

Links between National Forest Programmes and Poverty Reduction Strategies



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MKUKUTA	National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction
NFP	national forest programme
NFP Facility	National Forest Programme Facility
NGO	non-government organizations
PRS	poverty reduction strategies
US\$	United States dollar

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper reports the main findings of a study which FAO conducted in ten countries in Africa¹ between November 2005 and July 2007. In collaboration with the National Forest Programme Facility (NFP Facility), the study examined the links between national forest programmes (NFP) and poverty reduction strategies (PRS) so as to better understand why the forest sector is often marginalized in efforts to improve livelihoods and help countries to achieve a greater measure of prosperity. Results reveal a significant lack of data on forestry's contributions to poverty reduction and economic development. They also point to inadequate coordination across sectors on natural resources management in general and weak stakeholder participation in forest management in many countries. Based on information obtained through literature searches and interviews, the study identifies key factors which promote or hinder the establishment of closer linkages between forestry and wider development processes, including poverty reduction strategies, and recommends ways to increase the presence and influence of the sector in central decision-making. Detailed reports by country are posted on the FAO website at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/43875/en/>.

In terms of forestry's inclusion in poverty reduction strategies, trees, woodlands and forests are generally viewed as essential to meeting basic needs for wood, fuel, medicine, fruits and other food. The strategies also note, in addition to generating employment and contributing to economic growth, the importance of these resources in providing fodder for livestock, regulating the quality and supply of water, and offering a range of ecological services. Some documents outline the challenges that forestry faces, its potential to reduce poverty, and external factors which have a bearing on how forest resources are managed. Objectives include halting deforestation, rehabilitating degraded land, combating desertification, improving productivity and value addition, involving communities in management, strengthening enforcement, and introducing incentives for private sector participation. However, the contributions of the sector to rural economies and household incomes are not well recognized despite their significant importance.

With regard to forest policies and legislation, most include poverty reduction as an objective which is then incorporated into national forest programmes. Some institutional frameworks provide the basis for communities to conserve and sustainably use forest resources, support livelihoods and achieve the government's commitment to reduce poverty. Still others call for sharing the benefits and responsibilities of forest management more equitably, reducing human conflicts over grazing rights and wildlife encroachment, and increasing private sector involvement in forest industry and trade. A few NFPs are explicit about the need to collaborate across sectors, harmonize policies and instruments, and mainstream gender and HIV/AIDS concerns.

Various mechanisms are used to bring stakeholders together to formulate NFPs and lobby for forestry reforms: dedicated units, steering committees, advisory groups, and task forces. However, lack of coordinated effort to incorporate forestry into development priorities is a serious obstacle in many countries and the sheer size of some countries limits participation and coordination not only in forestry but in other sectors as well.

¹ Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia

International cooperation partners are moving away from project support to joint assistance strategies which focus on capacity building and general budget support. While the approach may be sound in principle, it is of real concern to those in forestry who believe far less funding will flow to a sector that is already undervalued and underappreciated. Some civil society groups are also worried that the decrease in project support to forestry means that they now must depend on government funding for their activities – a situation which they contend compromises their objectivity.

Improving linkages: constraints and opportunities

Lack of data on forest resources and their range of contributions

Inadequate resources, lack of equipment and low staff capacity prevent many countries from conducting national forest inventories on a regular basis. Even when they are able to complete such assessments, the institutional framework and the resources needed to achieve sustainable forest management are often absent. Moreover, the multi-dimensional nature of forestry makes it difficult to collect data and measure the full extent of its contributions to livelihoods and economic growth – relative to agriculture, health and education, for example. These constraints place authorities at a disadvantage when negotiating budget allocations in the face of stiff competition for limited resources. Another problem is that forestry data is often scattered across different ministries and reporting systems are not in a format that enables national statistics offices to use the information.

Under the System of National Accounts which dates back to 1993, the contributions of forestry to gross domestic product (GDP) are subsumed under agriculture, a practice that significantly underestimates the sector's importance to economic development, including its potential to reduce poverty. Although recent studies are helping to put a price on the range of forest goods and services, more research is needed on the value of environmental services these resources provide – water quality and supply, soil retention and fertility, carbon storage, and conservation of biodiversity, among others. Methodologies are also needed to calculate the cost of unsustainable forest management.

Monitoring and evaluation systems across government

With regard to monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction strategies, most governments developed indicators using information from national statistics offices and planning units in line ministries which, on occasion, seek input from district and local levels. Sources include administrative data, national surveys, research on specific themes, and participatory poverty assessments that capture the views of poor people. However, few PRS indicators are related to the environment and even fewer are specific to forestry – mainly because forestry officials are not widely engaged in their development.

Capacity to monitor and evaluate national forest programmes and poverty reduction strategies is weak in almost all governments that participated in the study, often limited to tracking specific projects. Where such systems exist for NFPs, they are seldom consistent with those used to assess PRSs. Moreover, the absence of baseline data on which to set targets and measure progress limits their potential to examine if goals are met, identify obstacles which hinder implementation, and shape future policies and programmes.

Awareness of the importance of forestry to national development and poverty reduction

Because decision makers and members of the public generally are not well informed, they do not understand the economic, environmental, social and cultural value of forests and trees or appreciate the sector's contributions to poverty reduction. Some countries have made serious attempts to improve understanding and awareness of forestry issues by convening regular stakeholder meetings; translating research into user-friendly material; making documents available in local languages; and waging media campaigns to explain forest policy, legislation and regulations.

Electoral campaigns offer excellent opportunities for civil society organizations to lobby political candidates across parties to address key forest issues, including governance, tenure and access rights. Immediately after the formation of a new government or after the renewal of a current administration's term is also a good time for forestry authorities to urge their ministers to increase the visibility of the sector among Cabinet colleagues and other members of Parliament.

Role of civil society and participatory forest management

Because of their arm's-length relationship to government, civil society organizations are often seen as objective third parties whose role is to call authorities to task when implementation of policies, legislation and guidelines on the environment and natural resources falls short of expectations. When they use credible research findings to highlight, for example, the causes and impacts of deforestation, soil erosion, land degradation, poaching and encroachment, these groups can be especially effective in catching the attention of the media and in getting their voices heard during public consultations. With more support, they could be more active in promoting forestry interventions to reduce poverty.

Although community based forest management has been shown to increase incomes and improve livelihoods – especially when governments give village administrations exclusive commercial rights – support for the approach varies among stakeholders. Some governments are reluctant to give up control over resources or they allocate those which are degraded and yield little or no return, at least over the short term. Furthermore, communities often lack incentives to become involved or are hampered by complex legislation. Where joint forest management schemes are well established and community driven, they restore forest quality, improve water discharge in catchment areas, and reduce the incidence of fire. However, their effectiveness in addressing poverty is less obvious if they fail to target the most vulnerable groups: women, children and elderly people.

The cross-cutting dimensions of sustainable forest management

The study reveals that the adoption of poverty reduction and economic growth as national goals are sharpening the focus on cross-cutting issues and countries are instituting more comprehensive approaches to planning and resource allocation. In practice though, interventions appear to be sector oriented and sector driven even when they address concerns related to the environment, gender equality, HIV and AIDS, for example. Forestry is still considered an entity unto itself despite the economic, ecological, social and cultural benefits

that resources provide – dimensions which clearly extend beyond a single sector. Many foresters reinforce this image by working in isolation often because they are trained to do so or because they lack the expertise and funds to involve stakeholders in a meaningful way.

Way forward

Because of their multi-dimensional and participatory nature, national forest programmes can serve as comprehensive frameworks for the sustainable management of forest and tree resources at national, district and local levels. They can also be effective mechanisms for collaborating with a wide range of partners on initiatives which are broader in scope, including strategies to reduce poverty. NFP processes therefore need to better engage in deliberations on wider government development priorities, using key entry points to raise the profile and influence of the sector in central decision-making.

With few exceptions, systems to monitor and report on poverty reduction are not well developed nor do they capture the extent that forestry helps to achieve this objective. Data collection across ministries and their departments is often *ad hoc* and information systems are neither compatible nor aligned to other government processes, including those related to the allocation of budgets. Closer collaboration, especially with national statistics offices, will help forestry authorities to quantify the full extent of its contributions to economic growth and rural development, in addition to more clearly demonstrating the sector's links to the environment and the management of other natural resources.

Although civil society groups are increasingly engaging in government reforms, their capacity to participate meaningfully in discussions is weak in many countries and consultations often are held on a sporadic basis. They could better support sustainable forest management if they had the means to strengthen mechanisms for the exchange of information, experiences, and best practices. National fora to facilitate such dialogue and to develop joint work programmes would increase collaboration in areas of common concern as well as the effectiveness of interventions.

Inasmuch as action to reduce poverty must be concerted and involve stakeholders across sectors, sustainable forest management cannot be achieved in isolation. Some of the key ways for governments to maximize the contributions of forestry to poverty reduction are to make it part of wider strategies for economic and social development; empower forest-dependent people; build entrepreneurial skills; improve governance; and fight corruption. While these last two aspects fall outside the scope of this study, they are intrinsically linked to the capacity of countries to reach the level of prosperity to which they aspire. Good governance in forestry is central in the fight against poverty and should be included as a key component of national forest programmes in much the same way as it is now integrated into poverty reduction strategies.

1 INTRODUCTION

Although the contributions of forestry to national development, rural economies, and household incomes are significant, they are not well recognized. Forest resources are essential to meeting subsistence needs for wood, fuel, medicine, fruits and other food, in addition to generating employment, supporting livestock, regulating the quality and supply of water, and providing other ecological services: wildlife habitat, biological diversity, soil conservation, and carbon sequestration, for example. Since these functions are intrinsic to improving the lives of forest-dependent people, many of whom are poor, it would be important to strengthen financial and institutional support for the sector. One way is to increase forestry's presence and influence in national decision-making processes, including those pertaining to poverty reduction.

Because national forest programmes are cross-sectoral and participatory in nature, they can be instrumental in building linkages to wider agendas. Thus far however, little analysis has been done on why the forest sector is often overlooked in national efforts to reduce poverty. A recent literature review of PRSs in 16 forest-rich countries² found reference to a NFP in only one country (**Uganda**) and only 5 of 17 participatory poverty assessments that were prepared to inform PRSs included forestry issues. While providing useful insights, such studies have not shed light on how linkages are established either between processes or with other sectors.

In the interest of addressing some of these disparities, FAO conducted a study in ten countries in Africa³ from November 2005 to July 2007, in collaboration with the NFP Facility – a multi-donor initiative, hosted by FAO, to support the development and implementation of NFPs. This paper summarizes the findings, including the factors which promote or hinder the establishment of linkages between NFPs and PRSs. It also identifies gaps in information about how forestry contributes to poverty reduction and notes the need to enhance cross-sector coordination and stakeholder participation in forest management.

Prior to travelling to each country, study teams reviewed national forest programmes, poverty reduction strategies and other key documents such as policies, laws, regulations, action plans, evaluation reports, household surveys, and census information to identify the extent to which PRSs and other national development processes include forestry dimensions and are linked. They then supplemented their preliminary findings during meetings with government, the private sector, civil society organizations, forest-dependent communities, and international development partners. Deliberations focused on the presence and influence of forestry in central planning processes as well as on the challenges and opportunities of establishing closer links.

Where possible, time in country was scheduled to coincide with workshops that the NFP Facility organized on national forest programmes which brought together government and non-government stakeholders from across the country. The team took advantage of their presence to gather additional information pertinent to the study. These sessions also provided an opportunity to discuss and validate findings as well as consider ways to improve linkages, building on best practices and lessons learned.

² Bird, N. and Dickson, C. 2004. *Forestry, Bushmeat and Livelihoods: Exploring the Coverage in PRSPs*. ODI, London.

³ Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia

2 COUNTRY CONTEXTS

In addition to being partners with the NFP Facility, specific countries were invited to participate in the study because they represent a range of circumstances and conditions, as Table 1 illustrates. For example, the percentage of people living below US\$1 per day runs from 2% in **Tunisia** to 75.8% in **Zambia**. Forest cover as a percentage of total land area varies from as little as 1% in **Niger** to as much as 57.1% in **Zambia**. Population density, as an indicator of pressure on forest resources, goes from a low of 2.5 people per square kilometre in **Namibia** to a high of 153.5 in **Nigeria**.

