



Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library Foundation

High – Level Technical Workshop on Afforestation in Africa and Climate Change (Abeokuta, December 15 – 17, 2008)

Summary Report

1. The Centre for Human Security (CHS) of the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library Foundation (OOPL) in collaboration with Nigeria Tree Planters organised a three - day high level technical workshop on *Afforestation in Africa and Climate Change*. The workshop which held at Obasanjo Hilltop Residence, Abeokuta, Nigeria from December 15 – 17, 2008 had in attendance a cross section of stakeholders from across Africa. They were joined by other distinguished and accomplished men and women from government, the organized private sector, civil society, academia, multilateral organizations and development agencies from other parts of the world.
2. The workshop was declared open by His Excellency. **President Olusegun Obasanjo**, the immediate past President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. **Prof. Wangari Maathai Nobel Peace Laureate**, delivered the keynote address. **Jan Heino**, Assistant Director General, Food and Agricultural organization (FAO) read a statement on behalf of the DG FAO. The workshop also benefited from instructive presence of **Mr. Mahamad Azmi Ibrahim**, *Deputy Director, Forestry Department Peninsula Malaysia*, **Oba Otudeko**, *Chairman of Honeywell Group*, **Mr Moyo Ajekigbe**, *Managing Director of First Bank Nigeria PLC*, **Prof. Akin Mabogunje**, *Chairman, Unity Bank PLC and Chair of the Programme Development Committee of OOPL*, **Prof. Dapo Afolabi**, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, **Prof. Ishaq Oloyede**, Vice Chancellor, University of Ilorin, **Chief Giwa Bisi Rodipe**, President of the Nigeria Tree Planter, amongst several other distinguished and accomplished men and women.
3. Participants commended the Centre for Human Security and The Nigeria Tree Planters for convening the workshop, particularly for seeking to sensitize policymakers and various stakeholder groups from across the country on the danger of deforestation, environmental degradation and climate change as well as on the potential of agro forestry as an investment option. Participants also expressed appreciation to the convener of the workshop, former President Olusegun Obasanjo for his thoughtfulness, vision, courage and foresight in establishing the Centre for Human Security in the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library Foundation. They expressed hope that the CHS and OOPL would become formidable institutions that will help in tackling the challenges and constraints to human security in Africa.

4. Further, participants saluted efforts of the Programme Development Committee of the OOPL for placing the issue of climate change and the potential of agro forestry as a preventive measure against climate change and a viable investment option on the regional agenda.
5. The workshop focused mainly on three major issue areas: (i) *Regulatory Instruments of the Environment*; (ii) *Sustainable Forest Management and Enterprise*; and (iii) *Afforestation as Agribusiness*. Participants reviewed the existing conventions, international treaties and protocols on climate change. The workshop also benefitted from experiences of best practices from other regions of the world. Participants were alarmed by the forecast that current practices in deforestation in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular will aggravate the current trends to resource based conflicts.
6. Participants noted that while poverty may be at the root of deforestation, it also holds potential for serving as a platform for reversing the trends through agro forestry which is a multi purpose vehicle for preventing environmental degradation as well as serving as tool for wealth creation and poverty alleviation. The workshop therefore recommended that institutions, schools, churches and mosques as well as individuals must plant trees on the available land. Participants also recommended that every Nigerian must plant a tree a year. To facilitate this the workshop enjoined local governments to develop nurseries to provide seedlings and provide cuttings.
7. As a pragmatic approach, the workshop underscored the need for a more nuanced understanding of carbon trading in Africa as well as framework for mobilizing the different categories and levels of stakeholders. There is need for a paradigm shift to encourage and enforce the Voluntary Trading Market mechanism which is targeted at generating revenue or income for states, individuals, and corporate entities who invest in tree planting.
8. Noting that the challenge of contributing to reversing the challenges of climate change, the workshop reasoned that responsibilities must be at various levels, from the individual to the community to the local state and federal governments' levels. Participants therefore urged that as individuals we should embrace and mainstream the concept of Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle in managing the environmental problems in order to improve our everyday lifestyle. This will require additional policy and legislative support from the various levels of government.
9. The workshop lamented the non domestication of the various conventions and instruments on climate change to which African countries have acceded. This was attributed to the low level of institutional and individual capacities to understand and interpret these instruments. Workshop observed that over the years, due to low level of participatory planning, weak policy framework, weak institutional and law enforcement capacity, many African countries have not been able to factor environmental concerns into their development planning and as such remain largely unaware of the existence and potential of viable environment friendly investment options. Participants urged the federal government

to review the conventions and treaties acceded to over the years, and initiate the domestication of same. Participants called for greater and more effective enforcement of the embargo on exportation of round logs and semi-processed logs. The workshop also decried the constant exclusion of forestry experts during the negotiations, decision-making at the local, national, and international levels and urged that steps be made to engage them and utilize their expertise. Participants also urged African governments to take advantage of the current shift towards renewable energy source to create green jobs as a strategy for combating rising youth unemployment.

