Map 12.1 Forest cover in Africa (percent of land area) and total forest area per country (countries over 1 000 000 ha) (Data: FAO FAOSTAT 2005; map designed by Samuel Chopo)
12 From Poverty to Prosperity: Harnessing the Wealth of Africa’s Forests

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Convening lead author: Jennifer Clare Mohamed-Katerere

Abstract: Africa is a continent with tremendous potential. Its forests are a vast source of goods and services, which can be used to generate much needed wealth. This chapter examines trends and drivers affecting the prospect of moving from poverty to prosperity. Supporting the informal sector and developing entrepreneurship are critical for maximizing opportunities. Local people’s control and access over forests and other natural resources is central to improving their livelihoods. This remains true despite the trend towards decentralization. Radical overhauling of law, policy, and practice is necessary if local people are to capture the benefits of SFM. Whilst the lack of capacity is a challenge to SFM, extra-sectoral constraints such as poor infrastructure and inadequate access to markets and finance stifle any meaningful forest-based wealth creation. Several factors, including health, undercuts SFM. Urban-rural-urban migration is placing new demands on forests, but also creating market opportunities for forest goods and services.

Keywords: Forests; forest wealth; rights; equity; governance; capacity building; HIV/AIDS; deforestation; local people; poverty; Africa.

12.1 Introduction

Africa has embarked on a new path of self-defined development with a stronger focus on governance and political reassertion, as it seeks to break the stranglehold of global economic and power inequalities. The challenge is not just to arrest growing poverty but also to create a path of prosperity. Africa must build on the progress it has made in the last few years. In 2003, it achieved a growth rate of 3.7%, the highest in the last four years and significantly higher than the 2.9% achieved in 2002 (AfDB 2004). Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) must grow an average 7% per year to reduce poverty by half by 2015 (AfDB 2004). The relationships between forests, people, and growth must be redefined to establish a role for forests in the African transition. This requires understanding Africa’s forest resources and the natural systems of which they are part, as well as Africa’s past, priorities, values, and ambitions. It underscores the need to re-define the science-policy interface to respond more effectively to Africa’s challenges.

Several fundamental paradigm shifts are taking place, which have implications for policy, management, economic strategies, and research. Key drivers include externally driven economic development, globalisation, a problematic science-policy nexus, a policy and governance regime that excludes local perceptions about framing problems and defining solutions, population growth, under-performing economies, and ill health. These crosscutting factors shape livelihood options, forestry development priorities, understanding of environmental services, investment, trade, and forest conservation. In addition, these factors play out in complex and sometimes contradictory ways; for example, globalisation exacerbates poverty while simultaneously creating new opportunities.

The last half century has seen various foreign driven interventions to address poverty and development. Overall, these have intensified Africa’s problems by creating net outflows of economic and social capital as well as governance systems that protect the self-interest of foreign governments, donors, international organisations and, sadly, African elites. The positive side of this is that Africans are becoming more forceful and strategic in their demands for leadership that can drive a truly home grown development agenda and seek appropriate support from international partners. Greater transparency and
accountability from partners, as well as from African governments, are seen as crucial. There has been a marked surge in civil society organisations active in rights and development areas.

12.2 Overview of Forest Sector

FAO (2003a) estimates total forest cover at 649.9 million ha (see Table 1); this represents 21.8% of Africa’s total land area and 16.8% of global forest cover. Total forest area in SSA in 1990 was 29.5%, and in 2000 it was 27.3% of total land area (World Bank 2004).

Variable growing conditions lead to uneven forest distribution and considerable differences in the extent and type of forests (see Map 12.1). North and West Africa have only 7.2% and 14.3% respectively of their land under forests. In contrast, 44% of Central Africa’s land is forested; this accounts for 37% of Africa’s forests (FAO 2003a).

Natural forests make up 99% of total forest cover. The area of natural forests under sustainable management, though increasing, is negligible. Historically, management focussed on protected forests; these constitute about 5% of Africa’s forest cover (FAO 2003a). In addition, many protected areas set aside for wildlife management are forest ecosystems; protected areas cover about 6.6% of total land area or 207 million ha.

Africa’s estimated 8 million ha of plantations, of which 50% are found in Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Sudan, account for just 4.3% of the global total (FAO 2003a). Limitations to expansion include low investment due to inadequate incentives, and poor security of tenure. Several countries have legislative incentives to promote investment in plantations. Benin, Kenya, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe all give tax exemptions. Proposed laws in Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia will introduce new incentives.

East Africa

Forest cover in this region is estimated at 85.6 million ha, which represents about 21% of its total land area (FAO 2003b). Forest distribution is uneven, with Djibouti and Ethiopia having very little while Tanzania boasts 44% of its land area under forest cover.

East Africa has several forest types. Savannah woodland and thicket are the most widespread, constituting 63% of forests and supporting the rich wildlife that sustains a vibrant tourist industry. *Miombo* woodlands amount to 20% of forests and provide diverse products, such as fuelwood, thatching grass, medicines, and food, as well as environmental services. The *montane* forest of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania is 12.8% of forest cover (FAO 2003b).

Growing demand for forests products, such as wood fuel, and the expansion of agricultural land has accelerated forest lost. Between 1990 and 2000, the rate of deforestation was about 10% with the highest rates recorded in Uganda (FAO 2000).

Despite civil unrest, wars and limited capacity in forest departments several countries, including Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar, have taken steps towards decentralising forest management and establishing some form of community management. Additionally Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Tanzania recognise some pastoral tenure rights.

Southern Africa

This region is generally dry with uneven rain distribution. The wetter northern parts support more closed canopy forest while the drier countries are predominantly woodlands and savannah (UNEP 2002a). Forest cover is about 185.3 million ha, which amounts to 31% of the total land area; just less than 2.2 million ha are plantations (FAO 2000).

Indigenous forests management varies across the region and investment in it is generally limited. In countries with commercial species, such as Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, the forests have been overexploited since the colonial period. Agricultural expansion is a serious threat to the region’s forests. Since 1997 many countries including Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Malawi have adopted new forest laws (Mohamed-Katerere and Matose 2002). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has adopted a forest protocol that recognises the value of transboundary approaches.

The region’s huge wildlife resource supports a vibrant eco-tourism industry; this promotes forest conservation in state and private areas. Following the success of Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas Management for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in the 1980s, several countries, including Botswana, Mozambique, and Namibia, adopted policies to empower communities to manage and benefit from wild resources. All of the above initiatives have had some success. In addition to achieving community

### Table 1. Forest cover by region (FAO 2003a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Land Area (million ha)</th>
<th>Forest Area (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>941.4</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Africa</td>
<td>411.1</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>591.1</td>
<td>131.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
<td>551.5</td>
<td>240.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>505.3</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Africa</td>
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<td>649.9</td>
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*Note: Table data is from FAO (2003a)*

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benefits, they also demonstrated recovery of wildlife. These initiatives were the inspiration for developing participatory SFM in Lesotho, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana; projects include managing for fuelwood, reforestation, and benefit sharing. The skewed land and natural resource tenure regime inherited from colonialism continues to constrain effective community forest management and equitable forest industry development.

The high incidence of HIV/AIDS – Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa, and Zimbabwe are severely affected (see Table 3) – has significant impacts on forestry.

Central Africa

Central Africa is an important forested region with about 45.5% of its land, 240.7 million ha, under natural forest (FAO 2003c). It contains the largest remaining contiguous expanse of moist tropical forest on the African continent; this is the world’s second largest tropical forest after the Amazon forest. It stretches across Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and a small part of the Central African Republic (CAR). The DRC contains about 56% of the region’s forest and 20% of total forest cover in Africa. Gabon is Africa’s most forested country with 85% forest cover.

Forest use is diverse and includes timber and non-timber forest products. Harvesting varies from low impact household collection to high-intensity commercial logging. More than 70% of the population is rural. With the exception of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, Central African countries are among the poorest in the world (FAO 2000). They also have the lowest population densities (apart from Rwanda and Burundi) in Africa (FAO 2003a). The region’s forests abound in biodiversity, which if protected could help strengthen national economies.

Forest resource information, though improving, remains poor. Most inventories cover only part of the productive forests (Cameroon, the Congo, Gabon, Rwanda, and the CAR) and SFM planning is negligible (FAO 2003c). Recently some countries (Cameroon, Gabon, and DRC) have made efforts towards adopting forest strategies and action plans.

The Congo Basin countries have weak forest legislation due to unfavourable technical, financial, and institutional conditions. In some countries, corruption and weak law enforcement make it difficult to control illegal logging. The conflicts in the DRC and Great Lakes Region (Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda) hamper effective management and deter investment in the forests. In the DRC, the Security Council found that over 100 private companies, foreign and multinational, were involved in illegal extraction (United Nations Security Council 2002). These conflicts have displaced hundreds of thousands of people who have destroyed forests through settlement, uncontrolled logging, and fire.