Table 1 *Population, poverty levels and forest area*

Country	Population 2004 (1 000)	Population 2004 (per km ²)	% living below US\$1/day 1990-2004	% living below US\$2/day 1990-2004	Forest area 2005 (1 000 ha)	Forest area 2005 (% land)
Kenya	32 447	57.0	22.8	58.3	3 522	6.2
Malawi	11 182	118.9	41.7	76.1	3 402	36.2
Namibia	2 033	2.5	34.9	55.8	7 661	9.3
Niger	12 095	9.6	60.6	85.8	1 266	1
Nigeria	139 824	153.5	70.8	92.4	11 089	12.2
Sudan	34 356	14.5	N/A	N/A	67 546	28.4
Tanzania	36 571	41.4	57.8	89.9	35 257	39.9
Tunisia	10 012	64.4	2.0	6.6	1 056	6.8
Uganda	25 920	131.5	N/A	N/A	3 627	18.4
Zambia	10 547	14.2	75.8	94.1	42 452	57.1

N/A = not available

Source: FAO State of the World's Forests 2007 and the Human Development Report 2006 of the United Nations Development Programme

Civil strife and the high incidence of HIV/AIDS which plague some countries also have a significant bearing on government priorities and budget allocations. Different legislative frameworks make for a varied sample as well. They range from being rigid or outdated to being recently reformed and implemented. For example, despite **Tunisia** making significant advances on the legislative front to involve forest users in the management of resources, some laws are contradictory or they impede the participation of these groups, in part because they were designed to regulate how benefits are shared from the sale of agricultural and fish products rather than those from forests. In **Zambia**, Parliament enacted the *Forests Act (1999)* but government has yet to issue a Commencement Order. Thus, 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 are also preventing the expansion of joint forest management – an arrangement whereby forestry departments enter into a partnership agreement with local communities to share related costs and benefits.

Table 2 *Forestry's place in government hierarchies*

	Location within Government
Kenya	Kenya Forest Service*/links to Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Malawi	Ministry of Energy and Mining
Namibia	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
Niger	Min. de l'Hydraulique, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte Contre la Désertification
Nigeria	Federal Ministry of Environment
Sudan	Forests National Corporation* and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (GOSS)
Tanzania	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
Tunisia	Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources hydrauliques
Uganda	National Forestry Authority* and Ministry of Water and Environment
Zambia	Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources

*Autonomous or semi-autonomous entities

While the countries in the sample reflect important differences, including where forestry is placed within government hierarchies (Table 2), they also display striking similarities: above average population growth; high poverty levels in rural areas; unreliable data on the number of forest-dependent people and their income levels; wide regional disparities within countries and skewed income distribution; reliance on biomass to meet energy needs; dependence on forests for traditional medicines; the dominance of agriculture in all but one national economy (**Nigeria**); government ownership of forest resources; out-dated forest

inventories; weak capacity for forest management at all levels, especially social dimensions; ill-equipped field offices to carry out operations; severe restrictions in public service hiring and training; fragmented governance of the sector among several ministries and departments; and the huge number of unrecorded and uncoordinated transactions in informal markets.

3 GENERAL FINDINGS

3.1 *Forestry in poverty reduction strategies*

Poverty reduction strategies generally recognize that trees, woodlands and forests are essential to meeting basic needs for wood, fuel, medicine, fruits and other food. They also note, in addition to generating employment and contributing to economic growth, their importance in providing fodder for livestock, regulating climate as well as water supply, and offering other ecological services: wildlife habitat, biological diversity, soil conservation, and carbon sequestration, for example. Some strategies outline the challenges the sector faces, its potential to reduce poverty, and external factors which have a bearing on how forest resources are managed such as land ownership, energy consumption, decentralization and urbanization.

Most documents make clear the fact that livelihoods and economic growth depend on a healthy environment and the sustainable management of natural resources. Thus poverty reduction strategies call for the integration of environmental concerns into development activities. Forestry officials therefore have a possibility to collaborate with other jurisdictions to achieve this objective, using it as a key entry point to address issues and influence decisions that affect the sector yet originate outside it. In fact, the study found that when the environment was singled out as a priority, forestry was given greater prominence because of the need to reduce the harmful impacts of over-exploitation on life-supporting ecosystems. PRSs also pay more attention to forestry when unsustainable practices threaten productivity in other sectors, especially agriculture which is considered a core component of economic recovery and job creation, along with tourism, trade and industry.

Some strategies stress the importance of private sector investment but are silent both on the role business should play in national development and on the contributions of forestry to economic growth. They recognize that weak and uncoordinated management of natural resources is a major constraint which is exacerbated by population growth, environmental degradation, and encroachment. Key objectives for forestry are halting deforestation, increasing forest cover, improving productivity and value addition, involving communities in management, strengthening enforcement, and introducing incentives for private sector participation.

In a few instances, poverty reduction strategies deal with forestry as a sub-sector of rural development and focus on improving food security through the integrated management of natural resources, combating desertification and protecting the environment. Priorities for action include establishing protected areas, rehabilitating degraded land, putting information systems in place, replanting for multiple uses and practicing agroforestry. However, the contributions of the sector to rural economies and household incomes are not well recognized despite their significant importance.

In one case (**Nigeria**), reference to forestry is all but absent in the PRS although the document does note that 90% of the rural population depend on forests for livelihood and domestic energy and that poor people need to be protected against deforestation and other risks to the environment. At the other end of the spectrum, **Uganda's** Poverty Eradication Action Plan specifically lists priorities for enhancing the implementation of its National Forest Plan and considers forestry an "urgent short-term priority" for funding. By the same token, political commitment to fight poverty by protecting and valuing forest resources is clear in **Niger**, as evidenced by the close links the sector has at both the institutional level and on the ground.

The country's real challenge lies in mobilizing the resources to implement the strategies and programmes.

Sudan's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper covers only the North and is based on data from 3 different surveys, none of which are specific to poverty. It briefly assesses issues in the agriculture, health, education, industry, and water sectors, and identifies key areas of growth. Although the main text does not mention forestry per se, many objectives contained in the annexes relate to natural resources, including community forestry and incentives for forests and wood production. The document does not outline goals or targets to reduce poverty and is silent on a system to support implementation and monitoring. With regard to the South, the government's Policy Statement (2006) notes the importance of sustainable agricultural development and recognizes that trees, woodlands and forests are essential to the well-being of its citizens and to national economic growth. When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in May 2005, it was decided that South Sudan would develop its own strategy which it planned to complete by mid-2007. The intention would then be to merge the two to cover the entire country.

Goals related to forestry in terms of alleviating poverty are found throughout **Tanzania's** National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction as well, better known by its Swahili acronym MKUKUTA. In **Tunisia**, the sector forms an integral part of development plans and federal forestry officials sit on all regional agricultural commissions. However, the lack of a comprehensive rural strategy, weak community participation in the management of shared natural resources, and the absence of a partnership approach among institutions concerned with sustainable development result in a certain incoherence and lack of harmony within programmes and imperatives surrounding socio-economic growth.

As macro policy processes, poverty reduction and economic growth strategies are helping to highlight how the sustainable management of tree and forest resources benefits other sectors – agriculture, energy and water, among others – and thus are strengthening the case for forestry interventions. They are sharpening the focus on cross-cutting issues which affect livelihoods such as the environment, gender, and HIV/AIDS, providing entry points and incentives to increase collaboration across sectors. However, monitoring and reporting progress on strategy implementation continue to be structured and measured along sector lines. This approach makes it difficult to promote joint initiatives as an effective means of pursuing common objectives. Countries also find it a challenge to accurately estimate the cost of proposed interventions, especially when several partners are involved. This problem severely limits the ability of officials to fight for adequate financing during budget negotiations.

3.2 Poverty in national forest programmes

National forest policies and legislation provide a framework for developing and implementing national forest programmes – a generic term used to describe a wide range of approaches to the sustainable management of forests at national and sub-national levels, based on a set of guiding principles, including stakeholder participation and cross-sectoral collaboration. When national forest programmes are built on participatory processes, they provide the means to review and revise forest policies, legislation and regulations so that they reflect and can effectively respond to current and emerging issues, thus ensuring a solid basis for development in the sector. More information on national forest programmes is available on the FAO website at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/nfp/en/>. Until lately, they did not consider

poverty dimensions to any great extent partly because they are difficult to measure, are not well understood, and data often is not available. The more recent the forest policies, legislation and programmes are, however, the more likely the chances that they include explicit objectives to reduce poverty and contribute to economic growth. Table 3 lists the names of the national forest programme and poverty reduction strategy of each country which participated in the study.

Table 3 *National forest programmes and poverty reduction strategies*

	National Forest Programme	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
Kenya	Kenya Forestry Master Plan	Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation
Malawi	National Forestry Programme	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
Namibia	Forestry Strategic Plan	National Development Plan
Niger	Plan Forestier National	La Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté
Nigeria	National Forest Programme	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
Sudan	Forest Sector Review	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Tanzania	National Forestry Programme	National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction (MKUKUTA)
Tunisia	Programme Forestier National	Xème Plan de Développement Économique et Social
Uganda	National Forest Plan	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
Zambia	Zambia Forestry Action Plan	Fifth National Development Plan

In some countries – **Tanzania** for example – national forest programmes were elaborated only after authorities commissioned several studies and analyzed significant amounts of data that shed light on the linkages between forestry and poverty reduction. Information thus obtained includes a better estimate of the number of forestry jobs, mostly in the informal sector; the income that poor households receive from the sale of non-wood forest products and their reliance on this revenue to fill gaps from other sources such as labour and farm produce; the vast amounts of firewood and charcoal consumed each year; and the extent to which poor people rely on access to free forest goods for shelter, food and medicines. Using these findings has helped to raise awareness among policy-makers as well as the public of the importance of forestry to the wider economy.

In almost all countries involved in the study, forest policies and legislation include poverty reduction as an objective which is then incorporated into the national forest programmes. It is therefore not unusual for NFPs to accord priority to subsistence issues, noting that non-wood forest products are often the only source of nutrition for rural communities when food is scarce. Most also acknowledge that forestry provides significant employment and income opportunities outside urban areas. The NFPs also highlight the challenges of achieving sustainable forest management in light of population growth and poverty which give rise to illegal logging, illegal charcoal production, and encroachment for agriculture and settlement.

A few NFPs are explicit about the need to collaborate across sectors, harmonize policies and instruments, and mainstream gender and HIV/AIDS concerns. **Kenya's** latest draft forest policy undertakes to enhance opportunities for women and youth in forest training, education, and forest management. Some frameworks provide the basis for communities to conserve and sustainably use forest resources, including trees on farms, to support their livelihoods and achieve the government's commitment to reduce poverty. Still others call for sharing the benefits and responsibilities of forest management more equitably, reducing human conflicts over grazing rights and wildlife encroachment, and increasing private sector involvement in the development of forest industry and trade.

One country's NFP (**Malawi**) highlights the link between forest degradation and poverty, notes that women and children suffer the most from fuelwood shortages, and confirms a chronic imbalance in the supply and demand of forest products. Yet another (**Tunisia**) places people at the centre of decision-making on matters related to the natural environment where they reside. In this regard, it is the only country in the sample that established a division within the forestry directorate to focus exclusively on the socio-economic development of people living in or near forests – a concrete measure which attests to the government's commitment to improve their livelihoods and sources of income through forestry.

Nigeria's NFP considers agriculture, health, energy and rural development as key sectors but falls short of identifying ways to address cross-cutting issues such as the effect of high petroleum prices on fuelwood consumption. The document attributes the root causes of deforestation to poverty and overpopulation and its guiding principles are based on the multi-functional role of forests and on community participation in the management of resources. However, it only makes scant reference to the country's poverty reduction strategy and is silent on how forestry can contribute to the wider government agenda, including initiatives related to the Millennium Development Goals.

3.3 Coordination mechanisms

Poverty reduction, economic growth, and rural development strategies

Responsibility for processes related to poverty reduction strategies and their alignment with budget exercises varies only slightly among the countries involved in the study. Tasks associated with PRS formulation, implementation, monitoring and reporting are housed either in the ministry of finance, the ministry responsible for economic planning and development, or in planning commissions which report to the head of state. In one case, a permanent secretariat attached to the Prime Minister's office has the lead (**Niger**). In another, a national steering committee of Parliamentary Secretaries, chaired by Cabinet, is in charge (**Zambia**).

In a few countries, there is no central mechanism for stakeholders from different sectors to exchange information and collaborate on poverty issues. Moreover, forestry officials are often absent when plans and strategies which affect the sector are developed and implemented by other jurisdictions – for example, agricultural policies which favour cutting down forests to increase the area to grow crops (whether this course of action is the best option or not) and programmes in such sectors as water, housing, roads, and infrastructure development which at times are ill-conceived.

In cases where national multi-disciplinary groups are established to facilitate collaboration, they still largely focus on sector specific issues. Due to limited financial support, such groups do not meet on a regular basis and links with sub-national and district processes are weak. Overlapping and conflicting mandates also make collaboration across sectors a challenge. In **Zambia**, 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.