10. Participants also called on the organized private sectors to invest massively in agro forestry. Towards this end, they urged the CHS to organize series of dialogues mainly to sensitize the organised private sector and other relevant stakeholder groups in Africa and Malaysia on the potential of agro forestry as an investment option. **They urged the federal government to develop appropriate policies and framework for mobilizing private sector investments in agro forestry.** There is need for people to engage in tree planting in order to arrest the advancing desert and wind erosion, thereby creating a system of carbon emissions trading that allows the buying selling of carbon ‘credits’ which invariably will aid prevent global warming and promote the planting of trees on degraded land.
11. It was pointed out that the involvement of private sector in Agro forestry must be informed by the need to maintain ecological equilibrium, sociological balance and economy viability.
12. The conference saluted the initiatives of the University of Ilorin in Agro forestry and urged other universities to initiate and undertake similar initiatives.
13. The workshop also recognised the importance of traditional rulers and institution particularly that they possess some potential, influence and capacity for promoting and moving the tree – planting crusade forward. They therefore recommend that conscious and deliberate efforts be made to mobilise and maximise the use of their status, influence and capacity to drive the agenda forward
14. Reviewing the challenges ahead and as a follow up mechanism, participants urged the CHS to promote the creation of an ad-hoc framework for facilitating the much needed synergy between the technical and intellectual practitioners of forestry and tree planting.

TOWARDS AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

- a. Participants called on the national governments particularly Federal Government to hasten the promulgation and implementation of the National Forestry Policy, which was approved in 2006 but yet to be signed into law.

- b. The workshop recommends that the nation should encourage, enforce and participate in the Voluntary Trading Market for carbon so as to generate income and revenue.
- c. Participants urged that as individuals we should embrace the concept of Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle and mainstream same in checking the environmental problems in order to improve our everyday lifestyle. This will require additional policy and legislative support from the various levels of government.
- d. Participants urged the national governments to review the conventions and treaties acceded to over the years, and initiate the domestication of same.
- e. Participants called for greater and stricter enforcement of the embargo on exportation of round logs and semi-processed logs.
- f. The workshop also decried the constant exclusion of Africa forestry experts during the negotiations, decision-making at the local, national, and international levels and urged that steps be made to engage them and utilize their expertise.
- g. The workshop urged the CHS to organize series of dialogues mainly to sensitize the organized private sector and other relevant stakeholder groups in Africa and Malaysia on the potential of agro forestry as an investment option.
- h. The workshop urged the federal government to develop appropriate policies and framework for mobilizing private sector investments in agro forestry.
- i. Participants also urged the people to engage in tree planting in order to arrest the advancing desert and wind erosion of the soil, thereby creating a system of carbon emissions trading that allows the buying and selling of carbon 'credits' which invariably will prevent global warming and promote the planting of trees on degraded land.
- j. The workshop also identified agro forestry as a tool for wealth creation and poverty alleviation. The workshop therefore recommended that institutions, schools, churches and mosques as well as individuals must plant trees on the available land. Participants also recommended that every Nigerian must plant a tree a year. To facilitate this workshop enjoined local governments to develop nurseries to provide seedlings and provide roots.
- k. Development and inclusion of functional environmental curriculum on climate change both at primary and secondary schools.
- l. Establishment of forest trust fund that will be managed by a newly established National Forest Commission.

Further to recommendation on page three of the draft report, it is proposed that that a **National Association of Foresters and Tree Planters be established** and will be promoted by the Centre for Human Security:

Preamble

The association will function as a spatial arrangement and a framework for effective synergy between the intellectuals and practitioners in forestry in Nigeria. The association will mobilize private action and government efforts on all aspects of forestry in Nigeria.

The association will also promote the establishment of a National Council on Forestry. The national council on forestry will be a combination of government and private sector.

Based on informal consultation, the following is proposed as the interim management team. The concept paper for the association will be developed early in January 2009 for consideration.

- A. Patron – Prof. A. Mabogunje
- B. Interim President – Prof. S. K. Adeyoju
- C. Interim Deputy President Prof. Isiaka Mohammed
- D. Interim Secretary – Dr. Collins Gardner
- E. Interim Zonal Vice Presidents
 - i. Chief Giwa Bisi Rodipe – South West
 - ii. Dr. Salihu K. Musa – North West
 - iii. Prof. Ishaq Oloyede – North Central
 - iv. Prof. Magnus C. Ofoh – South East
 - v. Kushi A. Mugana – North East
 - vi. Dr. Sylvester Okonofua – South South

The interim secretariat will be temporarily located and housed at Africa Leadership Forum, Ota – Ogun State. The TOR for above interim committee include,

1. To ensure that the Forestry Policy be updated in the light of the outcome of this high level workshop.
2. Agro Forestry to enjoy no less than incentives granted to manufacturing firms – the example of Malaysia is instructive in this case.
3. Mobilisation of support for Forestry Policy and disseminate the contents of the law.
4. Advocacy for special fund for agro forestry
5. Mobilization of members for the association.
6. Liaise with all stakeholders
7. Sourcing and presenting best practices for adaption and adoption.
8. The voice crying for an about forest everywhere.