Throughout the region, civil society organisations are weak and there has been no significant shift to community or decentralised management. Cameroon’s forest law recognises the right of communities to exploit high value timber resources (Brown et al. 2002) and provides for a 10% share in tax revenue (Fombe 2001). However, the success of these decentralised forest initiatives is disputed (see Box 12.4).

In Rwanda, local communities benefit from tourist revenues in the Ngungwe Forest Reserve.

West Africa

West Africa has a total area of 72 million ha or 14% of its land area under forests. For generations farmers have retained, nurtured, protected, and planted trees on their land for a variety of purposes (Chouin 2002). These and other wooded lands amount to nearly 44 million ha (FAO 2003d). Forest cover varies greatly between countries. Guinea-Bissau has about 60% of its land under forests whereas Niger has only about 1%.

The region can be broadly divided into two ecological zones, the dry and humid zones. The humid zone stretches across nine countries from Guinea all the way to southern Nigeria. The dry zone is essentially the Sahelian belt stretching across Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Cape Verde; it is characterised by low rainfall and a dry season of six to seven months. Although accurate data is not available, the division is roughly 60% of forest and woodland in the humid zone and 40% in the dry zone.

Dry West Africa

Most of West Africa’s protected areas are in the arid zones (FAO 2003d). Plantations are mainly for non-industrial use, except in Senegal. Many are established to halt or reverse desertification, the main ecological problem (FAO 2000), and to stabilise coastal dunes.

For most countries forest knowledge and information are dated and inadequate to support SFM. Burkina Faso last carried out a national level evaluation of its forest resources during the 1990s. Forest resource information in Mauritania and Niger are based on estimates. Insufficient financial resources undermine the implementation of forest policy reforms. In general, forestry programs are poorly funded. Private sector investment is at its lowest ebb.

Participatory forest management models developed in the 1970s and 1980s in the Sahelian belt, following global research and development trends, focussed on tree-planting to counter the perceived
fuelwood crisis. In the 1990s, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) led to a focus on decentralisation. Decentralisation was driven mainly by the desire of governments and donors to improve management, rather than by concern about restoring rights to local people. Today, most countries have embarked on some form of decentralisation and enacted new laws and policies to support this. In Mali, Burkina Faso, and Senegal decentralisation initiatives have focussed on fuelwood management (Amanor 2003).

In most of these projects, government forest services continue to play a central role. The Gambia has relatively well developed initiatives supporting community management, dating from the 1990s. These include pilot projects in several national parks and state forests (Alden Wily 2002).

**Humid West Africa**

Although these humid forests are less diverse than those of Central Africa, and endemism is relatively low (Sayer et al. 1996), species diversity far surpasses that of the dry zone. Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria are among the 50 most bio-diverse countries (WCMC 1994).

This region’s forests are highly fragmented with two thirds classified as open (FAO 2003d). In Ghana, of the total 6 million ha of forest, only 1.6 million ha are closed; in Nigeria, the situation is worse, with less than 1 million ha of the total 13.5 million ha of forest remaining closed. Deforestation is high; total forest loss from 1990–2000 was over a million ha (FAO 2003d). These high losses are caused by conversion of land to agriculture, logging, mining, and infrastructure development. Over 70% of the population is engaged in agriculture. Additionally, conflict around tenure undercut local rights and thus promotes deforestation. In Ghana timber, by virtue of a 1962 law, is considered the property of the chief who exercises authority in the area. Forest concessionaires may harvest timber on farms without compensating farmers; instead, royalties are paid to chiefs and the district council. This has led to farmers destroying trees on their farms (Brown 1999; Amanor 2003). Public and private sector investment is inadequate to support SFM. In Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire, this has contributed to the conversion of natural forests into plantations of exotic and indigenous species, and in particular tree crops such as cocoa, coffee, palm oil, and rubber. Public information on investment opportunities and potential in the NTFP sector has been inadequate.

There is inadequate information on management and planning in the natural forests; FAO (2003d) suggests that the area under planning is negligible. Only 19% of Cote d’Ivoire’s and 6% of Nigeria’s forests are said to be under sustainable management (FAO 2000).

There has been a policy shift towards decentralisation. Ghana, Togo, Guinea, Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, and Nigeria all have some form of community involvement, ranging from consultative mechanisms to benefit sharing. However, these initiatives remain weak. In several countries, there is an inadequate supporting legal framework (FAO 2003d), while in others, like Ghana, there is a disjuncture between law and practice. Ghana’s 1994 forest policy creates a framework for participatory management and recognises the importance of farmers in the forest industry; however, tenure law reform to support this policy was resisted mainly because of the commercial value of these forests. As a compromise, the Social Responsibility Agreement commits concessionaires to pay communities 5% of stumpage value. Throughout the region, the high value of timber militates against governments’ devolving more authority to communities. In some areas, multi-layered tenure systems make it difficult to establish community and decentralised management regimes. Countries face the challenge of having to reconcile rights of migratory people with those of fixed dwellers.

**North Africa**

This region is dominated by desert and semi-desert conditions. Forests and woodlands are restricted to coastal areas of western Mediterranean countries, the Atlas Mountains and the tropical zone that extends into Sudan (UNEP 2002a). These cover an estimated 68 million ha, about 7% of the total land area. Only in Sudan does forestry contribute significantly to the national economy; its contribution has been estimated at 10% (UNEP 2002a). A large part of the region’s industrial wood requirements are met through imports, primarily from Europe.

Sudan’s forest loss, at the rate of 1.4% per annum, is one of the highest in Africa (FAO 2003e). In all the other countries in the region, except Mauritania, there has been successful re-afforestation and afforestation. For example, 202,000 ha of trees have been planted in Tunisia since 1956. Algeria has planted 718,000 ha of trees (FAO 2003e).

In North Africa, trees’ environmental functions tend to be more important than their productive functions, due to serious water stress and soil erosion. Southern Sudan has a long history of forest management and together with central Sudan it has the highest extent of productive forest (FAO 2003e). However, effective management has been seriously undermined by war.

**12.3 Economic, Social and Environmental Values of Forests**

The way forests are valued influences the policies and priorities of governments, foreign and local investors, and donors as well as choices about how to use forest resources and forestland. Value is affected
by biophysical factors such as forest type, extent and species; economic factors including markets and associated benefits and costs, livelihood opportunities, and income; social relations including land tenure, government-civil society relations, and institutional arrangements; and cultural considerations. Time and space are undoubtedly important considerations – proximity and prevailing conditions, particularly the lack of options, determine priorities and approaches.

Forests’ commercial value as reflected in GDP is low. However, the formal forest sector is important; it contributes to employment and generates wood products. The complex and diverse role forests play in local livelihoods is poorly understood and accounted for. Economic methodologies, such as those that attribute a monetary value per unit area, tend to neglect the local use regimes and values. In particular periodic consumption, such as building or nutrition, may not be taken into account. Additionally, environmental services are hard to quantify and are thus often inadequately taken into account. Income provides some indication of the significance of forest resources; forest based activities such as energy, grazing, and NTFP-harvesting contribute 15 to 35% of all household income in southern Africa (Cavendish 1997; Shackleton and Shackleton 2000). In Tanzania about 58% of farmers’ cash income is derived from honey, fuelwood, and wild fruits and at least 60% of people obtain some of their subsistence from forests (Mohamed-Katerere and Matose 2002).

Many poor people rely on forests for food and medicine. With the feminisation of poverty, women and children can be expected to rely more heavily on forest resources. In many countries, children gather and eat wild fruits; these are an important source of nutrients. Forest dependent people obtain a significant proportion of their protein from the forests. In some countries, this dependency is even more widespread. In the DRC and Liberia about 75% of the population eat wild meat. Wild meat trade in Liberia has an estimated value of USD 24 million (Hoyt 2004). Forests’ complementary nutritional role is particularly important when agricultural production is insufficient due to recurring droughts, civil strife, HIV, and pests. In South Africa, local medicinal plant trade is about 19.5 thousand tonnes with a value of USD 35 million; secondary uses generate about USD 30 billion. In Burkina Faso, the Niger, Nigeria, and Ghana more than 80% of the population use medicinal plants; and over 40% of the urban population are dependent on them (FAO 2003d). As the noose of poverty tightens, communities are likely to turn increasingly to forests for food and medicines.

Ninety one percent of Africa’s timber is used for energy. It is the main energy source for 70% of the population and constitutes about 65% of all energy used (African Union et al. 2003). In many areas traditional management systems, which prohibited the use of live wood, have broken down. Population growth and continuing poverty are likely to increase the demand for wood fuel. Consequently, it is important to promote sustainable fuelwood-harvesting methods, investment in other forms of energy, and the modernisation of the wood energy sector.

