

Effectively Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change in Africa while ensuring Equity, Livelihoods, Rights, and Sustainable Development in Forest Areas

The Parallel workshop of the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) “Africa Regional Dialogue on Forests, Governance and Climate Change” in collaboration with the Environmental Economics Policy Forum for Ethiopia (EEPFE) and the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) took place at the United Nations building, Africa Hall as a pre- African Development Forum (ADF) event from the 11 to 12 of October 2010 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Over one hundred delegates from twenty African states, representing communities, governments, researchers, women’s groups, parliamentarians, and NGOs evaluated the linkages between climate change, forest governance and land tenure, and made the following observations:

1. **Strong and socially appropriate land tenure systems and governance are required for effective adaptation and mitigation.** Secure land tenure systems that recognize customary and local rights predetermine the willingness to invest, protect and conserve the valued resources and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. Strong and equitable local and national governance systems where all citizens are fairly represented and have access to policy making and can hold all stakeholders accountable are also required for effective mitigation and adaptation.
2. **Land tenure and governance systems are notably weak and inequitable across the continent and major reforms are necessary** both for reasons of climate change and for the more fundamental reason of strengthening citizenship, representation, social development and forest conservation.
3. **Effective mitigation measures enhance adaptation strategies and both complement each other and are mutually reinforcing.**

In order effectively mitigating and adapting to climate change in Africa while ensuring equity, livelihoods, rights, and sustainable development in forest areas, the group made the following recommendations:

Tenure reforms and climate change

1. Governments undertake comprehensive forest land tenure reforms involving all stakeholders as a requirement for climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and programmes.
2. Pilot programmes on REDD+ and climate change should take into consideration the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and focus on capacity building of small and medium size enterprises, alternative energy (solar, wind, water etc.) for food security and poverty reduction.
3. Regional institutions such as African Union, African Development Bank, Economic Commission for Africa should put in place monitoring mechanisms for governments to effectively follow up

advancements on forest and land tenure reforms especially in REDD+ and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

4. Create a multi stake holder advisory/working group on tenure and climate change in order for informed government decisions on tenure reforms, funding, and research for sustainable forest management.
5. For climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes and policies to be successful, African regional institutions, donors, governments and civil society should:
 - a. facilitate the effective participation and representation of women in national in decision making processes and bodies related to REDD+ and climate change;
 - b. ensure women equally benefit from the REDD funding
 - c. Advocate better rights for women to forest lands and resources
 - d. Recognize and value the leadership role of women in the production, processing, and commerce of non-timber forest products (NTFP)
 - e. Encourage and support women's forest enterprises, especially those focused on NTFP.

Forest Governance and Climate Change

6. Simplify and operationalize fund disbursements processes for Payment of Environmental Services (REDD+ process, carbon market, etc.) which ensure equitable benefits access, especially to benefit local communities;
7. Draft and implement innovative policies and strategies on the national, subregional and regional level—policies and strategies that go beyond REDD+, respect local communities' rights, and include major social groups (e.g. parliamentarians, local officials, civil society organizations, local and indigenous communities, minorities, women, youth, etc.);
8. Support international climate negotiations based on consultations with all stakeholders (universities and research centers, civil society organizations, local communities and indigenous peoples, women and other marginalized groups);
9. Put in place an international independent auditing system to monitor and evaluate REDD+ programs and funding, based on established safeguards;
10. Promote land conflict management mechanisms, recognizing alternative methods for conflict resolutions;