The National Planning Commission coordinates the development of high level policies in **Namibia** yet neither it nor the Forestry Department engages in each other's processes to any great extent, other than in the Country Pilot Partnership for Integrated Sustainable Land

Management – a programme which brings together five ministries to address both symptoms and root causes of land degradation in an integrated fashion. As well as being the focal point for policy analysis and planning, the National Planning Commission houses the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Information Systems Centre – departments which play a key role in monitoring policies and initiatives related to poverty.

Along similar lines, the National Planning Commission in **Nigeria** is the lead institution for policy analysis and coordination, serving the President and Executive Council. Among other units, it houses the Secretariat for the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy – the country's national strategy to reduce poverty. The Oversight on Public Expenditure associated with this Strategy is driven by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President. Its mandate is to support government ministries, departments and agencies to improve budgeting and monitoring of programme expenditures against activities related to the Millennium Development Goals which are financed through the Virtual Poverty Fund (a mechanism for spending Paris Club debt relief of approximately US\$1 billion per annum)⁴.

In **Sudan**, the process to develop an interim poverty reduction strategy started in 1999 with the establishment of the Poverty Unit within the Ministry of Finance and National Economy. In 2000, a Presidential Decree established a High Council, chaired by the President, to supervise the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive programme to reduce poverty. The following year, it was replaced by the National Council for the Preparation and Supervision of the poverty reduction strategy. A social development department was created in the Ministry of Finance and National Economy to coordinate policies and the financing of programmes. It was also tasked with formulating an interim poverty reduction strategy (2004-2006) for the 16 states in the North which took into account issues identified in Sudan's Comprehensive National Strategy (1992-2002) and National Strategy for the Agriculture Sector (2003-2027).

Overwhelmed with the urgent need to help victims of the war, including displaced persons, refugees and orphans, the Government of National Unity has only recently been able to engage in a poverty-centred approach that is participatory in nature. As part of the joint assessment and planning process which led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, parties undertook in 2004 to develop a National Poverty Eradication Strategy. The Poverty Eradication Unit in the Ministry of Finance and National Economy is acting as a technical secretariat to ensure that the two interim poverty eradication strategies are elaborated in conjunction with the State Ministry for Finance in Juba.

National forest programmes

Various mechanisms bring stakeholders together to formulate NFPs and forestry reforms: dedicated units, steering committees, advisory groups, and task forces which carry out consultations. When members represent a range of interests and are drawn from key ministries, the private sector and civil society at fairly senior levels, they have been instrumental in integrating forestry into poverty reduction strategies, as in **Tanzania** and **Uganda**, for example. Unfortunately, few countries engage in efforts to sustain effective

⁴ In November 2005, the Paris Club approved a debt relief deal that sought to eliminate \$30 billion of Nigeria's \$36 billion external debt by March 2006. The provisions require that Nigeria first repay roughly \$12 billion in arrears to its bilateral creditors. The country would then be allowed to buy back remaining debt at a discount.

coordination and collaboration. As a result, forestry interventions, including as part of national development, sometimes are planned and executed using a top-down approach rather than through meaningful consultations with stakeholders both outside government and across relevant ministries. In many countries, the absence of national fora to facilitate dialogue on forestry issues and of a cross-sectoral approach to address them is a serious impediment to integrating forestry into broader agendas. **Uganda's** decision to integrate land tribunals into the justice, law and order portfolio sent signals across government and the public that collaboration across several ministries is not only possible but can be managed (Box 1). The new arrangements called for the working group on the environment and natural resources to engage with this portfolio to resolve mutual concerns related to land ownership, access rights and decentralization.

Box 1 *A sector-wide approach: Uganda's justice, law and order sector*

Between 1997 and 2000, several studies and a commission of enquiry revealed the public's dissatisfaction with the delivery of justice, law and order services. Findings also showed that citizens worried about their personal security and about the safety of their property.

The administration of the justice, law and order portfolio was spread among ten ministries, each having a different view of the issues and solutions. Together, they analyzed their institutional mandates, agreed on action to foster closer collaboration and implemented changes.

A committee of ministers from all departments concerned gives overall guidance and support to the sector-wide approach and is informed by a steering committee of permanent secretaries which has links to the donor partners and CSOs participating in the reform process.

A 4-person secretariat coordinates activities and facilitates the flow of information across ministries and management bodies. It is housed in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and, in addition to its other functions, services the ministry's senior managers. A technical committee, consisting of task managers from all institutions, meets weekly and gives direction to subcommittees on commercial justice reform and on criminal justice reform. Five cross-sectoral groups support its work.

Partners meet bi-annually to review progress and discuss sector planning, budgeting, and accountability. They have also jointly developed guidelines which set out working modalities.

Source: Meeting on December 15, 2005 with Senior Technical Advisor of the portfolio and text from LWLE, 2003

When Heads of Government make frequent changes to Cabinet, they can seriously disrupt the planning and delivery of forestry interventions to reduce poverty. In Malawi, the Department of Forestry was subject to government re-organization seven times since 1985, the most recent occurring in May 2007 (Table 4). This latest shift saw all reference to forestry and natural resources dropped from the ministry's new name, despite the fact that the department responsible for forestry is bigger than either energy or mining. The decision sends a negative signal both to Malawians and to the international community about the importance that government accords to the sector.

Table 4 *Place of forestry in the Government of Malawi*

MINISTRY	SECTORS	TIMING
Ministry of Energy and Mining	Energy, Mining and Forestry	May 2007
Ministry of Mines, Energy and Natural Resources	Forestry, Fisheries, Energy, Mines and Environmental Affairs	Jan 2007
Ministry of Mines, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs	Forestry, Fisheries, Environment, Energy, Mines & Geological Surveys	2004
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs	Forestry, Fisheries, Environment, Geological Surveys, Mines, Energy Studies Unit	Jul 1999
Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs	Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs	Mar 1998
Ministry of Natural Resources	Forestry, Fisheries, Parks and Wildlife	Nov 1994
Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources	Forestry, Mines, Parks and Wildlife	1985

In **Namibia**, ten years after the adoption of the Forestry Strategic Plan, coordination mechanisms have yet to be established, including the high level Forest Council which is called for in the *Forest Act*. Forestry's move to a new ministry in 2005 prevents the Directorate from enforcing parts of the legislation because some is specific to the mandate it had under its former ministry. Despite these flawed institutional arrangements, forestry officials do participate in committees which span across sectors to address a range of issues.

Where states have jurisdiction over forest management, NFP processes can serve as a template for reform at lower levels of government but only if state and local authorities feel they are full partners in the their development and implementation. The sheer size of some of the countries, however, constrains participation and coordination not only in forestry but also in other sectors. **Nigeria** is trying to overcome these shortcomings with the establishment of the National Council on Environment whose membership consists of all State Commissioners of Environment. The National Forestry Development Committee, a subsidiary of this council, coordinates the implementation of national policy through participatory processes involving state directors, civil society and other government institutions from across the country. The committee provides a venue for networking and sharing experiences but insufficient funding limits its activities.

Federal-state coordination is a challenge in **Sudan** as well. Although the Forests National Corporation is the focal point for forestry matters, a number of councils provide support, all of which have responsibility for integrating and coordinating policies, plans and programmes related to renewable natural resources at the national level. These same councils also ensure that state plans dealing with natural resources are consistent with federal land use policies. As each one carries out these functions, considerable confusion can result.

In **Tanzania**, various mechanisms were used to formulate the NFP and forestry reforms in a participatory and coordinated manner. To facilitate implementation at national and district levels, a steering committee guided the process and a coordinating unit of 2 full time and 9

part time staff convened several meetings and seminars throughout the country. Under the unit's supervision, four national task forces developed the NFP after extensive consultations – an exercise which led to amending outdated legislation.

Although forestry dimensions are integrated into **Tunisia's** national development plans and the forestry administration is present in the regions through regional agricultural development commissions, implementation of sylvo-pastoral activities are not well coordinated nor are such activities included in the national rural development strategy. This omission, in addition to weak mechanisms to involve rural communities in natural resource management and the absence of partnerships among the institutions concerned with sustainable development, lead to incoherent approaches to programmes and their delivery.

A high level Forest Sector Coordination Committee made up of Permanent Secretaries from seven ministries, the private sector and civil society guided the formulation and implementation of **Uganda's** Forest Policy, Forest Act, National Forest Plan and other forestry reforms. Although no longer active, it was instrumental in integrating forestry into the country's Poverty Eradication Action Plan and contributed significantly to the drafting of the new forest policy. From 1999 to 2004, a well resourced secretariat supported the committee, including its working groups, consultations and participatory processes. Because resources were made available at the time of its inception, the secretariat was able to engage stakeholders from other sectors. However, lack of funding prevents the current Forestry Support Services of the Ministry of Water and Environment from performing these tasks to the same extent.

In **Zambia**, the Forestry Department is building stronger links to other sectors and to more stakeholders through implementation of the Integrated Land Use Assessment – a project which is strengthening the capacity of land use institutions to collect, analyze and disseminate reliable information on forest resources, crops, livestock and socio-economic dimensions. Over the longer term, the initiative aims to establish a land use monitoring system. Because forestry officers at the provincial level act as focal points for environment matters, they are enhancing the sector's presence and influence in decision-making across disciplines. However, as noted earlier, overlapping and conflicting mandates for the management of natural resources within the country impede collaboration among sectors on the planning, development and implementation of policies and programmes.

International partners

Following endorsement of the Paris Declaration in March 2005 by more than one hundred senior officials, international aid is moving away from a project-based approach to direct budget support⁵. This shift is intended to better align and harmonize external assistance as well as to make donors and government recipients more accountable for achieving results, especially those related to poverty reduction. With the introduction of these procedures, donors are consulting more regularly amongst themselves and are developing joint assistance strategies to deliver aid more effectively.

⁵ Direct Budget Support is a joint donor/government arrangement to channel external resources through national budgets using national allocation, procurement and accounting systems to supplement public expenditure on country priorities. Such support can also be provided to specific sectors and it has become a preferred method by some donors and for some governments for providing development assistance.

While the approach may be sound in principle, it is of real concern to those in forestry who believe far less funding will flow to a sector that is already undervalued and underappreciated. The problem is compounded in low forest cover countries, where forestry's influence in shaping the national agenda or accessing donor funding is minimal at best. Mustalahti and White share this view, arguing that many forms of assistance are needed to support forestry and rural development, not only direct budget support. They maintain that projects will remain important instruments for implementing sector strategies and that support to central governments should not divert funding from the target beneficiaries of poverty reduction strategies (IFR, 2007).

Some civil society groups are also worried that the decrease in assistance to forestry projects means that they now must depend on government funding to carry out their activities – a situation which they contend compromises their objectivity.

On a more positive note, 15 development partners in **Kenya** launched a 5-year action plan in September 2007 to support the government's growth agenda, consistent with the country's Economic Recovery Strategy and the Millennium Development Goals. Investments call for initiatives to reduce poverty and, because forestry is a key entry point, aid to the sector has increased significantly. Under this collaborative effort, partners provide technical and financial assistance to support forestry reforms and to make the sector more responsive to social, economic and environmental issues. Consistent with the terms of the Paris Declaration, donors in **Zambia** also are focusing on capacity building and providing general budget support for government priorities outlined in the Fifth National Development Plan.

In other countries, for example **Namibia** and **Tanzania**, many cooperation partners who supported participatory forest management are no longer engaged in the sector – a decision which threatens institutional reform aimed at increasing community involvement. A similar situation arose in **Uganda** when donors redirected support to central agencies, away from forestry reforms. The move all but stopped decentralization despite the Poverty Eradication Action Plan identifying district forestry services and community forests as urgent underfunded priorities.

In **Tanzania**, government and development partners have been adopting a cross-sector approach in forestry and beekeeping since 2004. A technical team initiated a number of activities to harmonize programmes and projects aimed at reducing poverty. Multiple partners also collaborated to develop NFP work plans and budgets.

Through their extensive networks, development partners are in a good position to facilitate the establishment of closer linkages between forestry reforms and wider government anti-corruption measures. Good governance in forestry is critical in the fight against poverty and should be included as an integral component of national forest programmes – the transparent allocation of permits for harvesting timber and other forest products and improved revenue collection, for example.

4 IMPROVING LINKAGES: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 *Capacity of forestry administrations*

Staffing freezes in the public sector, combined with a moratorium on training in all but name, have meant an increasingly incapacitated and aging workforce in all forestry administrations. Often staff is distributed unevenly across regions and lacks the skills required to deliver the range of tasks and interventions that society demands of it, especially in terms of integrated management strategies, cross-sector collaboration, and participatory processes. The problem is compounded by the fact that foresters at the local level often must work with one of the poorest and least educated segments of the population who are ill-prepared to take control of their own development needs without sustained support. Such limitations argue strongly for directing scarce resources to the most urgent issues in a phased approach – for example on a pilot basis in areas selected according to pre-determined criteria such as potential for success, extent to which the target population is organized, and whether the local economy is dynamic, social infrastructures are in place, and participatory forest management plans exist.

