

# **CRISIS IN THE KENYA WOOD CARVING INDUSTRY**

**OPTIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

**Conference of the WWF-UNESCO Initiative on "People and  
Plants"  
18-19 September 2000  
Kenya College of Communications Technology (KCCT)  
Mbagathi, Kenya**

**FACILITATION REPORT**  
**Prepared by Prof. G-C. M. Mutiso**  
**Muticon**  
**Box 689 Ruaraka**  
**Kenya**  
**Email [muticon@wananchi.com](mailto:muticon@wananchi.com)**  
**Phone 254-2-860772**

**Fax 254-2-860771**

## Table of Contents

1. Conference Preparation	3	
2. Conference Proceedings	3	
3. Consultant's Tentative Agenda.	3	
4. Initial Groups Ranking of Priority Problems	5	
5. Group Ranked Problems, Solutions and Solution Providers	6	
6. Plenary Agreed Problems, Solutions and Solution Providers	10	
7. Programming Implications		12
a. Lack of Industry Knowledge, Funding and Marketing Plans	12	
b. Participants Preferences for Sector Interventions in Descending Order	13	
8. Appendices		15
a. Program		
b. Mbagathi Declaration		
c. Conference Fact Sheet		
d. Pre-Conference Press Release		
e. Minister's Speech		
f. List of Participants		
g. Selected Conference Presentations		

h.

## **1. Conference Preparation**

In preparation of the conference, WWF and UNESCO had commissioned a consultant to prepare a background document. His terms were *inter alia* to 1. Identifying and listing the key stakeholders in the wood industry 2. Updating the stakeholders on the current status of the industry and donor proposed intervention measures and 3. Selecting stakeholders' representatives to attend the conference.

The consultant, Dr. Samuel Muthwii, travelled to the sites where carving is done and identified carvers, businesspersons and co-operatives taking part in the industry. He produced the background document titled **Report on the Survey and Contact on The Interested Groups in the Wood Carving Industry in Kenya**. This document was used as a background document and is available from the People and Plants Initiative Offices at UNESCO.

In a meeting held to prepare the facilitation, it was agreed that after the official opening of the conference, there would be presentations from key programmes intervening in the industry. These presentations were to come from UNESCO, MCC, EU Micro-enterprise Program, Kenya Forest Department, Kenya Wildlife Service, Fair Trade, Oxfam, the premier Carving Community Representative and Samuel Muthwii and David Maingi of Kenyatta University and WWF respectively. Of these only Oxfam did not have a representative in the conference.

Since it was planned that about 72 people would attend the conference, they were to be organised into six groups to facilitate detailed discussions of the industry. It was further agreed that there would be six facilitators for the groups.

## **2. Conference Proceedings**

The conference timetable is found in Appendix 1.

It was planned that the opening statement by the Minister for Environment, the presentations from interested agencies would take the first morning. The first afternoon and the second day would be taken by group work in reviewing the presentations and charting the way forward. The timetable was followed from the first session. Presentations were completed before lunch of day 1. Group work was started on time and was completed by end of day 2.

## **3. Consultant's Tentative Agenda.**

The first session in the afternoon of day 1 was for review of the Consultant's Tentative Agenda and the presentations by all six groups and to suggest whether there were key areas of concern left out, needing leaving out etc. Since this was the initial group meeting, very little changes were made. Since formal presentations were not circulated, participants relied on their notes to glean matters to be included.

The tentative agenda materials reviewed are shown below.

- a. Discuss and look for effective ways of involving stakeholders in the wood carving industry and farmers in planting good wood plant species, other local species used for wood carving and any other species for improvement of the environment
  - b. Discuss problems which hinder massive tree planting campaigns and the modalities of doing it and find out the possibility of using community based groups particularly in places where wood carving industry is intense e.g. Wamunyu and the other surrounding areas.
  - c. Discuss the problem of pricing woodcarvings to avoid exploitation of carvers by middlemen.
  - d. Discuss the problem of wood wastage and ways of minimising it.
  - e. Discuss marketing strategies by co-operatives and by individual carvers for the purpose of making them more effective and to expand markets. This should include other measures for improving the trade.
  - f. Discuss the need for educating carvers, which areas they need education and the effective approaches to adopt and adapt.
  - g. Discuss the leadership crisis affecting co-operatives.
  - h. Discuss the corruption problems facing co-operatives and KCCU e.g. in the distribution of orders, elections and the education of voters etc.
  - i. Discuss the use and the popularisation of good wood and its products here and elsewhere.
  - j. Discuss the problem of overcrowding and the over taxing of facilities in working sites, which can result in health problems.
  - k. Discuss ways of dealing with wood carving waste
  - l. Discuss Problems of migration and belonging to more than one co-operative
  - m. Discuss the possibility of using wood from other countries.
- Discuss way of making good wood carving products more appealing to buyers and the preservation measures needed.

The initial task of defining what was to occupy groups for the rest of the conference period was achieved for on the whole those invited were familiar with the problems as well as having discussed them with the consultant. In Plenary after agreeing on the tentative agenda with minor modifications, groups were sent back to rank the most serious six problems.

#### **4. Initial Groups Ranking of Priority Problems**

The initial ranking by six groups of the most serious problems are tabulated below.

