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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR HARMONIZATION OF FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN AFRICA

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FOREWORD

This study, undertaken at the request of the countries of the African region, expressed in the programme of work and priorities 1984-1985 of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is based on a paper prepared by a consultant, and was reviewed in close collaboration with the Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization.
INTRODUCTION

1. For several decades, the African continent has been suffering relentlessly from the effects of deterioration and depletion of vegetal cover. Interaction of natural and induced forces have led to deforestation and degradation, resulting in soil erosion, desertification, degradation of watersheds, destruction in many cases of wildlife habitat and other ecological damage, with severe economic implications. The indiscriminate destruction of the vegetal cover, including forests and savanna shrubs, is fundamentally changing the environmental conditions of the continent, so that more than 4 million hectares of forest are disappearing every year - with the desert encroaching 100 km southwards from the Sahara since the 1970s.

2. This report deals with the problems and prospects of harmonization of African forest policies, and contains two major postulations. In the first are described problems, constraints and the overall situation of African forestry. The second analyses prospects for harmonization of African forest policies, both at regional and subregional levels. This report concludes with specific and concrete recommendations for serious consideration by African policy-makers towards improving African forests in the short, medium and long term.

I. THE SETTING

A. Situation of the African forestry sector

3. According to FAO estimates, forests and woodland areas of Africa covered more than 1,257 million ha in 1984, of which the exploitable proportion was estimated at about 25 per cent. The main and most disturbing feature of African forests is their high speed of disappearance. More than 1.3 million ha of closed broad-leaved forests in tropical Africa, and over 2.4 million of forest-grassland formations disappear each year in the region. African forests, especially moist and dry closed forests, face serious silviculture and management problems. Consequently, overexploitation and degradation take their toll. In total, only 1.75 million ha from a total of 163.5 million ha of productive closed forests, were deemed to be under proper management in Africa at the end of 1980. At the same time, arid and semiarid areas of the Sahel, Eastern and Southern Africa, are rapidly increasing, aided by drought, and in some cases desertification is inevitable.

4. In North Africa, i.e., Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, certain forest species have suffered heavy losses from fire, overgrazing, fuelwood consumption and overexploitation. Egypt has only petrified forests. The natural productive forest of this subregion is either in the mountains or distant localities, and in spite of this and the special attention from the forestry authorities, the rate of disappearance is increasing daily. The green belt project is an attempt at arresting the advance of the desert.

5. West African countries, formerly endowed with important forest riches, are now at the brink of the biggest forest disaster if adequate legal, technical and economic measures are not immediately taken. Nigeria and the Ivory Coast will probably lose their closed forest resources by the mid-1990s, as a consequence of indiscriminate overexploitation and shifting cultivation. The yearly rate of
forest disappearance in both countries is about 300,000 ha. Two other countries, Ghana and Liberia, will totally lose their commercial species within the next 10 years. This is the grim prospect before the West African subregion by the early 2000s if current extraction rates continue unchecked.

6. In Central Africa, tropical forests, especially the closed humid forests, with 170 million ha and 100 per cent of hardwood species, are an important reserve which should be protected, not only because of the field of forestry products, but also to conserve the environmental conditions of that part of Africa. The utilization of these resources differs. There is usually very heavy exploitation in the coastal areas and less so in the interior. Cameroon and Gabon are considered to use their forest resources more reasonably.

7. The East African countries, poorly endowed with humid tropical forests, are among the most rich in savanna and in coniferous resources and especially in eucalyptus. Closed broad-leaves forests occupied an estimated area in 1980 of 22.5 million ha against 192.2 million ha of savanna. Forests in this area have tremendous importance, not only because they are the source of fuelwood and charcoal and industrial wood, but also they contribute significantly as a regulator of environmental conditions.

8. Africa is well endowed with a large variety of wildlife species thriving in distinctive ecological areas. This provides an important part of the African community's protein consumption, mainly in the savanna and humid forest areas. National parks account for an important diversity of wildlife resources, which are managed mainly for tourism purposes, and so earn valuable foreign exchange. Though Africa is facing serious problems of drought and desertification, the inland water resources are an important source of fish protein; unfortunately this is not being adequately exploited in some zones (Eastern, Southern and Central African lakes) and is overexploited in others (West Africa).

