

TANZANIA FOREST WORKING GROUP

CLOSING YEAR 2008 AND STARTING YEAR 2009

Overview

The Tanzania Forestry Working Group (TFWG) is one of the working groups supported by the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum focussing on natural resource management and governance issues. TFWG has been implementing its activities by engaging with the government in a positive and constructive way to address governance shortfalls in the forestry sector. Engagement with government has included working with the Parliamentary Environment and Natural Resource committee, the Sector Wide Approach Steering Committee of the Forestry and Beekeeping Department (FBD), through technical meetings organised by the FBD and lastly through individual consultations within the FBD.

TFWG has achieved many of its activities through holding bi-monthly meetings discussing topical issues, developing collaborative proposals and sharing information (networking). There have been a lot of achievements made as a group. We are proud of these achievements and we should look at ways of sustaining them. But we also have some challenges that we need to address and make sure that we do not fall backwards but instead go forward. In this small document I have tried to record the few achievements that may be of interest and which people would like to carry forward.

We are close to the end of year and it would be great if we start thinking of next year. To start with I would like to congratulate all those who made possible all the activities that we had planned to implement this happen. Without your diligent efforts nothing or very little could have happened. Let me briefly recap what happened this year.

1. Mama Misitu campaign

We had a long struggle in putting up a proposal to curb the problem of illegal logging in Tanzania during year 2008. This was only possible through our normal working group meetings which we have been hosting in Dar Es Salaam. I have to thank all those who actively participated in the meetings and all those who gave their inputs through formal and informal discussions and by emails. The joint communication and campaign project was finally launched in May this year. Members who were at the launch saw the fruits of their efforts in developing the project.

I have to say that the campaign has been supported fully by the government as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism led the launch at the Karimjee Hall in Dar Es Salaam. After the launch we had to continue struggling with designing the implementation of the campaign which finally took off in late July 2008. Implementation with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland is now in progress at the national level and in two pilot districts at the grassroot level and we have an implementing team based at the TFCG offices in Dar Es Salaam. The role of this team is to work with TFWG members in the field to coordinate the implementation of Mama Misitu. I would like to re-iterate that Mama Misitu has been designed to work through TFWG members, we hope with increasing levels of resourcing being made available. In addition, a crucial partner will be MJUMITA - the Community Forest Conservation Network. I continue to request all of you to continue your support of this undertaking in any way you feel appropriate. The success of this project is the result of joining together our efforts and therefore, is in our hands.

2. Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM)

In the process of developing the Mama Misitu campaign we were also requested to write a proposal on IFM in Tanzania. Thanks a lot to all those who gave inputs to this as we could not make all members get involved since we were limited with time to make all participate. We finally secured funding from DANIDA and after advertising in newspapers and consultations with the Director of Forestry and Beekeeping we managed to contract HTSPE Tanzania Limited working in association with Resources Extraction Monitoring of the United Kingdom to conduct the design work of IFM in Tanzania. HTSPE Tanzania Limited has already signed the contract and is now developing the action plan for designing IFM. The TFWG will be a key stakeholder having a major say in how IFM is developed. Once the consultants finalise the action plan we will keep you informed so that you are also fully on board during the process.

3. Biofuels

This is another area where as a Forestry Working Group we have not done much but we have been discussing this subject since last year without a concrete direction. We had presentations from the late Dr. Andreas Böhringer, Nike Doggart and others and there is a feeling that we have to carry their ideas forward. In September 2008 we had a small discussion group where we came up with ideas to conduct a study on biofuels. The study has already been commissioned with support from IIED and possible additional support from IUCN. The aim of the study is to develop a 'best practices guide' for biofuels investments in the country, in terms of land acquisitions, investment procedures and production. The research project is being carried out by Emmanuel Sulle,

and is closely coordinated with WWF and FAO – who have also commissioned or have been carrying out research on biofuels. The overall aim is to develop a study that complements other studies and helps fill in the gaps. Two case studies will be selected in December in consultation with the TFWG. This is again expected to give some directions on governance issues on land and forest resource use rights that may be affected by biofuel investments in the country. The findings will also be used to feed into the national policy development process for biofuels in Tanzania.

4. Carbon

The issue of the carbon trade and climate change has been discussed at various fora since last year. There were small team meetings in Arusha supported by TNRF earlier this year and of late the Katoomba workshop held in Dar Es Salaam in September 2008. There are bits of information here and there that need to be coordinated. I think it is time we start thinking strategically as a working group how we should proceed with this subject to see good practical working models – or ‘Incubators’ in the field and communities getting benefits from such models.

Conclusion

To conclude, I have few ideas that I am proposing to you for carrying forward most of what has happened in year 2008 to year 2009 and making some of the issues more sustainable. **I was thinking that it would be great to showcase the work of TFWG members and the role of TFWG to other NGOs, the private sector and the DPG. The showcase could take the form of an ‘open day’ with a series of debates of key issues as well as the opportunity for TFWG members to showcase their work.**

1. This message will be circulated to all TFWG members as their end of year key message to take up from the TFWG Coordinator.
2. Most of these activities mentioned above are being implemented by partners in the field with facilitation and support from TNRF. It is time now that we should think on how we should keep information flow from the grassroots implementers to the national policy makers and visa versa so that we do not miss something for the sustainability of activities being implemented.
3. As a working group we have to start evaluating our work performance. What we did well and what we didn’t do so well which has to be corrected and not repeated.
4. Have a meeting to display our activities and products and let the outside world understand what we are doing by demonstrating our value. Here it should not only be the work of the TFWG but should also include some of our partners work related to forest governance issues.

5. Together with all these I propose to make visits to your offices if at all you agree and have a discussion on this and get your ideas then we conduct a day's session where we go through what I have proposed. Some of my questions here to you all are;
- i) Do you see these ideas useful way of taking things forward or what would you like to propose and how would you see it happening?
 - ii) When do you think such work could be undertaking realising that you also have your own work? And who do you propose to organise the work etc?
 - iii) Where do you propose to do this sort of work such as the proposed exhibitions and how?