

Report on the HBS Future Workshop on Resources in East and Horn of Africa



Nairobi, 6th- 9th November 2012

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Schedule

Tuesday, 6th of November 2012

- Morning: Field excursion to Nairobi National Park
- 15:00-18:00: Introduction, Getting to know

Wednesday, 7th of November 2012

- 9:00-17:30: Problem Phase

Thursday, 8th of November 2012

- 9:00-17:30: Vision Phase + Realization Phase

Friday, 9th of November 2012

- 9:00-17:00: Realization Phase

Tuesday, 6th of November 2012

Get together

The workshop started with the participants stating their main expectations from the workshop. The main expectations of the participants were broadly classified as:

- To learn and share knowledge on natural resources in the region.
- To identify main problems related to natural resources use and sustainable solutions
- To explore how development can be achieved while ensuring conservation of the environment
- To find sustainable solutions to natural resources exploitation in order to reduce degradation and conflicts

Some participants had specific expectations which could not fall in the broad categories listed above. These were:

- To come up with a clear definition of equitable resource distribution
- To explore how awareness on sustainable resource use can be achieved
- Design a mechanism on how to make follow-up on findings of the future workshops
- To explore ideas on how land-related resource exploitation issues can be addressed
- To get inputs for “The Mines and Geology Bill for Kenya, 2012 ” which one of the participants was involved in drafting

Wednesday, 7th of November 2012

Problem Phase

After identifying the main problems rubricated in the main fields according to the resources they were addressing during their presentation the day before (water, climate change, biodiversity, agriculture, land, forest and oil & minerals) there were 4 working groups divided through choosing the individual preferences. These groups were; the water group, the oil and mineral resources group, the forest group and the climate change group. The main issues that came up during the group discussions were:



1. Water

The group deliberated on many issues facing the region but what came up mostly was that:

- Water scarcity was the greatest challenge in the region
- Poor water resources management (watershed, reservoirs, distribution networks and treatment facilities) was making the water scarcity issue more severe.
- Water pollution in rivers which is a big problem in the cities is due to poor sanitation facilities while in the rural areas it is due to agricultural related chemicals use.

Cross-border conflict related to water came up with the Nile Basin Treaty being criticized by the participants as unfairly denying the residents of the River Nile source the right to benefit from the water and granting downstream countries like Egypt and North Sudan undue advantage.

2. Oil and mineral resources

The group pointed out that the region is endowed with many oil and mineral resources though many have not been discovered or exploited. Examples pointed out are oil in Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, Natural gas in Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda, coal in Kenya, copper and diamond in Tanzania and gold in Kenya and Tanzania.

The group pointed out community exclusion by governments and mining companies in sharing of the oil and minerals proceeds as the greatest source of local conflicts. Conflict between North and South Sudan due to oil was the only cross-border conflict mentioned but was not deliberated upon.

3. Forest

The group was in agreement the biggest problem facing the forestry sector is deforestation mainly for wood fuel (charcoal and firewood) and shifting cultivation. Development projects especially roads, residential buildings and government facilities were also pointed out as contributing to deforestation in Kenya and Tanzania. Construction of a road in Serengeti National Reserve and Nairobi National Park were discussed as examples.

4. Climate change

The group discussed the effects of climate change but did not clearly point out specific issues in the region.

Thursday, 8th of November 2012

Utopian phase

The working groups were divided into; water and agriculture; conflicts and minerals; unsustainable exploitation of forests; and fossil fuels use. This was based on the main thematic topics voted for by the participants after the problem phase. The main discussion points in this phase were:



1. Water and agriculture

Protection of the water catchment areas was identified as an important point of intervention to ensure sustainable water supply. This, the participants discussed can be achieved through afforestation / reforestation programs. Participatory approaches were identified as the most suitable way of involving communities in these programs to ensure success. Pollution of water bodies by pesticides and fertilizers was identified as a cause of concern due to the resulting health problems. Use of organic farm inputs was floated as a possible solution to this problem. Rain water harvesting (in water pans and underground tanks) in the arid and semi-arid lands was suggested as a source of water for agricultural use. However, some participants were against this as the stagnant water forms breeding areas for Malaria. An example of Ethiopia was given as a case where people abandoned water harvesting due to spread of malaria.

