



Samco Quarter. Bonadikombo-Mile 4, P.O Box 742 Limbe, CAMEROON

Tel: +237 77 62 72 17 /+ 237 77 76 75 61 Email: cendep2001@yahoo.com; info@cendep.org

Website: www.cendep.org

FIRST INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY FORUM ON ANALOG FORESTRY, WOMEN & LAND RIGHTS



Theme: Strengthening analog forestry methodology, women and land rights

CONFERENCE REPORT

6-7 MARCH 2019

Table of Content

1. Introduction and Objectives	3
1.1 Introduction.....	3
1.2 Objectives.....	4
1.3 Participants.....	4
2. Methodology.....	4
3. Outcomes of the conference	4
3.1 Opening.....	4
3.2 Participants' experiences and country/international policy contexts	5
3.3 Context analysis	5
3.3.1 National and international policy formulation and/or reforms.....	6
3.3.2 Policy implementation.....	7
3.3.3 Women's awareness and capacity to plan and carry out advocacy.....	8
3.3.4 Actors' awareness of existing laws and the situation of women's land rights	9
3.3.5 Resource mobilisation	9
3.4 Planning of advocacy actions.....	10
3.5 Communication	14
4. Conclusions.....	14

1. Introduction and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

In developing countries and emerging economies, women and girls do not have full or adequate access to their rights to water, to food or to a clean, healthy and/or safe environment. GAGGA recognizes that one of the key causes of this violation is the unequal relations of power based on gender.

Women are playing vital roles in the management of natural resources and are fighting to preserve access to them for themselves, their families and their communities. However, this work by women, at the grassroots level, is often not recognized or valued. Furthermore, many grassroots groups that are working on lobbying and advocating for women's rights are being by-passed by the growing financing available for work on the environment.

The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) therefore sets out to strengthen and unify the capabilities of grassroots groups and movements to lobby and advocate with and for women to claim their rights to water, to food and to a clean, healthy and safe environment. GAGGA's five-year goal is to generate structural change in social and institutional spheres to ensure that:

- Women's rights to water, to food and a clean, healthy and safe environment are respected and sustained by communities, individuals and local and central governments;
- Policies and legal frameworks respecting, protecting and fulfilling women's rights are in place;
- Policy implementation meets the needs and priorities of women to exercise their rights to water, to food and a clean, healthy and safe environment;
- International, regional and national institutions, including donor institutions, actively promote women's rights to water, to food and a clean, healthy and safe environment and allocate adequate financial resources accordingly.

Analog forestry being a tool to accelerate the process towards clean, safe, secure environments (forests, biodiversity, water, soil, carbon storage) while helping provide income and food provisions for (rural and peri-urban?) households, farms & communities ... and living beings on the planet, the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), by building consensus and advocacy capacity on solutions to environmental challenges, sharing the analog forestry methodology and strengthening alliances with women and policy makers has organized a series of training workshops in five (05) African countries with the aim of gathering baseline information to inform decision making and position taking as far as solutions to environmental challenges are concerned.

Thus, to reinforce and ensure the sustainability of analog forestry methodology and strengthen alliances with women and policy makers, it is necessary that they both come together under the canopy of a forum to share information and articulate their views towards influencing policy formulations that can build their capacities to effectively lobby and advocate for the mainstream of analog forestry methodology and to claim their rights to land rights.

1.2 Objectives

The overall objective of the forum was to strengthen and unify the capabilities of women's organisations and associations, partners to GAGGA, to Lobby and Advocate with and for women, to claim their rights to own land thereby practicing analog forestry methodology effectively. The specific objectives were:

- To understand the legal and policy challenges that women face in the areas of Analog forestry, land rights and environmental justice
- To identify potentials and opportunities for improvement of legal and policy environment
- To identify the different actions and develop a country /regional advocacy plan

1.3 Participants

A total of 28 stakeholders took part in the forum. They came from 6 countries (Ghana, Togo, Benin, Uganda, DRC and Cameroon). Apart from network members, participants from the host country included representatives of stakeholder categories such as lawmakers (parliamentarians), village leaders, council officials, leaders of women's groups, leaders of CSOs working on land, forestry and environmental issues, and officials of the ministries in charge of lands, forestry and environment. The International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) was also represented.

2. Methodology

In addition to plenary presentations, participatory tools (brainstorming and group work) were used to enable participants engage in deep reflections and exchanges on the challenges and opportunities for the promotion of Analog Forestry and the rights of women to land. Two group work sessions were organized to analyse the policy context in order to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement, and elaborate a regional advocacy action plan.