9. The roundwood production of Africa was 295.4 million m³ in 1973 and 443 million m³ in 1983, registering an average increase of 4.1 per cent annually. This increase is directly related to the annual average population increase of 2.8 to 3 per cent during this period. Most of the roundwood was used for fuelwood and charcoal. Industrial roundwood production was 41.3 million m³ in 1983, or 9.3 per cent of the total roundwood yield. Between 1980 and 1983 all the African subregions registered an increase in industrial roundwood production except the West African subregion. Sawnwood and sleepers production was 6.3 million m³ in 1983, and increased at an annual average rate of 1.9 per cent from 1980 to 1983. Nevertheless, sawnwood export value declined in the same period from $162.3 million in 1980 to $138.1 million in 1983, due to deteriorating terms of trade, inflation and world economic decline. Panels, paper and paper-board production registered a positive increment of 10.4 per cent and 0.4 per cent in volume respectively between 1980 and 1983. In 1983, the African production of fuelwood and charcoal was about 402 million m³, all of which was consumed in the continent.

10. Though there is no available data upon production of medicines, fibres, incense, gums, resins, food, fodder, etc., it is very important to consider this as a part of African forest production in daily use and consumption by African communities.
11. An important feature of African forestry relates to forest-land ownership. In tropical Africa, the symbiosis between customary rights and statutory laws introduced by colonial administrations occurred in different ways. In anglophone countries, a large proportion of forests was handed over to the traditional communities after the forests had, in fact, been constituted. In francophone countries, all the forests were made state property, with the local communities enjoying numerous usage rights and this situation has generally continued to the present time despite sporadic attempts at change. The socialist countries, particularly Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola, have nationalized all their forest lands. Some North African countries such as Algeria and the Libya Arab Jamahiriya have terminated private ownership of forest lands, although there are a few pockets of private grazing forests in parts of Algeria. Some other North African countries like Morocco and Tunisia have private, communal and state forests. But on the whole, private ownership is very rare in tropical Africa except in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The de facto control of forest resources by the people, irrespective of whether governments have de jure ownership, often makes implementation of conservation or utilization strategies problematic.

12. The development of forest industries in Africa has not been harmonious over the last decade. Only some countries have registered outstanding production improvements in Africa. The numbers and capacity of the different types of wood-based industries in Africa are unknown. However, the largest concentrations of sawmill, veneer and plywood factories are located in West Africa. Many well-endowed countries of Central Africa have relatively few wood processing plants. Lack of demand, inexperience and poor management and dearth of skilled manpower, obsolete machinery and inadequate maintenance are among the main reasons for industry failure. North Africa has few forest resources and, therefore, depends on timber imports. The vast majority of its sawn timber consumption, and in many cases wood-chips for the particle board industry, are imported from Europe. Similarly the veneer and plywood requirements come from Europe. Europe and Asia. Nevertheless, the North African subregion produces more than 50 per cent of its pulp and paper needs. The East African subregion is noted for small-scale factories, mainly based on raw materials from coniferous plantations. But because of small national markets, lack of regional co-ordination for processing at an economic scale, and poor access to wider international markets, these countries have failed to fully utilize the existing forests. The situation is particularly severe for pulp and paper which constitute a large-scale industry.

13. Since 1970, imports of forest products have risen much faster than exports. Between 1975 and 1980, imports of pulp and paper accounted for 60 per cent of the total forest products, and roundwood for 51 per cent of the exports. In terms of quantity, pulp and paper averaged 3.6 million tons per year during the same period. Thus, it is clear that while unprocessed wood (logs) dominate Africa's exports, its imports are mostly manufactured products with a higher value-added content.

14. On the other hand, although the number of species exported had increased gradually, more than twentyfold could be exploited still usable timber species in Africa. Timber trade for roundwoods is solely in the South-North direction while for finished wood products, it is North-South. The trade in non-wood forest products is restricted to small transactions between communities in the vicinity of international boundaries. Here the metropolitan companies and/or
transnational corporations are well established, maintaining a high economic
dependency on raw materials and an external dependency on technology, finance
and international markets. Nevertheless, some countries, especially in West
Africa, are moving in and regulating the activities of the forest-based trans-
national corporations. However, it is apparent that the francophone companies
have a more intractable hold in their domain. Yet, because of the economic
weakness of many African countries, the international perspectives are per-
manently longitudinal towards Europe, rather than latitudinally across Africa.
It is true, however, that the differences in outlook, method and technology
between anglophone and francophone foresters hardly contribute to the improvement
of the forest sector.

