

FOREST POLICY STATEMENT

Sector Mission

The Mission of the Directorate of Forestry is to “practise and promote the sustainable and participatory management of forest resources and other woody vegetation, to enhance socio-economic development and environmental stability”.

The Aims of Forest Policy

Given State commitment to improving rural economic welfare, the forest sector will have to become productive in order to serve four basic aims flowing directly from the poverty reduction strategy.

- (a) *Reconcile rural development with biodiversity conservation by empowering farmers and local communities to manage forest resources on a sustainable basis.* The problem of biodiversity conservation is particularly acute in rural areas where poverty is pervasive. Fragile ecosystems are being degraded due to absence of woodland protection and management strategies, exacerbated by uncoordinated policies intended to promote rural development, as well as poor appreciation of the economic value of forest resources and biodiversity conservation. Maintenance of biological diversity therefore requires economic incentives to increase the net local benefits from conservation and sustainable forest resource use.
- (b) *Increase the yield of benefits of the national woodlands through research and development, application of silvicultural practices, protection and promotion of requisite economic support projects.* The growing stock in the woodlands, in addition to producing wood, also supply a variety of non marketed or partially marketed goods and services including; non wood products, water storage and filtration, soil protection, carbon storage and genetic diversity. The quantity and quality of the various benefits currently produced by the woodlands are not the only possible quantities and qualities that the resource might produce. Through external interventions, it is possible to change the output of these benefits in the desired direction. The purpose of economic support projects, particularly markets, transport and finance, is to spur supply and demand for forest products.
- (c) *Create favorable conditions to attract investment in small and medium industry based on wood and non-wood forest raw materials.* Investment in manufacturing will overall be determined by price and other incentives provided by macroeconomic policies of the State in monetary, fiscal, industry and trade terms. However, there are certain conditions that management of the national forest resources could fulfill that could make the sector attractive to business investment. Such conditions include; sustainable management of the resource to ensure security of forest raw material supply, entrusting the management of the resource for commercial purposes to the private sector, and social pricing to ensure efficient utilization of the forest raw materials.

- (d) *Implement innovative land-use strategies including multiple use conservation areas, protected areas, agro-forestry and a variety of other approaches designed to yield forestry global benefits.* The nation's substantial amount of woodlands and wooded grasslands are arguably formidable carbon sinks, and provide valuable habitats for wildlife and dry land biological diversity. Control and prevention of their degradation and decline of their land area can be achieved by means of suitable national economic policies that will eliminate the bias against forestry, and at the same time spur investment in innovative land-use strategies that are able to capture the domestic non-market values of forest benefits. Such national initiatives that will lead to the realization of forest global benefits should be supplemented by appropriate mechanism that will secure global willingness to pay in international transfers.

Strategic Framework for the Implementation of policy

To realize the already stated mission statement, the forest sector will follow the 4 program areas elaborated in the Forestry Strategic Plan of 1996. The *Institutional Capacity Building Programme* will focus on policy and legislative reforms, development of institutional management systems, human resource development, research and information management. The programme of *Community-Based Management of Natural Forests* will involve the participation of rural communities in forest management and will entail granting them ownership and tenure rights to forest resources to achieve management objectives. The *Farm Forestry Programme* will attempt to integrate forestry into existing farming systems to contribute to food security and income generation. The *Environmental Forestry Programme* will manage designated forest areas for conservation to yield both national and global benefits. These will be achieved through defined *midterm strategic objectives, result areas and annual plans*, with clear division of responsibilities among staff, backed by a clear *performance management system* to achieve efficiency and effectiveness

Strategic Objectives

The implementation of this policy will be guided by objectives derived from the strategic framework, with the sole purpose of defining areas and direction in which forestry development will take place. It is important to note that these strategic objectives function within Namibia's National Development Planning Framework.

These objectives are:

1. To implement Forest Policy, Legislation and to educate the public on these key documents.

2. To institutionalize the culture of Strategic and Forest Management Planning in the sector
3. To Implement the Strategy of Environmental Forestry:
4. To implement the strategy for community involvement in forestry in the whole country
5. To uphold the principles and practices of forest protection or conservation for national and global benefits
6. To promote and implement afforestation and reforestation programs
7. Conduct forest research and provide information for forest management
8. To institute a system for Human Resources Development and Organizational Effectiveness.
9. To provide baseline data on, and promote forest products and forest-based industries

Policy Instruments Available to The Authority

- (i) *Assignment of effective property rights for sustainable forest management.* Ownership is indispensable to the sustainable management of the nation's savannas and woodlands. Purely productive woodlands as an alternative land use will be left to the private sector (farmers, local communities, enterprises) in the context of an adequate institutional policy and incentive framework. The current traditional communal resource management practices and range management practices in commercial areas are both unable to guarantee sustainable management of nation's forest resources. Therefore, forest management practices in both communal and commercial areas will be updated to reflect the status of forest resource scarcity and intervention measures made to operate efficiently. These will also be supported by technical assistance from the Directorate of Forestry and non-governmental organizations with requisite technical expertise.

