



NEPAD PLANNING AND COORDINATING AGENCY

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Decision Makers in Africa Address Climate Change through Sustainable Forest Management



September 8, 2015 Continental leaders, senior government officials and international development agencies as well as private sector, farmer organisations and civil society gathered in Durban, South Africa on September 7th to 11th September 2015, putting a spotlight on forests and sustainable forestry management as an integral part of sustainable natural resource use and management. The need for governments, civil society and the private sector to foster supportive policies and boost investments in forests for sustainable development is the focus of the XIV World Forestry Congress.



With over 3,500 delegates in attendance drawn from across the world as well as technical, education and research institutions under the theme: *Investing in a Sustainable Future*, participants are discussing ways to unleash the full potential

of forests to lift rural populations out of poverty by expanding economic opportunities, accessible to rural populations as well as acting as buffers against climate change and inspire new technologies and renewable products.

This XIV World Forestry Congress event is considered as the most important and inclusive gathering of the global forest community, and marks the first time the Congress is held in Africa since its inception in 1926.



The African Union Commission and partners including the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency have organised an “Africa Day” for Tuesday 8th September. *The Africa Day is specially designed to stimulate and facilitate sharing and learning around Africa’s experiences and lessons in the light of its aspirations, development goals and targets. Specifically, the Africa Day programme will provide an exclusive platform for governments, policy-makers, experts, private sector and practitioners to come together to share and debate ideas and exchange information in a bid to strengthen the common resolve and create partnerships for smart investments in African forests, 624 million hectares, which is more than 20 percent of the continent’s land area. Rich in biodiversity, the continent’s tropical forests are estimated to harbour 12,000 plant species, including 7500 or more that are endemic.*

Additional to the day-long “Africa Day session”, African governments and partners have organised a series of side events and poster exhibitions under the theme: *“Addressing climate change through sustainable forest management”*.

Although climate change projections for Africa are highly variable, the increase in temperature on the continent is likely to be higher than the average increase globally. There is a significant risk that the adaptive capacity of many African forest ecosystems will be compromised.

“For this event, a purpose-built African Pavilion has been mounted which will provide space for participants to showcase projects and developments in African forestry, especially in the context of fostering people-centred development priorities and objectives as articulated in Africa’s Agenda 2063.

The Congress and Congress theme is opportune in enabling Africa to take stock of its experiences, knowledge base and initiatives fostering sustainable forestry management as an integral sustainable development imperative. Delegates can look forward to learning about African experiences, successes and challenges alike, regarding the forestry ecosystem in the continent.” stated Martin Bwalya, Head, Program Development, Program Implementation and Coordination Directorate at NEPAD Agency.

Hosting the congress on the continent is quite significant as Africa mirrors many of the most important global challenges and opportunities for forest. It also presents an opportunity to reflect deeply on the future of Africa’s forest and help to galvanize governments’ response to the call in the Malabo Declaration for a sustainable forest management program framework.

Additionally, this is an occasion to consolidate responses and to improve coherence between forest uses and sustainability and this comes as a forerunner to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals summit in New York this September, COP 21 of Paris in December when, world leaders meet to agree on a comprehensive climate change agreement.

According to the FAO “The African region needs to move forward on a path of sustainable growth that ensures agriculture, food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, provision of energy (wood) and livelihoods, as well as build resilience to climate change. Sustainable management of forest has an important contributory role here. Forests help to decrease vulnerability to climate change, which could have serious negative implications on communities and economies. To enhance forestry’s role in this regard, more effective incentives, decent employment for youth and woman, good governance and positive returns on investment are needed.”

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About the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA)

The **NEPAD** Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), is a technical body and development vehicle of the African Union (AU). The NPCA is responsible for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (**NEPAD**), a strategic framework for pan-African socio-economic development. In order to address critical challenges facing the continent, the NPCA facilitates and coordinates development programmes and projects, pushing for partnerships, resource mobilisation, research and knowledge management.