3. Outcomes of the conference

3.1 Opening

The opening session was presided at by the local administrative officer for Limbe II (the administrative district where the conference took place). This session began with a presentation of the IAFN and GAGGA. This was followed by an opening speech by the administrative officer. In this speech, he recognized the role of women in food production and the management of natural resources, the fact that the role of women is often neglected and the potential contribution of Analog Forestry to the improvement of women's land right and natural resource management.

3.2 Participants' experiences and country/international policy contexts

Participants presented the policy context within which they are working, with emphases on the gaps that justify their interventions, the work their organizations are doing in order to improve on women's land rights, the practice of Analog Forestry and environmental justice, including the main challenges they face in their efforts.

As concerns the policy context, it came out from the presentations that most of the policy gaps were common to the five countries represented at the conference. The most recurrent gaps included failure of land policies to be clearly responsive to the vulnerability of women, poor implementation of existing land and environmental policies, duality and in some cases contradiction between state laws and customary laws, corruption in land deals and poor knowledge of Analog Forestry and its potential as a tool for the improvement of women's land rights and natural resource management.

From the presentation of their respective efforts, it could be observed that Analog Forestry is still very unpopular. While some groups have effectively taken up the practice of Analog Forestry as a means to effectively manage and preserve their agricultural resources while securing their access to land (case of a group of women from North West Cameroon advised by COMAID), other members of the IAFN have not yet fully integrated the concept into their work. Key challenges include lack of the necessary capacity to plan and successfully implement advocacy actions, weak voices as members are working more on individual basis than in networks, resistance from village and local administrative authorities, and poor access to technical and financial resources.

The presentation from FIMI indicated that while women in general are marginalized and their land rights generally violated, indigenous women are doubly affected considering that indigenous communities are generally marginalized and the land on which they live and depend for their livelihoods is often considered as *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one). They are often victims of land grabbing and eviction.

The various presentations are included in annex.

3.3 Context analysis

From participants' presentations of their experiences and current country/international contexts, five key themes were identified for analysis:

- National and international policy formulation and/or reforms
- Policy implementation
- Women's awareness and capacity to plan and carry out advocacy
- Actors' awareness of existing laws and the situation of women's land rights
- Resource mobilisation

The analysis was done in the form of group work with each group working on one theme. The results of this group work were presented in plenary for discussion and enrichment. Highlights of the results of this analysis are as follows:

3.3.1 National and international policy formulation and/or reforms

Current situation

- Relevant policies and laws exist in African countries and at international level (example of the AU framework and guideline for land policy in Africa)
- Some countries have reviewed policies and laws to reflect the current situation while others have engaged the reform process and its ongoing
- In some countries, policies and laws do not clearly articulate issues of women's land and resource rights
- African countries have adopted many international instruments that promotes more inclusive actions on women land and resources right, and these have been ratified by most of the member states of the AU
- State policy/laws and or customary land and resource tenure systems co-exist in the majority of African communities
- Under **customary tenure systems** women usually have weaker land and resource rights compared to men. Their property rights are frequently tied to relationships with men in their families (usually the head of household).
- Most countries have not yet aligned customary tenure systems to the legal tenure system

Key stakeholders

- Members of Pan African Parliament
- Country law makers (Parliamentarians and Senators) and state officials
- Country adhoc committees in charge of land, fishery, forestry and environment reforms
- Ministers in charge of lands, forestry, wildlife, fishery, gender, women empowerment, Justice
- International and local civil society organizations
- Village chiefs

Major challenges

- Full participation of women in policy and law formulation is not ensured
- Women are not sufficiently represented in leadership positions to influence policies and laws
- Women have limited knowledge on existing laws and international instruments that promote their land and resource rights
- Women are not sufficiently mobilized to undertake collective actions to contribute in laws and decision making instances or arenas
- Absence of women in local land governance institutions

Opportunities

- Ongoing reforms in some African countries are opportunities to influence for more inclusive land and resource policies and laws
- Many initiatives ongoing to improve on land and resource rights of African women (Kilimanjaro initiative, Women Land Rights in Africa, National Engagement Strategy on Land Governance promoted by ILC...)
- International organizations are ready to support initiatives on improved land and resource rights for women
- Legal instruments adopted by African Union to guide elaboration of inclusive land policy (Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in African)
- Existence of village chiefs' networks and enlightened village chiefs who can influence their peers

3.3.2 Policy implementation

Current situation

- The implementation of the policies has been weak and women are continuously marginalized and their land rights violated despite the existence of land laws in all the countries. This is because of many bottlenecks at both administrative and traditional levels

Key stakeholders

- Country law makers (Parliamentarians and Senators) and state officials
- Local administrative authorities and ministry officials involved in the implementation of land laws at local level
- Village chiefs
- Local and international NGOs

