

Linking National Forest Programmes and Poverty Reduction Strategies

Zambia

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Acronyms

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEVCO	Forestry and Environmental Vision Consultancy
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
GDP	Gross domestic product
JFM	Joint forest management
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MTENR	Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
ZFAP	Zambia Forestry Action Plan

Summary of key recommendations

Overview

Zambia is one of Africa's poorest countries where more than two-thirds of its 11 million citizens live on less than US\$1 per day. Although poverty levels have fallen from 73% in 1998 to 68% in 2004, population growth is increasing pressure on natural resources and contributing to their depletion. The country's Fifth National Development Plan 2006-2010 (FNDP) identifies wealth creation through sustained economic growth as the most important element in fighting poverty and places high priority on sectors that have the best potential to stimulate growth and on sectors that best address the needs of poor people – agriculture, education and health, for example.

The Zambia Forestry Action Plan (ZFAP) was adopted in August 1997 as a 20-year framework for the sector's development. It is based on the principles of sustainable forest management, capacity building, stakeholder participation, private sector involvement, gender balance in forestry development and cross-sectoral approaches. It underscores the extent to which poverty, population growth, economic growth, and environmental degradation are inter-related and it highlights the need to design programmes that take these linkages into account. It also recognizes the importance of forests to agriculture, biological diversity, water, mining, transportation, energy and tourism, pointing out that decisions made in these and other sectors often are the cause of forest depletion.

Strengthening the linkages between forestry and poverty alleviation

Forestry institutional framework

The single most critical issue facing the forest sector in Zambia is the government's failure to establish the Forestry Commission which is called for in the *Forests Act (1999)*. As a result, the institutional framework is based on 1973 legislation and it has no legal authority to implement either the National Forest Policy or the Zambia Forestry Action Plan. Outdated laws and regulations also prevent the expansion of joint forest management – a prime means to alleviate poverty in forest-dependent communities. Moreover, an incapacitated forestry administration is unable to halt the high rate of deforestation which continues to destroy the resources on which poor people rely. The reluctance of donors to support the sector as long as it is in the current state of disarray is of concern as well.

Cabinet urgently needs to make a decision on the way forward. If, for example, it agreed to transfer the employees of the Forestry Department to the new Forestry Commission and to establish a team to manage the transition, the sector would have a legal foundation to address today's imperatives, including broadening community participation in forest management. Civil society could play an instrumental role in bringing about required change by pressuring Parliamentarians and their committees for action.

Coordination and collaboration

Overlapping and sometimes conflicting mandates make collaboration across sectors a challenge in Zambia. For example, more than 30 institutions are involved in the management of natural resources. The Government established the Natural Resources Consultative Forum to address this problem but some members believe that wildlife issues dominate the agenda. Therefore, the feasibility of setting up a mechanism to deal exclusively with forestry matters is being examined. Before a decision is made, it would be important to assess whether another committee would further isolate the sector. Resource implications, funding sources and the

extent to which this forum would need to draw on the same stakeholders as those involved in natural resources are other factors to be considered.

Some ministries expressed a willingness to collaborate more closely with the Forestry Department and every effort should be made to pursue joint initiatives – working with the Department of Energy to reorganize the charcoal industry and improve the efficiency of charcoal production; conducting surveys with the Central Statistical Office to collect data on forestry activities, including in the informal sector; and incorporating forestry in campaigns that the National Tourist Board is developing to market Zambia as a tourist destination, among other opportunities.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Government developed a system to monitor performance and evaluate progress in implementing the Fifth National Development Plan and ministries, in consultation with stakeholders, were required to submit a limited number of indicators to the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP). Despite a chapter dedicated to natural resources, of which forestry forms part, there is not a single indicator to measure its contributions to poverty reduction. MFNP stated that it would accept proposals from the Forestry Department even though the deadline had passed. The Central Statistical Office also expressed the possibility of including forestry dimensions in the household survey now under development. Thus, the Forestry Department must act quickly to develop indicators and survey questions to measure as well as demonstrate the sector's importance to the national economy and livelihoods, especially of poor people. If it fails to act now, it will lose the opportunity to build its case at least for another five years until the next FNDP is prepared.

With regard to monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Zambia Forestry Action Plan, the Forestry Department has no established system to inform decision-making nor does it have sufficient capacity to collect baseline information, set targets, develop monitoring tools or manage databases. Putting a framework in place would allow stakeholders to measure the impact of interventions against stated objectives, including poverty reduction, and identify impediments. In addition to detailing the data to be collected (quantitative and qualitative), the methods of collection and analysis, and the institutions involved, the framework should capture activities at the household level – for example, walking distance to collect fuelwood.

