

Implementing policy decisions to conserve forest reserves in Tanzania – a case study

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Background

Tanzania is a country famous for its natural and cultural heritage. It has an expansive variety of ecosystems containing some of the world's richest and most diverse plant and animal communities. With nearly 20% of its land area receiving protective or multi-use status, the government is committed to the people and environment of Tanzania. However, many challenges remain in the face of the rapid social and economic changes under way.

As Tanzania's traditionally subsistence-based population continues to grow, degradation to the environment is becoming an increasingly serious concern. The shrinking availability of forest products, arable land and clean water is diminishing the ability of people, both rural and urban, to maintain their livelihoods. In order to reduce poverty, it is imperative to develop and encourage sustainable living practices that balance the needs of communities with that of conservation.

The organization TASONABI has a mission to contribute and participate effectively in national efforts to eradicate poverty in Tanzania by enhancing the sustainable management and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity through concerted efforts with other stakeholders. The organization recognizes the intrinsic value and function of natural resources in maintaining the Earth's ecological systems and the essential role they must play in poverty eradication. Development endeavours can be accomplished without sacrificing the natural environment. Conservation is not only valuable in its own right, but is critical for improving the quality of life for all people.

Legislation

Between 1961 and 1997, Tanzania lost over 10 million hectare of forests. To prevent the loss of further forest cover, and to intensify the contribution of forestry to poverty eradication, concerted efforts have been made by the

Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (FBD) with active participation of the local community and other stakeholders. In 1998, the New National Forest Policy was enacted by the parliament. The policy vests the responsibility of managing the forest resources sustainably under the forest sector (FBD) in collaboration with other stakeholders. FBD has produced a handbook, *Community-Based Forest Management Guidelines*, in English and Swahili. At national level, FBD has developed an effective policy framework and legal instruments for conserving forests.

To enhance effective implementation of the policy, in-depth studies were conducted leading to a Tanzania National Forestry Programme 2001–2010 (NFP). Workshops and seminars from district to national level were conducted to discuss findings of the studies and to obtain inputs from relevant stakeholders. The NFP that was finalized in 2001 contained a comprehensive chapter on 'Current Status and Trends in the Forest Sector' and solutions to identified weaknesses. Through a fast-track system, the Forest Act 2002 was enacted by parliament to facilitate efficient implementation of the New Forest Policy and the NFP.

However, proven current field experience has confirmed that serious degradation of forests and deforestation is still taking place in almost all regions of Tanzania, with negative impacts on environmental conservation and poverty reduction efforts. The alarming rate at which destruction of forest reserves is taking place in the Coast region (a few minutes drive from Dar es Salaam City) illustrates the unique challenges facing the forestry sector of Tanzania.

Case study: Kazimzumbwi National Forest Reserve

Kazimzumbwi is a protective Central Government Forest Reserve with an area of 4887 hectares, an elevation of 120–280 m and red to brown sandy-

clay soils (Figure 1). The climate is influenced by tropical East African oceanic temperatures that are slightly modified by altitude. Annual average rainfall of 1236 mm has been recorded for Kisarawe town. A peak annual rainfall of 2385 mm and a minimum annual rainfall of 502 mm have been recorded between 1936 and 1970 at Kisarawe town. One permanent stream arises from the forest reserve and provides the water supply to local communities living close to the forest. Records show that in the past, when the forest was more extensive and connected to the Pugu Forest Reserve, streams arising from the forest area used to supply all the water needed in Dar es Salaam. Based on the recent surveys, some of the biodiversity resources of Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve that are now at their advanced stage of vanishing include: plants 236 species; mammals 32 species; reptiles 28 species; amphibians 19 species; and butterflies 140 species.

Local opinion

The Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (WCST), working in Kazimzumbwi and Pugu Forest Reserves, has intensified its efforts in raising public awareness of surrounding villagers about the need to conserve the forests. However, villagers indicated that ongoing initiatives will fail unless efforts are made to deal with corrupt forest workers and non-performing



Figure 1 Kazimzumbwi National Forest (photo: Nike Doggart, TFCG)

forest officers. Villagers wanted explanations of the criteria used by officials to pay forest workers who have failed to conserve forest reserves under their jurisdiction (Figure 2). However, village government officials and the Village Environmental Committee members have recently reported that illegal charcoal burning is conducted openly in the forest reserves (Figure 3). From initial felling of trees, to final stage of charcoal production, it takes on average one month working continuously in the field. Smoke from charcoal kilns can be seen by people far away from the reserve. With the obvious indicators, villagers want to know how paid government workers fail to stop illegal charcoal burning in the small forest of Kazimzumbwi?

Law enforcement

Photographs, video tape and GPS coordinates, taken during an informal visit to Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve at the start of February 2003, were shown to forest officials at FBD and Kisarawe District and articles about the forest degradation appeared in the press. Senior officials from the Director of Forestry and Beekeeping and



Figure 2 Failure to conserve forest reserves (photo: Nike Doggart, TFCG)



Figure 3 Sack of charcoal produced in the Forest Reserve (photo: Nike Doggart, TFCG)

CARE-Misitu Yetu Project visited Kazimzumbwi in mid-February 2003. They visited a different site to the earlier visit, and reported the alarming rate of charcoal burning that was ongoing in the forest reserve. The Director of Forestry and Beekeeping released funds to intensify law enforcement in Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve and other forest reserves in Coast region as a short-term solution to the reported problem.

However, local government officials and Village Environmental Committee members have recently reported and claimed that their conservation efforts are frustrated by some corrupt forest guards who are participating in illegal charcoal and timber harvests in Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve (Figures 4 and 5). Discussions held with Kisarawe district officials identify the urgent need for:

- structured work plans and greater supervision
- a more pro-active approach to identifying and prosecuting those making charcoal illegally
- clearer terms of reference on which authority is responsible for particular actions
- sufficient skilled manpower and working resources
- recruitment of competent and effective managers for national forest reserves.

Other factors contributing to illegal charcoal burning in the reserve include:

- poverty in the surrounding population with few income generation opportunities
- rapid population growth in Dar es Salaam City with high demand for charcoal for cooking with little affordable energy alternatives to the majority of households.

Goal and objectives of TASONABI

The main goal of TASONABI is to assist FBD and Kisarawe District Authorities to minimize further destruction in Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve by the end of year 2004.

The main objective is to contribute to improved livelihoods of the local communities surrounding Kazimzum-



Figures 4 and 5 Timber harvesting (photos: Nike Doggart, TFCG)

bwi Forest Reserve through improved environmental conservation and increased supply of forest products from village forest reserves and farmland tree growing. The destruction of Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve is ongoing even as this edition goes to press.

Key lessons learned so far on the ongoing win-win strategy for conserving Kazimzumbwi are:

- Many people have shown enthusiastic support for saving Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve.
- FBD has shown keen interest in the ongoing efforts to conserve Kazimzumbwi Forest Reserve and other forest reserves in Tanzania.
- It is suggested that FBD and Kisarawe District Authority should facilitate NGOs and private sector organizations to take action and stop the illegal harvesting of wood from Kazimzumbwi.

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