Although forests have many benefits, they may in certain circumstances pose threats to neighbouring communities, particularly by increasing the risk of wild animals raiding crops and of diseases, such as yellow fever and sleeping sickness (Shell and Wunder 2002).

### Growing Forest Loss

Between 1990 and 2000, Africa lost about 52 million ha of forest annually; this is about 56% of the global reduction in forest cover and is the highest rate in the world (FAO 2003a). There is considerable variation in the extent of forest loss between different regions (see Table 2) as well as between countries. In some countries, including Algeria, Egypt, and Libya, forest cover has increased. Forest loss is highest in Zambia, the DRC, and Sudan.

Ironically both “high” and “low” forest values contribute to forest loss and degradation. Several factors are pertinent. First, the high value placed on indigenous hardwoods by an extractive timber sector, which focuses on primary production, promotes indiscriminate harvesting. Second, poor agricultural yields, due to droughts and low investments in agricultural technologies, contribute to extensification of agriculture. Ten years ago, SSA’s forestland was shrinking by 2.9 million ha per year while cropland was expanding by a million ha per year (Cleaver and Schreiber 1994 cited in Hill et al. 2000). It is significant that opportunities for agricultural loans exceed those for small-scale forest enterprises. Third, the instability of war makes management, monitoring, and enforcement difficult as is evident from the high levels of plundering in the DRC and Liberia. Proceeds from illegal logging have been used to finance warring factions. The high number of internally displaced people, close to 7.3 million (FAO 2003b), creates locally concentrated demand on forest resources.

#### Table 2. Forest cover changes in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Forest cover 1990</th>
<th>Forest cover 2000</th>
<th>Annual change</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(million ha)</td>
<td>(million ha)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
</tr>
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<td>East Africa</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>199</td>
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<td>Central Africa</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>241</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Africa</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
</tr>
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</table>
and militates against investment in forest management. Fourth, the SAPs of the 80s and 90s resulted in job cuts, forcing the unemployed to migrate to rural areas and clear new land for agriculture. Fifth, institutional and managerial shortcomings result in failure to prevent illegal logging and to adequately regulate the forest industry. Sixth, growing urbanisation and lack of investment in alternative energy forms increase demand for fuelwood and charcoal. By 2030, urban dwellers are predicted to reach 785 million (54.5% of 1406 million) up from 297 million (37.9% of 800 million) in 2000 (UNEP 2002a; FAO 2003b). Seventh, the lack of access to markets, low forest product prices, poor infrastructure, and inappropriate policies limit the potential for sustainable forest-based livelihoods. Eighth, externally driven forest activities, including conservation projects and commercial extraction, threaten local livelihoods and undercut local investment in forest. For example, the customary rights of the Ogiek people to the 290 000 ha Mau Forest in Kenya are not recognised because this forest is the largest remaining continuous block of indigenous mountain forest in Africa. Ninth, a lack of shared forest values, whether between the state and citizens or within communities, generates conflict, which may undermine management and promote forest loss. When forests are economically valuable, governments are often reluctant to recognise community rights and values. In Cameroon, local forest people have lost their rights to the culturally and economically valuable species, bubinga and moabi, as these species are earmarked for commercial extraction. Tenth, demographic distortion due to diseases, particularly HIV but also malaria and tuberculosis, and population growth has resulted in a lack of social cohesion. This factor, together with a younger population – over 40% are below the age of 15 (FAO 2003a) – may mean the demise of traditional values associated with SFM.

Until the underlying structural and policy drivers of deforestation are addressed, the current rate of forest loss can be expected to continue; the capacity of the forests to provide forest products will decline. In this scenario, trees outside forests will become more important.

12.4 Harnessing the Forests’ Wealth

Realising the potential contribution of forests to wealth creation requires understanding how development trends impact on Africa and how Africans are responding to them. First, the 1980s ushered in the now widely accepted objective of sustainable development. In 1993, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development put sustainable development firmly on the global agenda, and through a series of multi-lateral agreements increased pressure on coun-

tries to adopt this approach, thus strengthening the existing trend to protect natural resources and restrict use. From 1990, the global area of protected land grew by over one million square kilometres (World Bank 2004). New approaches to business and trade emerged including the certification of forest-derived products, environmental conditionality in trade, and scepticism about infrastructural development projects, such as roads, that could lead to increased extraction of forest products. Second, trade liberalisation and structural adjustment in the 1980s marked the beginning of growing vulnerability of poor communities. The SAPs resulted in a decline in state service provision and an increase in privatisation. While this had some positive outcomes, overall the rural people became poorer. In the 1980s, income per capita in SSA declined at 2.4% per annum and Africa’s GDP fell by 14.3% (AIDB 2004). World Bank (2004) figures show that between 1990 and 2001 the number of people living on less than USD 1 a day rose by 87 million or 38%. In 2001, 46.5% of people in SSA lived on under a dollar a day and 76.3% on less than two dollars a day. Coping strategies, and in particular the traditional support mechanisms between urban and rural people, like remittances, broke down due to high urban unemployment. Additionally, the removal of subsidies on key agricultural inputs, such as seed and fertilisers, rendered subsistence farming less viable for newly retrenched urban workers. Third, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has devastating social and economic consequences. In many areas it has wiped out the most economically productive, placing increased burden on the aged and the very young. Between 1985 and 2003 some 7 million agricultural workers died, affecting production at 60–70% of farms and resulting in the loss of agricultural knowledge (UNAIDS 2003). Industry has been affected by illness-induced absenteeism. In contrast to global trends, life expectancy in most SSA countries has fallen to below 40 years (see Table 3), reversing the gains of the previous 15 years (UNEP 2002b). In 2003, about 3 million people became newly infected and 2.2 million died (UNAIDS 2004). At the end of 2004, some 25.4 million people in SSA were living with HIV. The 2004 Human Development Index (HDI) shows that 13 SSA countries suffered dramatic reversals in human development since 1990, largely due to the AIDS pandemic. This puts pressure on already scarce financial resources, making investment in areas like forestry less likely while simultaneously increasing dependency on forests. It undercuts market opportunities for forest products as disposable income declines and makes the achievement of skill and capacity targets unlikely. Fourth, globalisation has widespread impacts on various factors, including trade patterns, investment flows, technology, and our sense of time and space. It is possibly the most significant external change driver in the forest sector and poses special challenges for Africa. The pace of change is much faster than before.

FORESTS IN THE GLOBAL BALANCE – CHANGING PARADIGMS
Table 3. Life expectancy and HIV/AIDS rates in selected Sub-Saharan African countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (HDI rank)*</th>
<th>Life expectancy</th>
<th>HIV/AIDS prevalence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Republic of Africa (169)</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho (145)</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>36.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mozambique (171)</td>
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<td>38.5</td>
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<td>Swaziland (137)</td>
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<td>Malawi (165)</td>
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<td>Zambia (164)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe (147)</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(UNAIDS 2004)
* HDI 2004, 175 countries plus Hong Kong and the Occupied Palestinian Territories
** Latest available verified data, incorporating 2004 HDI
*** UN AIDS 2004

Prospects for Expanding Plantations

The potential for expanding Africa’s plantation industry will depend on resolving a number of technical, institutional, and economic issues. Increased investment, improved processing facilities, increased value adding, secure tenure, and the development and diversification of markets are necessary for the plantation industry to grow. In the short-term, Africa, with the exception of South Africa, is unlikely to become a major supplier of plantation wood.

Most countries have poor infrastructure and distance to markets tends to be great with high transportation costs. In SSA, freight costs are about 20% higher than those in other regions (AfDB 2004), making its products less competitive and suppressing demand. Plantations have been most successful in countries, such as South Africa, where they are vertically integrated with value-adding processing and where tenure is secure. In Zambia, where integration with processing is unlikely to happen since the plantations are state owned and the processing facilities are privately owned, the potential for growth seems limited. The uncertainty of raw material supply due to erratic state investment in plantations also constrains growth.

With globalisation, Africa will need to compete globally and thus should closely follow global trends regarding forest products and prices. The booming economies of India and China could present opportunities for expanding the plantation industry. Africa’s total exports to Asia only amount to 20% of total exports (AfDB 2004), even though this is now the world’s largest market with approximately 2.5 billion people. This market might become more important given the slump in growth in the EU, which is currently Africa’s largest trade partner (50%). Opportu-


**BOX 12.1 Out Grower Schemes**

*Jennifer Clare Mohamed-Katerere*

**KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

The South African private sector, particularly South Africa Pulp and Paper Industry (SAPPI) and Mondi, supports a flourishing out grower scheme. By 1999, there were more than 12,500 small growers who had established Eucalyptus woodlots covering nearly 27,000ha. These out growers supplied over 200,000 tons of wood to industry (FAO 2003). These schemes enable companies to limit their land holdings, spread the risk of fluctuations in timber demand, and reduce land-based conflicts with neighbouring communities. Communities benefit from having a ready market and some financing for their plantations.

**Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe, two companies, Border Timbers and Zimboard Products operate out grower schemes. The Border Timbers scheme started in 1996 for the production of eucalyptus poles. A key driver for was achieving greater flexibility in production from its own land. It intends to extend the scheme from its current size of 450 ha to 2000 ha so that it meets 60% of its wood requirements. The five out grower schemes, operated by Zimboard Products began between 1997 and 1999, to supply eucalyptus for its chipboard mill given the uncertainty of pulpwood supply.

Although the arrangements for the schemes operated by the companies are similar there are some important differences. Both companies offer growers loans at 15% interest (this is much lower than commercial rates), undertake to purchase the harvest at market prices, and provide some technical support; however, the level of responsibility growers have varies. In the Border Timbers’ Scheme growers, on company advice, determine the production tasks for which they want to accept responsibility: the Zimboard Products’ schemes are managed by project committees, which include both company and grower representatives. This co-operative approach might be attributable to the fact that landholders, who wanted to generate income for agriculture or community development, initiated three of the five schemes. Growers in the Zimboard Products’ schemes buy their own seed and manage the plantations. (The text has been adapted from Desmond and Race 2000 cited in Meyers and Vermeulen 2002)

**References**


exporters of wood and wood products. Nevertheless, the margin between imports and exports has steadily been closing due to low investment in value-added products; in 1990, surplus production amounted to USD 496 million, but by 2000 it had fallen to USD 131 million. Production potentials have not been met and the market opportunities in Africa have not been utilised. Value adding activities and diversification are important for countries like Ghana, where processing capacity (sawn timber, panels, and matches) exceeds supply (FAO 2003d). Given the generally low prices for primary commodities and Africa’s low-income elasticity, the challenge is to increase the production of value-added items while ensuring that wood continues to be sustainably harvested. This requires high capital investment.

Several countries restrict log exports in an effort to promote value adding with varying success. Powerful interests sometimes lobby against such initiatives. For example, in 1994 Cameroon banned log exports. As this threatened the interests of French timber companies, which export over 50% of Cameroon’s logs for processing in France, the French government intervened and pressured Cameroon to withdraw the ban (Brunner and Ekoko 2000).

Africa has considerable market potential for wood products. By 2020 population is expected to have more than doubled from 2000, and will have reached about 646 million. Whether markets grow as a result, will depend on overall patterns of growth and earnings. Although Africa has 13% of the world’s population, it accounts for less than 2% of the world’s GDP. Per capita income is low and is likely to remain that way even with optimistic growth rates. Even in relatively well off countries, such as South Africa, opportunities are limited; per capita income figures hide the extreme disparity between rich and poor people.

Inadequate access to improved technologies, particularly for wood processing, is an impediment to investment. Although many countries have made significant investments in education, research, and development, these have been insufficient to create a vibrant local technological research and development sector. Given declining public resources and an unsupportive FDI (foreign direct investment) and development aid climate, this scenario is not likely to change.

**Seizing the Opportunities for Commercialising NTFPs**

Global and regional trade in NTFPs has been important for centuries, dating back to 1214. Historically it included pepper (Aframomum spp. and piper guineense), shea butter (Vitellaria paradoxa), ivory, palm oil, kola nuts (Cola acuminata and C. nitida), tamarind, rattan, and rubber (Funtumia elastica). Contemporary trade, in addition to these products, includes exudates (such as gum arabic from Acacia senegal, myrrh from Commiphora myrrha), tannins (Acacia mearnsii), and medical plants (including Prunus africana and Cinchona spp.). With growing tourism, trade in forest based art and crafts, particularly carvings and baskets, has increased. Due to incomplete data, the full extent of NTFP trade is impossible to gauge.

Despite this long history in NTFP trade, Africa has not been able to capture its full economic value. In part this stems from inadequate control over collection, absence of value-adding processes, and weak market access. Africa has paid a heavy price for bio-piracy, which has appropriated genetic wealth and related traditional knowledge; this has cost billions in the loss of potential earnings. Although the range of traded products has increased significantly in the last twenty years, economic benefits to rural people have remained small (Marshall et al 2003). Ecological and community benefits, such as empowerment, improved organisation, social justice, and human wellbeing, are difficult to quantify (Marshall et al. 2003).

There is a drive to commercialise a wider range of NTFPs, including honey, wild fruit jams, fruit based beverages, aromatic oils, resin, rattan (Defo 2004), shea butter (Schrekenberg 2004), exudates (FAO 2001), woodcarving, and basketry, to increase...
the potential earnings of local producers (see Box 12.2). Given global prices, earnings from cosmetic and pharmaceutical products could be significant. Key species include *Prunus africana* (Ndam and Marcellin 2004), devil’s claw (*Harpagophytum* spp.) (Wynberg 2004), *Griffonia simplicifolia* (Gbewonyo 2002), and Yohimbe (*Pausinystalia johimbe*) (Sunderland et al. 2004).

The success of commercialisation varies across products and countries. Box 12.3 lists factors limiting the success of production, collection, processing, storage, transportation, marketing, and sale of NTFPs. Several African case studies show that the distribution of property rights, the ability to claim and enforce such rights, resource scarcity, and market transparency are also important constraints (Byron and Ruiz Perez 1996; Romero et al. 2002; Defo 2004; Wynberg 2004).

As with other community initiatives, the promotion of NTFPs has been motivated by efforts to reverse deforestation and land conversion activities (Sunderland et al. 2004); this has driven organisational form and in particular the centrality of government or NGOs. The involvement of multiple intermediaries and external product developers, especially for pharmaceutical products, is problematic. Trade in devil’s claw, a traditional medicinal plant, supports a USD 100 million industry but most benefits accrue to processing and transformation actors along the marketing chain and only a very low proportion go to domestic producers. In Namibia, harvesters that sell to intermediaries receive only 0.36% of the retail price, those in an NGO facilitated marketing chain receive 0.64%, while those with direct contact with the exporter receive the most, 0.85% (Wynberg 2004). In the absence of direct investment in community skills and opportunities, communities will continue to enjoy only minimal benefits. An AU treaty seeks to control harvesting, ensure fairer distribution of benefits, and recognise local intellectual property rights, but implementation remains weak. Opportunities are also curtailed because much of Africa’s genetic resources are freely available in gene banks, herbariums, and museums so that there is no need to go to the natural source. Many plant species are available across communities, regions, and countries, thus lowering the marketing opportunities of any one community and raising issues of how benefits should be distributed. Africans need to consider whether the “one-stop-shop” approach adopted in the Philippines and Costa Rica can overcome these problems.

Marketing presents special challenges and securing global markets is critical to the success of commercialisation. The European consumer has a particular interest in natural products, and with fewer barriers this market could become more important. The African Diaspora is also an important potential market. The Asian market remains untapped. International regulatory regimes may impose market restrictions; one problem with this is that some treaties do not make adequate provision for local variation in species’ status. Under CITES devil’s claw is listed as endangered, however, there is no local scarcity in Namibia. Requirements for certification place an added cost on poor communities.

In commercialising special attention needs to be given to promoting sustainable harvesting methods. Harvesting some NTFPs requires the felling of entire trees. In general, producers have responded to scarcity by extending the harvest range or by species substitution; domestication has not been actively adopted. Better species-based information is needed to develop appropriate harvesting regimes and ensure SFM (FAO 2001; Sunderland et al. 2004).

**Eco-Tourism**

Many African countries are investing heavily in eco-tourism. Ecotourism has become the fastest growing sub-sector of the tourist industry, with an annual growth rate of 10–15% worldwide. At the same time, international tourism to the global south is increasing by 6% per year, compared to growth in developed countries of only 3.5%. Ghana, for example, has an annual growth of 12% in tourist revenues; these are expected to reach USD 1.6 billion by 2010 (Vieta 1998).

However, in general, tourism has had minimal community and conservation benefits. Impacts on local communities have been profound: wide scale eviction from their lands, economic dislocation, breakdown of traditional values, and environmental degradation. Eco-tourism is intended to address some of these shortcomings, however, several challenges are still evident. First, eco-tourism is generally private sector driven and is not concerned with the economic, social, and ecological well-being of the host communities. To break with this there must be a focus on building equitable partnerships that go beyond benefit sharing and improve the capabilities and opportunities of communities. Strategies for achieving this are discussed below in the section on building entrepreneurship. Second, war, civil strife, and severe health problems all undermine tourism. In the Great Lakes Region the outbreak of war in 1994 stopped gorilla based tourism in Rwanda and the DRC but pushed up demand to view gorillas in Uganda’s forests.