Subject the Namibian Constitution, State ownership of woodlands will be limited to areas where the returns from the productive aspects of management are supplemented by positive externalities due to a clear protective role such as watershed management and protection of unique forest ecosystems.

- (ii) *Regulations.* The regulation of private sectors (farmers, local communities, enterprises) activities in forestry will only take place in cases where incentives to induce voluntary policy implementation are ineffective and the assignment of property rights and mechanisms for negotiated settlements are insufficient.
- (iii) *Extension service.* The Directorate of Forestry will put well-trained officers in the field, who will supply timely and useful advice to private (farmers, local communities, enterprises) forest owners and maximize the number of contacts with them. The advice package will entail two kinds of information; knowledge of possible uses and potential benefits from forest management, and knowledge of techniques for applying these uses to the forest. In connection with this *traditional or indigenous technical knowledge* will be fully recognized, especially if consistent with, or can contribute to sustainable management and improve rural incomes. Moreover, the extension effort will address the multifaceted needs of the rural population (lack of purchasing power to acquire goods and inaccessibility to economic support infrastructure), and not be focused on forestry practices alone. A forest extension officer will have informative and coordinating tasks as an obligation towards the private forest owners in the area, which has been assigned to him/her, while the corresponding ministries remain responsible for the implementation of the economic support measures in their respective sectors.
- (iv) *Forest research.* The State will support research to generate missing information, which will for instance, broaden understanding of the economic value of forest biodiversity conservation. Other research tasks will include provision of some combination of expanding output per unit of input, solving problems to which there was previously no solution, and creating new opportunities. Proven results from mainstream forestry research will be adopted from the international community, or developed in-country whenever necessary, to increase the yield of forest products. This will entail development of transfer mechanisms to secure research results from outside the country, and investment in appropriate national forestry research institutions.

In-country research institutions will also have to address the much-neglected field of innovating technologies for social methods, needed for people's participation in State-sponsored forestry development programs. Explicit research strategy focusing on issues pertaining to community-based approach to forestry management is needed, because people's participation in such programs depends on social arrangements and political relations; on economic incentives; and administrative approaches. Economic benefits give people reasons to participate, and administrative arrangements link the decisions of the state bureaucracies to the will of the local communities.

- (v) *Support to overcome lack of ability.* Motivated private forest owners (farmers, local communities, enterprises) constrained by physical, technical and economic factors will be assisted through the national program on prevention and control of forest fires and other forms of forest protection. This will also include policy support to specialized non governmental organizations handling technical details of forest management; the sharing of costs to support some forestry practices and the promotion of rural-based credit programmes to make capital available to finance income generating forest management practices.
- (vi) *Gender equity.* Traditional cultures often pose a glass ceiling preventing women from participating fully in organizing development efforts in rural areas. Women's roles are stymied by negative preconceptions and stereotypes about their development capabilities. Because of this, their participation in development cannot be simply proclaimed and assume that it will happen by fiat. The Directorate of Forestry, in collaboration with other State agencies operating in rural areas is, the critical change agents in rural development. They will determine barriers to women's advancement and proceed to design strategies that will bring about purposeful cooperation between women and men, in order to achieve specific forestry development objectives.
- (vii) *Forest management.* The Directorate of Forestry will ensure that the forest practices by private forest owners' are transparent and accountable. Moreover, their management practices will respect all applicable laws of Namibia and international and regional forest-related treaties and agreements to which Namibia is a signatory. The aim of their management operations will be to realize maximum and efficient use of the multiple products and services of the forests. They will, in the process, also maintain the ecological functions such as the conservation of biological diversity, soil and water resources, unique ecosystems and landscapes.
- (viii) *Education and training.* Currently, insufficient professional guaranteeing sustainable forest management. The State will finance forestry education to create professional and technical staff capable of fulfilling all necessary tasks of implementing its forest policy statement. Technical and in-service training through short courses and other training programmes will address Namibia's unique dry woodland ecosystems with its many non-timber forest products. The training at this level will also make available skills required to manage woodland habitats for the tourism industry.

The Directorate of Forestry will use appropriate media of communication to educate the public on the importance of adopting effective forest management practices, how to exploit commercial markets for forest products, particularly non wood products, and how to secure their commitment to the conservation of forest related biological diversity.

