



ADDRESSING CONSERVATION COMMUNITY CONCERNS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT IN WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA TROPICAL TIMBER INVESTMENT FORUM: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN NATURAL TROPICAL FORESTS: 28-30 AUGUST 2007
ACCRA, GHANA

By: Abraham Baffoe
Forest Programme Leader
WWF-WARPO





OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- ❖ Forest resources ownership & Mgt practices in West and Central Africa
- ❖ Forest resources access and benefit sharing systems
- ❖ Issues of concern
- ❖ Governments attempts at addressing forest mgt issues
- ❖ Conservation Community's role towards addressing the issues
- ❖ WWF's role towards addressing the issues
- ❖ Constraints in addressing the issues
- ❖ Opportunities for addressing the issues
- ❖ The way forward/Recommendations





Forest resources ownership systems in West & Central Africa

- ❖ Different ownership systems: There are state and communities ownership systems.
- ❖ Harvesting and use rights are granted by the state largely to logging companies and to lesser extent communities.
- ❖ Management Functions: either the state, leaseholder or by both.
- ❖ However, states perform policy making, regulatory and monitoring functions.
- ❖ Generally communities are not adequately consulted in management decisions which affect their use rights.
- ❖ Existing legislations and bureaucracies rather restrict communities' access to and control over forest resources in West and Central Africa





Forest management practices in West & Central Africa

- ❖ Most countries central theme: “Forests are being managed on a sustained basis for the benefits of the society”
- ❖ However, management practices are timber-focused rather than contributions to livelihood of rural poor.
- ❖ Selective logging focusing on few commercial species rather than range of species present in the forest.
- ❖ Forest dependent communities have very little or no role in forest management.
- ❖ Collaborative forest mgt concept widely accepted in West & Central Africa but mainly in theory





Forest Resource Access & Benefits sharing

- ❖ Rural livelihood in W & C Africa is inextricably linked to forest resources.
- ❖ Rural population access to forest resources is highly limited with severe restrictions on commercial purposes.
- ❖ Access to forest resources is usually granted with commercial interest primarily to logging companies.
- ❖ Fees and taxes are fixed, collected and distributed by governments with no consultation with other stakeholders.
- ❖ Local communities are not involved in decision-making processes.





Issues of Concern

- ❖ Weaknesses in implementation and enforcement of laws and standard practices
- ❖ Unsustainable harvesting practices and illegal logging
- ❖ Poor mgt practices leading to structural degradation
- ❖ Unfair access and benefit sharing systems
- ❖ Weak institutional and governance structures to manage and regulate the use of forest resources
- ❖ Absence of incentives for community participation in forest management.
- ❖ Limited alternative livelihood options for the rural poor
- ❖ Slow progress on SFM initiatives including certification





Governments attempts at Addressing the issues

- ❖ Review of policies and laws
- ❖ Institutional reforms
- ❖ Gradual shift from timber management to forest management
- ❖ Slow but progressive shift towards collaborative forestry
- ❖ Commitments to international conventions eg. CBD, CITES etc
- ❖ Commitments to other international, regional and local initiatives eg. FLEG(T), AFLEG, VPA, ITTO targets, Log tracking etc





Conservation Community's Role towards addressing the issues

- ❖ Lobbying and advocacy for states' commitment to SFM principles and participatory sector governance.
- ❖ Awareness creation and education at all levels on issues affecting SFM.
- ❖ A shift from critique approach to constructive engagement with states and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Collaboration with state institutions on joint management programmes.
- ❖ Hand on projects and programmes to demonstrate best practices.





WWF Specific programmes towards addressing the issues

- ❖ Advocacy for better regulatory framework for collaborative forestry to include fair access and benefit sharing regime.
- ❖ Joint forest management initiatives with state institutions on protected areas management
- ❖ Establishment of GFTN to help improve forest management and eliminate illegal logging.
- ❖ Field projects on community forestry in Central Africa focusing on best practices for community forest management.
- ❖ Support to community forest management entities to establish community forest enterprises.





WWF-GFTN

- ❖ Set up by WWF to drive improvement in forest mgt and eliminate illegal logging using certification.
- ❖ Partnership with forest managers and private companies.
- ❖ Third-party assessment and analysis of forest management and CoC gaps.
- ❖ Time-bound action plan to sort out gaps
- ❖ Market links between responsible producers and buyers.
- ❖ Capacity building for local communities on sustainable forest management.
- ❖ Group certification for small forest enterprises.





Constraints in Addressing the issues

- ❖ Political instability and civil unrests
- ❖ Weaknesses/lapses in sectoral policies, laws and regulations.
- ❖ Ad hoc and uncoordinated policy-making processes instead of coherent approach.
- ❖ Weak and under-resourced sector institutions
- ❖ Circumvention of policies, laws and regulations by states and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Information gap on state of resources and poor resource assessment.
- ❖ Meeting incremental cost of forest mgt
- ❖ Weak sector governance.





Opportunities for Addressing the issues

- ❖ Global awareness and concerns over unsustainable forest mgt practices in the region.
- ❖ Emerging international, regional and national initiatives aimed at addressing illegal logging and associated trade.
- ❖ Increasing governments' commitment to legality and SFM
- ❖ Adoption and states interest in Collaborative Forestry.
- ❖ Increasing collaboration between governments and civil society organizations.
- ❖ Adoption of certification and growing interest by private companies.
- ❖ National and regional level interest in Community forestry.





The Way Forward/Recommendations

- ❖ Commitment to legality, certification and sustainability of the resource.
- ❖ Law enforcement, transparency and participatory sector governance.
- ❖ Adequate institutional support, formation of partnerships and inclusion.
- ❖ Empowering communities to engage in mgt, protection and monitoring.
- ❖ Capacity-building for collaborative and community forestry.
- ❖ Meaningful community engagement in forest management.
- ❖ Promotion of community forestry through improve access to forest resource and financial support.
- ❖ Governments to provide enabling environment for certification to thrive.
- ❖ Recognition and incentive to supporters and practitioners of responsible forestry.
- ❖ Social and environmental screening in forest sector financing.





THANK YOU.