Although some of the forestry administrations involved in the study provide effective extension services, **Tunisia** – as noted earlier – is the only one to have established a division concerned exclusively with the socio-economic development of forest-dependent populations. However, weak capacity to address the social dimensions of forestry is a problem **Tunisia** shares with other countries, one that presents a real obstacle to implementing policies and programmes. Administrations are also handicapped by not being decentralized, therefore not able to work as closely with the clients they are mandated to serve.

4.2 *Weak data on forest resources and their range of contributions*

Lack of resources, equipment and staff capacity prevents many countries from conducting national forest inventories on a regular basis. Even when they are able to complete such assessments, the institutional framework and the resources needed to achieve sustainable forest management are often absent. Without up-to-date information on forest utilization and growing stock, the sustainable management of these resources becomes all but impossible. As importantly, the multi-dimensional nature of forestry makes it difficult to measure and collect data on the extent to which the sector contributes to livelihoods and economic growth. These constraints place authorities at a serious disadvantage when negotiating budget allocations with central government agencies in the face of stiff competition for limited resources, including within their own ministry.

Often the figures on which decisions are based are those reported only by forestry offices. They do not take into account the high number of informal transactions nor do they consider the range of services that forests provide. Neither are they packaged in a way that influences the design of PRSs and NFPs. Moreover, data is scattered across different ministries and reporting systems are not in a format that enables national statistics offices to use the information.

The PROFOR Poverty-Forests Linkages Toolkit is one of the instruments being tested to remedy these serious shortcomings (Box 2). During the design phase, several opportunities were identified for establishing forest-poverty linkages in data collection systems in **Tanzania:**

- Because officials did not understand the contributions of forestry to poverty reduction, the sector did not participate in discussions on goal 4 of MKUKUTA to reduce rural income poverty by increasing contributions from wildlife and fisheries. On the basis of evidence produced by the toolkit, the designers of the monitoring data base indicated their willingness to revisit this assumption.
- The Forestry and Beekeeping Division recognized that it could use the toolkit's findings to develop indicators which would make a case for additional funding through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework.
- As a result of data collected using the toolkit, it became much clearer to forestry staff that the Household Budget Survey did not capture the sector's contributions to poverty reduction. They were therefore convinced of the need to lobby for the inclusion of forestry in subsequent questionnaires.

Box 2 *PROFOR Poverty-Forests Linkages Toolkit*

The Program on Forests of the World Bank (PROFOR), in collaboration with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Overseas Development Institute, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and Winrock International, designed a toolkit to measure the extent to which poor households depend on forest goods and services for their livelihoods. The aim is to better quantify the role of forests and trees in reducing poverty and use the data to inform decision-makers in key ministries such as finance, planning, economic development, and local government so they can take these contributions into account when formulating policy and allocating resources.

International teams led by IUCN and the International Institute for Environment and Development tested the toolkit in Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar and Uganda from February 2007 to June 2008 and results will serve to fine-tune it for broader application. In 2 of the 4 sites in Madagascar, preliminary findings show that 40% of the population is poor; non-cash revenues from forest resources represent about 75% of total revenues for all income groups; and the major problems in the sector are fire, drought due to deforestation, and shift-and-burn agriculture. Based on the pilot, villagers were able to discuss a new action plan for forest management with regional officials and are drawing on the toolkit to guide implementation. At the national level, senior officials involved in the country's poverty reduction strategy (Madagascar Action Plan) have expressed appreciation for the way the toolkit is helping to achieve MAP objectives.

Source: PROFOR. 2007. Summary of BNPP-Environment-Mainstreaming Forests in PRSPs: Capacity building to train forest officers in Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar and Uganda Project Mid-Term Report and associated Annexes. Mimeo. World Bank, Washington DC

As per the latest revisions to the United Nations System of National Accounts which date back to 1993, the contributions of forestry to gross domestic product (GDP) are captured only partially and are subsumed under agriculture – a practice that significantly underestimates the sector's importance to economic development and poverty reduction. This fundamental flaw in design means that most countries only record the value of logs, crediting other products and services elsewhere or not at all. However, figures gathered using other means suggest that if the direct and indirect benefits to society of forest goods and services were calculated, they would paint a vastly different picture.

In **Kenya** for example, the forest sector contributes an estimated 1.3% of GDP (CBS, 2004). However, this figure omits the value of energy produced from wood, including the worth of the informal charcoal industry if it were properly regulated – as much as US\$ 550 million per annum by some estimates (ESDA, 2005). Neither are many other transactions taken into account, such as the estimated US\$ 23 million yearly that 60 000 full-time wood carvers generate, in addition to financially supporting close to 400 000 dependents (WRI *et al*, 2007).

Box 3 *CIFOR's Poverty Environment Network*

PhD students and other partners are gathering socio-economic and environmental data from 5 000 to 6 000 households in 200-250 villages in more than 20 countries. The sites cover different regions, forest types, forest tenure regimes, levels of poverty, infrastructure, access to markets, and population density. Because researchers are using comparable definitions, questionnaires and methods, they are building the first global analysis to explain how forests contribute to subsistence and cash income, asset building, security and welfare. In-depth studies and a synthesis of findings will produce concrete recommendations that can be fed into policy processes at national and international levels. The project involves universities and research institutes on all continents and is expected to run until 2010.

The Poverty Environment Network which CIFOR launched in 2004 is another example of a major initiative to collect data on the importance of forests and trees to livelihoods in the tropics (Box 3).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is working with the United Nations Statistics Division to help governments collect and analyze data that more accurately measure their market economy, especially in sectors which are paramount to national development. Statisticians are participating in these discussions but, for the most part, line ministries are not involved. In

Malawi, the National Statistics Office conducted a National Agriculture Census and Livestock which is the most reliable source of statistics on the sector. Results are expected to bring about significant changes – quite possibly amending the contributions of agriculture to GDP. Because forestry officials did not participate in this exercise, they passed up a unique opportunity to better estimate the sector's share of GDP. Working more closely with national statisticians would also increase the chances of capturing better data in economic and household surveys, and of setting up satellite accounts for forestry, as did tourism in many countries. Moreover, the establishment of a national forest accounting system to describe the resource base and track flows would provide a means to calculate the precise contribution of forest products and services to the economy, including in terms of reducing poverty. If pilot tests were conducted, findings could serve to fine-tune the methodology and pave the way for wider application.

As the first country in Africa to undertake resource accounting (early 1990s), **Namibia** was fully aware that excluding the range of forest products in standard accounts weakens planning efforts and drastically underestimates the sector's contributions to sustainable development. Although more recent forest accounts estimate that woodfuel, construction poles, and non-wood forest products add roughly 3% to GDP each year – compared with 4.6% for agriculture – they do not consider other values such as livestock grazing, shade or use of wild fauna in woodlands and savanna. If multiplier effects to the broader economy are considered from activities such as wood cutting, contributions almost double.

The importance of an environmental economics unit in setting policy is highlighted in Box 4. However without additional support to stem high staff turnover, its capacity to conduct further research and policy analysis to improve national accounting is in jeopardy.

Box 4 *An environmental economics unit in Namibia makes the case*

In 1993, the Directorate of Environmental Affairs initiated an economics programme to support environmental policy development within government. Efforts were guided by a technical committee which consisted of the Directorate of Scientific Services, the Directorate of Tourism, the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Department of Water Affairs, the Directorate of Planning, the Namibia Economics Policy Research Unit, the University of Namibia, the Namibia Nature Foundation, the Namibia Community-based Tourism Association, and the World Wildlife Fund-LIFE Programme.

The Environmental Economics Unit provides information and analyses of land use, including the use of wildlife, wild plants, forests, water, fisheries, and the production of crafts, crops and livestock. Models for budget/cost-benefit analysis of resource use were refined. Findings have answered questions on the financial and economic viability of natural resource use, the value of associated activities, and the extent to which land and resources were allocated for these purposes. In the past 12 years, it has published 85 documents about the value, costs, benefits and trends in resource use resulting from different policies.

Accounts developed earlier for the water, fisheries and minerals sectors were upgraded and new accounts were established for energy, forest resources and wildlife. The Natural Resource Accounts supplement the national accounts and provide valuable data for sectors and central government planning purposes. Data from the Natural Resource Accounts, tourism satellite accounts, and the analysis of national economic impacts were used to develop a socio-economic accounting matrix for the country.

The Environmental Economics Unit was able to show that investments in wildlife and other natural resources significantly improved rural livelihoods. It also demonstrated how conservancies* contribute to Namibia's goal of reducing poverty without the need for extensive subsidies that other rural development activities require, such as irrigation schemes. Thus, the unit played an important role in getting legislation passed in 1996 to allow the development of conservancies to manage resources on common property.

* Conservancies are groups of commercial farms or areas of communal land on which landowners or members pool resources to combine farming with the sustainable use of wildlife. They are managed and operated through conservancy committees.

Source: SIDA. 2006. Project to Institutionalise Environmental Economics in the Directorate of Environmental Affairs.

Although recent studies are helping to quantify the value of forest services and are suggesting ways to analyze their full contribution to GDP, more research is needed on the value of services that ecosystems provide – water quality and supply, soil retention and fertility, carbon storage, and conservation of biodiversity, for example.

More research is also needed on the cost of unsustainable forest management such as that conducted in **Nigeria** where deforestation and losses of non-wood forest products in the past 5 decades were estimated to be US\$ 0.8 billion per annum or 1.7% of GDP in 2003. This figure is about the size of the combined federal budget for health and education in 2004 – about US\$1.1 billion (AIAE, 2005). Findings show that, over the past 20 years, deforestation has doubled the real prices of fuelwood in parts of the country, due to increased collection and transportation costs. As remaining forests decline, the study predicts that the cost of further losses will rise significantly above current levels. It also advances that if the population that now depends on fuelwood for cooking was forced to switch to kerosene, the annual price tag

would be US\$ 4.8 to 7.3 billion. This amount, in addition to timber and non-wood forest products values foregone, is equivalent to 6-9.3% of GDP or about US\$ 78 billion in 2005.

4.3 Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems across government

Capacity to monitor and evaluate national forest programmes and poverty reduction strategies is weak in most governments that participated in the study, often limited to tracking specific projects. Information on forestry is collected and reports are generated almost exclusively by and for foresters, without considering the wider needs of society. However, a sound M&E system which not only supports the accounting and planning aspects of forestry but also fills gaps in data to improve national development plans will help to secure broader government buy-in, especially if these systems shed light on how the sector helps to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Where M&E frameworks exist for national forest programmes, they are not always consistent with those used to assess poverty reduction strategies. Moreover, the absence of baseline data on which to set targets and measure progress limits their potential to examine if goals are met; identify obstacles which hinder implementation; and shape future forestry policies and programmes. A well-designed system takes into account not only the targets contained in poverty reduction strategies but also captures relevant activities at the household level.

With regard to monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction strategies, most governments developed indicators using information from national statistics offices and planning units in line ministries which, on occasion, seek input from district and local levels. In most instances however, few PRS indicators are related to the environment and even fewer are specific to forestry – mainly because forestry officials are not widely engaged in their development. The sector's absence in the compilation of regional profiles which focus on poverty, vulnerability, well being, livelihood systems, service delivery and governance at the village level is another cause for concern because these profiles inform local development plans which, in turn, feed into the national agenda.

Box 5 Nature's Benefits in Kenya: an Atlas of Ecosystems and Human Well-being

This atlas uses a new approach to examine the links between ecosystem services and poverty by overlaying geo-referenced statistical information on population and household expenses with spatial data on ecosystems and their services (for example water, trees, wildlife). The result yields a picture of how land, people, and prosperity are related in Kenya. The maps and analyses are an attempt to provide information on the connections among environmental resources – including forests as well as trees on farms and in landscapes – human well-being, and economic expansion. Better knowledge of these linkages can then be used to develop programmes to reduce poverty and design policies to improve water resource management, agriculture production, conservation of biological diversity, and charcoal production.

The atlas represents a first step to stimulate informed dialogue, seek answers to difficult questions, and lay the foundations for effective strategies to reduce poverty in the hardest hit areas of the country, making better use of Kenya's natural resources.