B. Existing forestry sector policies and institutions

15. It needs to be emphasized that national forest legislation in Africa differs
in definition and legal provisions. While there is a general agreement on timber
as a basic forest resource, the inclusion and identification of non-cellulose resources are perfunctory. There is a preponderance of forest laws relating to
the exploitation and management of timber, to the neglect of other resources,
mainly in francophone countries, and there is lack of general and common under-
standing on the ramifications of forest resources.

16. Most African forest policies and legislation do not recognize the inter-
dependence and complementarity of agriculture and forestry; the two vocations are
usually perceived as irreconcilable vocations. Moreover, African countries are
apt to promulgate far too many laws in excess of their executing capacity; the
numerous laws dealing with interrelated aspects of forestry in francophone countries
are bewildering. The forest policies and legislation in anglophone countries
have largely remained as they were in colonial times. In many instances, the
traditional legal arrangements and institutions in vogue during colonial times,
have resisted change and crystallized into economic groups in the post-indepen-
dence era. The African forestry setting, still bound by colonial statutory laws,
is institutionally weak. Where it attracts investment, the opportunities and
ease with which its weaknesses are exploited, particularly by transnational
corporations, are very easy to see. Thus, although the sector generates consider-
able revenue for national economies in certain countries -- Ghana, Gabon, Cameroon,
the Ivory Coast, Liberia and the Congo -- the benefit could be even greater with
strong institutions.

17. Since 1958, the African scene has been replete with numerous attempts at
economic co-operation, and there have been a number of subregional and regional
economic groupings and institutions. Out of the 50 subregional and regional inter-
governmental organizations which exist in Africa, about 30 are devoted to land
and water resources, livestock, fisheries and forestry, wood and wood products,
education and trade, and 14 are concerned with economic and customs unions within
Africa. The most important are ECOWAS, UDEAC, CEEAC, Mano River Union, CEAC, PTA,
SADOC, CILSS, etc. However, the most important efforts directed to forestry issues
included the now defunct East African Community, the Mano River Union; the ECOWAS,
the African Timber Organization (ATO), the PTA and the Lagos Plan of Action,
which contains the most explicit set of forestry objectives.
18. By its terms of reference, ATO, which was founded in 1975 in Bangui, should seriously be addressing the problems of price stabilization and imbalanced wood exports as a prelude to full-scale processing and export of high-quality finished products only. However, after 10 years, ATO has hardly attained the laudable objectives for which it was established. Clearly, the member States have not adopted a concerted position on timber production ceilings; the national character of forest industries has not changed, at least not in response to ATO's decisions, and neither has there been an agreed position on pricing, and on dealing with transnational corporations. As a result, the latter are able to exploit the disunity and therefore obtain the most advantageous commercial conditions at the expense of the countries in the region.

19. The weakness of national African forestry policies, and the difficulties faced by the countries in their attempts at economic co-operation, have some link with the activities of the multinational corporations operating in African forestry mainly in Gabon, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Nigeria, Rwanda and Zaire. These multinational corporations are generally controlled by the Germans and the French, and secondarily by the Belgians, Danes and Canadians (in Zaire), and the Yugoslavs (in the Central African Republic). It is important to note that in most cases, there is virtually no British investment in the former French colonies, little discernible French investment in the former British colonies, and practically no African company investment in other African countries (the exceptions being two companies from the Ivory Coast: the Forestière Équatoriale of Abidjan, which owns a majority interest in two companies operating in Cameroon: Forestière de Campo and Forestière Équatoriale du Cameroun; and the Entreprise forestière de bois africaine centr-africaine in the Central African Republic). Thus, African countries constitute major separate forest markets or areas of economic influence of Britain, France, Belgium, etc.

C. Non-forestry sector policies and institutions affecting the forestry sector

20. It has already been stated that most African forestry policies and legislation do not recognize the interdependence and complementarity of agriculture and forestry, the two being usually perceived as disparate vocations. On the other hand, sectoral economic activities, such as agricultural, livestock, industrial, forestry, social, etc., are generally undertaken independently, the administrative structures as well as the sectoral plans and programmes pushing in different directions. As a result, sectoral activities are often contradictory and have a negative impact on the overall development of African countries.