Awareness and communication

Consultations with key stakeholders took place during the formulation of the Zambia Forestry Action Plan and the National Forest Policy. The Forestry Department has since provided the documents to those who are collaborating in their implementation. Notwithstanding this distribution, forestry information and materials are not available on the ways in which forests and trees outside forests contribute to local and national economies, benefit the environment, improve livelihoods, and enhance food security. As a result, decision-makers and the general public neither recognize nor appreciate the importance of the sector either in these areas or with regard to poverty reduction.

Campaigns to market forestry in terms of its economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits include the use of written material – brochures, fact sheets and policy briefs, for example. Radio, the press, workshops and televised documentaries have also proven to be effective in showing how forests and trees outside forests can help achieve the aims of many different stakeholders, ranging from politicians to farmers to local communities.

Following the recent elections in Zambia, it would be opportune for the Forestry Department to brief both newly and re-elected members of Parliament on the role and contributions of the sector in reducing poverty. The same material could be used to raise awareness among representatives of civil society. FAO, through its Technical Cooperation Programme, may be able to assist in this regard.

HIV/AIDS pandemic

With about one million citizens living with HIV, Zambia is one of the worst affected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The disease is seriously hindering national development and is threatening the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including reducing poverty and hunger. The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources has established a committee to address HIV/AIDS issues although no mention is made of its impact on forestry nor does the sector have awareness or prevention measures in place. Given the expressed willingness of the National Aids Council to work directly with the Forestry Department, the time is opportune for officials to implement awareness and prevention programmes in the workplace.

Once considered a problem exclusive to the health sector, the government has mainstreamed efforts across the public service to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS and fight its spread. If the Forestry Department determined how health authorities were able to convince decision-makers to adopt such a broad strategy, it might use similar approaches to persuade them to view forestry from a wider perspective as well – for example, in terms of how it assists other sectors such as the environment, agriculture, and energy to achieve the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. Highlighting the ways in which forests and trees outside forests act as safety nets for HIV/AIDS victims and their families would also increase appreciation of the sector's importance in reducing poverty, improving food security and building a stronger economy.

Other opportunities for forestry-based poverty alleviation

Forestry's contribution to gross domestic product

In 2004, estimates gauged forestry's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) at 3.7% but, because Zambia has not conducted a national forest inventory since 1964, information on the extent of the resource and on its importance to national and local economic development is out of date. As a means to raise the profile of forestry in the Fifth National Development Plan, the Forestry Department commissioned a study to measure the sector's direct financial contributions to GDP and the degree to which it reduces poverty. Not surprisingly, the report concluded that estimates are indeed low and that the potential of forest industries to improve livelihoods is linked to their capacity to provide employment which, in turn, depends on reforming the forest administration and creating a climate which fosters private investment.

The tourism industry has set up a satellite account to capture information on its economic contributions to GDP. It includes data on employment and on how much Zambians and visitors from abroad spend on tourism. The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources should consider establishing a similar account for forestry to build a case for more support to the Forestry Department to perform its functions.

Integrated land use

Forest cover in Zambia continues to decline both in quality and quantity due to a number of factors such as the extensive slash and burn practices of shifting cultivation; high demand for wood-based energy; unsustainable use of the few known commercial indigenous tree species;

over-grazing; and forest fires. Moreover, up-to-date information on the growing stock and use of natural resources is not available to assist in their sound management. Neither does the country have the means in place to plan and carry out integrated land use management – a situation which, given the high correlation between poverty and resource depletion, makes the need for one a matter of priority.

The objective of the project on national integrated land use assessments (TCP/ZAM/3007A) under the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme is 1) to develop institutional capacity to collect, compile, analyze and disseminate reliable information on integrated land use and 2) to provide the baseline data required to set up a long-term resources monitoring system. By providing the means to complete this project, the Government of Zambia will be able to establish a national database and integrate it into current information management systems. Staff capacity will also be strengthened to plan and conduct land use assessments and monitor resource changes.

Civil society

The voice of civil society is weak in Zambia although much potential exists for it to drive sector reforms and support sustainable forest management if given sufficient resources, both human and financial. Increased capacity would allow non-governmental organizations to engage decision-makers in dialogue and hold them accountable for their actions. They could strengthen their presence and influence in forestry discussions if they took advantage of the opportunities provided by the National Forest Programme Facility to participate more fully in local and national decision-making processes. They could also better capture the interest of cooperation partners if they package their requests for support in terms of activities which address governance and human rights issues as well as those which are geared to establishing baseline data for future monitoring. The recent approval of small grants under the Global Environment Facility represents another opportunity to increase their involvement.

