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JOINT FAO/ECE/ILO COMMITTEE ON FOREST TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

Seminar on
AFFORESTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

in conjunction with the 24th session of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on
Forest Technology, Management and Training

Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland, 15-19 September 2002

**Afforestation in the Context of Sustainable Forest Management in West Africa
– Nigeria as a Case Study**

Basic paper by Mr. Balogun Ibraheem

Summary

A sustainably managed forest is described as a forest that is able to provide the needs and services for the present generation without jeopardising the needs of the future generations. To sustainably manage a forest, some factors need to be carefully and strictly followed. One of those factors is afforestation. Afforestation is professionally described as the planting of trees and shrubs on marginal lands, i.e. lands where forest cannot be said to exist earlier. This differs from reforestation, which relates to lands that have been depleted or degraded in the past and are replanted with trees and shrubs to claim back the forest cover.

In Tropical West Africa, especially in Nigeria, most of what is described as afforestation is actually reforestation. Whether afforestation or reforestation, the main aim is to increase the forest land area to produce and provide more goods and services to the populace.

In Tropical West African states – Nigeria in particular – the rate of afforestation or reforestation does not equal the rate of deforestation or the rate at which the forest is being harvested, resulting in a

decreasing area of forest cover in the country. Also, the few afforestation projects that do exist do not take into consideration the communities living within or around such areas, and their forestry and environmental needs are not considered during species selection and management of the project. This exclusion of local communities accounts for most of the failure of such afforestation projects.

A few professional forestry non-government organisations, such as TFN, are designing various community afforestation projects, where the communities themselves design and implement afforestation projects on community basis to cater for local forestry and environmental needs. While this is the first priority, the fact that such work also contributes to global forest cover is also an important issue. Various groups and individuals are also given necessary advice and suggestions on the need to have more forestry cover through reforestation / afforestation projects. Similarly, the government is being advised to include local communities in its future afforestation programmes, using the success of the local communities' own afforestation projects as a case study.

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