

# STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM 2019

Promoting Good Natural Resource  
Management for Socio-economic  
Transformation in Africa

29 - 30 August, 2019 | Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



The United Republic of Tanzania

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● Institute

## Statement of the African Leadership Forum 2019

The sixth African Leadership Forum (ALF) took place in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from 29 - 30 August, 2019, under the theme “Promoting Good Natural Resource Management for Socio-economic Transformation in Africa”.

The objective of the Forum was to reflect on the potential for land, wildlife, fishery and forestry in fostering socio-economic transformation in Africa and address the noted widespread unsustainable use of natural resources across the continent as well as the anticipated socio-economic, environmental and climate change consequences.

The keynote address, expanding on the theme, was delivered by H.E. Benjamin William Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Patron of the Forum. The organisation was managed by UONGOZI Institute.

Similar to previous events, ALF 2019 was organised over a day and a half period with an open plenary and closed sessions under the same theme. The closed sessions were held under Chatham House Rules to encourage frank, open and in-depth discussion.

The plenary session of the Forum was graced by the attendance of H.E. Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who later on delivered an address. H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan, Vice President of The United Republic of Tanzania; H.E Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; H.E. Thabo Mbeki, former President of the Republic of South Africa; H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania; H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, former President of the Federal Republic of Somalia; and H.E. Hery Rajaonarimampianina, former President of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar; were in attendance. Also in attendance were diplomats, heads of international organisations and regional communities, and leaders from the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society from across Africa.

Under the overarching theme, the Forum considered three sub-themes, namely Basic Principles for Managing Renewable Resources, Illicit Practices of Renewable Resources in Africa, and Africa’s Perspective on Climate Change and its Impact on Natural Resources.

After the Keynote address, participants addressed the question on whether Africa is aware of the potentials of available land, wildlife, fishery and forestry resources in fostering socio-economic transformation.

- There are differences in the levels of awareness depending on who is being addressed. The learned, technocrats and scientists are aware of the potentials and intricacies of using natural resources. However, the common man (citizens) and especially the lowly educated population may be less knowledgeable about the potential that Africa has, or about the consequences of alternative uses of natural resources.
- From a different angle, Africans may be very aware of the potentials of natural resources, but fail in the ‘know-how’ of how to sustainably tap these resources. The Forum observed that when natural resources are used for livelihoods, it is in ways that draw negative impacts to the environment. A good example is the dilemma elucidated by the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Infotech Group Limited, Mr. Ali Mufuruki:

"The scale of charcoal business in Africa, the fact that governments generate revenues from charcoal through taxation, versus the negative impact on environment places governments in a serious dilemma of what to do."

- Awareness may be there, but there is an apparent lack of effort to prioritise issues centered around factors leading to negative impacts of natural resources: land tenure, population growth, sub-optimal water catchments management systems, unsustainable harvesting of forestry and fishery resources, and the like. This awareness ought to be linked with Africa’s education systems such that future generations manage natural resources more sustainably.
- H.E. Thabo Mbeki alerted on the need to disaggregate the challenges such that we are context specific in articulating solutions for the various observed challenges. Such differentiation could be by types of natural resources or by geographical locations. He also stressed the need for the common man to press and force leadership to be more responsible in managing Africa’s natural resources.

## **Recommendations to African Governments**

### **Invest in Research**

Governments should invest in research whose results would inform leaders about better natural resources management strategies. Such research should focus especially on rural economies, their socio-economic development strategies and how to mitigate negative environmental impacts. An example is research on the use of alternative energy sources, starting with addressing the problem of cutting trees for domestic charcoal.

### **Pursue Aggressive Awareness Raising Campaigns**

Governments are advised to pursue aggressive awareness raising campaigns about the implications of mismanaging natural resources and ultimate consequences on economic development. The target should not only be the common man, but also the political leadership. The goal should be to harness political will for proper management of natural resources.

### **Understand the Needs of the People prior to Implementation**

Governments' initiatives to undertake natural resources management ought to be implemented with clear understanding of the needs of the people in terms of their livelihoods and their medium- and long-term development perspectives and desires.

### **Session 1: Basic Principles for Managing Renewable Resources**

**Presenter: Dr. Fatima Denton, Director, United Nations University – Institute for Natural Resources in Africa**

The session dealt with the basic principles for managing land, wildlife, fishery and forestry to achieve maximum benefits; and went on to address the challenges of executing such principles and what African governments should be doing.