Cooperation partners

International cooperation partners are moving away from project-based help to general budget support. This shift aligns aid to the government's development priorities as outlined in the FNDP and is expected to increase harmonization of donor assistance as well as collaboration among line ministries. Many donors consider forestry to be part of the natural resources sector and are not supporting it to the same extent as in the past. They are calling for major reforms to be undertaken of forestry institutions as a prerequisite to providing further support.

If government and other stakeholders highlight the cross-sectoral nature of forestry in terms of its links to the environment and the management of other natural resources when requesting support from cooperation partners, they could increase their chances for funding. Submissions that respond to the need for urgent action in areas that correspond to donor interests would also likely be more successful – for example, the collection of baseline data, including in the huge informal sector, to allow comparisons for future monitoring of progress. Along the same lines, support could be sought to develop reliable indicators to assess the full contributions of forestry to poverty reduction.

Joint forest management

Because the forest estate in Zambia is too large for any one body to police or manage, joint forest management (JFM) is seen by many as the best option to tackle deforestation and environmental degradation. JFM is also considered an effective mechanism to reduce poverty; advance human rights, democracy and good governance; and promote gender equality.

Although the National Forestry Policy provides a supportive framework, the concept has no legal basis from which to operate, thereby preventing its application to other sites. Moreover, communities involved in the pilot phase cannot implement the plans they developed jointly with government because there are no provisions to share revenues.

Once legislation is in place, future expansion of JFM in Zambia should build upon lessons learned in the pilot phases, including the need to develop monitoring tools to measure the impact of this approach on poverty reduction. It would also be important to work closely with traditional leaders and build on existing community structures such as resource boards and village committees. The sharing of benefits should also apply to other forest resources besides timber – for example wildlife, non-wood forest products and charcoal production.

Introduction

As part of a wider study in African countries, FAO led a mission to Zambia to examine the extent to which the Zambia Forestry Action Plan (ZFAP) is linked to the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP). The main objectives were to identify factors that fostered or hindered the establishment of effective linkages and to enhance the presence and influence of forestry in wider planning instruments with a view to strengthening financial, institutional and policy support for forest-based poverty alleviation.

The team consisted of a forestry officer and an associate professional officer from FAO Rome, the country coach of the National Forest Programme Facility, and a national consultant on loan from the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources (MTENR). During the 2-week mission, discussions were held with more than 40 representatives from government, the private sector and civil society. (See annex 1 for the list of persons met.)

The mission coincided with a workshop entitled “national forest programmes for all” which was hosted by the Forestry Department, in collaboration with the Facility. This session brought together more than 30 participants from around the country and the team took advantage of their presence to gather additional information pertinent to the study.

1. Policy processes related to forestry and poverty

1.1 Overview

Zambia is one of Africa’s poorest countries where more than two-thirds of its 11 million citizens live on less than US\$1 per day. Although poverty levels have fallen from 73% in 1998 to 68% in 2004, population growth (estimated at close to 3% per annum) is increasing pressure on natural resources and contributing to their depletion. The economy is growing at about 5% annually, largely due to the expansion of mining following recapitalization, privatization and buoyant world markets. Construction, manufacturing and tourism are also recording strong gains.

Some 60% of total land area is covered in forests, close to 10% of which are protected. However, forest degradation due to encroachment and uncontrolled bush fires is a serious problem, as is the conversion of forest land to agriculture. Since most land in Zambia is administered by traditional authorities under tenure arrangements which favour open access to communities, property rights are ill-defined. The absence of a national land-use planning framework is another concern which adds to the conflicts surrounding land-use management.

1.2 Fifth National Development Plan (2006-2010)

In 1999, the Government of Zambia produced a National Poverty Reduction Action Plan that outlined issues and priorities but did not fully articulate ways and means to address them. The document provided the basis to develop the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002-2004 which was launched in July 2002 and consisted of five thrusts:

- economic growth focusing on agriculture, tourism, industry and mining
- social services, especially in health and education
- infrastructure in terms of energy, transportation, communications, water and sanitation
- cross-cutting issues of HIV/AIDS, gender and the environment
- macro-economic policies and good governance

Progress reports on the PRS identified challenges with regard to implementation, including late disbursement of funds and lack of a systematic process to prioritize interventions. In addition, the absence of a monitoring and evaluation framework hindered efforts to assess the extent to which programmes and strategies were effective in reducing poverty.