- (ix) *Pricing of forest utilization.* The Directorate of Forestry will ensure that compensation for direct utilization of the nation's forest resources reflects the economic scarcity value of the resource. The aim of the social pricing policy will be to create a continuing incentive to conserve woodlands growing stock, provide an incentive to invest in technologies that will enhance forest sector productivity, and allow environmental costs to be reflected in forest end-product prices.
- (x) *Multi disciplinary approach to policy implementation.* The major task for the Directorate of Forestry lies in implementation, for which it has to address two critical challenges: a) overcome inter-sector barriers, and b) mount a truly multi disciplinary approach. For the first barrier, mechanisms will be developed for linking forestry and other sectors with a common goal of raising incomes and reducing poverty in rural areas, by seeking cooperation from other disciplines and stakeholders. Willingness to overcome these barriers is essential to the success of common strategy approach for improving the rural economy.

Institutional Mandates for Policy Implementation

The execution of the policy statement will be the responsibility of the following stakeholders:

- 1) The *Private sector* comprising of farmers, local communities, enterprises, may manage forests, for the provision of goods and services for which it is possible to obtain payment.
- 2) The *Directorate of Forestry and related State agencies* as the principal policy-maker or competent authority, will use policy instruments in a way that will influence the behavior of private stakeholders towards achieving the aims of the policy statement. In addition, the Directorate will reserve and manage unique forest ecosystems for provision of environmental benefits. The *policy of decentralization of government* and the *building of local capacities for forest management* are fully espoused in this policy.
- 3) *Non governmental organizations*, understood herein as stakeholders not driven by profit motive and not subject to direct political control will support the private sector's explicit actions to implement the policy statement; and
- 4) *The international community* may supplement, (through willingness to pay by way of international transfers), Namibia's domestic initiatives in the form of policy and land-use strategies designed to yield global forest benefits namely; biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and regulation of climate change.

Financing Policy Implementation

Financing is indispensable to policy implementation. The responsibility of financing the proposed policy actions is distributed over the stakeholders as follows:

1. Preparation and execution of forest management plans will be financed by respective forest owners and then monitored and evaluated by the Directorate of Forestry;
2. Administrative expenditures arising from regulation of private forest owners will be financed by the Directorate of Forestry and related State agencies;
3. Extension and research will be financed by Directorate of Forestry and related State agencies, non governmental organizations, and whenever feasible by the private owners by way of cost-sharing;
4. Support to overcome private owners inability to manage forests may be financed either directly through budgetary allocation to the Directorate of Forestry or indirectly by the central Government, and the Directorate will determine the amount of adequate support needed;
5. Administrative expenditures arising from the design and implementation of strategies to ensure complementary roles of women and men in forestry development programs will be financed by the Directorate of Forestry and collaborating Government agencies;
6. Education and training will be financed largely by the State, and to a certain extent by the private sector based on skills needs assessment carried out by the Directorate of Forestry; and
7. The design of the strategy of multi-disciplinary approach will, be financed by the Directorate of Forestry. Its implementation co-financed by collaborating State agencies.

Control of Policy Implementation

The proposed policy actions that may enhance contributions of the forest sector to the nation's welfare will be transmitted through the rural integrated poverty reduction strategy. The State's welfare goals for rural developments are too remote from the impact of the proposed policy actions to serve as reliable guides to their effectiveness. The Directorate of Forestry needs guides that will provide this information. The required guides will serve as intermediate objectives and as important linkage variables that change in response to the authority's policy actions.

Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are recognized in this policy documents as the parameters needed to assist in the assessment of the country's trend in forest conditions and forest management. The agreed criteria will define the essential components of sustainable forest management consisting of biological, socioeconomic benefits and policy framework (laws, regulations, economic measures) needed to facilitate the achievement of forest sustainability; and indicators will describe and measure changes in the agreed national criteria.

A portfolio of **Criteria** and **Indicators** will enable the authority to measure progress towards sustainable forest management. In particular, the information provided by the indicators will be used in the identification of whether forest owners' interventions are collectively taking the country towards, or away from, sustainable forest management. Their interpretation will assist in the determination of policy adjustments and course corrections needed to improve forest management. Thus, indicators will form the basis of stimulating appropriate policy adjustments to achieve the aims of the State forest policy statement.

Education, training and research will be used to build the internal capacity of the authority to collect data on all indicators needed to assess trends in forest conditions and forest sustainability.

AGENDA FOR ACTION

This statement has reasserted a set of objectives that will guide the State's forest development policy into the 21st Century. Each objective is accompanied by a concise explanation of how a feasible strategy to achieve it will be designed and executed. This section is devoted to a summary of how the State will sequence the implementation of the proposed policy actions.

Fundamental Policy Actions

These policy actions require fundamental changes in relations within Namibian society. Their implementation will therefore be gradual, over a long period of time.

Forests land ownership is essential if markets of forest products are to work effectively and the resource to be managed sustainably. The resource ownership issue is critical in the communal areas because its absence creates the preconditions for forest degradation and the associated environmental damage. In these areas, forest policy will promote investment in forest resource management by exploiting the leasehold tenure arrangements of the national land policy being proposed to benefit individuals, groups of people and communities.

