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PRESS RELEASE

Forest and wildlife sectors key to food security and a green economy in Africa



1 October 2013, Windhoek/Accra - The Nineteenth Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) opened on 30th September 2013 at the Hotel Safari in Windhoek, Namibia. The meeting will last up to 4th October 2013.

Platform for directors of forestry and wildlife

Created in 1959 by the Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO), the AFWC is a platform for Directors of forestry and wildlife to discuss regional and global issues and policies on sustainable forest and wildlife management. The theme for this year's session is the "*Development of forest and Wildlife sectors for effective contribution to food security and a green economy in Africa*". Participants, coming from FAO member countries in Africa, United Nations agencies, international organizations, regional bodies, civil society and nongovernmental organizations, will discuss the often forgotten role that forestry and wildlife play in ensuring food security and enhancing a green economy, not only at community levels but also at national and sub-regional levels in Africa, and make recommendations for the attention of members and relevant FAO bodies at regional and global level.

Need to conserve forestry and wildlife

In his opening statement, Namibia's Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Hon. John Mutorwa, said "Although we are proud of the fact that Africa is endowed with a huge number and variety of fauna and flora, it is regrettable that it is also our region which is leading in losing natural

resources, especially forests”. ‘For many years deforestation has been claiming millions of hectares of important tropical trees in Africa” he added.

“Africa’s wildlife sector is an important contributor to the development of the continent’s green economy,” said Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director General, Forestry Department at the FAO during the opening session. “Therefore, judicious management of these resources, including protection, legal hunting and appropriate curling, should be encouraged”. Rojas-Briales also pledged FAO’s commitment to combating desertification together with her partners.

In his keynote statement, John Scanlon, Secretary-General, of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wildlife fauna and flora (CITES) stressed that “illegal activities in the forestry and wildlife sector are having a negative impact on national economies and national and regional security and require a multi-sector approach.”

Third African Forest and Wildlife Week

The Third African Forest and Wildlife Week will be observed during the Session to showcase forest and Wildlife Sectors’ contribution to food security and economic development in Africa. Other side activities planned during the Session include a meeting of the collaborative Partnership on Wildlife and a Forestry Communicators workshop.

Further details and meeting documents

Available at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/afwc/en/>

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