Major challenges

- Limited awareness of Women Land Rights issues
- Limited number of women in influential positions
- Women are rarely represented in traditional councils and even the voices of the few present are rarely heard
- Limited access to information on relevant legal procedures and laws (e.g. land laws for rural women)
- Poor understanding of existing laws on the part of some of those responsible for their implementation

Opportunities

- Existing Associations, networks and Platforms as a medium to re-enforce the existing laws (E.g. FIDA, Association of Female Jurists, COMAID, CENDEP, CSO REDD+ and Climate Change platform, Association of Female Parliamentarians and others)

3.3.3 Women's awareness and capacity to plan and carry out advocacy

Current situation

- Women's groups and several organizations have initiated actions aimed at mobilizing and supporting women to carry out advocacy actions aimed at securing their land rights
- Some of these initiatives have led to remarkable results while others are contributing very little or nothing towards the expected changes
- Main reasons why some of the initiatives are ineffective and inefficient include the fact that many women and actors involved in such initiatives are not fully aware of existing policies and often lack the capacity to plan and carry out successful advocacy actions
- There is global theoretical representation of women in policy/decision making & implementation
- The levels of women's involvement in policy are deplorable & discouraging
- Women are always pushed to act at the backstage
- There are traditional customs & ideologies about women being "***the weaker vessel***"
- Organizations and networks working on women's rights issues do not have enough resources to carry out their work

Key stakeholders

- Women advocacy groups & network/coalitions
- Parliamentarians, Ministers, Senators, Councilors Mayors, Fons, Notables in Communities, Chiefs and Traditional Councils, Religious Institutions,
- Educational Institutions
- Media

Major challenges

- Many women's associations and networks are weak
- Women are timid and shy to come out even when they know the legal framework
- Ignorance and inadequate education on their Rights
- Lack of economic empowerment
- Stigmatization from peers and the public
- Fear of harassment
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem to fight for what they believe & their Rights
- Inadequate coalition between women groups
- Inability to Stand criticisms and be willing to take risks

- There's is no effective coordination among institutions to ensure holistic involvement of women
- Lack of synergy among agencies

Opportunities

- There are several ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening women's capacity and supporting them to claim their rights
- Funding agencies are interested to support initiatives in the area of women's rights

3.3.4 Actors' awareness of existing laws and the situation of women's land rights

Current situation

- Many key actors are not fully aware of the situation of women's land rights
- Some key stakeholders are not aware of the provisions of existing instruments in the area of women's land rights and environmental justice
- Analog Forestry is still a new concept in many countries and is therefore not adequately promoted

Key stakeholders

- NGOs
- Women's associations
- Political leaders (parliamentarians, government ministers, mayors etc.)
- Media
- Traditional councils and traditional authorities
- Advocacy networks working on women's rights issues

Major challenges

- Resistance of some stakeholders to change
- Poor access to resources for organizations working on the issues

Opportunities

- Some of the stakeholders have created their own associations/networks (example of the association of traditional rulers) which can serve as entry points/forums for sensitization of actors
- Funding agencies are interested to support initiatives in the area of women's rights

3.3.5 Resource mobilisation

Current situation

- Limited funding
- Limited fundraising capacity to support women land rights advocacy
- Lack of a fundraising strategy for CSOs to carry out advocacy for women land rights.

- Limited CSO visibility, capitalization and documentation of their work on women land rights advocacy

Key stakeholders

- Government
- Donor organizations
- CSOs/Networks
- Communities

Major challenges

- Identifying suitable donors to fund work on women land rights.
- Limited technical capacity to write concept notes and project proposals.
- Limited eligibility to access funds due to country-specific issues.
- Country differences hindering transfer of funds due to political issues.
- Stringent control by government on CSO funding and high taxes.
- Multiple donor requirements (audit reports, annual reports, experience, references from credible international organizations)

Opportunities

- Existing national initiatives like NES put in place by ILC, Landcam, FIMI for indigenous women.
- Partnering with strong international and national organizations like IAFN, Both Ends, CENDEP.
- Presence of national, regional and international networks

3.4 Planning of advocacy actions

Participants agreed that it would be necessary to plan advocacy actions for the region and for country-level actors to plan their own actions in line with the regional plan. Working in 5 groups (same groups constituted for context analysis were maintained), participants proposed advocacy action for each of the 5 themes. Their proposals were presented in plenary for discussion, input and adoption. The adopted advocacy plan presented in the following table:

Table 1. Regional advocacy plan

Vision: “A society where women have secured access to land through the practice of Analog Forestry and improved land policy formulation and implementation, thereby contributing to the economic, social and political development of Africa”.

