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Technical session V

PRINCIPLES FOR A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MANGROVE ECOSYSTEMS

Report on the Joint World Bank – Ramsar Session on the Code of Conduct

Arusha International Conference Centre Saturday 9 April 2005

The session was opened and chaired by **Mr Anderson Koyo** who welcomed all participants and introduced the programme for the morning. Mangroves are particularly important in Africa from the perspective of biodiversity, fisheries and socioeconomic development. They serve as buffer zones in coastal areas. 53 participants from 32 African countries attended the session (Annex 1: List of Participants). In addition, representatives from the Ramsar Secretariat, WWF, Wetlands International and IUCN as well as NGOs were also present. **Dr Sarah Humphrey** of WWF International was volunteered as recorder.

The Tanzanian Experience in Mangrove Management

Mr Mbwambo of the Tanzania Forestry and Beekeeping Division presented the Tanzanian experience in sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems on behalf of Mr Evarist Nashanda of the same Division. The full paper was distributed. (Annex 2)

Mr Mbwambo highlighted the history of legal protection of mangroves including designation of all mangroves as Forest Reserves in 1947, but noted that the government had not had the means to effectively manage these extensive and relatively inaccessible forests. In the light of growing pressures, the government decided to develop a comprehensive management plan building on a national inventory. Spatial zoning provides for four different categories of utilization including strict protection. The plan is implemented through a co-management system founded on a strong education and awareness programme. Other strategies include development of income generating activities, mangrove rehabilitation involving communities and children and improved interagency coordination.

Participants from Nigeria, the Ramsar secretariat, Ghana, and Guinea raised questions relating to conversion of mangroves systems to alternative uses such as agriculture, the use of satellite and aerial photography, technical aspects of the rehabilitation process and its transferability, and on how to achieve a balance between protection and maintaining community livelihoods that depend on extractive uses or mangrove conversion.

Professor Gordon noted that the need to balance protection and utilization is at the heart of the wise use concept of the Convention on Wetlands. There is no one model that can be applied to all countries as factors such as culture, society and land ownership vary between countries. He suggested that we could learn from examples and from the underlying principles in the Code that can be adapted to the local context.

Professor Chris Gordon of the Centre for African Wetlands thanked the participants for their participation, especially at end of a long week of meetings. Professor Gordon welcomed the participation of inland countries in the audience, noting the impact that upstream activities can have on coastal mangroves systems.

Professor Gordon introduced the Principles for a Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use of Mangrove Ecosystems, which he was presenting on behalf of the World Bank (Annex 3.: Power Point Presentation without pictures). Copies of the Code had been distributed in English and French at the start of the Pre-COP meeting. The Code is a *work in progress* and the main aim of this session is to see how the document could be improved drawing on the experience of the participants. The Code was originally to be an internal document to guide development of World Bank projects, but the potential for wider use and application was soon realised. This could be achieved through Ramsar, whose endorsement is sought. The significance to the Ramsar Convention is evident in Resolution VII.21 on intertidal wetlands, including mangroves (ref Box 11a in the Code of Conduct).

The Code represents a framework for sustainable management of mangroves that can be *adapted* to local circumstances. There is no recipe or prescription for success, but there are some common principles that can be modified to local conditions. The initiative has explored co-management approaches involving local communities as resource custodians as illustrated by the Tanzania experience.

The Code was developed through an initial literature Review, compilation of case studies from around the world (including Benin, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal and Kenya), and a through three regional consultative meetings. The draft code of conduct then went to a peer review workshop in Washington. There are 15 principles in the Code of Conduct. All documents can be consulted on line at http://www.biology.au.dk/cenTER/MCB_2003.htm

The aim of the session was:

1. To seek inputs on the Code and in particular on the 15 Principles;
2. To explore how best to widen participation in the consultation process;
3. To discuss endorsement of the Code through the Convention on Wetlands.

