Results and Message to Policy Makers

International Knowledge-sharing Workshop

Kigali, Rwanda 26 -27 July 2016

Honorable Ministers; Excellencies; Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

The German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) has entrusted the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), FAO and Wageningen University with organizing an international knowledge-sharing workshop on “Forest Landscape Restoration and Global Change: From Policy to Practice”, to provide inputs into the High-level Bonn Challenge Ministerial Roundtable in Rwanda.

The two-day event was organised in partnership with MINIRENA and the cross-sectoral Task Force for agriculture and natural resources with contributions from IUCN, WRI, CIFOR and various research institutions in the region. It brought together more than 60 experts from over 10 countries in Africa and overseas.

Our overall aim was to support political commitments with knowledge and expertise on the actual implementation of FLR.

We heard from the high-level segment that political commitments need to be complemented with expertise and implementation on the ground. Therefore, we sought to:

1. Share and discuss lessons from current state of the art scientific and technical knowledge on FLR both at global and regional scales;
2. Connect FLR experts in the region and further stimulate exchanges of information, thus providing feedback into the Bonn Challenge and AFR100 policy initiatives;
3. Discuss challenges of current land management across the region and impediments to sustainable land management and ecosystem functionality;
4. And finally, to develop a plan of action in support of continuous sub-regional learning, sharing of experiences and FLR practice improvements.

To this end, we covered a wide spectrum of issues including participatory planning, governance, institutional arrangements, regulatory frameworks, capacity development, market and finance mechanisms, as well as technical aspects of FLR operations.

We welcome the opportunity to share results derived from the workshop which include policy making, for which we seek your support. The key results of our workshop are as follows:
1. Major efforts are needed to further develop approaches and mechanisms for FLR implementation on the ground, so that real and measurable changes in the landscape can be realised and the required resources mobilized. There is a competent scientific and technical community across the region that has experience in managing land and implementing restoration that should be tapped into.

2. We recognise that FLR is a long term process and therefore requires adaptive management which needs appropriate governance, especially to reconcile potential conflicts between stakeholders.

3. Monitoring FLR is essential to learn from practice, improve and scale up approaches, and communicate results. This requires commitment to avail data and resources. Specifically, objectives and indicators for FLR should relate to social and ecological aspects given their centrality in FLR.

4. FLR provides an opportunity for promoting diversity in the landscape, innovative landscape management, harboring novel technical approaches, particularly concerning planting designs, protection and management approaches as well as business models, with high environmental, social and economic returns. Small scale efforts in the region which have shown success can and should be a source of learning and represent opportunities for scaling up.

5. There is no “one size fit all” training for FLR implementation; various levels of stakeholders need to learn about FLR at conceptual, strategic and operational levels. There are opportunities for developing integrated curricula for FLR implementation.

6. More often than not FLR can affect current business models and practices as well as traditional lifestyles, and thus FLR approaches require gradual, careful and participatory transformation if such changes are to be sustainable.

7. FLR can be widely promoted through existing extension and education systems such as farmer field schools (FFS) and other institutions, including agricultural extension systems, across the region (for example ensuring quality and certified planting material).

8. We emphasise the critical role of people in the restoration process and its sustainability, and therefore there is a need to allow sufficient time to the FLR process to ensure adequate participation of stakeholders and ownership at all scales, in particular at community level.

9. We recognise the important role of clear and secure tenure and rights to support FLR implementation. In particular, community rights – including use rights - enable people to invest in land.

10. We recommend the harmonization of policies across sectors, not only at the national level but also at the decentralized level. Adopting integrated policy frameworks will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources (e.g. seed and planting stocks), across the region.

11. We recognised the need to endorse, facilitate or amend where necessary inter-administrative structures/fora to champion FLR transboundary issues. There is a
need to assess and remove **obstructive rules and regulations** (e.g. that may discourage farmers from planting trees on their land).

12. **Financial mechanisms are important to incentivize restoration.** They include reducing interest rates of loans, tax-based incentives and competitive rewards; mainstreaming PES schemes in particular through cooperatives, and encouraging the private sector to play its role responsibly.

13. **Knowledge sharing and capacity development should be promoted across the region notably by embedding it into the AFR100 strategy** that presents a great opportunity for knowledge sharing across the African region.

Finally, on the half of the co-organising partners of the knowledge-sharing workshop (IUFRO, FAO and Wageningen University), I would like to extend my gratitude to the Minister of Natural Resources Rwanda for supporting this workshop on FLR implementation. The partners are ready to further join the efforts to support FLR for achieving a lasting positive impact on the landscape.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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