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Photo: Firewood, Sudan © C. Taylor



Recommendations

The October 2007 Conference of IGAD Directors of Conservation and Directors of Finance and Planning on the Environment and Natural Resources as core Assets for Sustainable Development made the following recommendations for consideration:

1. The IGAD Sub-Regional Environment Action Plan (SREAP), the IGAD Sub-Regional Action Plan (SRAP), the IGAD Environment Outlook (IEO), and the IGAD Environment and Natural Resources Strategy should all be implemented;
2. IGAD should create an *ad-hoc* task force from the region to address important environmental issues including briefing sessions for Members of Parliament from the region;
3. IGAD should initiate a process towards a common regional approach on the governance of natural resources as a core asset and of strategic value as well as being a part of the African Peace and Security Architecture;
4. IGAD should conduct a regional inventory of the biophysical, socioeconomic and cultural assets of, especially, the arid and semi-arid lands which is the dominant ecosystem in the IGAD region. Knowing what the region has will allow appropriate governance systems, marketing channels, resource valuations, etc. to be put in place;
5. Concurrently with the inventory of the ASALs, products from under-exploited natural resource should be identified, analysed and pre-feasibility studies undertaken for their commercialisation in national and international markets;
6. The IGAD Secretariat and its partners should develop of tools and methodologies and capture the true value of the environment and natural resources; and
7. IGAD should foster the compilation and sharing of research and technology information available in the region.



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International Union for Conservation of Nature

Natural Resources – the Foundation for Sustainable Development and Peace in the Horn of Africa

KEY MESSAGES

- Natural resources are overlooked as major contributors to rural livelihoods and for poverty reduction.
- Non-traditional agricultural commodities (e.g. Hides, sesame seeds, medicinal plants, gums and resins) are neglected by national policies and development interventions and little attention is being given to informal and domestic markets where the majority of rural communities trade.
- Economically the natural resources and environment are poorly understood, and, as a result are under-reported and not adequately reflected in national accounts.

The seven IGAD member states of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda make up the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region which is among the poorest region on earth. It is a region with high levels of conflict and insecurity, environmental degradation and lowest income per capita and heavy external debts. The situation is exacerbated by high temporal and spatial rainfall variability resulting in periodic droughts, floods that cause famines. However the region is endowed with rich variety of fauna and flora making an environment that contributes to livelihoods and national economies and can have an enormous impact on development, but whose contribution and potential has rarely been factored into policy decisions.



What contributions make natural resources assets to livelihoods and national economies?

Natural resources are overlooked as major contributors to rural people's livelihoods and drivers of poverty reduction in the IGAD region. The majority of the population of the IGAD region is rural and depends directly on natural resources for their survival. These include the need for natural resources to meet such basic needs as food, clothing, water, energy, shelter, health, cultural wellbeing and security. What is their contribution to national economies and to national GDPs? What would national governments have to pay if these natural resources would no longer be available? Six national reports from the IGAD region indicate a general lack of awareness on these important assets as well as a paucity of natural resources economics and natural resources accounting. As a result, the contribution of the environment is routinely under-reported. Challenges include a lack of capacity in environmental assessment, accounting and monitoring. The figures and examples below indicate the need to better reflect the contribution of natural resources and the environment in national GDPs and to consider the real opportunity costs of ignoring the environment in development:

- In Kenya, the arid and semi-arid lands support 70% of the national livestock population with an estimated value of about USD 1 million¹.
- In Eritrea, riverine forests generate more value per capita for the local population than any other form of landuse².
- In Sudan, national energy surveys indicate that forests contribute 70.8 % of the country's national energy balance. In addition, Sudanese forest contribute an estimate of 33 % of the total feed requirement of the national herd and provide critical emergency food in times of drought (Hamid 2006)³.
- In Eritrea in 1999, Doum Palm generated 1.2 USD/person/day compared with wage labour on irrigated farms of 1 USD/person/day (MOA/SOS Sahel 1999)⁴.
- 80% of the people in Kenya depend on traditional medicines which are based on natural resources

Rural livelihoods depend heavily on natural resources at a subsistence level. For most rural households alternative sources of basic household items are unavailable or unaffordable.

What role do natural resources play in creating wealth for poverty alleviation and the achievement of the MDGs and PRSPs?

While it is clear that natural resources make a very important contribution to the basic needs of rural people, a major question relates to how they contribute to poverty reduction in terms of official figures. While much of the data is broadly lacking as national accounting systems do not properly trap the value of the environment and natural resources, there are serious poverty and social inequities which constrain sustainable development in the IGAD region. The equitable, efficient and productive use of natural resources offers important opportunities for sustainable livelihoods which can contribute to reducing poverty.

What are some of the challenges to boost the contribution of natural resources to poverty alleviation?

In a review of national reports from the IGAD region some of the following challenges were identified:

- **Resource governance:** The IGAD region needs comprehensive land and land use policies and accompanying laws. In Ethiopia, changing land allocation systems discourages many communities from taking good care of the land on which they depend. Environment and natural resource policies, laws, regulations and guidelines need to integrate the meaningful participation of local communities and have adequate resources to implement them.
- **Adequate information and awareness about rights and responsibilities:** Decentralization of natural resource management has been initiated in most countries in the IGAD region. But rural people and communities are not well informed about their rights and responsibilities for natural resources management, and they are not in a position to take on such rights. They lack knowledge and are unaware of laws, legal institutions and processes so that they can effectively take on their rights and responsibilities.

