

ELGEYO MARAKWET FOREST POLICY, BILL AND REGULATIONS DEVELOPMENT AND DIALOGUE ON FOREST CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

ELGEYO MARAKWET AND NAROK COUNTY ASSEMBLY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ON NATIONAL REDD+ PROCESS MEETING HELD ON 12TH AND 13TH JUNE 2019 AT SENTRIM HOTEL AND LODGES, NAIVASHA.

INTRODUCTION.

The county government of Elgeyo Marakwet is in the process of enacting a Bill on Forest Conservation and Management. The purpose of this bill is to conserve, protect, enhance, coordinate, administer, regulate, create awareness and mitigate on environmental degradation, greenhouse emissions, charcoal burning, clearance of the Kerio Escarpment for farming activities, encroachment into existing water sources in the fragile ecosystem of Kaptagat and Cherangany water towers, siltation on water harvesting facilities and adverse weather conditions experienced during the dry seasons. In the process of enacting this bill, several consultative meetings have been held between major county stakeholders such as Elgeyo Marakwet County Assembly Joint Committees on Environment, Physical planning and Administration of Justice, the Sengwer community representatives and other forest sector stakeholders and with UNDP partnership. In the work plan developed during the Elgeyo Marakwet Executive consultative meeting in Kisumu, it was agreed that a consultative meeting be convened between Narok County Assembly Committee on environment representatives and Elgeyo Marakwet County Assembly representatives on environment and administration of justice to exchange knowledge and experience they have gained since they developed their Environment Management Act in 2017. This meeting was in Naivasha at Sentrim Hotels and Lodges on 12th to 13th June 2019.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

- Enable the County Environmental Committees and stakeholders to understand the National REDD+ process.
- Enhance the understanding on human rights based approach and indigenous people rights and perspective.
- Share knowledge on the legislation process in both counties and the role of indigenous communities.
- Identify areas of collaboration and lessons learned on the county forest management and conservation.

The meeting was officially opened by the Chairman Environment Committee, Narok County Assembly and thereafter, Judy Ndichu, UNDP-FCPF focal person introduced the participants to the meeting and the essence of the meeting. She explained to the participants the importance of dialogue to enable the County Governments and UNDP, to extend support towards facilitating the dialogue process and support the counties in developing legislations on forest management in order to enable the counties to implement the national Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016 and Climate Change Act 2016 that obligates counties to develop county specific policies and legislations on adaptation and mitigation on effects of climate Change. She explained that the process will incorporate the participation of communities in the county including the indigenous communities in the management of the forest resources. The Chairman on his part explained the need to have exchange programs to internalize forest issues per each county, which have diverse cultural conservation techniques. He noted that although Narok County had passed a

law on environment, more education is needed to support dissemination of information and create awareness on ownership issues. Mostly the law passed concentrated more on Government forests and those of the communities, leaving forests on individual land holdings without specific items to ensure controlled harvesting of trees. The net effect of this has made Narok County the biggest source of charcoal in Nairobi city. About 3,800 bags of charcoal are supplied to Nairobi every day from Narok county. Narok forest cover stood at 16.66% while Elgeyo Marakwet 37.47%.

NATIONAL REDD+ PROCESS BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, NAROK COUNTY.

The mitigation chapter of Kenya's *National Climate Change Action Plan* (NCCAP) includes a low-carbon scenario assessment of the forestry and other land-use sector. The assessment comprises a preliminary historical greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory to 2010, a reference case projecting emissions to 2030, and low-carbon development options to bend down emissions from the business-as-usual path set out in the reference case. The low carbon analysis concludes that the forestry sector has the largest potential to mitigate emissions in Kenya, and restoration of forests on degraded lands is a potential REDD+ activity that can help to increase carbon sinks. The Government of Kenya has established a REDD+ Coordination Office and National REDD+ Technical Working Group, developed a REDD readiness preparation proposal (RPP) and is working toward a national REDD+ strategy. A Forest Carbon Partnership Facility grant of US\$3.4 million is expected to support select elements of the REDD+ readiness plan, including institutional strengthening of the REDD+ office, and stakeholder consultation and participation. Additional funds are needed for full implementation of the REDD+ plan, including early action, and pilot projects and testing, which includes restoring degraded forests. The proposed pilot activity for Restoring Forests on Degraded Lands would contribute to the goals of the Government of Kenya, while reducing emissions and enhancing sustainable development. Specifically, REDD+ actions are consistent with the goal of Kenya's constitution that sets a target of 10 percent tree cover, up from the current six percent. These actions are also consistent with *Kenya Vision 2030*, the long-term development blueprint for the country. Vision 2030 notes the importance of forests for a "clean, secure and sustainable environment" and calls for the rehabilitation of degraded forest areas, sustainable management of dryland forests, and user compensation for environmental services.