Source: World Resources Institute; Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya; Central Bureau of Statistics Ministry of Planning and National Development, Kenya; and International Livestock Research Institute (2007)

Kenya's Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System provides for timely reporting at both central and district government levels to feed the budget process and assess the effectiveness of programmes. The Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Planning and National Development uses 31 indicators to report on the Economic Recovery Strategy. It draws on information from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, planning units in relevant ministries, and district development officers. Poverty maps which are updated regularly to show changing trends would be more useful if they included better spatial data on forests and trees on farms (Box 5).

As the Economic Recovery Strategy comes to a close and the 2030 Vision for **Kenya** becomes the national framework for future action, in line with new 5-year economic development plans, the Ministry of Planning and National Development is leading efforts to 1) finalize the 2030 Vision, including indicators, and 2) identify flagship projects for implementation in the first 5-year phase. One of the initiatives retained for 2012 under the environment portfolio is rehabilitation of the country's main catchment areas which cover more than 1 million hectares. The Kenya Forest Service, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, thus has an excellent opportunity to highlight the role of forests in providing water for human and livestock use, for agricultural irrigation systems, and for hydroelectric power to one of the most water-stressed countries in the world.

A system to monitor and evaluate the **Malawi** Growth and Development Strategy is in place and the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development convenes quarterly meetings of a steering committee to address implementation issues. Since Government changed its fiscal year to run with the calendar, ministries and their departmental planning units were invited in June 2007 to submit new indicators to assess performance.

In terms of monitoring forestry operations, high turnover in the ministry's planning team has prevented the development of an adequate system but recent progress is encouraging. A memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Improved Forest Management for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (IFMSLP) – funded by the European Commission to enhance governance, service delivery, and multi-stakeholder involvement at the district level – is helping to harmonize monitoring systems. So far, two indicators have been integrated into the Food Security and Nutritional Policy: the percentage of households utilizing planted trees and the percentage of households involved in forest enterprises sourced from land which is under legal arrangements. Other indicators being considered are the percentage of households that adopt irreversible coping mechanisms during food shortages (for example, cutting firewood and burning charcoal), the percentage of households that adopt recommended technologies, including agro-forestry technologies, and the percentage increase in total food production, including under agro-forestry systems.

This formal arrangement could serve as a model for the Department of Forestry to forge a similar alliance with the National Statistics Office to insert forestry questions in welfare monitoring surveys and integrated household surveys in order to demonstrate the sector's importance to the national economy and livelihoods. The National Statistics Office indicated its willingness to collaborate in this regard and to help the Forestry Department to revise its record keeping and reporting system so that data are in a format which statistics officers can use. As in **Kenya**, if the sector misses this opportunity, it will have to wait another five years to build its case, until the next Growth and Development Strategy is prepared.

In **Namibia**, systems to monitor and evaluate the Forestry Strategic Plan, the National Development Plan and the National Poverty Reduction Action Programme are not linked. Thus, collaboration between the Directorate of Forestry and the National Planning Commission is weak. Without a clear indication of who is responsible for various aspects of implementation, entry points for interventions cannot easily be identified. Although the National Planning Commission developed a poverty monitoring strategy, poverty indicators still need to be refined and baseline data collected. At the time of the study, the indicators – none of which are explicit to forestry – were not tied to baseline information nor did they appear to sufficiently capture conditions on the ground.

Despite trees being important to livelihoods, forestry is not a priority even in regions where much of **Namibia**'s forests are found, likely because officials are not well engaged in broader development efforts. Regional Chief Foresters can be instrumental in incorporating forestry into regional plans and the Third National Development Plan. By means of participatory poverty assessments, they can also push to have the views of poor people taken into account when local strategies are formulated and priorities are identified to reduce poverty.

If the Directorate of Forestry worked more closely with the Central Bureau of Statistics, they could formulate indicators that link poverty with the environment and forests, building on the data collected on energy consumption and utilization of forest products which are used in the Environmental Monitoring Indicators Network and the State of Environment Reports.

A system to monitor and evaluate the Forestry Strategic Plan would allow the sector to assess implementation and identify constraints which hinder progress, especially if it outlined the quantitative and qualitative data to be collected, the methods of collection and analysis, and the institutions involved. The system should also capture relevant activities at the household level and take into account the targets and objectives contained in the third National Development Plan and the National Poverty Reduction Action Programme.

Although **Nigeria** has yet to refine its monitoring and evaluation systems, lessons may be learned from the country's education sector (Box 6).

Box 6 *Federal and state efforts to improve M&E in education in Nigeria*

Although the federal government is responsible for primary education, the fact that it transfers resources to states for this purpose promotes co-ordination in the sector, as does the National Council on Education which is supported by a Joint Consultative Committee on Education of federal and state representatives. Both fora recognize the diversity among states, provide venues for reaching consensus, and foster joint implementation of policies. Agreed standards are key factors in improving coordination and evaluation but overlaps between state and federal authorities with regard to monitoring and enforcement remain problematic.

The education sector in Nigeria found that setting standards, establishing monitoring and evaluation arrangements that link policy with implementation, and balancing top-down and bottom-up planning are crucial for effective co-ordination and service delivery. Data collection and analysis as well as regular information flows were also deemed important.

Source: Mokgoro T *et al*, 2005

Sudan does not have an integrated approach to poverty monitoring although the Ministry of Finance and National Economy indicated its intention to develop one. In terms of collecting

data on poverty to prepare an interim strategy, macro-planners faced the same constraints as 20 years earlier – statistics are patchy and information on the South is often omitted. The document borrowed from three national surveys which were carried out for different purposes and at different times: the Household Budget Survey (1992) which is in fact a poverty survey, the Safe Motherhood Survey (1999), and the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (2000). While forestry is absent from these sources, the Forests National Corporation submits data to central government, as do other sectors, which the House of Ministers then publishes in the Annual Statistical Yearbook.

Despite efforts to conduct surveys and inventories, up-to-date information on forest resources is not readily available. In South Sudan, non-governmental organizations generate qualitative information on food security, nutrition, livelihoods and vulnerability but data is context specific and not easily aggregated for use in government decision-making. However, establishment of the Centre for Statistics and Evaluation is improving coordination amongst suppliers and users of information.

If the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in South Sudan teamed up with the Livelihood and Food Security Integrated Analysis Policy Unit and if the Forests National Corporation in the North did likewise with the Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Policy Unit, access to data would be improved and officials would better be able to show forestry's contributions to households and economic growth. The European Union's support to these two policy units focuses on issues of concern to forestry – protection of the most vulnerable; support to smallholder agriculture and rural livelihoods to reduce poverty; sustainable and equitable management of natural resources – so there is much scope for building synergies.

Tanzania's Poverty Monitoring Master Plan and regular use of related indicators are expected to result in a more robust system to measure poverty over the next decade. The approach draws on 4 main sources of information to track the extent to which poor people derive benefits from public expenditures and from government policies and programmes to alleviate poverty: routine administrative data from federal ministries and local governments; national surveys carried out at regular intervals; research on specific themes; and participatory poverty assessments that capture the views of poor people.

The interim poverty reduction strategy utilized 60 indicators to monitor poverty, only 2 of which were related to the environment. The Poverty Eradication Division in the Vice President's office has since developed indicators to shed light on the links between poverty and the environment and intend to use them when reviewing MKUKUTA. Consultations with stakeholders and experiences with poverty monitoring systems elsewhere resulted in new indicators and data sources to measure performance against established criteria. They also revealed weaknesses with baseline information. Of the 11 environment indicators proposed for MKUKUTA, one is specific to forestry: the percentage of households that use alternative sources of energy to wood fuel, including charcoal, for cooking. Linkages would be strengthened if an indicator on firewood were developed and a question were included in the Household Budget Survey on other activities for which fuelwood is utilized such as curing tobacco, burning brick and making brew.

Despite plans to establish databases and monitor forest activities using information generated at different levels and from other sectors, structured reporting on NFP implementation has yet to be developed in **Tanzania**. Data are kept in various systems and not always accessible. In addition, district capacity to collect, store and analyze information varies considerably. Thus,

the Forestry and Beekeeping Division faces significant challenges as it attempts to engage in central efforts to monitor poverty. After 5 years however, the division is making progress in integrating relevant national systems into its own national and district forestry databank.

The Government of **Tunisia** will introduce management by objectives across the federal public service by 2010, a system which allocates budgets based on the achievement of pre-determined goals. The forestry administration is testing this new approach which should make the level of human and financial resources more consistent with the country's development priorities. It should also help to track staff performance in reaching targets and delivering results.

Units were established in the Ministry of Finance to focus on management by objectives and in the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources to monitor implementation. Meetings and training sessions were held to familiarize partners with the scope of the project and with the requirements associated with the new way of doing business. As part of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, the forestry sector defined its objectives and indicators (Table 5). Those related to the socio-economic dimensions are linked to improved living conditions, thus are expected to highlight the contributions of the forest sector in this regard.

Table 5 *Management by objectives in Tunisia's forest administration*

Objectives	Indicators
1. Socio-economic dimensions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ development and protection of forest resources and increase in forest cover ▪ conservation of fragile ecosystems and protection of agricultural land ▪ Improvement of conditions of people living in forest areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in income of individuals living in forest areas ▪ Number of agricultural development groups established and value of market contracts signed with these groups ▪ Change in private investments (temporary employment and concessions) in the sector ▪ Value of forest product exports (cork, pulp and paper, timber, essential oils and other NWFP) ▪ Rate at which livestock needs are filled
2. Technical dimensions - Performance and increase in productivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valuation of wood and non-wood forest products ▪ Sound management of human and financial resources ▪ Rational use of equipment and material ▪ Involvement of people living in forest areas and encouragement of private initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unit cost of production ▪ Operational costs ▪ Cost of maintenance and prevention ▪ Rate of involvement ▪ Number of forest infractions ▪ Average area of forests destroyed by fire ▪ Forest area burned annually
3. Environmental dimensions - Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress in achieving sustainable forest management ▪ Adherence to international principles and standards: protection of agricultural land, biodiversity, quality of life, ecotourism and recreation, pollution, for example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Variation in rate of forest cover ▪ Success rate of planted forests ▪ Percentage of forests under management plans ▪ Percentage of protected areas ▪ Forest area managed for recreation and ecotourism ▪ Animal and plant species threatened with extinction ▪ Quantity of carbon sequestered

Several institutions in **Uganda**, notably the Poverty Monitoring and Analysis Unit in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, are involved in monitoring and evaluating the Poverty Eradication Action Plan. As the name implies, the Unit monitors poverty reduction activities in all sectors and bases national reports on information from participatory poverty assessments, statistical surveys, management information systems, and annual budget framework papers which ministries prepare.

A strategy to monitor poverty and evaluate the impact of interventions contains 33 indicators for which a systematic effort was made to establish baseline data and targets. Two strategic objectives in the Plan's matrix relate to the performance of the forestry sector under *Pillar 2: Enhancing Production, Competitiveness and Incomes*. The relevant outcomes are increased forest cover and improved forest management, and the 3 indicators are percentage of land under forest cover, distance travelled by villagers to sources of firewood, and percentage of forest land under sustainable management plans.

Since the inclusion of forestry in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan, indicators have been developed to assess private sector involvement and the strength of local government. While the document captures priorities of the National Forest Plan, it is silent on the urgent need to build capacity within the Forestry Support Services (formerly Forestry Inspection Division) – the body responsible for formulating and monitoring forest policies, standards and legislation as well as for mobilizing support for the sector nationally. The Poverty Eradication Action Plan also fails to state the measures it will put in place in response to identifying forestry as an urgent short term priority for funding.

Four years after the National Forest Plan was approved, it has neither been monitored nor evaluated, including in terms of its effects on poverty. Moreover, the indicators to monitor and evaluate the seven programme areas are built on the pillars of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan but are no longer consistent with the framework to assess the current version.

The Government of **Zambia** introduced the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and activity-based budgeting to help ministries better plan. It also developed a system to monitor and evaluate the Fifth National Development Plan which it will use to conduct mid-term and final reviews in 2007/08 and 2010/11 respectively. Despite a chapter dedicated to natural resources, of which forestry is part, there is not a single indicator to measure its contributions to poverty reduction. With regard to monitoring and evaluating the Zambia Forestry Action Plan or sustainable forest management more generally, the Forestry Department has no system to inform decision-making, nor does it have sufficient capacity to collect baseline information, set targets, develop monitoring tools or manage databases.

4.4 HIV and AIDS

Without a doubt, the high incidence of HIV and AIDS in parts of Africa is undermining economic growth and national efforts to reduce poverty. Affected families are consumed with looking after the sick and must re-direct scant financial resources to cover medical and funeral expenses. Irreplaceable human capital in the form of knowledge and expertise is being lost, and the pandemic is leaving hundreds of thousands of children and adults destitute. In the case of forestry staff, loss of productive time results in suspension of extension services, decreased revenue collection, and weakened law enforcement – all of which contribute to the over exploitation of resources. In response, countries are establishing national multi-disciplinary

commissions to serve as focal points for designing and implementing HIV and AIDS interventions.