Participants considered that having abundant natural resources does not necessarily confer wealth. It was clear that resource rich countries in Africa have not been able to share resource gains and at times leading to greatest cases of income inequality.

Development under such circumstances can be analogous to survival of the fittest. Subsequently, the resulting natural resource mismanagement, compounded with climate change, will reverse many of the hard-won development gains. All the above are a result of not adopting good basic principles of good natural resources management.

Participants concurred that in order to properly articulate relevant natural resource management practices, we have to start by understanding the key threats. The Chief Executive Officer of African Wildlife Foundation, Mr. Kaddu Sebunya, refers to such threats as the “drivers of resource mismanagement.” These are: poverty, elements of the traditional African socio-economic set up, certain cultural values and beliefs which do not align with changes over time, and the vast informal sector.

The ultimate natural resource management principles and good practices, ought to be tailor-made to suit the African context encompassing the above threats.

To achieve this, using H.E. Jakaya Kikwete's words, "There is need for a better comprehension of the "Required balance between utilisation and the rate of replenishment of renewable resource" and move away from the notion that such resources are unlimited and simply "God Given" with eternal availability.

At the heart of achieving an all-inclusive strategy, principles and good practices of managing natural resources must recognise the issue of "ownership". We need to address the question of "who owns the natural resources in Africa?"

Three major challenges that limit African Countries in their efforts to properly manage natural resources were outlined as follows: (i) Human capacities, (ii) financial resources, and (iii) political will.

H.E. Benjamin William Mkapa argued that:

"Africa never benefitted by the processes that generated the carbon emissions leading to the disastrous depletion of the ozone layer, and thus in turn Africa does not have financial resources and adequate knowledge on how to contend with the effects."

As a result, we observe lack of coordination among authorities, poor definition of roles and responsibilities, and lack of harmonisation of laws and policies related to environmental management within African countries and at continental level.

Mr. Ali Mufuruki touched on an issue regarding mindset. He pointed out the tendency of African Leaders getting overwhelmed by the problems we face. They thus quickly resort to sourcing external assistance and aid. He argued that, "We have outsourced the task of taking care of our problems and at the same time the opportunities we have." For that matter what is required is a mindset change on our abilities to solve our problems and particularly so those concerned with natural resources Management.

### **Recommendations to African Governments**

#### **Africa needs Strong Leadership and Strong Institutions**

Africa needs two things: leadership in Natural Resource Management and African Institutions that can have a continental voice.

#### **Africa needs to pursue Five Transitions**

Africa ought to embrace the fact that it is capable of leading the global transformation process towards green economies by way of leapfrogging experience and technology.

To achieve this, African governments have to pursue five transitions that are with us now, namely Promotion of Sustainable Urbanisation, Investing in Digital Economies and Taking Part Fully in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Promoting Alternative Energy Opportunities, Investing to achieve Sustainable and Highly Productive Agriculture, and Leveraging better natural resource management by investing in supportive infrastructure.

### **Africa should address the Human Capital Challenge**

This will have to cover: improvements in the education systems, prioritising special needs of women and youth - the single largest untapped potential force for doing good in our societies.

### **African Governments need to diversify their Economies**

African governments should attempt to diversify their economies away from relying on direct and unsustainable utilisation of natural resources. Amongst measures that are pertinent is to put value to our natural resources and enhance responsible ownership.

## **Session 2: Illicit Practices of Renewable Resources in Africa**

**Presenter: Dr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for Africa, Food and Agriculture Organisation**

The session addressed the problem of illicit practices in wildlife, fishery and forestry resources in Africa.

Participants took note of the significance and strategic nature of illicit natural resource deployment. This was elucidated using various examples including: the hundreds of illegal fishing vessels that ply Africa territories. A thing that is made easy because of Africa's weak capacity to monitor and control deep sea fishing. At least one out of four fish harvested in Africa is caught illegally; Over 0.5% of Africa's forestry cover is cleared every year of which over 80% is illegal agriculture encroachment into forest areas; illegal harvesting of the African timber is estimated to be worth USD 13 billion. Between 2008 and 2016 2/3 of central Africa's Elephants were illegally poached. Between 2009 and 2016 the elephant population was reduced by 60%. Illicit trade of resources above the ground is equal or more than that of underground resources such as, oil and minerals. For example, in 2014, illicit trade of natural resources was estimated to be over 75% of Africa's FDI.