2. Conflicts and minerals

The group was in agreement that the community should be actively involved in the decisions process regarding their relocation, environmental protection and compensation for the land where oil and minerals are to be mined. They further pointed out that the community should be represented in forums where benefits sharing mechanisms are to be set up so that they can get a fair share of the accrued benefits.

However, unclear land tenure where most of the land in the region is owned by the government or collectively owned by the community was cited as a potential source of conflict when making such decisions.

3. Unsustainable exploitation of forests

The issue on whether only forest cover or forest rich in biodiversity is important was discussed at length. While some people in the group felt natural forests rich in biodiversity are more important, others felt that plantation forests should be equally promoted to meet fuel and timber needs of the community. Proponents of promotion of natural forests only felt that the objective should be promotion of alternative sources of energy and construction materials rather than planning forestry programs with these in mind.

There was also discussion on whether a forest should be merely conserved and interaction with the community allowed or the forest should be completely out of bounds for the community (conservation v/s protection). In the end, participatory approach where the community is sensitized on importance of conservation, involved in the conservation programs and sustainable exploitation of the forest allowed was preferred by the group.

4. Use of fossil fuels

The group was in agreement that use of fossil fuels should be discouraged due to its effect on health and the environment. However, the group agreed this can never be a popular decision since most of the countries in the region have in the recent past discovered fossil fuels which they will be looking forward to exploit (Oil in Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda; coal in Kenya; natural gas in Tanzania and Rwanda). In already fossil fuels dependent economies like Sudan and South Sudan, the decision to move away from fossil fuels would also never be accepted by the government. However, the members were in consensus that nuclear energy should not be an alternative to fossil fuels due to the high environmental and health risks it poses.

All in all, the group agreed on the need to promote renewable energy sources to reduce the share of fossil fuels consumed in the region.

Thursday, 8th of November 2012 and Friday, 9th of November 2012

Implementation phase

The topics of discussion remained the same as in the utopian phase but new working groups were set up. The main points of discussion were:

1. Water and agriculture

Rehabilitation of water catchment areas was pointed out as a major objective but since most poor farmers cannot afford to buy tree seedlings, free distribution of seedlings by government or NGO's was recommended. Also discussed was importance of a campaign on importance of watershed management to the locals through awareness creation using the media and other public forums to ensure success of the rehabilitation programs. Heinrich Böll Foundation was fronted as one of the organizations that can be involved in awareness creation.



2. Conflicts and minerals

The issue on how to spell out what percentage of the proceeds a private company mining in an area should give back to the community was extensively discussed. In the end, the group could only agree that the government should establish a committee composed of community members, company representatives, and government officials to deliberate on all matters regarding community welfare. Since most communities in such mineral rich regions are not economically or academically (low literacy levels) empowered, support of NGO's would be needed in awareness creation on their rights and representation in the select committees. It was agreed that HBF could play an active role in empowering the communities through awareness creation and representation in negotiation forums.

3. Unsustainable exploitation of forests

The group agreed there is need to introduce programs on sustainable conversion technologies for charcoal to reduced wood wastage. Promotion of alternative domestic energy sources like solar to reduce the pressure on existing forest was also agreed on. Massive afforestation/ reforestation programs need to be started to raise the forest cover to the acceptable 10% (currently in many countries it is below 5%). The participants also agreed that agroforestry should be promoted to ensure food security in conjunction with providing important wood and energy resources. Relevant government bodies and NGO's should be involved in the afforestation/reforestation and agroforestry promotion process.

4. Use of fossil fuels

The group agreed there is need to lobby government to draft laws that favours a shift to renewable energy sources like solar, wind, geothermal and hydro. The participants also observed there is a need for the governments to promote investments and research and development in renewable energy sources so that the sector can compete with the fossil fuels.