When the current government took office in January 2002, it instructed the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP) to prepare the Transitional National Development Plan 2002-2005 as well as five-year plans from 2006 onwards. When the PRS came to an end in 2004, the transitional plan served as the national planning document, including in terms of poverty reduction, until the Fifth National Development Plan 2006-2010 (FNDP) was published in June 2006. This latest document identifies wealth creation through sustained economic growth as the most important element in fighting poverty and places high priority on sectors that have the best potential to stimulate growth and on sectors that best address the needs of poor people – agriculture, education and health, for example.

The FNDP provides a comprehensive framework for Zambia's development planning and programming within projected resource envelopes but it is the annual work plans developed by each sector which form the basis for specific interventions. The Planning and Economic Management Department in the Ministry of Finance and National Planning is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the FNDP. It is assisted by a National Steering Committee of Permanent Secretaries and by Sector Advisory Groups composed of line ministries, other government institutions, civil society and international partners whose task are to review progress and monitor implementation.

1.3 Forestry in Zambia's poverty reduction strategies

The contributions of forestry to poverty reduction were not made explicit in the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002-2004 although mention was made of the need to increase processing capacity to add value to products, including those coming from forests. The requirement to reduce the demand on forests through more efficient use of energy was also noted, an objective for which the energy sector was assigned responsibility. Indicators to measure progress in this area included 1) urban households with access to electricity and 2) households using wood fuel for cooking. Agro-forestry and community-based natural resource management were incorporated as objectives under the environment, as was the establishment of a research and development unit at the Zambia Forestry College. The rate of deforestation was one of the indicators used to assess aspects related to the protection and management of natural resources.

The Fifth National Development Plan addresses forestry, along with wildlife, national

heritage and wetlands, in chapter 9 which deals with the natural resources for which the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources is responsible. The chapter purports to make linkages to other natural resources whose mandates rest in different ministries but does not specify how this will be accomplished. Consistent with the design of the FNDP, the programmes, objectives and strategies presented in the chapter's matrix are general in nature and do not appear in any order of priority. As noted previously, annual work plans that the ministry is expected to develop in consultation with stakeholders are supposed to describe the details of each intervention, including implementation modalities.

The FNDP provides a good summary of the challenges facing forestry but does not make the actual and potential contributions of the sector to poverty reduction clear. The document notes the current lack of capacity to manage the forestry estate and the Government's intention to establish the Zambia Forestry Commission to address this shortcoming. It also undertakes to draft supplementary legislation to support the *Forests Act 1999* and take steps to repeal the *ZAFFICO Company Act* in order to transfer responsibility for planted forests, including their expansion, to the Commission. Joint Forest Management will be encouraged, as will tree planting on farms, and efforts will be made to strengthen the Zambia Forest College.

1.4 Zambia Forestry Action Plan

The development of the Zambia Forestry Action Plan (ZFAP) began in earnest in 1993 when a national workshop was convened to identify issues and constraints in the sector as well as ways to address them. A national steering committee of key stakeholders was set up and the then Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources established a Secretariat to oversee the formulation process. Government and partners adopted the ZFAP and its seven programme components in August 1997 as a 20-year framework for the sector's development.

The document is based on the principles of sustainable forest management, capacity building, stakeholder participation, private sector involvement, gender balance in forestry development and cross-sectoral approaches. It underscores the extent to which poverty, population growth, economic growth, and environmental degradation are inter-related and it highlights the need to design programmes that take these linkages into account. It also recognizes the importance of forests to agriculture, biological diversity, water, mining, transportation, energy and tourism, pointing out that decisions made in these and other sectors often are the cause of forest depletion.

1.5 Poverty dimensions in the Forestry Action Plan and Forest Policy

The Zambia Forestry Action Plan notes the significant potential of agriculture and of the country's natural resources to provide a way out of poverty but acknowledges that sustainable management will not be realized without greater institutional and financial support.

The National Forest Policy (1965) was revised in 1998, a year following the adoption of ZFAP. The updated version reiterates the principles on which ZFAP is based and outlines goals for the sector, including for the yet to be established Forestry Commission. While the policy does not target poverty alleviation *per se*, achievement of its stated objectives and implementation of its proposed strategies would clearly have this affect.