Most eco-tourism initiatives have focused on wild fauna and little attention has been given to forests. Nevertheless, with good infrastructure and stable government, such initiatives can offer opportunities for new investments and economic growth and have positive spin-offs for forest conservation and local opportunities. A growing number of initiatives focus on forests and their role in biodiversity maintenance. These include initiatives in Kenya’s Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, South Africa’s Knysna Forest, Tanzania’s Budongo Forest Reserve, Congo’s Odzala National Park, and Uganda’s Kibale and Bwindi Forests.
Marketing of Environmental Services

Globally, there are growing markets for environmental services. International NGOs and governments are key drivers. One intention is to use market mechanisms to encourage environmental protection, reduce public spending, make large corporations pay for the benefits they extract, and reward communities for the environmental services they provide, and thus promote sustainable development. In the forest sector, these services include carbon sequestration, forest protection, watershed protection, and landscape beauty.

In Africa, there has been relatively little use of markets for environmental services other than in the tourism sector. The payment of fees to enter protected areas is well established. Several eco-tourism projects seek to create mechanisms to reward communities for the role they play in conserving and maintaining the natural asset base. There are also growing numbers of market initiatives in the water sector. In South Africa permits for land-based activities, such as plantation forestry, that reduce the availability of ground water have been introduced. Zimbabwe has established Integrated Catchment Management in the dry zones, which introduced watershed protection contracts. In Ghana “time-debt” swaps have been introduced. Debt-for-nature swaps have been adopted in some countries, notably in Kenya. In West Africa, trade networks have been established to promote marketing of sustainably managed wood, largely under the auspices of the FSC. There are also several initiatives that focus on Certified Emission Reductions for projects in the developing countries.

Thus far interventions focus predominately on services traded through formal markets and other services, such as soil quality, sacred sites, and aesthetics, which do not enter formal markets, tend to be excluded. Other constraints exist to developing

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**BOX 12.3 Factors Undermining Success for Commercialising NTFPs in Different Phases of the Process**

*Jennifer Clare Mohamed-Katerere*

**Production**
- Lack of technical support
- Lack of a favourable normative context
- Lack of financial instruments
- High opportunity costs
- Inadequate quality control

**Collection**
- Lack of financial instruments
- Lack of technical support
- Lack of community organisation

**Processing**
- Lack of processing skills and knowledge
- Lack of infrastructure, equipment and appropriate technology
- Lack of financial instruments
- Lack of technical support
- Lack of community organisation
- Lack of access to information
- Inadequate sharing of experience

**Storage**
- Lack of financial instruments
- Lack of appropriate storage facilities

**Transport**
- High unit cost of transport
- Long distances from point of sale
- Lack of transport infrastructure
- Lack of community organisation

**Marketing (identification of market and product promotion)**
- High cost of product promotion
- High availability of substitutes
- Lack of access to market information
- Lack of contact with final consumers
- Lack of financial instruments
- Lack of technical support
- Lack of community organisation
- Lack of market value
- Lack of adequate quality control
- Lack of attractive product presentation
- Lack of management capacity
- Lack of knowledge about consumer demands and needs

**Sale**
- Low product price
- Low returns to consumer
- High producer dependency on market intermediaries
- Lack of market value
- Lack of financial instruments
- Lack of technical support
- Lack of community organisation
- Poor relationship between final product price and production cost

pro-poor markets (see Table 4). Insecure tenure rights limit rural people’s opportunity to enter the market as the sellers of services. When faced with other powerful interests and economic pressures, governments may place little value on the rights of local peoples. The commoditisation of services could exclude communities from benefits they have traditionally enjoyed.

**Private Sector**

The private sector, though growing, is still weak in most African countries and has focussed on activities that have immediate benefits, such as logging; long term investment has generally been limited (FAO 2003a). This may be attributed to the insufficiently supportive institutional, legal, and policy
12 FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY: HARNESSING THE WEALTH OF AFRICA’S FORESTS

| Many African countries are investing heavily in ecotourism, which is the fastest growing sub-sector of tourism industry. A growing number of ecotourism initiatives focus on forests and their role in biodiversity maintenance. |

....

frameworks. Equity measures, such as land reform and developing an indigenous private sector in southern Africa, have had a negative impact on long-term investments by the established private sector. However, this insecurity might spur new approaches. For example, in South Africa the private sector opted for outsourcing agreements with communities to lower investment costs and minimise risk (see Box 12.2).

Most governments see the private sector as an important potential actor in the forest sector and many are committed to promoting opportunities for the private sector. Many countries, including Ghana, Kenya, and Zambia, have restructured the public forestry sector by privatising public enterprises and transforming forest departments into semi-autonomous public enterprises. NEPAD makes a specific commitment to building the private sector.

From Community Participation to Entrepreneurship

Across Africa, there is growing focus on the value of multi-sector livelihood options and local entrepreneurship. The success of trade and market initiatives requires a shift from treating communities as recipients of “development” to enabling them to be effective drivers of their futures and to move beyond subsistence livelihoods. Several factors are driving this.

Many parts of Africa have valuable forest resources yet a high incidence of poverty. An important response was the development of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) initiatives – an approach based on promoting conservation through increasing earnings at the local level – to address local poverty. To do this CBNRM shifted the locus of “management” to the community level while the state retained authority. The promise of prosperity led to numerous projects in various natural resources sectors. Local participation and “poverty alleviation” became operative terms to secure local support. To a large extent, the state’s interest – whether sustainable use or environmental protection – continued to underlie these initiatives; they only partially tally with local users’ visions (Emerton 2001; Hulme and Infield 2001; Hulme and Murphree 2001; Kangwana and Mako 2001; Murombedzi 2001; Katerere and Mohamed-Katerere 2002).

Perceptions of success depend on how the actual, and not just legal, relationship to wild natural resources has changed. Impacts on local users’ rights are important. Where these are not given priority or protected, support for CBNRM may be undercut. At times despite benefit sharing arrangements, forest departments prioritise commercial production over local use. Many countries continue to impose restrictions on use, for example on timber harvesting rights (Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and by limiting extraction methods, such as the ban on chain saw use in southern Ghana. Additionally, in many countries the state is at the apex of forest planning; thus some communities see CBNRM projects as a means for the state to further extend its reach and control (Katerere and Mohamed-Katerere 2002).

Despite the trend to support local management initiatives that ensure greater returns to poor people, there has not been a focus on creating a supportive legal and institutional framework. Many local activities, including fuelwood harvesting, charcoal making, and the sale of NTFPs, continue to be treated as “informal”, essentially representing marginalised economic activity with limited investment that borders on illegality. In some countries, such as Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Niger, governments and donors both continue to resist allowing rural people to engage in forest production and give licences only to urban based merchants (Ribot 2001). This is in contrast to the significant investment in time, labour, and financial resources that local people make in forest management. Globally, their investment amounts to USD 1.3 billion–USD 2.6 billion (White et al. 2004), which is as much as investment by national governments and exceeds ODA. Borrowing capital remains almost impossible for poor people, given that few have anything to offer as security.

Several other pertinent factors need to be addressed. These include inadequate infrastructural development, communication systems, resource and marketing information systems, access to markets and finance, and low capacity and skills.
Building Community-Private Sector Partnerships

Partnerships in development are a growing trend. Increasingly, entrepreneurs and others at the national and local levels are forging partnerships with business and NGOs to more effectively use the resources available to them.

Community-private sector partnerships (CPSP) are seen as a way to promote investment in rural areas. For example, in South Africa the awarding of forest concessions has been linked to company obligations to increase local benefits through community equity stakes, pay lease fees, give communities shares for the use of their land, provide preferential employment to local people, locally out-source procurement and contracting, and offer local enterprise opportunities, business training, and support (Wolmer and Ashley 2003). In Ghana, forest concessions are linked to companies making socially responsible investments.

To ensure equity a cautious approach to CPSPs needs to be adopted. Creating secure land rights is one way in which the balance of power can be swung towards communities. When a community is the land holder it is necessarily also a contractual partner rather than just a recipient of charity, and thus better able to influence development choices. How rights are interpreted in practice depends on several factors, consequently safeguards to protect local rights should be developed. Experiences show that when community interests are in conflict with more powerful interests, such as those of the state and conservation lobby groups, rights may be interpreted restrictively. For example, in the much acclaimed Makuleke land claim in South Africa’s Kruger National Park, community rights were restrictively interpreted in line with dominant conservation policy (Mohamed-Katerere 2001). In the absence of strong lines of accountability, many partnerships give rhetorical rather than real rights to poor people.

Given an unsupportive institutional and regulatory framework, CPSPs are not likely to become a major trend. Transaction costs may be too high; companies need to make additional investments in capacity building, and the processes of negotiating such deals are often cumbersome. Communities may lack legal personality, have weak tenure rights, and low organisational capacity. In general, the financial sector is reluctant to provide them with loans. The market pressure to move to economies of scale also weakens the prospects for CPSPs.