Once considered a problem exclusive to the health sector, issues associated with the disease are now being addressed across ministries. In this regard, governments are mainstreaming action across the public service in much the same way as they integrate gender, governance and the environment into the various components of poverty reduction strategies. Initiatives which reduce HIV transmission among forestry staff and people living in forest-dependent communities and those which improve the quality of life for individuals affected also should be prioritized in national forest programmes: developing better methods of harvesting medicinal plants, targeting assistance to the most needy, conducting awareness campaigns, and researching the linkages between the disease and forestry, for example.

Working with committees which span across sectors will allow forestry officials to highlight how medicines from forests are crucial in alleviating the symptoms of HIV, AIDS, and other illnesses. They can also use these venues for broader purposes which directly benefit staff and forest-dependent communities: to fight stigma and discrimination, promote voluntary testing and counselling, and modify working conditions to minimize risks. By reaching out to build strategic partnerships, mobilize resources, and improve programme coordination, monitoring and evaluation, forestry departments can engage relevant jurisdictions in resolving key issues. In doing so, they will influence decisions other sectors make which affect forest management and raise the profile of forestry, especially in terms of its importance in reducing poverty.

In 2003, the Forestry Research Institute of **Malawi** explored the role of forest resources in households which were affected by chronic adult illness and/or loss of a prime-age adult. Findings indicated that the harvest and sale of forest products were important both in terms of treatment and in mitigating the economic impacts from the death of a breadwinner. During the first stages of HIV infection, 60% of the households relied on forest products to alleviate symptoms. About 17% reported that they harvested and sold forest products to cover medical expenses such as admission fees, medicine, and transport to urban hospitals. The same study reported that after the death of a breadwinner, 23% of households increased the harvesting of forest products both for their own consumption and for sale. Also, the loss of a breadwinner appears to increase reliance on forests in the longer-term: households which experienced the death of a prime-age adult in the previous three years were five times more likely to have increased collection of firewood than those which had not lost a breadwinner. Since forests provide a “free” source of capital, the harvest of additional firewood to sell suggests that households are adopting this strategy to cope with worsening poverty and food insecurity.

In **Namibia**, HIV infection rates are lower in rural areas compared to urban centres but are on the rise. Among people aged 15-24, the estimated number of women living with HIV and AIDS was more than twice that of men. More than 25% of adults were infected in 2005 and rates ran as high as 35% in some regions. A quarter of all infected people are between 25 and 29 years old. Woodlands form an integral part of the livelihood and farming systems in Namibia and poor rural households depend heavily on these resources as their capacity to farm or engage in other coping strategies declines. Charcoal production and the sale of firewood, mushrooms and medicinal plants can be significant sources of off-farm income to mitigate the impacts of health expenses and productivity losses. Since most Namibians rely on traditional medicine, the challenge is to quantify the contributions of forests in this regard and ascertain the extent they help communities already suffering from widespread poverty to cope with HIV and AIDS.

Zambia's Fifth National Development Plan states that the country is one of the worst affected by HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa, with about one million citizens infected. Prevalence among the 15 to 49 age group is estimated at 16 percent. Women are 1.4 times more likely to be infected than men and infection rates among women between the ages of 15 and 24 are 4 times higher than men in the same age group.

The National Aids Council, established in 2002, supports and monitors the country's response to the pandemic and the Ministry of Finance and National Planning allocates money to line ministries to implement programmes in the workplace. While the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources has a committee to address issues related to the disease, no specific mention is made of its impact on forestry nor does the sector have awareness or prevention measures in place. Highlighting the ways in which forests and trees outside forests act as safety nets for victims and their families would increase appreciation of the sector's importance in reducing poverty, improving food security and building a stronger economy.

4.5 Awareness of the importance of forestry to national development and poverty reduction

Because decision makers and the general public have limited access to forestry information, they do not understand the economic, environmental, social and cultural value of forests and trees or appreciate the sector's contributions to poverty reduction. Some countries have made serious efforts to improve understanding and awareness of forestry issues by convening regular stakeholder meetings; organizing fairs to promote forest enterprises; translating research into user-friendly material; making documents available in local languages; and waging campaigns in the media to explain forest legislation, policies and programmes. However, in the absence of structured communication strategies, publicity units within forestry departments, and adequate funding, such activities – when carried out – are normally *ad hoc* and piecemeal.

Electoral campaigns offer excellent opportunities for civil society organizations to lobby political candidates across parties to address key forest issues, including governance, tenure and access rights. Immediately after the formation of a new government or after the renewal of a current administration's term might also be a good time for forestry authorities to urge their minister to increase the visibility of the sector among Cabinet colleagues and other members of Parliament.

In **Kenya** as elsewhere, many communities located in or near forests are some of the poorest in the country. In a number of instances, they believe these resources offer little chance for financial gain and would therefore rather cut them down to grow crops. They further contend that deforestation yields another benefit – the elimination of wildlife and the conflicts that go with it.

Most citizens are not aware that planted forests often are established to reduce logging in natural forests and, in addition to this aspect, provide a myriad of ecological services. With the promulgation of the *Forests Act 2005* and the eventual approval of a forest policy, Kenyans need to be informed of the reforms and how they will affect forest management in the country. Making these documents available in user-friendly format and in local languages will promote greater understanding of the changes, highlight the importance of forests and

trees outside forests for the range of products and services they provide, and publicize ways in which these resources contribute to national development and to all Millennium Development Goals, not only those related to poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

The Forest Sector Review has been guiding institutional reform in North **Sudan** since the eighties and forestry extension which was introduced at that time became the driving force of modern forestry in the country. The Forests National Corporation assists villages to establish community forests as well as to organize committees and associations. It supports women's involvement in woodlots, sets up village nurseries and promotes energy saving programmes. In addition to informing the public of the importance of the sector, including for food security, officials deliver lectures to students, make presentations to a variety of audiences, and use the mass media to raise awareness of the negative impacts of desertification and drought, environmental degradation and unemployment, for example.

The communication strategy for **Tanzania's** National Forestry Programme aims to ensure that all stakeholders have the knowledge and attitudes to play an effective role in the sustainable use and management of forests. It recognizes that successful implementation of NFP requires changes in outlook and behaviour of government, NGOs and rural communities. It also calls for dialogue and collaboration rather than information on an *ad hoc* basis (Media & TFCG, 2004).

As noted in the strategy, information about participatory forest management and the NFP varies considerably between locations. As gatekeepers, village leaders and NGOs can either restrict the flow of information to and from rural communities or use it to improve natural resource management. At the national level, the link between NFP and poverty reduction is not widely recognized, therefore needs to be articulated across sectors in central and local governments. Efforts to influence politicians are particularly important in this regard.

An evaluation of NFP communications in 2003 acknowledged that many initiatives promoted the forest policy but interventions were not strategic. Limited resources forced the termination of these activities so that information and ideas about the policy and NFP did not reach all stakeholders (Juma, 2003). Further, an assessment of **Tanzania's** NFP process revealed that stringent financial constraints and time pressure to consult made it difficult to increase awareness and buy-in at regional and district levels (Geller and Owino, 2002).

The communication strategy for the interim poverty reduction strategy involved intensive consultation. The strategy was reviewed during Poverty Policy Week in 2003 and 2004 as a means to build consensus, broaden ownership, and increase understanding of issues. In contrast to the formulation and launching of the NFP, government led 3 rounds of consultations on the interim poverty reduction strategy and engaged an organization from civil society as a regional convener. Dissemination and sensitization posed a challenge because of the need to translate material for district and village use (URT, 2005).

As a result of concerted communication efforts, **Uganda's** NFP process increased understanding of the role forestry plays in poverty reduction and in the livelihoods of marginalized groups. Politicians, the media, opinion leaders and others who were prepared to demonstrate their commitment to the sector and to the reforms were identified at an early stage and were informed of progress in implementation through regular briefings. Using the findings of a survey that the NFP conducted on awareness of forestry issues, a strategy was developed to inform the public of the linkages with poverty alleviation. Slogans such as "forests to fight poverty" on calendars, newsletters, school newspapers, and bumper stickers

were all part of the effort. NFP also effectively linked up with the publicity campaign for the Participatory Poverty Assessment Programme.

The Forestry Support Services and its partners need to resume and, in some cases, step up efforts to convey forestry's importance to the country, including in terms of reducing poverty. Although lack of hard data continues to be a major constraint, the Service could exert greater influence in decision-making circles if it devoted more time and effort, in collaboration with the National Forestry Authority and civil society, to market the pro-poor and development aspects of forestry to a wider audience, especially politicians.

4.6 Civil society and community participation in forest management

Because of their arm's-length relationship to government, civil society organizations are often seen by the general public as objective third parties whose role is to call authorities to task when implementation of policies, legislation and guidelines on the environment and natural resources falls short of expectations. When they use credible research findings to highlight, for example, the causes and impacts of deforestation, soil erosion, land degradation, poaching and encroachment, they can be especially effective in catching the attention of the media and in getting their voices heard during public consultations. With more support, these groups could be more active in promoting forestry interventions to reduce poverty.

Non-government organizations are increasingly engaging in forestry matters, including advocacy work around the charcoal trade, small enterprise development, livelihoods and illegal activities. They are also drawing attention to the need for the greater participation of women and communities in forest management and can be instrumental in ensuring that poverty reduction and good governance remain core government objectives.

Although the voice of civil society is weak in many countries, much potential exists for it to influence sector reforms and support sustainable forest management. Stakeholders need a forum to exchange information and strengthen collaboration, including on ways to integrate forestry more broadly into national development policies and priorities. They also require assistance to harmonize their data collection and reporting systems with those of government to avoid overlap, duplication and incompatibility. NGOs would better capture the attention and support of cooperation partners if they package their requests in terms of activities which address governance and human rights issues, as well as those which seek to establish baseline data for future monitoring.

In **Kenya**, civil society groups appear to be well organized at the national level. The Forestry Society, the Kenya Forests Working Group, the Forests Action Network, the Kenya Association of Forest Users, and the Green Belt Movement have much potential to champion forestry as a means to reduce poverty and could be more active in searching for solution to pressing issues. If the Kenya Forest Service established closer ties to the Green Belt Movement and the National Council of Women, it could tap their networks to strengthen tree planting efforts, boost the representation of women on forest conservancy committees, and enhance their participation in forest management.

Once the subsidiary legislation on community and private sector involvement in forest management is in place, it will turn **Kenya's** previous policy of exclusion into one that provides for agreements with private interests and community forestry associations, the latter of which make up 40% of each forest conservancy committee and are a key component of

reforms to enhance transparency and accountability. Community forestry associations can enter into two types of agreements with the Kenya Forest Service: one that conserves and uses forests for livelihoods, cultural or religious practices and one that allows members to engage in non-resident cultivation in adjacent forest areas – a system now referred to as the Plantations Establishment for Livelihoods Improvement Scheme. Plots for establishing planted forests are allocated to individuals through a balloting system which gives priority to poor and vulnerable members of the community.

Because of the complexities involved in participatory forest management, the government's move in this direction is creating uncertainty with regard to where, how and if the approach can work. Already, communities are expecting unrestrained access to and use of resources, an attitude which must be tempered through learning, mechanisms to share costs and benefits, feasibility assessments and testing (World Bank, 2007).

Civil society groups have only recently emerged in **Malawi** but are increasingly becoming involved in development work. Although most non-governmental organizations focus on concerns related to the environment and natural resources rather than on forestry *per se*, the Forest Governance Learning Group convenes quarterly to address emerging issues. Members conduct some research and are engaged in advocacy around the charcoal trade, livelihoods, small enterprise development and illegal activities. The Council for Non-governmental Organizations coordinates all NGOs in the country while the Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment is umbrella to those working on the environment and natural resources.

Many stakeholders do not know that the National Forest Policy of **Malawi** (1996) and the National Forestry Programme (2001) call for their increased involvement. While a range of players were consulted when the documents were formulated, the dialogue did not continue after donor funding terminated. However, the Improved Forest Management for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme is attempting to revive regular discussion with NGOs. The agreement which was recently renewed between the Forestry Department and the National Forest Programme Facility presents another opportunity for civil society groups to help shape the national forest agenda.

The formulation of the second National Development Plan and Vision 2030 were the first major attempts in **Namibia** to build policy and consensus through consultation and multiple avenues of information. By contrast, the Forestry Strategic Plan is regarded as a document belonging to the Directorate. Lack of publicity of the strategy and its restricted distribution further limit buy-in from civil society, the private sector and other government departments.

