



Tanzania Forest
Conservation Group
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Recommendations from the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group and MJUMITA with regard to the draft National Forest Policy

- **The National Forest Policy would benefit from including clearer strategies to ensure that the forestry sector contributes to poverty alleviation and national development, including guidance on sustainable management of forests; a timed commitment to activate benefit sharing for jointly managed forests; and recognition that villagers own the carbon and the right to sell carbon from forests and other habitats on Village Land.**
- **The National Forest Policy would benefit from being more closely aligned with current land categories and should consistently recognise that almost all unreserved forest is on village land.**
- **The National Forest Policy would benefit from including a commitment to improve transparency in the forestry sector and to establish independent forest monitoring.**
- **The National Forest Policy would benefit from including a stronger commitment to maintain and enhance the ecological services provided by forests to the nation by ensuring effective management of forest reserves with special measures for forests reserves in the green belt of Dar es Salaam.**
- **The National Forest Policy would be enhanced by more explicitly addressing hunting, wildlife trade and loss of high conservation values due to conversion of high biodiversity habitats to tree plantations.**

Overview

The revision of the National Forest Policy began in 2008. The revised policy reflects some important changes in the forestry sector since the 1998 National Forest Policy including growing recognition of: the potential of payments for ecological services including REDD; the need to improve governance in the forestry sector; and the emerging role of the Tanzania Forest Service in forest management. The policy also retains a commitment to conserving biodiversity and to stakeholder participation in forest management through participatory forest management. We commend policy makers for these changes and renewed commitments.

As important stakeholders in the forestry sector we urge Policy Makers to go further in their commitment to ensuring that the nation's forests contribute to the long term sustainable development of the nation by incorporating the following changes to the draft National Forest Policy.

The recommendations made in this document aim to complement the recommendations made during a joint statement by members of the Tanzania Forest Working Group but go further on some key issues related to securing the biodiversity and ecological services of Tanzania's forests.

Recommendation 1: The National Forest Policy would benefit from including clearer strategies to ensure that the forestry sector contributes to poverty alleviation and national development, including guidance on sustainable management of forests; a timed commitment to activate benefit sharing for jointly managed forests; and recognition that villagers own the carbon and the right to sell carbon from forests and other habitats on Village Land.

Harvesting of forests for charcoal and timber is a major driver of deforestation and forest degradation in Tanzania; has become a well-documented arena for corruption and weak governance; and is the source of significant potential revenues losses to the government and the industry including small-scale producers. Whilst this issue is clearly recognised by the strategy, Charcoal is the most significant forest industry currently operational in Tanzania and we suggest some additional policy directions that would help to steer the charcoal sector towards better governance, ecological sustainability and poverty alleviation.

Recommendation 2: The National Forest Policy would benefit from being more closely aligned with current land categories and should consistently recognise that almost all unreserved forest is on Village Land.

In keeping with the classifications published by the Ministry of Lands, the National Forest Policy would benefit from recognising that the majority of unreserved forests are on village land and not general land. The policy would benefit from recognising the achievements of the Ministry of Lands in mapping almost all of Tanzania's villages.

Recommendation 3: The National Forest Policy would benefit from including a commitment to improve transparency in the forestry sector and to establish independent forest monitoring.

Whilst the draft policy makes reference to improving governance, we consider that the measures that are recommended to address the governance shortfalls in the forestry sector are insufficient to address the problems at hand. Stronger commitments to improving accountability and transparency in the sector including making harvesting licenses, harvesting plans, budgets, work plans, technical reports and financial reports publicly available on the internet would be beneficial.

Recommendation 4: The National Forest Policy would benefit from including a stronger commitment to maintaining and enhancing the ecological services provided by forests to the nation by ensuring effective management of forest reserves with special measures for forest reserves in the green belt of Dar es Salaam.

Weak accountability for maintaining and enhancing forest condition in forest reserves is referred to in the document however the draft policy would benefit from going further towards ensuring that forest authorities uphold their duty to the nation to preserve the ecological services provided by forests. For example, the policy could include a clearer commitment to hold forest authorities accountable for forest condition; to prioritise investment in forest management; and to take effective and rapid measures where forest management is failing. Special reference could be made to the management of the forest reserves within the green belt of Dar es Salaam where the irreversible complete loss of high biodiversity forests is imminent.

Recommendation 5: The National Forest Policy would be enhanced by more explicitly addressing direct threats to biodiversity including hunting, wildlife trade and loss of high conservation values due to conversion of high biodiversity habitats to tree plantations.

Whilst the forest policy recognises the major threats to forests, greater emphasis should be placed on addressing various issues whose impact has emerged over the last decade including unsustainable hunting and wildlife trade in forest reserves and conversion of habitats including montane grasslands and coastal forest for exotic tree plantations including biofuel plantations.

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These recommendations are also available at www.tfcg.org/forestJusticeTanzania.html