- **Development of markets and value chains:** The global natural products industry is currently valued about USD \$65 million per year and is growing fast. With the exception of Sudan (the world's largest producer of Gum Arabic), most governments in the IGAD region are not paying proper attention to the market opportunities for natural resource based products. The focus remains largely on traditional agricultural crops.

¹ Message from the Conference of IGAD Directors of Environment and Conservation and Directors of Finance and Planning, October 2007. This conference was jointly organized by IGAD and IUCN, with funding from IDRC and from the National Host Kenya.

² REGIONAL STUDY: Yakobo Moyini 2007; NATIONAL STUDIES: Djibouti: Nabil Mohamed 2007; Eritrea: Seife Berhe 2007; Ethiopia: Shibre Tedla 2007; Kenya: Reuben Sinange 2007; Sudan: Mohamed Elamin Abdelrahman 2007; Uganda: Cornelius Kazoora 2007.

³ Hamid, A. (2006): Drylands Forestry A Means for Livelihood and Poverty Reduction for the Rural People in the Sudan.

⁴ Study carried out by the Eritrean Ministry of Agriculture and SOS Sahel.

Photo: Tasty Drylands fruits, Sudan © C.I.Beodhhartono



A large percentage, **80% in Kenya, and 85% in Uganda**, of the population of the IGAD region is rural

There are a number of challenges to be met so that communities can benefit from their natural resources and products, including:

- Weak policy and legal frameworks that support local communities and their products;
 - Low productivity, and lack of standards and quality control to support communities and their particular products;
 - Inadequate levels of product research, and market development and market information so that communities can act as agents for their own economic interest and social development;
 - Supply chain development that includes improved production, improved processing and enhanced marketing;
 - Poorly developed markets, where markets (local/export) do exist for products such as gums and resins, various medicinal plants, indigenous fruits and vegetables, tree products;
 - Lack of support so that communities can enter high-value markets through, for example organic and fair trade certification); and
 - Africa needs to develop a stronger common voice in international trade negotiations.
- Existing information and indicators do not reflect the true value of natural resources and the environment in PRSPs and in the MDGs:** Projects, programmes and plans aimed at the attainment of the MDGs and PRSPs do not adequately reflect the potential of the environment and natural resources. There are few environmental targets and milestones. Overall the integration of the environment and natural resources into PRSPs and the MDGs in the IGAD region is weak and the real value of the environment is not reflected.
- The arid and semi-arid ecosystems are still "forgotten":** Many of the poorest people in the IGAD region live in the arid and semi-arid lands, which cover 80% of the land. These lands are poorly understood and neglected by investment and appropriate policy.
- Emerging issues:** A total of eighteen emerging issues were identified for the IGAD region. The main ones include climate change, invasive species, genetically modified organisms, HIV/AIDS, globalization, conflict and insecurity. All these do (and can) have a major impact on both livelihoods and environmental management. They need to be integrated into national development and environmental planning process.



Photo: Kids with Tamarind fruits, Sudan © E. Barrow

Over **80%** of the IGAD region is **dry and semi arid** land

Natural resources are key components of people's livelihoods in the IGAD region and we must invest in them to generate wealth for poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Their importance in boosting wealth and alleviating poverty cannot be underestimated.

Examples of tradable natural resources products available in the IGAD Region. Source: adapted from Kazoora (2007)

Ecosystem	Products
Wetlands	handicrafts, furnisher, fish, medicines, dyes, building materials (fencing, timber and thatch), bricks and pottery
Forest	butterflies, Aloe Vera, orchids, honey, and beeswax, drums, fiddles, juice, Ocimum oil, wine extracts, medicinal plants and tree barks, bamboo shoots, timber, pet animals (snakes, frogs, chameleons, lizards, tortoises, birds)
Savannah	shea butter, tamarind, medicinal plants, Gum Arabic, mushrooms, timber, thatching grass
Open Water	fish, and fish products, ornamental fish, hydro electricity, etc.
Farm land	moringa, neem, bird eye chillies, <i>Prunus africana</i> , mangoes, papaya, oranges, guava, etc.

Achieving results

The welfare and livelihoods of the rural population in Sub-Saharan Africa have been highlighted many times through the lens of drought and conflict. But there has been little real progress on improving livelihoods and creating wealth.

Considerable research and technology capability lies within the IGAD region, and should be better used to create the knowledge and know-how to exploit natural resources, but this information is scattered throughout the region in different scales and for diverse purposes. It is vital to collate this information and identify products that could be developed for national and international markets through analysis and feasibility studies.

The IGAD Secretariat has a big role to play. Founded to enhance food security and environmental protection, IGAD can act as a catalyst to enhance regional efforts and improve awareness. IGAD should help support appropriate governance systems, and support the enabling environment for value addition and marketing. IGAD is in a good position to support the development of tools and methods to capture the true value of the environment in national accounting systems and PRSPs /MDGs.



Photo: Milk from nomads campin shopwak area © C.I.Beodhhartono