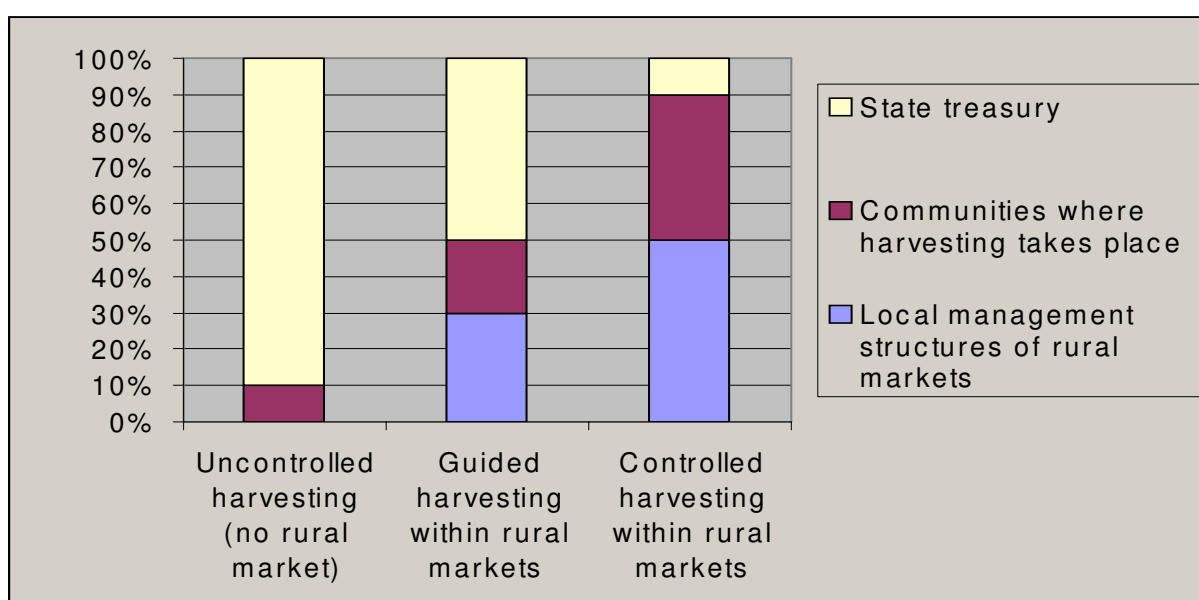
Implementation of community-based forestry has increased awareness of how forests can improve livelihoods, especially when government gives communities exclusive commercial rights. However, the Directorate of Forestry had registered only 13 community forests as of March 2008 even though this approach has been a priority for the last decade. Lack of progress is attributed mainly to inadequate incentives and complex legislation. Plans to harmonize the legal frameworks on which conservancies and community forests are based are high on the political agenda, as is support for community-driven sustainable natural resource management.

In **Niger**, several non-governmental organizations are involved in the management of natural resources, including through programmes and projects which donors fund in the environment

and rural development sectors. However, as in other countries, activities are not inventoried in a common data base so chances of duplication are high. Moreover the absence of a national forum to discuss forest issues limits the sharing of information on lessons learned among the range of stakeholders within the sector and those outside who have a direct interest.

With regard to benefit sharing, **Niger** is perhaps the most advanced of all the countries in the study sample. The legal framework for managing forest resources includes provisions to divide tax revenues from the transport and trade of roundwood among local management structures, communities and the State (Figure 1). The law also grants authorized citizens the right to collect levies, retain the portion owing them, and submit the balance to the national treasury. Moreover, to encourage producers to harvest in areas where forests are more abundant, charges are reduced when they set up operations far from towns. Law 2004-040 of June 2004, in addition to establishing state, community and private forests, involves local communities in the management of state and community forests via rural concessions.

Figure 1 *Division of taxes on the transportation of roundwood in Niger*



Regulation 92-037 of August 1992 not only provides for community forest management by means of rural markets for wood energy but also stipulates how local management structures will divide the revenue they receive from taxes on the transport of roundwood. In the case of guided harvesting, the forest management fund receives 60% of the proceeds while the community development fund is allocated the remaining 40%. This proportion is reversed in areas under controlled harvesting: 40% of returns go to the forest management fund and 60% to the community development fund.

This distribution of taxes represents a real opportunity for local development and poverty reduction, especially since forests are harvested according to management plans. In the area of Torodi, for example, 77 villages which are organized into rural markets generate significant revenue every year. From January 2001 to April 2002, close to US\$500 000 was shared among wood cutters (89.5%), village development funds (4.5%), and managers (6%). Taxes amounted to US\$80 000, of which 35% went to the local management structures, 25% to the community, and 40% to the state treasury (Direction de l'Environnement, 2003). The estimated 1 200 cutters would have received an average of about US\$400 – enough to cover

needs of the family for clothing, food, school fees, baptisms, marriages, and farm implements. Villages used part of the funds they received for infrastructure development – building schools and health clinics, digging wells, and establishing cereal banks. The balance was reinvested into forest restoration for which the forest service provided technical support.

Although civil society in **Nigeria** has not been fully engaged in the federally driven National Forest Programme process, its role in raising public awareness of forestry issues, promoting development in the sector, and holding government accountable for the management of resources is growing. Many organizations are well placed and competent to provide advocacy, information, fund raising and access to wide networks and experiences. However, the vastness of the country and scarce resources limit the potential of civil society groups to maintain these networks and develop joint ventures. The Forestry Association of Nigeria, largely comprised of retired and serving professionals from the public service, is one of the few non-government organizations on the National Development Forestry Committee.

Like many foresters, **Nigeria**'s practitioners are not accustomed to building networks outside the sector. Thus, forestry is not well represented when decisions affecting it are taken by other interests. Involving the range of stakeholders in NFP implementation would help to increase appreciation of the role of forestry in poverty reduction; improve understanding of the rights of poor people; better integrate the sector in national and state strategies to reduce poverty; and provide examples of effective community approaches to forest management. Because participation in the NFP has been limited, local government, including traditional leaders, do not have a sense of ownership in the process.

Frequent drought throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s in **Sudan**, coupled with increased pressure on forests due to an expanding population, prompted government to engage communities in sustainable forest management. A review of the sector in 1986 noted that, although some communities managed forests, trees for communal use were not being planted and resources were deteriorating. The review also noted that several options were feasible to address the problem – the establishment of village woodlots, community and private tree planting, and the setting aside of forests for amenity or recreational purposes.

As a result of vigorous extension and research programmes made possible through external funding, the Forests National Corporation was able to provide technical advice and planting material free of charge and widely publicize the importance of forests to livelihoods and the environment. Community forestry in Northern Sudan is therefore well established and locally-driven. In South Sudan, however, the small cadre of personnel has technical expertise but is not as familiar with the concepts of community forestry. The Forests National Corporation could offer valuable assistance in this area and others, including how to establish forest user groups, create village forest committees, and develop mechanisms to equitably share costs and benefits.

In much the same way as **Tanzania**'s NGOs, academic community and research groups are participating in the MKUKUTA process, forestry stakeholders are engaging in national policy discussions, poverty monitoring, and reviews of the National Forestry Programme (NFP). As a positive example of collaboration, the government commissioned the World Wide Fund for Nature, Hakikazi Catalyst, and the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum to analyze MKUKUTA, assess training needs of specific civil society organizations, and prepare and deliver a training package to them on poverty-environment linkages.

Several communities living in or near forests have signed agreements with district councils or with the Forestry and Beekeeping Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. Under these arrangements, ownership of forest land remains with the government but, depending on the status of the forest reserve and the existence of a management plan, local communities can benefit. The Forestry and Beekeeping Division, civil society and development partners have sponsored joint forest management in catchment forest areas over the past 10 years and evidence shows that the approach is restoring forest quality, improving water discharge, and reducing the incidence of fire. However, its effectiveness in addressing poverty is less obvious.

Although participatory forest management can increase village income, support for the approach among stakeholders varies in **Tanzania**. On the one hand, incentives under the *Forest Act* (2002) are encouraging communities to enter into joint agreements with government and forest condition is improving. On the other hand, many of the forests which the state devolved to local authorities are degraded so the impacts on poverty reduction are unclear (FAO, 2008). In some instances therefore, the cost of joint management appears to outweigh the benefits to the point where alternative non-forest based livelihood strategies are required. Participatory approaches also call for a change in attitude and behaviour of forestry staff, from an enforcement orientation to a mindset that embraces social aspects.

With the establishment of the **Uganda** Forest Sector Working Group in 2001, more than 60 civil society organizations, individuals, academic and research institutions made poverty eradication and good governance core objectives of forestry activities. The working group's involvement in the National Forest Plan highlighted the need for stakeholder participation to address the marginalization of poor people and to overcome difficulties associated with their lack of negotiating power and limited access to resources in central forest reserves. Members of the working group took part in task forces, providing inputs into the business plan of the National Forestry Authority and the *National Forestry and Tree Planting Act* to ensure that reforms addressed poverty issues. The group also participated in discussions on the bill and regulations on transparency and accountability.

In **Zambia**, civil society groups are not yet sufficiently organized to influence sector reforms to any great extent or to engage decision-makers in dialogue and hold them accountable for their actions. In addition to consultations taking place to formulate the Zambia Forestry Action Plan and the National Forest Policy, mechanisms for the agriculture and natural resources sectors have been established to exchange information, raise awareness, and collaborate with other groups. **Zambia** has a network of well established international NGOs which support local priorities and, in this regard, has a solid basis on which to build stronger partnerships.

The Ministry of Finance and National Planning called on key stakeholders from across the country to help develop the Fifth National Development Plan. They then participated in a workshop to review the draft which was subsequently revised and published in June 2006. However, since the government had not yet formally launched the plan at the time the study was conducted, it was too early to determine the extent to which Zambians were aware of its existence or how much they will be involved in implementation.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Poverty reduction and national development are goals which cut across sectors.

The adoption of poverty reduction and economic growth as national goals is sharpening the focus on cross-cutting issues. In response to these two imperatives, countries are instituting more comprehensive approaches to planning and resource allocation. For the most part, governments have adopted the Medium Term Expenditure Framework – a rolling system (often a 3-year cycle) in which Cabinet and central agencies assign budgets based on fiscal targets that have been established in collaboration with line ministries. This new way of doing business is intended to make planning and budgeting processes more transparent and predictable but it is not yet fully operational in most of the countries which took part in the study. Many managers still plan over a 12-month horizon, providing arbitrary estimates for the subsequent 2-year period. Therefore, actions to reduce poverty and achieve national development tend to focus on the short term – a situation which makes continuing support for their implementation unpredictable.

Despite intentions to adopt cross-sectoral approaches when implementing poverty reduction strategies and national development plans, interventions still appear to be sector oriented and sector based even when they address concerns related to the environment, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS, for example. Along the same lines, most stakeholders deal with forestry as a stand-alone entity, notwithstanding the range of values that forests and trees provide in terms of economic, ecological, social, and cultural benefits.

National forest programmes are broader than forestry and more than national in scope.

By virtue of their multi-dimensional and participatory nature, national forest programmes can serve as coherent frameworks for implementing forestry policies and programmes at national, district and local levels. They are also effective mechanisms for collaborating with a wide range of partners on initiatives which originate outside the sector yet are of direct relevance to it, including strategies to reduce poverty and promote economic growth. In this regard, when NFP processes feed into wider deliberations on government priorities and work plans, they can be instrumental in raising the profile and influence of forestry not only among central decision-makers but also at the local level, especially in terms of rural development.

Lack of data on forest and tree resources underestimates their contributions to GDP

Forestry authorities in all countries involved in the study are operating on the basis of outdated inventories, many of which are 50 or more years old. Even when they are able to complete such assessments, weak capacity often precludes the sustainable management of resources. Moreover, the multi-dimensional nature of forestry makes it difficult to collect data and measure the full extent of its contributions to livelihoods and economic growth.

Box 7 *IUCN's Livelihoods and Landscapes Initiative*

The Livelihoods and Landscapes initiative is based on the premise that forests, agriculture and other land uses – in combination – provide most of the needs of rural poor people for income, goods and services. It operates in 11 areas around the world to facilitate discussion among communities, government, NGOs and businesses in order to manage landscapes for diverse and balanced uses, addressing issues such as insecure tenure, lack of access to markets and perverse incentives which encourage land degradation. Through its monitoring system, Livelihoods and Landscapes will:

- capture information on the value of forest assets, their contributions to local economies, and their role in poverty reduction
- increase awareness of the importance of property, land use and access rights for people who depend on forest resources
- examine how forest decisions and policies are made and how they affect livelihoods of poor people
- support new income generating opportunities, including markets for ecosystem services
- promote incentives which curb illegal logging and can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Source: www.iucn.org

The Livelihoods and Landscape initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature is helping to better document the role that forests play in improving the lives of rural poor people (Box 7)

Management plans are developed and implemented using information that contains serious discrepancies – a situation which hinders efforts to curb illegal forest activities and prevents the sector from waging campaigns to inform the public of the many ways that forests and trees support their everyday lives.