Bilateral and Donor Partnership

Although recognising that Africa must become self-reliant, a major focus of the NEPAD strategy has been to try to increase the flow of development assistance and FDI. Several other initiatives support this objective, including the G8 and the UK Africa Commission. However, two years into NEPAD the prospects for meaningful external support seem slim.

Despite some recovery after the 1990s downward trend in ODA, aid levels still fall far below those needed to achieve the MDGs. Increasingly, Africa has to compete for development assistance with emerging demands in Eastern Europe, Afghanistan, and Iraq and the global war on terrorism, as well as agricultural subsidies paid to developed country farmers. Africa is a marginal recipient of FDI receiving only about 2% of the global total (AIDB 2004). Countries in SSA share less than one percent, of which half goes to South Africa (Oxfam 2003). Although FDI increased in the 1990s (FAO 2003a), it has now taken a dramatic downward swing. In 2002, FDI inflows declined from USD19 billion in 2001 to USD10.9 billion, which is a staggering 41%; this affected 23 countries (AIDB 2004). Most FDI goes into oil and gas projects in Angola, Algeria, Sudan, Nigeria, and Gabon, and into gold mining in Tanzania and South Africa. Africa’s share of FDI to developing countries is only around 4% compared to 45 to 50% for Asia and 30% for Latin America (AfDB 2004). A large percentage of FDI earnings are externalised. The prospect for less predatory FDI is slim, and thus even increased foreign investment may not bode well for Africa’s development.

Africa has only 5% of the developing world’s income but it carries about two thirds of the Global South’s debt burden – over USD 300 billion. Despite extreme poverty, it transfers almost USD 15 billion a year to rich nations in debt repayments. The average African country spends three times more on repaying debt than it does on basic services provision. By the end of 2004, Africa will spend about 70% of its export earnings on external debt servicing (Africa Recovery 2004). Debt repayments are a major impediment to growth. Much of the debt is believed by Africans, and others, to be unjust, thus prompting calls for debt cancellation.

In 1999, the World Bank and the IMF introduced Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) as a mechanism for countries to qualify for debt relief and donor assistance. Consequently, some see PRSs as a new form of economic SAPs and donor conditioning. The review of PRSs (PRS paper or PRSPs) provides a basis for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, concessional lending, and the World Bank’s Country Assistance Programme (Bojo and Reddy 2002). At least 60% of the PRSPs are from SSA. The PRSPs are purportedly designed to be country driven with participation of all actors, to link public action and poverty outcomes, and to achieve outcome-related goals for poverty reduction. PRSPs are also intended to integrate environment and natural resources, such as forests, into poverty analysis and national planning. Countries have different capacities to develop PRSPs that can address these complexities. Many need support to ensure the better integration of forests and other natural resources into
national plans, policy, and legal reform.

Implementation of PRSs has been slow both in pace and magnitude. In SSA, 24 countries have received some debt relief: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, São Tome & Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Debt relief can have significant impacts. Tanzania has received USD 3 billion in debt relief, and has been able to increase spending on education and eliminate school fees for elementary education. Almost overnight, an estimated 1.6 million children returned to school. Mozambique increased health spending by USD 13.9 million.

The entire relationship with external actors must be recast. The donor sector has historically been a major driver of forest sector change. There is growing concern in the local NGO sector about double standards and, in particular, the unwillingness of donor countries to support significant debt cancellation. Against the backdrop of development corruption involving multi-lateral institutions, such as in the Lesotho dam fiasco, African governments are more likely to demand greater transparency and accountability.

**Pan Africa Partnership**

Throughout Africa there is a shift in thinking, a widening of the perspective from national economic interests to the opportunities of regional co-operation, as is evident in the transformation of the politically motivated Organisation of African Unity to the AU.

Distance to ports, small populations, relatively small markets, and the many landlocked countries are motivations for economic integration and joint investments in energy, communications, and transport. Many African countries inherited transport and communication systems that were designed to serve the interests of their former colonial masters; many infrastructural systems do not facilitate cross-border trade and often result in high transport costs. Recognising the real limits to economic growth of national efforts, NEPAD has as one of its guiding principles, the acceleration of regional and continental integration (NEPAD 2001). Africa has 18 regional trade agreements, including SADC, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and East African Community (EAC). As regional bodies mature, intra-African trade can be expected to increase.

Greater regional cooperation is also evident in the natural resource sector with a growing number of agreements related to the management of transboundary natural resources, such as wildlife and water, and the establishment of transboundary management areas.

**12.5 Protecting the Asset Base**

Since UNCED, global policy has increasingly focussed on conservation at global, national, and local levels. This conservation-action driver has at times led to inappropriate strategies to protect the environment while neglecting livelihood issues and local priorities and approaches to problem solving. The challenge is to turn around the focus on protection and develop an approach that supports African aspirations while ensuring resource sustainability.

**Science – Policy Failures**

A fundamental problem in developing approaches to protect environmental resources and services lies in the troublesome relationship between science and policy. Powerful networks of policy makers, including both national and international actors such as non-governmental organisations, research agencies, donors and governments, often frame inconclusive science into “stories of crisis” that demand immediate intervention (Keeley and Scoones 2003). The receptiveness of governments to scientific recommendations lies partly in the fact that education, and in particular science, is highly valued and is seen as essential to development and transformation. This places scientists in a dangerously influential position and marginalises local users in policy-making. One consequence is that science is used to consolidate state control over commercially valuable natural resources and to exclude the majority of rural dwellers from enjoying its benefits (Ribot 2001).

The oversimplification of scientific findings often results in policy recommendations that focus on just one element in the overall system, resulting in inappropriate solutions; this is evident in such diverse arenas as slash-and-burn agricultural strategies, fuelwood supply, bush meat, watershed protection, and climate change. These policy failures demonstrate the need for processes that encourage debate and allow different perspectives to be presented, rather than simply implementing pre-determined global policies. Throughout Africa, there is a growing appreciation of the value of inclusive processes.

These dilemmas are evident around the forest-hydrology nexus, which over the last ten years has become an important policy focus at the global and national levels. Deforestation, climatic conditions, and livelihoods are increasingly seen as linked, this creates an impetus for forest conservation. A key problem has been a one-size-fits-all approach to solutions and policy. However, as Nelson and Chomitz (2004) demonstrate, scientists still poorly understand the hydrology-deforestation link. Although broad conclusions can be drawn, the actual link depends on such specific local factors as soil structure, topography, the land cover that replaces the forests, the spatial-temporal patterns of rain (Nelson and
Global Values and Economic Trade-Offs

The tension between preserving forests for environmental services and using them to attain economic benefits is not abating. One key area is the role of forests in climate change mitigation efforts. Although vegetation and soil act as net carbon sinks and long-term carbon reservoirs, forests can be sources of Greenhouse gases (GHG) if poorly managed. Enhancing the mitigating role of forests and developing national legislation to support this remain challenges. One reason for this is that the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is not user-friendly. For example, accounting (measuring and reporting) systems on emission levels and the modalities for small-scale reforestation and afforestation projects to claim benefits from carbon trading are complex. Additional challenges are to harmonise national and supranational law and to agree on what standards to adopt.

In many instances, local people are asked to forego livelihood opportunities for conservation without being offered adequate compensation. In Uganda a carbon sequestration plantation project, in an area with high population density and high unemployment, resulted in land-based conflicts between the forest authorities and displaced communities, when the communities were removed from the land over which they had usufruct rights to make way for the plantation. The rents they received from this project were below the rents they were required to pay for the farmland they now had to lease (IUCN 2004).

The climate change debate epitomises the dilemma of policy globalisation and defining the best way to proceed. Global policy focuses primarily on reducing emissions, protecting existing forests, and developing new forests to promote carbon storage. Through international agreements the developing world has been pushed to adopt this approach. The Kyoto Protocol creates an incentive for afforestation and reforestation projects in developing countries under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). A market is emerging where carbon credits from these projects can be traded with industrialised countries to offset their domestic greenhouse gases emissions. However, the extent to which CDM will benefit developing countries and poor people in particular remains questionable. Will CDM result in land use patterns that marginalise forest dependent people? Is there a threat that CDM will encourage large-scale conversion of productive non-forest ecosystems to managed plantations? How can Africa’s existing contribution to carbon storage through its vast tropical forests be recognised?

Plantation development, SFM (longer rotations, selective harvesting and trees providing shelter for soil), reduced deforestation, and reduced incidence of fire could make forests a more permanent carbon sink. However, forests can be susceptible to climate change, which may reduce their potential to function as carbon sinks. Finding land to expand plantations is not likely to be easy. Where forests that support wood-based activities (logging and processing) are converted into carbon sequestration projects, local people could lose livelihood opportunities. Projects that reduce access to land, resources, and jobs without offering alternatives may create incentives for illegal clearing or harvesting. New stresses may be created as people are forced to source wood supplies and land from elsewhere.