21. In implementing irrigation and intensive agriculture projects, forests are generally destroyed and not restored once irrigation activities start and develop. This is also generally so when implementing industrial projects. Existing poor land-use policy and planning are conducive to deforestation and desertification. In all countries there is a little co-ordination in energy planning to optimize the combination of imported fuels with local fuelwood and charcoal-based energy production. At the same time, no serious attempt has been made to seek ways of meeting some energy needs in timber-deficit countries by charcoal imports from well-forested ones. In all areas of trade in forest products and other articles,
there is dependence on non-African currencies for these transactions. Since these currencies are scarce, it is a foregone conclusion that significant African trade and co-operation will remain largely unattainable. Often imports of coal are encouraged from as far away as Europe because of still prevailing monetary spheres of influence.

22. In most African countries, wildlife move freely from one country to another, and are easy prey to international poachers. This is an expression of lack of co-operation and co-ordination between African countries. Therefore, all the discrepant sectoral activities to which reference has been made tend to poster deforestation and desertification.

D. The Lagos Plan of Action

23. The plan for the implementation of the Monrovia Strategy is the strongest appeal yet from African governments to concentrate efforts, resources and experience for the promotion and the achievement of a balanced economic and social development of the continent. The objectives assigned by the Lagos Plan of Action to the forestry sector include inventory of resources, their conservation and regeneration, exploitation and greater local processing for improved value. To achieve this, the Lagos Plan of Action calls for increased training and research and finally for regional co-ordination of all these activities. The Lagos Plan of Action indicated three major quantifiable objectives:

   (a) An expansion of 10 per cent per year up to 1985 of zones which are to be subject to regeneration programmes;

   (b) An expansion of 10 per cent of forest reserves over the period 1980-1985;

   (c) A progressive prohibition of the exportation of raw logs reducing them by 50 per cent in proportion to their level of 1980, for the period 1980-1985.

Unfortunately the Lagos Plan of Action forestry objectives were not completed in the target period of 1980-1985 and there has been insufficient time and inadequate resources for implementation and assessment. The industrial capacity expansion, organizational and financial problems are immense. Furthermore, agencies such as multinational corporations, which would be most affected by the change, have offered little incentives to the achievement of the target.

II. PROSPECTS FOR POLICY HARMONIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT

A. Harmonization of forestry sector policies

24. In encouraging co-operation and harmonization in forestry sector development, the Lagos Plan of Action views such harmonization has an essential tool to achieve success. This analysis will make proposals for harmonization with this in mind. This section reviews the main features of African forest policies and institutions in order to propose adequate solutions. Clearly, forestry legislation and the subsequent setting up of administrative services must take cognizance in most African countries of new conditions, particularly in respect of subregional and regional aspects. Thus, countries well-endowed with forest resources should put
emphasis on legislation aiming at regulating timber extraction, wood processing, and export of forest products, mainly under the philosophy of the Lagos Plan of Action.

25. On the other hand, the first priority in the arid and semi-arid areas of Africa consists of promulgating laws on conservation of the existing forests and soil resources, promoting at the same time the active cooperation of the rural communities for resolving their fuelwood problems. These countries should jointly formulate policies and strengthen any institutions that will permit supply of forest goods and services from the well-endowed to the less-endowed countries. This will include commercial forest products, charcoal, wildlife products and the protection of key shared watersheds. As an example, certain key river basin systems require stronger cooperation on forestry aspects, such as the Nile, the Zaire, the Niger, the Senegal and the Zambezi.

26. Major reorganizations of forestry institutions and departments, especially those dealing with desertification control, should be undertaken. Reported constraints to fulfillment of the objectives of forest policies are usually "shortage of funds" or problems relating to recruitment of suitable trained staff at all levels. In this connection, education, training and research play the more important role among the policies that should be promoted. Today, no formal courses at university level are generally available within Africa for French-speaking countries, while the English-speaking countries are much better off. In forestry research, only a few countries of the East African Community and the Maghreb region have fully-fledged institutions. Moreover, training in wildlife remains at too low a level in most African countries.