2. Strengthening linkages between forestry and poverty alleviation

2.1 Forestry institutional framework

The single most critical issue facing forestry administration in Zambia is the government's failure to establish the Forestry Commission which is called for in the *Forests Act (1999)*. Despite Parliament enactment of the law, government still has not issued a Commencement Order. The reasons appear to be lack of funds to support the sweeping reforms involved and the desire to avoid mistakes made when setting up the Zambia Wildlife Authority a few years ago. As a result, the sector is operating under 1973 legislation and has no legal foundation to implement either the National Forest Policy (1998) or the Zambia Forestry Action Plan (1997). Outdated laws and regulations also prevent the expansion of joint forest management (see 3.3.3 below). To compound the problem, weak political commitment to address the high rate of deforestation and other serious concerns is destroying the resource base on which poor people depend. Moreover, donors are reluctant to support the sector as long as it is in disarray.

Without a doubt, the challenges that forestry institutions face are many and solutions are not simple. However, further delays in initiating critical reforms are almost certain to cause further damages to Zambia's forest estate, some perhaps irreparable. Equally worrisome is the fact that, after 7 years, no one is lobbying government to take action or is even questioning why the Forestry Commission is not yet established.

Suggested action

Cabinet urgently needs to make a decision on the way forward. If, for example, it agreed to transfer the employees of the Forestry Department to the new Forestry Commission and to establish a team to manage the transition, the sector would have a legal foundation to address today's imperatives, including broadening community participation in forest management. Civil society could play an instrumental role in bringing about required change by pressuring Parliamentarians and their committees for action.

2.2 Coordination and collaboration across sectors

As noted previously, the National Steering Committee of Parliamentary Secretaries, chaired by Cabinet, led the development of the FNDP and will oversee its implementation. Sector Advisory Groups which assist the committee in this regard, although multi-disciplinary, are sector specific as the name suggests. They do not hold meetings on a regular basis and members who attend are mostly from government and the donor community. Neither are they linked to provincial and district processes at the moment.

Overlapping and sometimes conflicting mandates make collaboration across sectors a challenge in Zambia. For example, 11 government ministries and 33 pieces of legislation touch on matters pertaining to the environment. In addition, more than 30 public and private institutions are involved in natural resources management. Lack of coordination in this latter sector is a serious problem which the Government has attempted to address by establishing the Natural Resources Consultative Forum. Membership consists of relevant line ministries, the Zambian Wildlife Authority, cooperation partners, civil society and the private sector.

Because the process is new and resources to support operations are limited, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of this forum at this point. Some members believe that wildlife issues are dominating the agenda to the detriment of other sectors. Thus, with the support of the

National Forest Programme Facility, the Institute of Human Rights, Intellectual Property and Development Trust (HURID) is examining the feasibility of establishing a mechanism to deal exclusively with forestry matters. Options include making it a stand-alone body or a sub-committee of the forum on natural resources.

When the Forestry Department was developing ZFAP, it realized that partnerships with other sectors needed to be strengthened. Although officials are involved in some inter-sectoral committees and joint initiatives, weak capacity prevents them from engaging more widely. However, the Department's responsibility to coordinate the implementation of initiatives such as the Forest Resource Management Project, the Provincial Forestry Action Programme, and the Integrated Land Use Assessment is building stronger links to other sectors and to more stakeholders. With regard to collaboration within the various departments of MTENR, weekly meetings of senior staff (chaired by the Permanent Secretary) facilitate teamwork and information exchange. The fact that forestry officers at the provincial level act as focal points for matters related to the environment also enhances the sector's presence and influence in decision-making across disciplines.

Suggested action

Before deciding to establish a forum specific to forestry, it would be important to assess whether such a move would further isolate the sector from discussions on issues of direct relevance to it. Consideration would also need to be given to resource implications, funding sources and the extent to which this forum would need to draw on the same stakeholders as those involved in natural resources. Before establishing another committee, thought should perhaps be given to raising the profile of forestry in current deliberations and integrating it better into activities which other sectors are undertaking.

Some ministries expressed a willingness and desire to work more closely with the Forestry Department and every effort should be made to pursue joint initiatives. Opportunities include collaborating with the Department of Energy to reorganize the charcoal industry and improve the efficiency of charcoal production; conducting surveys with the Central Statistical Office to collect data, including on the informal sector; and incorporating forestry in campaigns that the National Tourist Board is developing to market Zambia as a tourist destination.