The low-carbon scenario assessment in the mitigation chapter of the NCCAP demonstrated that the forestry sector has the greatest mitigation potential when compared with actions in the agriculture, energy, transport, industry and waste sectors. The low-carbon analysis demonstrated that emissions in the forestry sector rose from 16.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO_{2e}) in 2000 to MtCO_{2e} in 2010; and comprised 32 percent of total national emissions in 2010. Emissions primarily originate from deforestation, where forests are cleared for fuel wood and charcoal production or to create agricultural land. Forestry emissions are projected in the reference baseline to decline to 17.0 MtCO_{2e} in 2020 and 12.8 MtCO_{2e} in 2030 because of reduced clearing of forests and increases in the number and size of trees, a result of tree-planting programmes and reductions in wood harvesting. Low-carbon development actions in the forestry sector have the potential to abate an additional 40 MtCO_{2e} per year in 2030 compared to the reference case projections. A priority low-carbon development option in the forestry sector is the restoration of forests on degraded lands, with an abatement potential of 32.6 MtCO_{2e} per year by 2030. Achieving this full abatement potential would mean restoring forests on 960,000 hectares of degraded land between 2015 and 2030. Much of this abatement potential could be realized through conservation and sustainable dryland forest management interventions that encourage regeneration from ground-stored and wind-blown seeds, as well as growth of trees stunted by grazing. REDD+ activities to restore forests on degraded lands can also bring sustainable development benefits. Kenya's forest resources provide important environmental and ecosystem services. For example, biodiversity can benefit from sustainable forest management and conservation of forests, and regeneration of natural tree species. Forests can be used in a sustainable manner for a variety of products, including fuel wood, charcoal, medicines and others; contributing to economic development. Importantly, forest

resources contribute to water availability, for consumption, sanitation, agriculture and hydro-electricity development. In addition, forest restoration can increase adaptive capacity in vulnerable areas like mountain slopes, ASALs, and fragile ecosystems like natural forests and wetlands. Regeneration of degraded forestlands reduces erosion and sediment discharge in rivers, and improves the health of soil. Actions to restore forests on degraded lands are consistent with the NCCAP's vision of a low carbon climate resilient development pathway.

The key results for REDD+

- 1. an operational national REDD+ strategy and investment plan;**
- 2. an operational safeguards information system for REDD+;**
- 3. functional multi-stakeholder engagement and capacity building for REDD+;**
- 4. and technical support provided for improvement to the National Forest Monitoring System and Forest Reference Level.**

THE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

The experience from Narok County legislation formulation as explained by the county director of environment is that they did a stakeholder analysis session to ensure none of the stakeholders was left out. They invited Masai mara university, group ranges, government agencies, County Commissioner, NEMA, KEFRI, COG, UNDP, Kakamega County Government, Climate Change Secretariat, County Assembly of Narok, County Executive and representatives from minority and marginalized groups. They collected various data and information from the stakeholders to get in-depth understand of their needs and expectations. UNDP procured an environmental lawyer to check validity of the bill against the existing legislations. During their field visits they identified Loita, Nyangwere and Mau as environmental hot spots.

They bench marked on Kakamega bill and they shared and compared situational analyses. The bill was finally ready to present to the County Assembly. The participants from elgeyo Marakwet wanted to know how the indigenous people were included in the conservation bill. It was agreed that forest management is an all-inclusive activity which involves all the stakeholders. More meetings will be planned to share more experiences between the two counties.

CONCLUSIONS AND WAYFORWARD

The consultative meeting agreed to engage all the stake holders during the enactment of the forest act, taking much considerations to both the marginalized and minority communities living within the two counties. GOING forward, the team from Elgeyo Marakwet to go through the Narok Environment Act and critic it to and come up with a more pro-active all round bill.