27. In the timber-producing countries of tropical Africa, research is generally related to forest products and the plantations. Nevertheless, the silvicultural problems of these plantations and the natural resources are still immense and in many cases fall outside research policy priorities. At present, natural regeneration of tropical forest does not exist and many countries have adopted artificial methods of regeneration, especially with fast-growing species without analysing deeply the advantages and inconsistencies. On the other hand, and considering the depletion of existing forest in most African countries, forest plantations, combined with natural regeneration of the existing forest, should be promoted.

28. Accessibility to forests by network of roads plays an essential role in combating and preventing forest-fires, as well as in the expanding of forest products. Consequently, policies to improve accessibility of forest resources could benefit most silviculture activities. In the area of forest industries and wood processing, legislation on regulation and control of the exports of logs as well as increasing the proportion of primary species processed before exports should be enhanced.

29. Concerning the pulp and paper industry policy, serious plans ought to be undertaken for localizing this kind of industry, according to the principles of economy and environment. At present, adequate markets are only possible when more than one country market is available to each mill. Advantages should, therefore, be taken of any existing preferential trade zone, or regional bodies, to agree on creation of a few economic mills instead of costly national ones.
Finally, wildlife policies should be formulated so as to yield greater economic gain for the countries, as well as environmental benefits. With regard to trans-boundary aspects, existing institutions and policies which allow adequate cooperation and improvement are essential.

B. Improving the non-forestry policy framework for better sector performance

30. As was recognized in many FAO sessions, one of the most important prerequisites for efficient forest conservation in Africa is that government should adopt a truly political will. In this context, it is imperative that policy-makers keep in mind the necessity for interdependence and complementarity between agriculture and forestry and all aspects of land use strategies and development. Therefore, policies should be promoted and legislation in action to make more rational use of existing agriculture and forestry areas, with a view to reducing the daily mounting pressure on both sectors. On the other hand, the use and utilization of forest resources should be included under socio-economic schemes to improve the standard of living of the rural communities, maintain the condition of the environment and increase the active co-operation of small farmers in forest activities.

31. The administrative structures should reflect the linkage between forestry and other important sectors, such as livestock, fishery, industry, education, trade, etc. Furthermore, non-forestry institutions, sometimes linked with forest planning activities, should be involved in the forest administration to strengthen their technical relationship. Above all, the forestry administration should provide incentives and training to the rural communities to make this sector more effective and efficiently operational. Moreover, with regard to energy research, more co-operation should be promoted among the African countries at subregional level to reverse the current adverse situation. The management, development and utilization of wildlife and protected resources should be enhanced and formulated under sub-regional wildlife programmes, specifically in trans-boundary migration cases.

III. MECHANISMS FOR HARMONIZATION

A. The role of African Governments and IGOs

32. Government actions are supposed to be effected through African intergovernmental bodies. Some African countries have started, or will soon start, to review the legal instruments that guide their forestry development, to ensure that their laws are adequate to meet national realities, and with regard to such aspects as rural people's participation, the communal users' rights, and also the relationship between forestry and other rural development activities. As already stated, since 1958, the African scene is replete with numerous attempts at economic co-operation and there have been a number of subregional and regional economic groupings and institutions such as ECOWAS, OCEAC, OEAQ, PTA, SADCC, CILSS, etc. Most of these organizations are dealing with land, water resources, livestock, fisheries, forestry and agriculture development.

33. Concerning specifically the sector of forestry, and taking the example of ECOWAS, one of the recommendations relating to "Reafforestation Decade" (1983-1993) of the first joint Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, Water Resources and Forestry,
organized by ECOMAS and held in Cotonou, Benin in March 1983, called on member States to consider the necessity of "formulating a master plan for short- and medium-term national forestry development" as a measure to control the alarming rate of desert encroachment in the subregion. This is in recognition of the fact that further efforts are required to ensure that the new orientations of forestry development are reflected with more emphasis and coherence in forest policy and legislation drafted in the light of prevailing conditions in each country.

34. The African Timber Organization (ATO) founded in 1975 in Bangui by 11 African countries should, by its terms of reference, be addressing the problems of price stabilization and imbalanced wood exports as a prelude to full-scale processing and export of high-quality finished products. ATO, which has not so far been able to realize its objectives, should be reinforced to do so for the future decade, 1985-1995.