2.3 Monitoring and evaluation

The Government recently introduced the Medium Term Expenditure Framework process and activity-based budgeting to help ministries better plan. It also developed a system to monitor performance and evaluate progress in implementing the FNDP which it will use to conduct mid-term and final reviews in 2007/08 and 2010/11 respectively. Ministries, in consultation with stakeholders, submitted a limited number of indicators to the Ministry of Finance and National Planning for each main sector and component of FNDP. Despite a dedicated chapter to natural resources, of which forestry forms part, there is not a single indicator to measure its contributions to poverty reduction.

The Ministry of Finance and National Planning indicated that it would accept proposals from the Forestry Department even though the official deadline had passed, as long as it submitted them within a reasonable delay. The Central Statistical Office also expressed the possibility of including forestry dimensions in the household survey it is currently designing.

With regard to monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Zambia Forestry Action Plan or sustainable forest management more generally, the Forestry Department has no

established system to inform decision-making in these matters, nor does it have sufficient capacity to collect baseline information, set targets, develop monitoring tools or manage databases. Conducting M&E will require training in fields such as economics, accounting, social sciences, management, and facilitation/conflict resolution.

Suggested action

The timing is ideal for the Forestry Department to make significant headway in terms of demonstrating forestry's importance to the national economy and livelihoods by developing indicators and survey questions that would measure the sector's contributions in these areas. If it fails to act now, it will lose the opportunity to build its case at least for another five years until the next FNDP is prepared.

The establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for the Zambia Forestry Action Plan would allow stakeholders to assess implementation, measure impact against stated objectives, including poverty reduction, and identify obstacles and constraints which hinder progress. The framework should provide for capturing relevant activities at the household level – for example, walking distances to collect fuelwood – and should detail the data to be collected, the methods of collection and analysis, and the institutions involved.

Most users of the information prefer quantitative indicators because they can be interpreted more easily and objectively – important considerations when analyzing trends over time. However, where relevant and appropriate, qualitative assessment should also be carried out. Staff will need to be trained in social disciplines to be able to collect and interpret data on this dimension of forestry.

2.4 Awareness and communication

The Fifth National Development Plan: As coordinator of the FNDP, the MFNP called on a range of key stakeholders to provide advice and guidance during its development, including at provincial and district levels. It then convened a national workshop to review the draft which was subsequently revised and published in June 2006. However, since the recently re-elected government has not yet formally launched the FNDP, it is too early to determine the extent to which Zambians are aware of its existence or how much they will be involved in implementation.

Zambia Forestry Action Plan and National Forest Policy: As noted earlier, consultations with key stakeholders took place during the formulation of the Zambia Forestry Action Plan and the National Forest Policy. The Forestry Department has since provided the documents to those who are collaborating in their implementation. Notwithstanding this distribution, forestry information and materials are not available on the ways in which forests and trees outside forests contribute to local and national economies, benefit the environment, improve livelihoods, and enhance food security. As a result, decision-makers and the general public neither recognize nor appreciate the importance of the sector.

Suggested action

Marketing forestry in terms of its economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits requires innovation and initiative. Campaigns to promote these aspects include the use of written material – brochures, fact sheets and policy briefs, for example. Radio, the press, workshops and televised documentaries have also proven to be effective in showing how forests and trees outside forests can help achieve the aims of many different stakeholders, ranging from politicians to farmers to local communities.

Following the recent elections in Zambia, it would be opportune for the Forestry Department to organize briefings for both newly and re-elected members of Parliament. The same material could be used to raise awareness among representatives of civil society. FAO, through its Technical Cooperation Programme, may be able to assist in this regard.

2.5 HIV/AIDS

The Fifth National Development Plan states that, with approximately one million citizens infected with HIV, the pandemic has made Zambia one of the worst affected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its prevalence among the 15 to 49 age group is estimated at 16 percent. Moreover, women are 1.4 times more likely to be infected than men and infection rates among young women (age 15 to 24) are 4 times higher than men in the same age group. The disease is hindering national development and seriously threatening the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including those related to alleviating poverty and hunger.

A National Aids Council composed of representatives from government, the private sector and civil society was established in 2002 to coordinate, support and monitor the country's response to HIV/AIDS. The Ministry of Finance and National Planning also allocates money to line ministries to implement programmes in the workplace but some are yet to draw on these funds for this purpose. The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources has established a committee to address issues related to the disease although no specific mention is made of its impact on forestry nor does the sector have special awareness or prevention measures in place.