Factors that contribute to increasing illicit practices in wildlife, fishery and forestry resources in Africa include:

- **Illegal natural resource trade:** A lucrative businesses, with high consumer demand. It is relatively higher in the continent because of low chance of detection and low cost of executing illegal practices.
- **The link between illicit trade of natural resources and political instability:** Examples include effects of refugees' movements across country borders and activities of warlords.
- **Transformation failures:** Includes unsuccessful development of agriculture, which has led to encroachment of forestry reserves, poor management of water etc.
- **Shortfalls in legal frameworks:** These open a door for failures to enforce laws and incentivising corruption.

Participants further took note of bilateral and multilateral agreements to combat illicit dealings associated with wildlife, fishery and forestry resources in Africa, including:

- Joint declarations for protecting forestry reserves, barring illegal timber, agreements on ports management measures and corresponding agreement.
- Contingency and regional funds and/or systems to support victims of natural disasters.
- Local initiatives to conserve natural resources: Here, H.E. Benjamin William Mkapa quoted several useful approaches, including efforts by the late Wangari Muta Maathai, who managed to plant 50 million trees in Nairobi as well as his own support to replant trees around Mount Kilimanjaro.

### **Recommendations to African Governments**

#### **Raise Awareness on Africa's Ownership of Resources**

African governments, and Regional Economic Communities, ought to raise awareness regarding Africa's ownership of resources, and do so in a manner that generates anger amongst leaders and the population about how the outside world exploits our resources. Such anger will drive actions to establish policies and institutions that protect our natural resources. Illicit trade of Africa's natural resources is an act of interference with African Country's sovereignty.



## **Facilitate Public-Private Initiatives to Protect African Wildlife**

African governments should facilitate Public and joint Public-Private initiatives to protect African wildlife. Protecting African wildlife is equated to, and considered synonymous, to protecting Africa's future.

## **African solutions to African problems**

African governments need to convince themselves that the problem is in their hands. Solutions should come from within the continent. This includes according adequate weight to political instability as a driver to illicit natural resources trade.

## **Design Incentives for Business, Promote Intra-Regional Trade and Private Sector Investment**

Governments ought to design incentives for legal natural resources businesses; encourage intra-regional trade in natural resources and also encourage private sector to investment in areas such as deep sea fishing, currently only done by foreign firms.

## **Press for International Measures**

Governments should press for international measures to depress consumer demand of Africa's natural resources, especially wildlife.

## **Advocate for Criminalisation of Illicit Exploitation of Natural Resources**

African governments should advocate for criminalisation of illicit trade of natural resources globally

## **Session 3: Africa's Perspective on Climate Change and its Impact on Natural Resources**

### **Presenter: Prof. Youba Sokona, Special Advisor for Sustainable Development, South Centre**

Climate Change is the biggest challenge facing humanity at the moment. It poses a fundamental threat to development, good natural resource management and the fight against poverty.

Climate change is increasingly becoming not only an environmental but also economic and social challenge in Africa; and Africa is relatively more vulnerable than sister continents. Rising climate change vulnerability imposes constraints on land, wildlife, fishery and forestry management. To quote the UN Environment Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Joyce Msuya, "1 million species out of 8 million are in danger of extinction." Continued greenhouse emissions also stand out as a major challenge calling for action.



There is now a recognition that African countries need to stand together in the global arena to protect Africa's Natural resources. H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo took the audience back to cases where Africa stood together and emerged stronger than when each country worked in solitary. H.E. Jakaya Kikwete touched on the Africa Union initiative, the Committee of Heads of states on Climate Change and position that the continent has taken. Ms. Joyce Msuya reiterated on the need to abandon the fragmented Africa approaches and voices.

### **Recommendations to African Governments**

#### **Continue to put Pressure on Major Contributors to Greenhouse Gases**

African governments out to profile higher global warming and continue to institute measures to deal with the problem. jointly, Africa should continue to put pressure on major contributors to greenhouse gases to take proportionate responsibility and honour commitments such as the one on carbon credit with relaxed conditions. In turn, Africa has to curve out a business case out of the climate change mitigation and adaptation agenda.

#### **Facilitate Public-Private Initiatives to Protect African Wildlife**

African governments need to urgently address access to energy services through a rapid and wide scale expansion of both electricity generating capacity – on-grid and off-grid – and the supply of other forms of energy.

#### **Invest in and Promote Suitable Measures**

The Forum concurred that whereas climate change is a global phenomenon, the impacts remain country specific. Therefore, governments ought to continue investing in and promoting appropriate and proven mitigation and adaptation measures. In doing so they should bring together the three pertinent communities of practice: policy, research and practice in a more organised manner, and approach the challenge holistically via systems.