35. At the continental level, and following their adoption of the "Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa" in July 1979, the African Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at an Extraordinary Session in Lagos, Nigeria in April 1980, adopted a "Plan of Action for the implementation of the Monrovia Strategy..." — the Lagos Plan of Action. The forest priorities in the Lagos Plan of Action already mentioned are still valid for the development of Africa, and should be extended to the new decade 1985-1995.

36. OAU is working closely with the Economic Commission for Africa in the forestry sector, the objectives of which are to:

   (a) Prepare strategies and programmes at national, subregional and regional levels for the conservation of African forest resources, in particular those with a special economic and environmental importance (co-operating with FAO and UNEP);

   (b) Assist governments involved in the identification and assessment of specific forest resources;

   (c) Assist in strengthening national, subregional and regional institutions which could improve the capacity for management, technical achievement and research, bearing in mind the principle of maximizing the efficiency of existing institutions.

37. A recent change in the United Nations administrative and project-execution framework in Africa has been the creation of five Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) within ECA, one each for North Africa (Tangiers), West Africa (Niamey), Central Africa (Yaounde), the Great Lakes countries (Gisenyi) and Eastern-Southern Africa (Lusaka). It is intended that these MULPOCs form the main units for subregional co-operation and considerable effort has been made and continues to be made by ECA to document the current status and prospects of many social and economic parameters for the MULPOCs so that decisions on their future development can rest on a concrete foundation of facts. ECA is currently strengthening the staffing of the MULPOCs for that purpose.
B. The role of international organizations and institutions

38. The role of the international organizations and institutions is essential in the formulation and implementation of balanced forestry policies, both at subregional and regional levels of Africa. In this connection, transferring forestry information, being a forum for debate on African forest issues, providing finance and expertise for forest policies implementation are key roles for these international organizations. The United Nations system, which includes ECA, UNSO, UNEP and FAO, gives particular support to strengthening subregional and regional initiatives and institutions of training, conservation, research and development of the African forestry sector.

39. FAO programmes and strategies basically coincide with the Lagos Plan of Action objectives; integrating forestry activities more closely with agriculture, ensuring adequate supplies of fuelwood and preserving the forest resources for the coming generations. In addition, the FAO dimensions should include: (a) forest resources conservation; (b) new resources creation; (c) forest processing; (d) forest industrialization; and (e) trade and marketing of forest products. The FAO African Forest Commission is a good institution but should be adapted to the new conditions affecting the African continent, such as desertification, drought, forest depletion, etc. On the other hand, forest information from FAO statutory bodies should be analysed in greater co-operation with ECA and OAU, taking into account their objectives and priorities.

40. Since ECA has been very weak in forestry activities for the last two decades, it should reinforce its capabilities in such activities to cope with the new natural and social conditions currently facing most African countries. Experience of international non-governmental organizations should also be co-ordinated at subregional and regional levels to benefit African Governments and peoples. Each day more direct co-operation between African Governments and non-governmental organizations could play an important role in solving specific forestry problems.

IV. CONCLUSION

41. The problem of African regional forestry policy may be divided into three main categories:

(a) The first pertains to the harmonization of technical aspects such as:

(i) removal of obstacles to trade;

(ii) uniform classification of forest products so as to improve commercial practices;

(iii) introduction of programmes and self-sufficiency to supply services in forestry;

(iv) provision of aid to forestry;

(v) co-operation in training;

(vi) co-ordination of planned research programme to avoid overlapping to make the work of research institutes more effective;
(vii) dissemination of information; and

(viii) compilation of accurate and essential statistics.

(b) The second set of problems concerns timber production policy.

In view of the notably uneven supply and demand patterns, steps should be taken not only to stabilize total output but also to improve the distribution of timber products to individual member States. In the long term, it is envisaged that national forest policies should be co-ordinated in a comprehensive subregional plan of forest resources, production and management.

(c) The third set of problems relates to decision on:

(i) regional co-operation on forestry protection;

(ii) structural investments in agriculture, forestry and other projects characterized by extensive land use;

(iii) policy of timber concessions and taxation; and

(iv) incentives for stabilizing forest land tenure in a rapidly changing African society.