Comments on the Code

Participants from Ghana, Tanzania, Sudan, the Ramsar Secretariat, Cote d'Ivoire, and Benin, and raised a number of questions and issues which were discussed. These included:

- The need to adapt to different contexts not only between but also within countries;
- The considerable amount of time required in establishing mangrove management, in order to build awareness, develop understanding, and ultimately change behaviour;
- Issues of overgrazing and of mangrove clearance for livestock in some countries;
- Land ownership by communities or governments;
- Management for single products or multiple products and services;
- Participation and co-management;
- Restoration and regeneration;
- Pollution derived from local and upstream sources and strategies to control this;
- Properties of different mangrove species, and cultural preferences for different types of fuel wood;

- The need to share lessons and information effectively between different management initiative and programmes in order to avoid duplication of efforts or loss of continuity.

Some specific issues were raised that need to be elaborated or corrected in the text:

1. There should be a clearer and more comprehensive definition of participation in the Code. At present many references are vague and it is not clear that participation goes beyond consultation or involvement. The Tanzania example is a good illustration of community ownership and of a well developed co-management scheme. This and other case studies could be used in the document.
2. The need to expand the section relating to land use.
3. It was noted that the French translation of some technical terms is weak.

Since many participants had not yet read the document, Professor Gordon referred to the one page summary of the 15 principles in Annex 3 of the Draft Code. He requested feedback in particular on any fundamental disagreement or concerns with the 15 Principles. The following points were raised:

- Principle 2 could evoke the need for EIA prior to any developments in mangrove areas.
- Principle 7 should specifically refer to the need to conserve cultural values.
- On Principle 14, green labelling may represent an obstacle to African countries given the demands of such certification and that maybe there should be an allowance made for the situation of African countries. On the other hand, there is good potential to label non-timber forest products such as honey as coming from sustainably managed forests and such labelling can give products a competitive edge amongst informed consumers. It was suggested that the word “should” be changed in the summary.
- The reference under Principle 13 to education belongs better with Principle 8 on capacity and awareness.
- On Principle 13, it should be clear that regular tourism and ecotourism are very different and this distinction should be explicit. The term ecotourism is often used too loosely without proper consideration of issues such as direct benefits for local communities.

Adoption of the Code by the Convention on Wetlands

The Chairman noted that Ramsar’s strength lies not in reports, but in the sharing of technology, skills and knowledge. In response to a question from Tanzania, the Secretary General, Dr Peter Bridgewater noted that the Code is being discussed at Preparatory Meetings for the COP9 in three of the Convention’s regions, namely the Americas, Asia (forthcoming), and Africa. If the contracting parties so desire, the Secretariat can explore formal adoption of the Code through the Steering Committee.

An abbreviated text prepared by the Secretariat, and containing the Principles, could form part of the advice and guidance notes of the Convention and would be reviewed by the STRP. He further noted that a Resolution on mangroves was adopted at COP8 in Valencia, so a further resolution referring directly to the Code should not be necessary. The Secretariat could also

explore a more formal relationship with the World Bank to monitor application of the Code, perhaps involving FAO with which there is an ongoing discussion on mangroves.

Further Consultations

Professor Gordon noted that this meeting is enlarging the debate and that he will provide feedback to the World Bank on the advice provide by participants. However, many key African stakeholders have not yet been involved in the process.

Professor Gordon presented a brief concept for a follow up project to expand the discussion on the Code, raise awareness on mangroves and on mangrove management amongst key agencies and decision makers, and expand access to available knowledge in five sub-regions of Africa by 2006. A discussion on the project by participants resulted in up scaling from Africa to a global project. (Annex 4 Project Proposal)

The Secretary General welcomed the proposal and suggested that it may be expanded to other Regions including those being consulted in the lead up to the COP and the Oceania Region where there are a growing number of contraction parties with particular interest in coastal wetlands. He offered the support of the Secretariat to further develop the proposal and present this to the World Bank for its support.

The Chair welcomed the initiative and thanked the Secretariat for its support and the promise to follow up.

Other Issues

Professor Gordon informed participants about the development of an updated edition of the World Atlas on Mangroves which has proved to be an important awareness-raising tool. He requested participants to actively assist in its preparation.

The participants thanked the Chair and the session was closed at midday.