Suggested action

Once considered a problem exclusive to the health sector, HIV/AIDS issues are now being addressed across government ministries. In this regard, the government has mainstreamed its agenda for action across the public service in much the same way as it integrated gender, governance and the environment into the various components of the FNDP. If the Forestry Department determined how health authorities were able to convince decision-makers to adopt such a broad strategy, it might use similar approaches to persuade them to view forestry from a wider perspective as well – for example, in terms of how it assists other sectors such as the environment, agriculture, and energy to achieve the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. Highlighting the ways in which forests and trees outside forests act as safety nets for HIV/AIDS victims and their families would also increase appreciation of the sector's importance in reducing poverty, improving food security and building a stronger labour force and economy.

In addition to the above, the Forestry Department should seize the opportunity to work directly with the National Aids Council which expressed its enthusiasm to help implement awareness and prevention programmes in its offices across the country.

3. Other opportunities for forestry-based poverty alleviation

3.1 Forestry contributions to gross domestic product

In 2004, the forest sector contributed an estimated 3.7% to gross domestic product (GDP), compared to agriculture at 7.2%, fisheries at 2.6% and mining at 8.2%. However the absence

of data, including in terms of supply (inventory), non-wood forest products, industrial timber processing, and the informal fuelwood and charcoal trade, significantly underestimates forestry's contributions to the national economy and to poverty reduction.

Inadequate resources, lack of equipment and low staff capacity have prevented Zambia from conducting a national forest inventory since it gained independence in 1964. Without up-to-date information on forest utilization and growing stock, the sustainable management of these resources becomes all but impossible. In broad terms, integrated land use assessments would provide sound baseline data to set up a long-term resources monitoring system.

With support from Finland, the Forestry Department contracted a company (Savcor Indufor) to measure the direct financial contributions of the sector and its potential to reduce poverty as a means to improve the basis for decision-making and raise the profile of forestry in the Fifth National Development Plan. Not surprisingly, the report concluded that estimates are indeed low, mainly because most of the charcoal trade is not captured. It also noted that the potential of forest industries to reduce poverty depends on their capacity to provide employment which, in turn, depends on reforming the forest administration and establishing a climate conducive to private investment.

The National Forest Programme Facility is providing funds to the Forestry and Environmental Vision Consultancy (FEVCO) to conduct a more in-depth study of the contributions of the sector to the economy and to poverty reduction, in addition to examining Zambia's forest revenue and concession systems. FEVCO is working closely with the Central Statistical Office to validate and analyze data collected.

Suggested action

The tourism industry has set up a satellite account to capture information on the economic contributions of the sector to gross domestic product. It includes data on employment and on how much Zambians and visitors from abroad spend on tourism. The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources should give serious consideration to establishing a similar account for forestry. Doing so would clearly demonstrate its importance and build a strong case for more support to the Forestry Department to perform its functions.

3.2 Integrated land use

Forest cover in Zambia continues to decline both in quality and quantity due to a number of factors such as the extensive slash and burn practices of shifting cultivation; high demand for wood-based energy; unsustainable use of the few known commercial indigenous tree species; over-grazing; and forest fires. Moreover, up-to-date information on growing stock and use of natural resources is not available to assist in their sound management. Neither does the country have the means in place to plan and carry out integrated land use management – a situation which, given the high correlation between poverty and resource depletion, makes the need for one a matter of priority.

In March 2005, the Government of Zambia entered into an agreement with FAO under the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to develop institutional capacity to collect, compile, analyze and disseminate reliable information on integrated land use and to provide the baseline data required to set up a long-term resources monitoring system. Among other outcomes, the project is expected to:

- improve institutional capacity to plan and implement land use assessments, monitor

- resources, manage the information and enhance natural resource management;
- define a national land use assessment methodology, taking into account criteria and indicators for sustainable natural resource management and the information needs for national and international reporting; and
- establish a national database on land use resources and integrate it into management information systems.

Notwithstanding the importance of the project and Zambia's commitment to support it, delays are being experienced with the release of the government's share of financial assistance. Consequently, field activities have been suspended and risk not being completed before the TCP project comes to an end.

Suggested action

The correlation between poverty and resource depletion is high in Zambia, especially in areas around urban centers. By providing the funding it promised to complete the TCP project, the government will be able to establish a national database on land use resources to provide much needed information on the growing stock and the use of natural resources. Continuing the project will also strengthen staff capacity to plan and implement land use assessments, sustainably manage resources, and monitor changes in resources, all of which are instrumental in reducing poverty.