42. Basic to all these proposals and problems of African forest policy harmonization is the provision of finance which would have to be on a sustained large scale. Since forestry is generally afflicted by scarcity of development resources, it is imperative that the sector should articulate clearly and forcefully, its requirements at the earliest opportunity. As a prerequisite, a meeting of the chiefs of the African forest services should be jointly convened by OAU and ECA to initiate the preparation of measures for harmonizing and co-ordinating forest policies, and for ensuring their effective implementation in member States. In this connection, OAU, ECA and other relevant United Nations agencies have an important role to play, not only in continually identifying feasible areas of co-operative efforts at subregional and regional levels, but also in seeing to it that such interests are sustained by individual countries. With its wealth of experience in international economic co-operation, ECA should be in a good position to initiate a vigorous set of activities aimed at harmonizing forest resources policy. What is urgently needed is a matching of resources with the will and technical nucleus now existing in ECA.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. On desertification control in Africa

43. Considering the deforestation and desertification processes, the causes of which have very serious international dimensions and affect an increasing number of countries, co-ordinated efforts by the countries stricken by the phenomenon are required. In this connection, co-operation at subregional level is recommended in:

(a) Protection and management of the natural forests, pastures and national parks;
(b) Placing in reserve of endangered and degraded lands to favour as much as possible the natural regeneration of grasses and trees, with close co-operation with rural communities;

(c) Large scale and woodlots planting for meeting both population and industrial needs, and to supply fuel and forage;

(d) Brush fires control and prevention;

(e) Windbreaks planting for irrigated and dry farming crops, and planting of field trees (Acacia albida, for example);

(f) Soil protection and rehabilitation works;

(g) Watersheds and river basins protection and development; protection of hydraulic infrastructure.

B. On wildlife management

44. Considering the continuous depletion of the wildlife population, both by increasing numbers of hunters in most of the African countries and diminution of natural habitats, it is recommended to:

(a) Strengthen inter-State co-operation, especially at subregional level, by adhering to the principles of the OAU Convention on Wildlife as soon as it is ratified;

(b) Invite African Governments to co-operate more intensively with the Ecosystem Conservation Group and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other similar specialized institutions;

(c) Revise existing national forestry legislation and create new ones where they do not exist, taking into account characteristics of wildlife, forest and water resources and the phenomenon of transboundary migration of wildlife;

(d) Create special reserves for wildlife species which are seriously threatened by extinction and to promote subregional co-operation in this area;

(e) Strengthen training and research activities and the capacities of the two major centres of Garoua (Cameroon) and Mweka (United Republic of Tanzania) and to analyse possibilities of transforming them into subregional centres;

(f) Invite governments to co-operate more with specialized non-governmental and governmental organizations and dealing with wildlife species and habitat protection to benefit from experiences of some institutions such as the East African Wildlife Society.

C. On forest industry development at subregional level

45. Considering that:

(a) Africa, which is a traditional exporter of logs is in deficit on fuel-wood, especially in the arid and semiarid areas;
(b) Africa is a net exporter of low-value products and a net importer of high-value added items, some of them made from its own raw materials exported for offshore processing;

(c) On the key commodity (sawn timber), Africa is not only importing increasing quantities but is shifting towards greater use of coniferous timber;

(d) Yaounde and Gisenyi MULPOC subregions which have about 70 per cent of Africa's useful forests contain an insignificant and declining wood-processing industry and account for only 4-5 per cent of Africa's total gross domestic product (GDP). and are not considered financially strong enough to independently rejuvenate and expand their forest industries to the point of meeting Africa's total needs;

it is recommended:

(a) To solve the problem of Africa's deficit and low level of intra-African trade for self-reliance by rejuvenating African forest industry and adding new capacities;

(b) To set up co-operative ventures between countries and subregions, mainly between deficit MULPOC subregions (Tangiers and Lusaka) and timber-rich MULPOC subregions (Yaounde and Gisenyi) with the former supplying the bulk of any project's financing including investment for infrastructural development;

(c) To establish co-operative ventures between the Lusaka MULPOC and the Tangiers MULPOC subregions whereby some of the Lusaka MULPOC subregion's softwood plantations, originally intended for export pulp, could be converted to sawn timber plantations to cater for Tangiers MULPOC subregion's severe and worsening deficit for this commodity;

(d) For establishing the proposed co-operative ventures, African subregions should simultaneously invest in: (i) improved coastal shipping; (ii) improved port facilities with special wood-products wharves in key regions of Central and West Africa; (iii) new or improved overland communications to markets in East/Southern Africa from timber-rich Central Africa;