Gender and economic empowerment is indispensable to welfare improvement in the rural areas. The National Gender Policy seeks to resolve resistance to change in the roles that women could undertake in organizing development efforts through education and training. In the meantime, the State is initiating and

supporting policy measures aimed at addressing overt discrimination against the meaningful participation of women in income generating activities. In the forest sector, training and education in forestry, as well as employment in the public forest service, will increasingly be opened up for women. Linkages between established women groups and forestry extension services will be pursued vigorously.

Policy Actions Already in Effect

Permits are currently the main policy instruments used by the Directorate of Forestry to regulate private sector forestry activities. A permit is required for harvesting, transportation and marketing of forest products, from both commercial and communal areas.

Skills upgrading through education and training is at the moment the main objective of Directorate of Forestry capacity building. It is envisaged that by the end of this Century, the Directorate would have built sufficient competent skills at the technical level, and will attain adequacy in professional skills by the end of the first decade in the 21st Century. Moreover, the Directorate continues to strengthen its internal management capacity through an in-service training program that makes available the skills required by the staff, to perform assigned tasks satisfactorily.

The Directorate is undertaking forestry research on species trials, for purposes of afforestation and amenity plantings, improvement and promotion of indigenous fruit trees and dune stabilization among others. The Directorate, through the execution of community-based forestry projects, is gradually expanding its research capacity to cover institutional arrangements that will deliver the desired results in the development of partnerships, particularly in the communal areas.

Harmonization of forest and other related sectors is gradually taking place. In the communal areas, agroforestry is being promoted in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development. In the commercial areas, forest policy encourages the production and exportation of charcoal as a realistic land-use alternative in the process of mitigating the problem of bush encroachment. De-bushing for charcoal production enhances range productivity and supplements incomes from livestock production.

The Directorate of Forestry in close collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, is exploring ways and means of spawning Small and Medium Enterprises based on forest wood and non wood raw materials. The envisaged development of forest certification in Namibia, will enable the country to exploit export market opportunities, particularly in charcoal and non wood forest products.

Ministry of Environment and Tourism policy of devolving forestry management responsibilities to the local communities, enhances close collaboration between the Directorate of Community Development, in the Ministry of Regional and

Local Government and Housing, and the forest sector. Complementarity between Community Development policy and forest policy is a key prerequisite to development of effective community-based forest management practices.

Regional land-use allocation bodies and committees, within the Ministry of Lands, Resettlements and Rehabilitation, will have the mandate to approve the gazettment of any forest land. Moreover, land tenure arrangements proposed in the Land Policy are a primary incentive for achieving sustainable forest management in the communal areas.

Within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, there is inherent collaboration between forestry and wildlife management in the protection of plants within and outside parks. Implementation of forest policy is also expected to play a major role in drawing management plans for community-based wildlife conservancies, by setting allowable harvests of wood and fire control. With respect to tourism, forest policy guarantees sustainable management of the wildlife habitat, which is a major national income generating land-use alternative.

Namibia has already recognized the importance of making a contribution to the global commons, by sanctioning the following Global Environmental Instruments: (1) Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) acceded in 1991; (2) UNCED Declarations agreed to at Rio in 1992; (3) Forest Principles signed at Rio in 1992; (4) Convention on Biological Diversity signed at Rio in 1992; (5) Convention on the Protection of the Ozone layer and the Montreal Protocol acceded in 1993; (6) Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar) acceded in 1995; (7) Convention on Climate Change signed at Rio in 1992 and ratified in 1997; and (8) Convention on Combating Decertification signed at Rio and ratified in 1997.

Agenda for Early Action

The policy actions given below are needed but are at the moment not applied, they will therefore be taken as an agenda for priority action.

Forest management plans for all forms of forest ownership in Namibia are nonexistent. Poor woodland management and protection strategies coupled with poor appreciation of the need to maintain and manage forest ecosystems, is the greatest challenge in sustainable forest management in Namibia. Work on preparation and execution of plans, stating forest management objectives and the means to achieve them, will commence as soon as possible.

Forestry extension effort will be introduced as an important element of a successful program of sustainable forest management. Currently, the Directorate of Forestry does not carry out extension. The introduction of extension services will be characterized by both specialized and general staff. The former staff would address the issue of increasing forestry productivity and the latter would focus on poverty alleviation.

Development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management will be initiated as soon as possible. The national criteria and indicators program will subsequently facilitate certification of forest products with market potential, and link the rural economy to urban and export markets. In addition it will be used to assess the performance of the sector and also to demonstrate its economic worth in National Development.

Technical assistance and a credit program will be needed to overcome private forest owner's inability to practice sustainable forest management. Forest authority will exploit appropriate State macroeconomic policies to secure resources to fund such broad-based rural programs that would partly benefit forest owners.