3.3 Civil Society

The voice of civil society is weak in Zambia although much potential exists for it to drive sector reforms and support sustainable forest management if given sufficient resources, both human and financial. Increased capacity would allow non-governmental organizations (NGO) to engage decision-makers in dialogue and hold them accountable for their actions. They could also play an important role in collecting hard evidence to support change.

Consultative mechanisms have been established for the agriculture and natural resources sectors and, as noted earlier, the possibility of creating a third forum to focus on forestry issues is being explored. Such venues provide a platform for exchanging information, raising awareness, and collaborating with other groups to achieve common goals. Moreover, Zambia has a network of well established international NGOs which are supporting local priorities. In this regard, a solid basis exists to build stronger partnerships.

Suggested action

NGOs have significant scope to strengthen their presence and influence in forestry discussions if they took advantage of the opportunities provided by the National Forest Programme Facility to increase their participation in local and national decision-making processes. They could also better capture the interest and attention of cooperation partners if they package their requests for support in terms of activities which address governance and human rights issues as well as those which are geared to establishing baseline data for future monitoring. The recent approval of small grants under the Global Environment Facility represents another opportunity for NGOs to increase their involvement.

3.4 Cooperation Partners

International cooperation partners are moving away from project-based support to a Joint Assistance Strategy which focuses more on capacity building and general budget support. This shift aligns aid to the government's priorities for development as outlined in the FNDP

and is expected to increase harmonization within the donor community as well as collaboration among line ministries. In some circles, it is felt that the coordinated approach which funding partners are using to support the government's development strategy in Zambia is more advanced than in many other countries. The World Bank and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – a key forum of major bilateral donors working to increase the effectiveness of their joint efforts – are watching closely to determine whether successful practices can be replicated elsewhere.

Many donors consider forestry to be part of the natural resources sector and are not supporting it to the same extent as in the past. They are also calling for major reforms to be undertaken of forestry institutions as a prerequisite to providing further assistance.

Suggested action

If government and other stakeholders highlight the cross-sectoral nature of forestry in terms of its links to the environment and the management of other natural resources when requesting support from cooperation partners, they could increase their chances for funding. Submissions that respond to the need for urgent action in areas that correspond to donor interests would also likely be more successful – the collection of baseline data, including in the huge informal sector, to allow comparisons for future monitoring of progress, for example. Along the same lines, support could be sought to develop a complete set of reliable indicators, not only the limited few which the FNDP could accommodate, to assess the full contributions of forestry to poverty reduction.

3.5 Joint forest management

With support from the Government of Finland, the Forestry Department tested community-based forest management in select sites during the periods 1995-98 and 2000-05. Objectives were to reduce poverty; protect the environment; advance human rights, democracy and good governance; and promote gender equality.

Because the forest estate in Zambia is too large for any one body to police or manage, joint forest management is seen by many as the best option to tackle the high rate of deforestation and environmental degradation. Although the National Forestry Policy provides a supportive framework, the concept has no legal basis from which to operate. (As noted earlier, the government has not yet issued the order to commence *Forest Act 1999*.) Communities involved in the pilot programme, therefore, cannot implement the plans they developed jointly with government because there are no provisions to share revenues. Given poverty levels in the country, such incentives and the possibility of earning income are key factors to engaging local residents in forest management. Another problem is the lack of legislative authority to expand JFM to other sites, despite keen interest to do so.

Suggested action

Once legislation is in place, future expansion of JFM in Zambia should build upon lessons learned in the pilot phases, including the need to develop monitoring tools to measure the impact of this approach on poverty reduction. It would be important to work closely with traditional leaders and build on existing community structures such as resource boards and village committees. The sharing of benefits should also be expanded to cover other forest resources besides timber – for example wildlife, non-wood forest products and charcoal production.

4. Next steps

Given the urgent need to provide a legislative framework for the administration of forest policy and programmes in Zambia, Cabinet needs to make a decision with all due haste on establishing the Forestry Commission. The delay in moving forward is crippling attempts to sustainably manage the country's forest resources with the result that they are declining and deteriorating at an alarming rate – to the detriment of the millions of poor people who depend on them for their survival and well-being.

Once a sound governance structure is in place, forestry authorities will be in a better position to consider and implement the measures proposed in this report. As reforms are introduced, discussions should take place on how to improve livelihoods through forestry interventions and on how to increase awareness of the sector's contributions in this regard. With assistance from the National Forest Programme Facility and other cooperation partners, the Forestry Department as well as civil society can strengthen their presence and influence in central planning processes, especially those that aim to reduce poverty.

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