Objective	Activities	By Whom?	With Whom?	By When?
SO 1. Influence policies and laws to adequately protect women’s land rights and promote the practice of Analog Forestry and environmental justice in Africa.	1.1 Carry out a detailed analysis current policies with focus on women rights	- GAGGA	- International partners - (IAFN and others to be identified) - Consultant (legal experts) - CSOs working on rights issues (to be identified)	3 month
	1.2 Produce a position paper on women’s land rights, the practice of Analog Forestry and environmental justice in Africa	- GAGGA	- International partners (IAFN)	4 months
	1.3 Organize lobby meetings with key stakeholders to present position paper	- GAGGA	- International partners (IAFN) - Policy makers - Rights groups - CSOs	7 months
SO2. Ensure the effective and full participation of women in local and national land and resource governance structures	2.1 Organize lobby meetings on the need for inclusive governance over land and resources	- GAGGA	- Networks of traditional rulers - Authorities of various land governance structures - Opinion leaders	1 year
SO 3. Enhance the implementation of existing national and international land policies	Lobby for the elaboration of texts of application	- GAGGA	- International partners (IAFN) - Relevant government ministries - Law makers - Local and international CSOs and advocacy groups working on women’s rights	December, 2020
	Put in place a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of land laws	- GAGGA	- International partners (IAFN) - Relevant government ministries - Law makers - Local and international CSOs and	

			advocacy groups working on women's rights	
SO4. Improve on women's awareness and understanding of existing national and international land instruments, environmental laws and Analog Forestry and strengthen their capacity to plan and carry out advocacy actions at all levels	Organize educational campaigns to reach out to grass root women (sensitization meetings, production and dissemination of adapted IEC material)	- GAGGA	- Existing NGO's - Existing Women Network - Government officials - Councilors - Educational institutions	April 2019- March 2020 (completion)
	Organize capacity building activities for women on advocacy planning and implementation	- GAGGA	- Existing NGO's - Existing Women Network	April 2019- April 2020 (completion)
	Stimulate/strengthen women's advocacy networks	- GAGGA	- Existing NGO's - Existing Women Network	April 2019- April 2020 (completion)
SO5. To improve on relevant actors' awareness and understanding of land laws and analog forestry, the situation of women with respect to these laws and how Analog Forestry can contribute in securing women's land access	Organize sensitization campaigns to reach out to relevant actors (sensitization meetings, production and dissemination of IEC material, Radio and TV programmes)	- GAGGA	- International partners (IAFN) - Local and international CSOs working on rights issues - Advocacy groups	2019-2020
SO6. Mobilize sufficient technical, material and financial resources to lobby and advocate for women's land rights, analog forestry and environmental justice	Carryout donor mapping	- CSOs	- GAGGA, IAFN and CENDEP	- April 2019
	Build capacity of CSOs in resource mobilization	- Consultants	- CSOs, Networks, Beneficiary communities	May-June 2019
	Design project proposals	- Consultants - CSOs	- Donors - International partners	June –December 2019
	Capitalization on CSOs initiatives for visibility	- CSOs	- International partners - Media	Ongoing
	Networking with national and international like minded	- CSOs	- Donors - International partners	Ongoing

	organizations			
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3.5 Communication

All 5 groups also reflected on how communication will be ensured in the course of implementing the regional as well as national advocacy plans. At the end of the presentations, it was agreed as follows:

- That a Whatsapp group be created to enable participants share experiences, coordinate and render account about actions that would be implemented within the framework of this regional advocacy plan and country level plans;
- That other social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter etc.) will be used to facilitate exchanges among members while at the same time reaching out to stakeholders to sensitize them on the activities of the network and the situation of women's land rights, Analog Forestry and environmental justice;
- That other mass media channels (such as TV, Radio and print media) will be used to reach out to relevant stakeholders. In this area, participants agreed on the publication of a biennial newsletter (online and print version) in addition to publications in existing journals
- That an online portal be created where actors can access information on women's land rights and environmental justice issues and on Analog Forestry.

4. Conclusions

At the end of the forum, participants were visibly happy with the opportunity to exchange experiences and jointly analyze the policy context for Analog Forestry and women's land rights. The enthusiasm of the conference participants and their proposals towards continuous exchanges through various means can be considered as testimony of the relevance of the initiative to bring them together.

The country presentations enabled participants to improve their understanding of the challenges faced by women in Africa in the area of Analog forestry, land rights and environmental justice in line with the first specific objective of the conference. The group work sessions during which participants jointly analyzed the policy environment also contributed to the attainment of this objective. During the analysis of the policy environment, participants accessed the potentials and opportunities for the improvement of the said policy environment. This led to the attainment of the second specific objective of the workshop. The workshop ended with a regional advocacy action plan which identified key actions to be taken at regional and national levels as stipulated in the third specific objective. It can therefore be concluded that the objectives of the conference were largely attained.

Annexes:

- Press release
- Country presentations
- Budget requested for event

These have been sent as separate files