Not all CDM projects are obvious “win-win-win” for livelihoods, conservation, and climate change mitigation. Experiences from Tanzania, Uganda, and Malawi indicate that transaction costs and the complexities of CDM projects may prevent small-scale farmers from participating. In addition, a focus on large-scale projects might divert investments away from small-scale projects, resulting in an uneven distribution of benefits (Orlando et al. 2002).
The relationship between poverty and environmental resources has a strong gender component. Women and girls, responsible for collecting fuelwood, fodder and water are hurt disproportionately by environmental degradation.

**The Role of Private Sector in Protected Area Management**

As Africa is home to 25% of the world’s remaining tropical rainforests and contains 20% of the world’s biodiversity hotspots thus it is of interest to conservationists. Early conservationist thinking, drawing on then dominant frameworks in ecology and motivated by wilderness preservation, focussed on creating protected areas reserved against use (Hulme and Muphree 2001). Often local people’s rights and interests where not taken into account; thus this conservation model is seen as undervaluing equity. Today some international environmental organisations, with the support of many western governments, continue to focus on maintaining the sanctity of these protected areas. Several fundamental shifts are evident as the economic viability of this approach is being revisited.

First, as the incidence of poverty continues to rise and rights-concerns have come to the fore, one solution has been to focus on the flow of benefits to forest dependent people. Throughout southern Africa, community involvement in tourism and wild area management is promoted and various business initiatives are being tried. Co-management initiatives have been adopted in protected areas in Tanzania, Uganda, Gambia, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Guinea.

Second, as the ability to protect and manage natural forests is hampered by low government investment, a greater emphasis is now placed on the role of the private sector. Private sector investment is seen as key to creating jobs and skills development. Both CPSP and public-private sector are promoted. The area under private protection has been steadily increasing. In southern Africa, 14 million ha are estimated to be under some form of private protection (Krug 2001). Similarly in Kenya, a significant amount of land is in private protected areas. One concern about privatising national resources is that it may limit access by poor people.

Third, with global attention and scientific research focussed on the impact of habitat loss on species diversity, there has been a shift to the creation of mega transboundary parks. Many are driven by powerful private sector tourist organisations in alliance with governments or by international environmental organisations. The opportunities for local people vary considerably; however given the well established focus on community rights most initiatives at least make some rhetorical commitment to increasing community benefits.

**Research and Capacity Building**

Confronting challenges in forestry and the related areas of agriculture, health, environment, human security, and economic growth requires meaningful levels of investment in science and technology.
Africa cannot continue to depend solely on global research that does not always give priority to its concerns. Neither can it afford not to have the benefits of research. For example, the consequences of long-term climate change on agriculture and forestry need to be understood. Also, models for mitigating and adapting to climate change are required.

Forest research has mainly focussed on production forestry that seeks to address industry’s needs. However, according to Temu and Kowero (2001), the capacity of industry to support research in many African countries, with the exception of countries like South Africa, is weak. Governments find it increasingly difficult to raise required research funds as economies of many countries have declined over the years. The on-going socio-economic reforms in Africa have not helped the lack of funding for forest research.

Africa needs to address the serious weaknesses in science by mobilising all stakeholders at the national level, such as universities and public and private research institutes, as well as regional academies of science. Coordination and consensus on what research is required will put Africa in a better position to allocate targeted funds and seek support from international donors and foundations. At the same time, African governments and international donors need to increase research and development funding that is focused on the unique challenges facing Africa. Investment in forest institutions is essential if they are to be more visionary. Research must be responsive to real world issues, including rights and equity considerations, and devise tools and methods that measure the real impact of forests on livelihoods at the household level and at larger scales. New kinds of partnerships with international research organisations, in which Africans have a greater stake in research agenda setting, advocacy, and policy development, are needed if forest research is to address the challenges of the day.

Additionally, the technology gap must be closed – Africa has an average of only one internet user for every 200 people, compared to a global average of about one in 30 (UNEP 2002b). Access to first generation communication technology remains incomplete. Without such a commitment, the opportunities presented by globalisation may not be realised.

12.6 Improving Governance of Africa’s Forests

Historically, forest governance regimes have been designed to ensure exclusivity for state or private sector commercial harvesting and/or to conserve the forests for environmental services and other values. In many cases, this meant that governance frameworks controlled and restricted local use, focussed on top-down management, imposed criminal sanctions, and established poor systems for accountability and local participation. In the last ten to twenty years, several divergent factors have converged to create a focus on issues of participation, democracy, and equity. These factors include local people’s demands and rights claims, global movements, multi-lateral agreements, the failure of purely preservationist management frameworks, inadequate state funding, and social conflicts, as well as a shift, nationally and globally, in the motivations for and objectives of forest management.

Democratisation and Decentralisation

There is a growing focus on democratisation and decentralisation. Many local people are demanding greater authority over local resources by, for example, more secure tenure regimes. Many link forest resource rights to historical land claims. Governments and donors are more supportive of decentralisation as they realise that policy development and management cannot be the preserve of technocrats, but must include local users.

Decentralised forest management models range from localised state management, with few opportunities for community participation, to more participatory models. Participatory mechanisms include consultative forums, multi-stakeholder co-management models, and benefit sharing schemes. In many countries, governance deficiencies continue to plague these initiatives (Mohamed-Katerere and Matose 2002; Amanor 2003).

First, the governance initiatives of the 1990s, although often the product of local rights claiming, were driven by global visions of what governance should look like in order to meet a set of predetermined criteria. Representation, participation, benefit sharing, and acknowledgement of local people’s knowledge, which are at the heart of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s vision for governance, were repeated in the Forest Principles and then again and again in bi- and multi-lateral conservation agreements. By focussing on these inadequately deliberated elements, the nuances that had driven the original rights claims were lost. Many of these conservation policies and programmes focussed simply on ensuring representation of previously marginalised groups – women, traditional leaders, communities – without creating mechanisms to ensure active participation in the new forums and to achieve accountability and transparency between the final decision maker and citizen (Murombedzi 1992; Katerere and Mohamed-Katerere 2002; Ribot 2002; Larson and Zeledon 2004).

Second, the definition of stakeholder and decision-maker remains problematic; it has been shaped not only by the national significance of forest resources but also by global forest policy. State agencies continue to identify themselves as stakeholders and not simply trustees of national resources.

Third, policy development and management
In 1994, Cameroon radically overhauled its forest law. The new law allows communities to reclaim the right to manage and use 50,000 ha of their customary forest through the declaration of a community forest. Use rights were extended from NTFPs to high-value timber (Brown 1999). Implementation is hindered by several factors. 

First, the driving force behind the law reform was the donor community and in particular the World Bank. Unfortunately, policy development and implementation mechanisms were determined externally and local participation was discounted as not being cost effective (Brunner and Ekoko 2000). Consequently, there was little national ownership of the law and the demarcation plan that was the basis of implementation bore little resemblance to local usage (Brunner and Ekoko 2000). This undercut the effectiveness of the law. The exclusion of members of the influential forest industry from consultations lessened their support for law reform and in particular tax reforms; they have used their financial muscle to ensure that granting community rights does not undermine their interests (Fomete 2001).

Second, community forests may only be established in forests of lesser value and not in "permanent forest", which compromises 64% of forest estate, although many people live in these areas (Brown 1999). These are set-aside as commercial forestry areas or wildlife habitat. Nevertheless, the reforms are significant as most local people previously had little opportunity to "own" land. The law does not restore traditional rights; in traditional law occupation grants the occupier some degree of title.

Third, the law is vague. For local people to take advantage of the law a legal entity must be formed. However, how this is to be constituted is not stipulated in the law, and there is no requirement for it to be representative of local interests. For many local people such requirements are difficult to fulfill without external support.

Fourth, tenure is not secure. The state retains ownership of the land and the community is allocated up to 50,000 ha on a 25-year lease, which is reviewed every five years and renewable for a further 15 years. Fifth, due to undercapitalisation, communities often have little choice but to subcontract the right to harvest. Under these circumstances, there has been high-speed felling with limited community involvement. Benefits are often distributed individually, used consumptively, and not reinvested.

Nevertheless, there are demonstrated benefits. Several case studies suggest that community skills and cohesion are essential for success (Fomete and Vermaat 2001). In one case where the Ministry supported the community through training, benefits have been more substantial. Training was given in sawing planks using a precision frame; this enabled the community to get a better price. Project support in creating a market was also important. However, a drawback was that the community made short-term benefits a higher priority than long-term interests. Unfortunately, given the insufficient support to community organisations, a series of failures occurred and conflict set in. In another case, where community organisations developed goals and defined the management framework success was evident. In a third case, where there was no outside involvement and a trained forester who was a member of the community helped develop a management plan, the community opted to reinvest a percentage of earnings.