(e) To invest heavily and adequately in resource processing and ancillary infrastructures suggested to increase, among other things, intra-African trade in the medium and long term;

(f) To launch, in the short term, a campaign for promoting greater use of African sawn-wood instead of imported so that this campaign could yield impressive results if directed at the Tangiers MULPOC subregion and supported by competitive prices and reliable delivery;

(g) To reinforce the African Timber Organization so that it could help subregions carry out the activities mentioned;

(h) Since pulp and paper are the main wood products being imported into Africa, governments should give priority to joint establishment of manufacturing facilities, taking into account the forest resources available and the needs for large markets to ensure economic viability.
D. On manpower, training and research

46. Considering that manpower training and research are basic instruments to cope with the deterioration of the continent, and that successful implementation of policies depends on the availability of trained manpower for all activities including research, it is recommended that governments co-operate in efforts to:

(a) Strengthen and increase staff training facilities at all levels according to the specific problems of each subregion by organizing technical courses, seminars and other continuing education;

(b) (i) Evaluate existing forestry schools or training centres and projects in the pipeline with a view to transforming some of them into subregional schools or strengthen already existing ones in order to avoid duplication of activities; (ii) put emphasis in the training programmes on social forestry, soil erosion and desertification control and on forest resources conservation; (iii) co-operate in these fields with the United Nations University;

(c) Intensify in-service training of workers and peasants and improve their capabilities in forest and pasture management, establishment of woodlots and industrial plantations, forest exploitation and soil conservation;

(d) Emphasize university training in forestry, especially in francophone countries;

(e) Improve planning and integration of forestry research activities at subregional and regional levels to establish the basis for better information, dissemination and exchange of experience.

E. On fuelwood energy supply and development

47. Considering that:

(a) About 80 per cent of the energy needs in African countries are covered by wood fuels, mainly in domestic use;

(b) The efficiency of converting wood into usable energy in households is very low (around 10 per cent);

(c) The oil resources of the region are limited and unevenly distributed;

(d) The energy consumption is growing rapidly in Africa because of quick population growth, migration toward urban areas and increasing industrialization; it is recommended that countries co-operate to:

(a) Improve the efficiency of wood energy conversion systems used in the region in order to reduce the wastage of forest resources;
(b) Substitute progressively fossil fuels in the industrial sector by wood fuels since these can be used much more efficiently in industrial activities than in households, and conversely, promote the progressive use of fossil fuels in the domestic sector;

(c) Promote economically self-sustained energy plantations.

F. On the African Timber Organization

48. Considering that:

(a) Since its foundation in 1975, ATO has hardly attained any of the objectives for which it was established (wood price stabilization, wood processing promotion, processed wood export promotion, etc.);

(b) The member States have not adopted a concerted position on timber production ceilings, neither has there been an agreed position on pricing and on transnational corporations;

(c) The national character of forest industries has not fundamentally changed in response to ATO's decisions;

it is recommended that:

(a) ATO should be reinforced so that it could help countries and subregions carry out the activities proposed in the recommendations on African forest industry development by: (i) spreading its scope and terms of reference; (ii) augmenting the participation of African countries; (iii) improving and increasing its activities in research and training;

(b) ATO should better co-operate with African subregional organizations and institutions to enhance its capabilities at regional level;

(c) ATO should better co-operate with multinational corporations dealing with forestry so that it could be considered as the African privileged partner for all African forest issues;

(d) ATO should satisfy needs for expansion towards forest improvement, infrastructure, shipping, and industry development;

(e) ECA and OAU should jointly help ATO carry out its activities by means to be jointly identified by the three organizations.

G. On the creation of a Forest Conservation Union for Africa and a Forestry Information Centre for Africa

49. Considering that:

(a) The African continent has been suffering for several decades from the effects of depletion of vegetal cover, deforestation and desertification;
(b) The forestry sector should be given the crucial importance it deserves in the overall development process of the African continent; it is recommended that:

(a) OAU and ECA should jointly urge the African countries towards the creation of a Forest Conservation Union for Africa which would comprise forest producers, consumers, scientists and research institutions, and the terms of reference of which could be jointly defined by the two regional organizations;

(b) ECA should create a Forestry Information Centre for Africa within itself, the information materials of which should be provided at subregional level by the MULPOCs.