The manner in which the 1993 System of National Accounts is structured compounds the problem of unreliable data because it only partially captures the contributions of forestry to GDP which are subsumed under agriculture. This flaw in design means that most countries only record the

value of logs, crediting other products and services elsewhere or not at all. As long as the current system fails to quantify forestry's contributions more accurately, decision-makers will continue to underestimate their importance to social and economic development. The ability to compete fairly with other sectors for scarce resources – for example, agriculture, health and education – will continue to be compromised and forestry will receive resources significantly below levels warranted for some time to come.

Systems to monitor and assess performance are inadequate.

With few exceptions, systems to monitor and assess implementation of poverty reduction strategies or national development plans are not well developed nor do they include indicators to capture the extent forestry helps to achieve stated objectives. Data collection is often *ad hoc* and information systems are neither compatible nor aligned to other government processes such as the Medium Term Expenditure Framework. In the absence of baseline data, it is difficult to set targets and measure the effectiveness of pro-poor policies and programmes. However, some countries are making headway in this regard, moving away from approaches which give priority to specific sectors to ones which are results-based and focus on economic growth, governance, social protection and cross-cutting issues. Systems to track implementation of national forest programmes and assess the effectiveness of interventions also fall short of what is required.

The shift in development assistance to direct budget support is weakening forestry capacity.

Although some experts believe that the shift in development assistance from project to budget support would result in more resources being directed to national forest programmes, funds appear to flow increasingly to central government processes at the expense of those led by line ministries. The move threatens to weaken forestry capacity at all levels, for example to convene stakeholder consultations, engage in discussions across sectors on issues that affect forest management, and to develop joint initiatives in partnership with others to improve livelihoods, promote rural development, and protect the environment. More specifically, the withdrawal of project-based support is hindering efforts to decentralize services to districts and communities where activities have the greatest potential to reduce poverty. The new approach is also of concern to civil society organizations which historically have relied on donor funding to maintain an arm's length relationship with government, a prerequisite when lobbying authorities to take action on critical issues such as access rights to natural resources, land tenure, and illegal forest activities.

Schemes to manage forests through partnership arrangements are yielding mixed results.

Although many countries have legislated joint or community forest management, the absence of mechanisms to equitably share costs and benefits are preventing some communities from entering into formal arrangements with governments. In addition, authorities with vested interests are reluctant to give up control over resources or to share revenues they collect, despite regulations and policies which stipulate otherwise. However, where partnership schemes are well established and community driven, they are restoring forest quality, improving water discharge in catchment areas, and reducing the incidence of fire. The extent to which they reduce poverty is less obvious, partly because many benefits that accrue to poor people are non-monetary and because of the difficulty in measuring the contributions of forest products and services to livelihoods in precise terms.

Collaboration across sectors and with central agencies needs strengthening.

Poverty reduction strategies and longer term fiscal planning horizons are bringing ministries responsible for central processes – finance and economic development, among others – and line ministries to the same table. The cross-sectoral dimensions of wider government agendas are also proving the need for increased dialogue with a range of partners outside government. However, because collaboration and participatory processes generally are time-consuming and can be expensive, countries are struggling to maintain meaningful consultations with stakeholders, including in sectors which have complementary or overlapping mandates.

The inclusion of forestry in poverty reduction strategies does not guarantee more support.

When poverty reduction strategies were first developed, reference to forestry was often absent because authorities did not recognize its potential to improve national and rural economies or its importance in terms of providing other benefits, including environmental, social and cultural. More recent versions are paying greater attention to forestry issues but, contrary to expectations, there is no evidence to suggest that the sector is receiving more funding as a result – even when it is identified as a priority for action.

6 WAY FORWARD

Identify priorities for follow-up and develop action plans.

Based upon the detailed report of the study's findings in each of the ten countries, forestry authorities – in collaboration with other ministries, civil society groups, and international partners – now need to prioritize the follow-up actions proposed and develop implementation strategies. Once completed, these work plans could then serve as a basis for securing additional funding from within and outside government, especially if they include joint initiatives to demonstrate wide ownership. Requests that correspond to fiscal priorities might increase the chances of success: the collection of baseline forestry data, including on transactions in informal markets, the establishment of compatible monitoring and evaluation systems with those used to measure the effectiveness of poverty reduction strategies, and the development of indicators to calculate the part that forestry plays in national economic growth, rural development, and environmental health, for example.

Broaden national forest programmes beyond forestry.

National forest programmes would be more relevant as instruments for achieving poverty reduction goals if, in addition to providing a solid framework for achieving sustainable forest management, they prioritize activities and areas for investment that are specifically pro-poor, especially the development of small and medium forest-based enterprises. By including poverty reduction and livelihood improvements as key objectives, NFPs would strengthen collaboration between forestry authorities and those leading the PRS process to address issues that cut across sectors and directly affect the well-being of poor people and the communities in which they live – environmental health, agricultural productivity, nutrition, food security, to name a few. Using NFPs to engage forestry in wider discussions would align their objectives and activities more closely with core government agendas and thus increase their relevance as instruments to advance country priorities such as rural development and economic growth.

Good governance in forestry is central in the fight against poverty and should be included as an integral component of national forest programmes in much the same way as it is integrated in poverty reduction strategies. Measures that thwart corrupt behaviour include laws which grant secure tenure and access rights, provide for the public disclosure of information on timber harvesting, processing and transportation, and establish participatory processes to detect and prevent illegal forest acts.

Include forestry issues more prominently in poverty reduction strategies.

Poverty reduction strategies would be more effective in attaining national and rural development goals if they acknowledge the critical contributions of forests and trees outside forests to the well-being of the target population and if they accorded higher priority to supporting the sector as an integral part of building a strong and prosperous country.

Box 8 *Environment indicators for Tanzania's MKUKUTA*

Stakeholder consultations and experience with poverty monitoring systems elsewhere resulted in 11 proposed environment indicators to measure aspects of Tanzania's MKUKUTA:

- Proportion of Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments which avoided or mitigated negative impacts
- Percentage of household income in rural areas derived from the sustainable processing and marketing of natural resource products
- Percentage of households able to fetch clean and safe water in under 30 minutes (go, collect, return) from a protected source
- Percentage of households with access to basic sanitation facilities
- Percentage of clean water bodies, based on the 1974 temporary water standards
- Percentage of population living in areas of high risk of environmental disaster
- **Percentage of households using sources of energy, other than wood fuel, for cooking**
- Land area used for natural resource management that is subject to tenure security
- Number of ministries and districts establishing effective environmental units
- Mechanisms for participatory decision-making established and functioning
- Proportion of poor and vulnerable households with legally-enshrined land titles

Central agencies which lead PRS processes, including the formulation of indicators to measure progress in implementation (Box 8), need to encourage the involvement of forestry officials in discussions. It is equally important for forestry officials to make efforts to be more present in deliberations on poverty issues in order to increase political, institutional and financial support for the sector.

Inasmuch as action to reduce poverty must be concerted and involve stakeholders across sectors, sustainable forest management cannot be achieved in isolation. Although not a panacea, some of the key ways for governments to maximize the contributions of forestry to poverty reduction are to make it part of wider strategies for economic and social development; empower forest-dependent people; build entrepreneurial skills; improve governance; and fight corruption. While these last two

aspects fall outside the scope of this study, they are intrinsically linked to the capacity of countries to reach the level of prosperity to which they aspire.

Make collaboration across sectors part of routine forestry business.

Marketing forestry on the basis of its importance to other sectors will increase understanding of the benefits and open up new opportunities for collaboration. Because governments consider agriculture a key engine for growth and a top priority for funding, working more closely with this ministry would promote the development of joint initiatives such as planting trees on farms that not only improve food security for poor people but also offer them alternative sources of income. Working to resolve issues of shared concern with other ministries – land management, rural development, tourism, wildlife, energy, mining, and fisheries, among others – also would minimize the risk that responses conflict with or duplicate measures already in place in some of these jurisdictions.

In the same way as many initiatives now are screened on the basis of their potential impacts on the environment, governments and international partners would do well to assess and fund programmes intended to promote development or reduce poverty on the extent to which they include collaboration across sectors in their design. As a further incentive, governments could also allocate additional funds to ministries which adopt a team approach to problem solving, in recognition that joint efforts are often more resource intensive.

Build evidence through data collection and systems to monitor and evaluate performance.

Systems which not only support the accounting needs of forestry departments but also fill gaps in data to improve national planning will help to secure wider government buy-in, especially if they provide solid information on how the sector helps to reduce poverty and achieve other Millennium Development Goals. Stronger partnerships with national statistics offices – all of which have indicated a willingness to collaborate more closely with forestry officials – will provide credible data to demonstrate the real contributions of the sector to gross domestic product and its importance in reducing poverty. Shedding light on both these aspects, for example by adding questions to routine household surveys by or developing stand-alone questionnaires, will significantly enhance the chances of raising the profile and influence of the sector in discussions with other ministries, including central agencies.

Improve mechanisms for civil society participation.

Although civil society groups are increasingly engaged in government reforms, their voice is weak in many countries, partly because they have little capacity to participate meaningfully in discussions and partly because consultations often are carried out on a sporadic basis in response to breaking issues or the need to engage in specific tasks of limited duration. By the same token, many governments do not fully understand or recognize the positive role that civil society can play in achieving sustainable forest management. Public administrations not only need to build expertise so they can work more effectively with stakeholders but they also need to provide incentives, including financial, to make public-private collaboration a matter of routine.

Non-government organizations need to better coordinate their support to sustainable forest management by building stronger networks to exchange information and experiences at national, regional and local levels. They also need to harmonize their data collection and reporting systems with those of government to avoid duplication and incompatibility. National fora to facilitate dialogue and develop joint work programmes in these and other areas of common concern would strengthen forestry interventions to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.

Raise awareness of the full range of benefits that forests and trees provide.

Because the importance of forestry to poverty reduction and national development are not well recognized or understood, publicity campaigns would raise awareness of the many ways the sector contributes to these goals (Box 9). The media should also be used to inform individuals and communities of their rights and responsibilities in terms of tenure, access, and participation in forest management. The distribution of simplified and user-friendly versions of policies, legislation and programmes are excellent examples of how communications can be used to make the link between forestry and efforts to reduce poverty, increase food security, and mitigate the hardships of people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS. Although lack of data continues to be a major constraint, the use of slogans such as “forests to fight poverty” on calendars, newsletters, school newspapers, and bumper stickers have shown to be effective in marketing the pro-poor and development aspects of forestry to a wider audience, including politicians.

Box 9 *Making the most of the media in North Sudan*

Forests and trees outside forests contribute significantly to food security and poverty alleviation in Sudan by providing many edible goods, creating jobs and generating income from the sale of products. However, interest and investment in the sector has been low because its importance to livelihoods is not well recognized and its contribution to the economy is difficult to assess. As a result, an estimated 1 million hectares of forests are lost every year.

The National Forest Programme Facility therefore engaged a firm which specializes in public relations to launch a campaign to encourage foresters, decision-makers, civil society and the general public to give higher priority to forestry programmes in Sudan.

Field trips were organized for twenty-two journalists from major newspapers in Khartoum to show forestry in action and to encourage discussion of sector issues with the local people and forestry officials. As well, media officers in forestry agencies were trained on ways to use the media to help achieve their objectives. Interaction among the parties sparked an active debate in the press which featured more than fifty articles, interviews, reports and advertisements on various subjects. In addition, 1 000 brochures, 500 posters and 1 000 stickers were printed, disseminated and posted in prominent areas in Khartoum and at entry points to important forests.

The activities are expected to change attitudes towards forestry at all levels of decision-making and help to develop national consensus on how to address issues relevant to forests and trees.

Source: Press Release on Teeba Press Corporation

Continue development assistance to projects on a selective basis.

The shift in development assistance away from a project-based approach to direct budget support is of real concern to those who believe far less funding will flow to forestry as a result. Because the sector is already under resourced, many forms of assistance are needed if it is to play more than a marginal role in improving livelihoods and promoting economic growth. It therefore will be important that international support to central government processes does not divert funding from the target beneficiaries of poverty reduction strategies but that partners continue to finance projects, perhaps on a more selective basis, for making critical interventions. They should also make more effort to commit and make assistance available over longer periods. Experience shows that doing so enables countries to better plan their strategic interventions and achieve greater progress.

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