References


potential benefits of decentralised forest management and are thus now more open to creating such systems. Over 30 African countries have some form of local level forest management; this involves about 4500 communities (Alden Wily 2002). Implementation, however remains slow and is hampered by limited funding and weak capacities. Second, although many local users received some benefits, with time they have begun to re-examine these benefits and are questioning the extent to which these initiatives have fundamentally improved livelihood opportunities. Local people are increasingly aware of their lack of authority to make long-term changes that widen their livelihood opportunities or enable them to extricate themselves from poverty. These two factors need to be placed at the centre of governance debates and policy development processes, so that as new practice evolves it is better able to achieve poverty alleviation goals. To support local users to achieve livelihood objectives, management priorities and institutional design need to be specifically linked to be meaningfully shining finery, intended to appease public and negative, shows that this requires clearly defined and secure tenure rights. In several countries there are conflicting tenure rights to forest resources. This may be due to multiple legal or normative systems or simply to conflicts within the general law system. More interactive governance frameworks are essential to address social conflicts.

Despite these positive trends, fundamental governance change is likely to be slow and confined to low value forests, due to the many contradictions within governments and the overlying (global) economic pressures. For economic reasons decentralisation in forest rich countries, particularly those with low population densities, will probably also be slow, as the state will continue to strive to maintain control over these resources. In Cameroon, the initiatives that support communities to enjoy the benefits of forests have had only limited success despite supportive laws (see Box 12.4).

Law Enforcement

Throughout much of Africa, law enforcement is ineffective. The reasons for this vary from country to country and locality to locality. However, understanding why this is the case is crucial to building more effective managerial regimes.

The success of policy implementation depends in part on the extent to which the policy is specifically and legally defined and partly on whether or not there is the capacity to implement and enforce it. Many countries experience difficulties; in Ghana at the local level, only about 10% of forest policy is implemented. (Wiggins et al. 2001).

Social conflict and war result in very fluid law enforcement. Over 30 African countries have been involved in wars in the last five years and many more experience local resource conflicts. In war-ravaged areas, it is difficult to monitor and enforce law. Conflicts between different users or between lawmakers and users may also exist in stable societies. Local users may ignore laws that undermine their livelihoods.

Rights Framework

Although the language of law has become more conciliatory and participatory, the reality of the law – sometimes because of careful crafting and sometimes through a lack of political will – has remained essentially unchanged. Despite forest law reform, the focus remains on controlling use, and little attention is given to the issue of rights. Rights to forest resources, including decision making authority which can support SFM, remain poorly developed (see Box 12.4); where they do exist they are often difficult to claim. Despite the decentralised approaches, law enforcement has remained the primary tool for ensuring sound management. Tenure regimes continue to emphasize the ultimate authority of governments, including the right to terminate community access to resources. In Zambia, the government extinguished local rights where it was able to earn revenue from awarding a concession to a logging company. In Cameroon, where over 100 000 completely forest dependent people live, forest law still upholds the colonial notion of land rights, which deems vast tracts of land as no man’s land because of “inadequate” occupation. Only when real rights are transferred to local people will they be able to achieve the kind of balance between extraction and preservation that meets their immediate needs and long term expectations.

Similarly, procedural rights remain poorly developed. For example, Mozambique’s Forest Act requires consultation prior to awarding concessions; however, this does not mean securing agreement from communities, but simply an obligation to solicit their views (Wolmer and Ashley 2003). In the absence of any obligation on the deciding authority to give reasons for its decisions, the opportunity for communities to challenge decisions remains fundamentally constrained. Throughout Africa, law is dressed in conciliatory and participatory, the reality of the law – sometimes because of careful crafting and sometimes through a lack of political will – has remained essentially unchanged. Despite forest law reform, the focus remains on controlling use, and little attention is given to the issue of rights. Rights to forest resources, including decision making authority which can support SFM, remain poorly developed (see Box 12.4); where they do exist they are often difficult to claim. Despite the decentralised approaches, law enforcement has remained the primary tool for ensuring sound management. Tenure regimes continue to emphasize the ultimate authority of governments, including the right to terminate community access to resources. In Zambia, the government extinguished local rights where it was able to earn revenue from awarding a concession to a logging company. In Cameroon, where over 100 000 completely forest dependent people live, forest law still upholds the colonial notion of land rights, which deems vast tracts of land as no man’s land because of “inadequate” occupation. Only when real rights are transferred to local people will they be able to achieve the kind of balance between extraction and preservation that meets their immediate needs and long term expectations.

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ers know that they are not under threat of losing their rights and where they have sufficient legal and practical opportunity to enforce their rights.

12.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The world and Africa are undergoing rapid changes driven by globalisation, free trade, heavy indebtedness, violent conflicts, emphasis on market mechanisms, and a decreasing role of the state. In the forest sector the trend has been towards growing deforestation due to inadequate tenure rights, conflict, agricultural expansion, and commercial logging; a rising informal sector; greater willingness to decentralise management except in high value forests; and increased privatisation. Increasing poverty and vulnerability remain major challenges. Despite the havoc being wrecked by diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, Africa’s population is still expected to grow and urbanisation to increase. This too will place pressure on the forests, but it will also create demand and markets for forest products.

One big question is how Africa should respond to a more globalised world and growing demand for forest products. To what extent can increased investment in plantations and forest-based enterprise development increase its share of global trade in forest products and support SFM?

Forests will continue to play a major role as safety nets for poor people who have no other option but to use forest resources. Additionally, trees outside the “forests” will remain an intrinsic part of the lives of poor people. To harness the forest’s wealth for the poor, certain conditions are necessary for entrepreneurship to flourish and for successful commercialisation and profitability at the local level. First, poor people in remote areas must have access to social and financial services, markets, infrastructural development, and substantial investment in technology. Second, they require enforceable tenure rights to forest resources in their vicinity in order to counter power and legal impediments. Third, the non-poor need to assume their share of the costs of environmental protectionist policies or externally driven commercial exploitation, whether by colonialists, private sector, the state, or illegal loggers. Fourth, the focus has to be on supporting local people in making the transition from low-level primary resource management to greater value adding and economically more productive arrangements. Fifth, without market access and reliable information, communities cannot prosper. Information to support decision making at all stages but particularly for product and market identification is crucial. Sixth, capacity building to enhance local skills is essential to close the gap between the poor and the rich, and between the powerful and the marginalised. Essential skills include negotiation, conflict management, accounting, and management. Seventh, partnerships that support community trade and create equitable benefit sharing systems are vital. The private sector can play a key role in the economic revitalisation of the forest sector. Unfortunately, it remains weak in most countries. To change this requires improving the investment climate.

The lack of accurate data on the state of Africa’s forests underscores the need for greater efforts at data collection to support strategic planning and to inform policy. If policy and planning are to respond to real world situations, there must be greater investment in collecting and analysing forest data and information.

Science has been a double-edged sword. It has enhanced understanding of complex problems and created a new basis for developing appropriate policies. However, too often as scientists have struggled to sell their findings, they have promoted a crisis intervention approach that has over-simplified and generalised problems and thus framed inappropriate solutions. It is evident that strictly technical or managerial solutions fail to take account of the complexities of politics and power. Finding a more positive and interactive role for science is essential. Developing SFM strategies presents numerous challenges because SFM is part of a complex nexus of biodiversity, agriculture, water, health, and environmental management that is influenced by extra-sectoral activities, such as land use planning, macro-economic policy, and power dynamics. This is further complicated by the fact that many forests are subject to competing tenure and governance claims, and multiple visions and objectives. For science to be responsive to African needs, a new culture among researchers and forest managers is needed. Many international research organisations raise money to undertake research and development in and for developing countries; however, research is often driven by the latest funding fads and the need to demonstrate impact rather than address the long-term needs of poor people (Keeley and Scoones 2003). The range of skills found in national and international forest institutions needs broadening to respond to complex issues such as land rights, democracy, resolving conflicts, and generating wealth creation.

Although forests generate multiple benefits, they are subject to numerous demands that invariably cause resource-based conflicts. Thus, viable solutions to forest related issues are often not only technical but also political. There will always be a need for laws that are not command and control but are guided by the need to conserve and recognise the rights of poor people. There will always be winners and losers, but the gap between them needs to be narrowed; processes that create spaces for poor people to participate are essential.

Many believe that a new era is dawning for Africa. NEPAD is a bold attempt to reverse current negative trends. Whilst providing a basis for coordinated response to poverty, NEPAD remains a
contested approach in terms of how “African” it is, whether it has been sufficiently consultative, the extent to which it is new, and whether it will replace or complement many existing development initiatives. Despite numerous commitments from donors, the funds promised to move from rhetoric to action have not materialised. Whether or not NEPAD initiatives will actually result in a new and more successful chapter in Africa’s story of development is subject to much debate.

References


