



AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION®

PRESENTATION

AT

THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PREPARATORY MEETING

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RESOURCES FOR AFRICA-
THE AWF SERA POLICY INITIATIVE

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you Madame Chair, fellow panelists, and organizer for inviting us to present at this important meeting. Today I will be presenting African Wildlife Foundation's agenda of policy, legislative and institutional recommendations based on the principles and lessons of 48 years of experience on the ground that we think will help protect Africa's wildlife and wild lands and optimize their contribution to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

I will start with a 4 minutes video to remind ourselves of what is at stake...

The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is a leading international conservation organisation focused solely on the continent of Africa. Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, *AWF works with the people of Africa to ensure the wildlife and wild lands of Africa will endure forever.*

From the video, no doubt that Africa has an economic comparative advantage in wildlife and the value of this advantage will grow. We therefore need programs that encourage African nations to conserve, expand and add value to their wildlife resources and to position wildlife as a critical part of development and growth strategies for the future of the continent, as reflected in many of the national strategies for poverty alleviation and for the achievement of the millennium development goals.

The UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment concur that the renewable natural resources and services generated by natural ecosystems, like those we have just seen in the video, are valuable locally, nationally and globally. Millions of Africans depend on them "to provide the conditions for a decent, healthy and secure life; either for food, medicine, construction material, watershed protection, or income generation.

In recent years AWF has seen many bilateral donors move wholly towards achieving MDG 1 (halving the rate of poverty) as central guiding goal and measure while the MDG 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability) gets sidelined. Though the reports of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment clearly articulate that the only way forward to achieving the MDGs to reduce poverty, hunger and disease lies in returning to the fundamental principles of sustainable development, recognizing the mutual inter-dependency between environmental sustainability and socio-economic development, as well as the need

to address climate change centrally in both. Productivity of ecosystems depends on policy choices on investment, trade, subsidy and regulation, among others.

AWF calls for commitment on working towards effective policies that encourage regional cooperation, harmonize resource management, tourism, and revenue-sharing practice across national borders, and facilitate the flow of resources and the net benefits of conservation, good governance, and human health. We have practical program of work in support of each policy areas, and we encourage you and other partners to support them as follows:

- a. We need policies that Identify and promote large scale conservation and tourism destinations. We do believe that conservation at scale is important for both ecological and economic reasons. AWF's experience suggests that a few large scale conservation and tourism destinations will generate more benefits to society than many small, fragmented efforts. The Serengeti-Mara-Ngorongoro area (2 countries) and the Upper Zambezi-Victoria Falls-Okavango area (4 countries), and many of the landscapes we have seen in the video, and these still photos are examples of the environmental and economic potential of large scale conservation in Africa.
- b. Policies that Support regional cooperation and transboundary conservation. Biodiversity and ecosystems do not recognize national boundaries. Creating conservation that works, including through large scale conservation and tourism destinations, requires transfrontier collaboration.
- c. Policies that promote the concept of 'sustainable use' - central to effective conservation in Africa and a healthy protected areas system. Ecosystem function and biodiversity resources cannot be conserved through protected area systems alone, but requires sustainable management at scale, making the principle of sustainable use central to conservation efforts.
- d. Policies that strengthen local incentives to conserve. AWF supports strong, secure, tenure arrangements for local communities living with wildlife on their land, and effective national policy and legal frameworks that protect tenure and rights. AWF and partners have a particular interest in developing and applying models that give local communities a large and defining financial stake in the resources they conserve and in promoting public and private investments.
- e. Policies that will mitigate and adapt to climate change. AWF recognizes that climate change poses a major threat to Africa and believes that Africa has the opportunity to mitigate the effects of climate change with both technological and environmental responses. AWF supports African efforts to 'leap frog' over expensive, inefficient technologies and embrace newer, light technologies like micro-generators and wireless communications which bring affordable services to more people quickly and avoid the creation of a carbon-based infrastructure. But we need first of all to
 - i. Increase our understanding of biodiversity and climate change linkages
 - ii. Ensure that the role of natural ecosystem in storing and removing carbon from atmosphere recognize and incorporate global and national policies
 - iii. Know likely impact scenarios and implications, and design and implement coping strategies with local partners.

- f. Good governance, social justice, and human health as central to sustainability of conservation. AWF perceives a strong connection between good governance, democracy, respect for the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the full participation and empowerment of women in decision-making and leadership. On human health, we believe that the health of Africa's ecosystems cannot be separated from the health of its people. A population weakened by chronic and preventable disease is hindered in its ability to achieve its conservation and development goals.
- g. The African conservation agenda should be set and led by African conservation leaders. Where the capacity for this leadership is not yet up to strength, AWF asserts that it is incumbent on all stakeholders to work to develop this capacity, hand in hand with any implementation activities.
- h. Donors should provide a supportive international aid framework for biodiversity conservation. AWF calls on the international community to encourage, support, and invest in the Africa-defined agenda for the continent, as embodied by the work of the NEPAD program of the African Union and international policy processes including the Africa Commission and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. These bodies along with relevant international conventions issue a common call for substantial increases in investment in Africa's natural resource and ecosystem management.

AWF thanks especially African governments, and our 2 largest development partners; the US government and the Dutch government for their generous contributions to our efforts in Africa.

Thank you.

