



FORESTRY SOCIETY OF KENYA

Promoting Professional Forestry in Kenya

Press Release by Forestry Society of Kenya (FSK)

“Prolonged Drought, Charcoal Burning, Logging Ban, Forest Management, Which Way?”

Forestry Society of Kenya (FSK) is a membership organization of professional foresters in Kenya, registered in 1979. The society is an autonomous, non-profit organization with a vision *“to be the leader in promoting sustainable forest management and best practices in all forest types (public, community and private)”*. The society has over 1500 members drawn from various public and private sector institutions, and organizations, including; Government ministries, National Government agencies responsible for the management of forests, water, wildlife, and other natural and environmental resources, County Governments, Forestry research institutions, Universities and other academic institutions, Local and International civil society organizations, Wood based industries, and Forest producers organizations.

As the only forestry professional body in the country, FSK has continued to play pivotal role in the growth and development of the forest sector. The society was a key partner in the development of the draft Forest Policy 2015, development and implementation of various forest related Legislations and National Strategies, including; Forest Act 2005, Climate change Act 2017, The Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016, Benefit sharing Bill, various subsidiary legislations, Forestry Society Professional Bill 2016, and The National Forest Programme (NFP) 2016 – 2030. The society is also a member of KFS Board of Management, and advisor to various institutions on forestry matters.

The enactment and implementation of Forest Act 2005, was the beginning and the basis for the forest sector reforms in the country. It laid emphasis on Participatory Forest Management (PFM) as a suitable approach for sustainable forest management. PFM provides for elevated role of local communities in decision making and management of forest resources. The implementation of the Act, did not only transform forest governance in Kenya, through establishment of Community

Forest Association (CFAs), and Forest Conservation Committees (FCC) as community structures for co-management of forest resources, and establishment of KFS as a body cooperate responsible for conservation, sustainable development, management and utilization of the country's forest resources for equitable benefit of present and future generations, but also increased recognition of private and community forests as important avenues for bridging the growing national wood supply deficit and also for attaining the constitutional target of 10% forest cover. During this period (2005 -2015) there was remarkable improvement in the management of our forest resources, subsequently leading to increased forest cover from less than **3% to 7.2%**.

The Forests area in Kenya is about **4.39 Million hectares**. The natural forests on public, community and private lands constitute about **4.159,279 Ha** representing about **94.7%** of the national forest cover. These are primarily protected forest areas for ecological and environmental benefits. The plantation areas within gazetted, community and private forests constitute about **232,298 Ha** representing **5.3%** of the national forest cover. KFS as the lead forest management agency is responsible for **905,357 Ha** of natural forests and **138,152 Ha** of plantation area.

Forests are important livelihood base for majority of Kenyan. Over 80% of the domestic energy supply is met from fuel wood. About 90% of rural households use firewood for cooking while 80% of urban households depend on charcoal as the primary source of fuel for cooking. Forests contribute 3.6% to the GDP excluding environmental services and contributions to other sectors. Kenya is however a wood deficit country. The current wood deficit is projected to increase from 10 million m³ to at least 15 million m³ per year by 2030.

In the last few week, there has being increased discussions and disquietedness on the management of our forests in the country. The Forestry Society of Kenya (FSK) would like to contribute to the raging debate, particularly on the technical aspects, by stating the following;

1. That we take this opportunity to congratulate the appointment of **Mr. Keriako Tobiko** as the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The society applauds the effort of the government in addressing the challenges facing the forest sector.
2. We take cognizant that the country is facing unprecedented serious and acute water crisis. The attribution that deforestation, degradation and encroachment

of water towers and other catchment areas, as cause factors for low water levels in rivers and streams cannot be disputed. Other factors such as climate change effects should be considered for long term mitigation. The drought has affected most countries in the region, with the latest casualty being Cape Town in South Africa.

3. The society equally appreciate the stress the natural resources particularly the tree resources face in providing the much needed livelihood support especially in the Arid and semiarid regions of this country. In the recent past the country has witnessed charcoal bans by county governments as a measure of addressing environmental degradation, the society will it support those efforts calls for a more comprehensive approach in addressing the matter, since the charcoal production provides the last livelihood option to rural communities.
4. The society recognize the moratorium on logging ban in Kenya and hopes it helps in identifying the challenges and those responsible for it, however past studies and lessons has shown that logging ban has not been an effective way of sustainable forest management in Kenya. We further acknowledge the Four Agendas the government has as part of its transformative plan; however the possibility of affordable housing might be hampered as results of unavailability of timber products.
5. The society wish to highlight the massive role the water towers and watershed plays in providing a number of ecosystem goods and services that includes water. This point seems to have been lost as we concentrate our debate on 138,000 ha which 6 % of the total forest cover the country is endowed with. We further appreciate the integral role our members has continued to play in ensuring the government generate revenues from plantation forests while implementing professional forestry practices that include zonation and right silvicultural practices. While the drought situation has affected many livelihoods, the causes are more than logging, we wish to highlight other challenges including forest fires, encroachment, overgrazing, over abstraction of water resources and climate change.
6. As we reiterate our commitment to ensure professionalism in forestry practice with the country, we are calling on the government to provide additional resources to ensure that the sector challenges are addressed comprehensively.

We further call on our fellow Kenyans to ensure we continue planting trees and support better management of forestry resources.

7. The society acknowledge and appreciate the formation of the taskforce on the logging ban, however there is need to have forestry professionals in the team especially in contributing the technical and science aspects in the assignment. Our members remain available to support government efforts in environmental conservations. We appeal to the taskforce carry out its task objectively, without any malice towards our members. The Society will ensure that its members adhere to professional ethics and are committed to dealing with those abusing the professionalism. Towards this, the society has developed code of ethics and aims to put them together into a professional legislation for purpose of enforcement.

Each Kenyan should play their role in reversing negative trend in environmental conservation. As the society we call upon Kenyans to plant trees during the long rains. Our members drawn in all regions of Kenya will lead Kenyans in tree planting. Our joint effort will lead to a better environment for all.

Signed by



..... *1st Day of March, 2018*

Mr. Joram Kagombe
National Chairman
Forestry Society of Kenya



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Dr. Nelson Maara
Secretary
Forestry Society of Kenya