Group	Group	Group
Pricing of woodcarvings	Lack of seedlings	Lack of Standardised Prices
Exploitation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carver</li> <li>• Farmer</li> </ul>	Lack of Costing and Marketing Knowledge	Lack of Industry wide Co-ordination
Tree-growing techniques for ASALs ( arid and semi-arid lands)	Wood Pricing	Lack of Market Information
Applied research and development	Wood wastage	Lack of Transparency by Co-operative Committees
Transport	Lack of Transport	Lack of Materials and Resources
Leadership crisis affecting co-operatives	Bad Business Practices by Co-operatives	
Identification of carved wood species		
Group	Group	Group
Lack of water	Lack of Awareness of Improved Trees	Lack of Water
Inadequate techniques in tree planting	Small Farms	Lack of Seeds
Not enough land for planting trees	Water Problems	Poverty
No tree planting campaigns at local level	Lack of Tree planting Skills	Rigged Co-operatives' Elections
Daily needs are not met	Lack of Standard Prices	Incompetent Management
Pricing should be bottom-up	Privatisation of Group /Co-operative Orders	Lack of Specialisation
Training for new carvers (in cutting native trees)		

It should be noted that there was general agreement on the problems across groups even though the language differed.

After the individual groups ranked key problems the following plenary session took time to discuss regrouping of the identified problems for the overall group. As is usual in this methodology very creative discussions took place during plenary. One key issue stood

out in the discussions. This is the problem of representing carvers in co-operatives and in the industry in general. It is exacerbated by the existence of incompetent, untrained and corrupt management of the co-operatives in the industry although they only cover about 20% of the carvers. Carvers felt very strongly that the leadership keeps them away from co-operatives.

Then the six groups were asked to take the broadly agreed problems and to work out solutions to the problems as well as specifying who was to address the problem. The final product of this effort is found below

## **5. Group Ranked Problems, Solutions and Solution Providers**

This first cut of discussing ranked problems, solutions and actors to provide the solutions in general also showed that there was broad agreement on solutions and solution providers. . Again the language was not exact but this is expected of the methodology for in the groups had different capacities. Two examples suffice. One group saw a problem called research although what they enumerated was really research and development in the industry.

<b>GROUP</b>		
<b>Problem</b>	<b>Solution</b>	<b>Who</b>
Acquisition of wood for carving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create awareness on sources of wood</li> <li>- Tree planting</li> <li>- Use of alternative tree species</li> </ul>	Management of Coop societies/FD Carvers should initiate tree planting
Leadership crisis in carvers' groups	Transparency measures to be put in place Select appropriate leaders	Wood carvers and members of the co-operatives
Corruption by management in business transactions	Accounting measures to be put in place	Wood carvers and members of the carver groups
Marketing of woodcarvings	Prioritise/ enhance marketing through trade fairs, exhibitions	Management of carver groups Traders
Awareness/training on wood utilisation, tree planting, good woods etc. among carvers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holding meetings</li> <li>- Training sessions and demonstrations</li> </ul>	Management section of carvers' groups FD extension
Poor relationship between carvers and FD, KWS, administrations	Holding consultative meetings between related groups (KWS, foresters, administrations, NGOs)	Carvers to initiate meetings of all parties
<b>GROUP</b>		
Shortage of trees	Planting more trees from the species of 'good wood'	Government, Environmental NGOs, Farmers, Buyers, carvers
Water shortage	Provision of water reservoirs, e.g. dams	Community, NGOs, Government, carvers
Lack of seedlings	Provision of seedlings by FD	Forest Dept.

Labour shortage for nursery care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of labour</li> <li>- By training of carvers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government</li> <li>- Environmental NGOs</li> </ul>
Lack of co-operation among carvers	By training carvers on costing and pricing	By knowledgeable stakeholders
Lack of exhibitions	Exhibitions and trade fairs to be held	NGOs
Lack of Code of conduct	Co-operative to adhere to Code of conduct	
Lack of accountability of funds	Need for accountability	
Lack of management skills	Management training	Business advisers
Lack of transparency	Electing right leaders	
Lack of knowledge	Training	Environmental NGOs
<b>GROUP</b>		
Lack of land for tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers to plant trees on their land</li> <li>Carvers to negotiate for special land from the government</li> </ul>	
Ineffective involvement of stakeholders in tree planting	Form committee for sensitisation	
Exploitation of carvers	Encourage carvers to form co-operatives	
Corruption	Good governance by coop members	
Poor management of coops	Training	
<b>GROUP</b>		
Research needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Substitute materials</li> <li>- Tools and equipment</li> <li>- Designs and function</li> <li>- Tree growing techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carvers</li> <li>- Farmers, carvers, KEFRI, FD</li> </ul>
Training/education	Creating public awareness	- Researchers, NGOs
Membership (groups)	Law	Carvers, Government, (DCO)
Graft/pilfer proof resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good wood campaign</li> <li>- Body to operate similarly to KBS</li> <li>- Colour free bottomed handcrafts (certified wood ID)</li> <li>- Scientific ways</li> <li>- Transparency &amp; accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carvers, UNESCO</li> <li>- Carvers</li> <li>- KEFRI</li> <li>- KEFRI</li> <li>- Carvers</li> </ul>
Strategies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management</li> <li>- Marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Motivation</li> <li>- Media, ask museum's participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carvers</li> <li>- Media</li> </ul>
Carving sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carvers safety</li> <li>- Health education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carvers</li> <li>- Health Officers</li> </ul>
<b>GROUP</b>		
ASSUMPTION: CREATION OF AN UMBRELLA INDUSTRY WIDE BODY TO IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS		



Lack of raw materials - Good wood - Water  - Seed  - Land - Good working environment	Planting: - Growing of good wood - Dam construction, boreholes, water harvesting systems - Collection  - Identifying land	- Farmers, carvers - Farmers carvers, NGO (support)  - Farmers, carvers, KEFRI, NGO support - Farmers, carvers, Govt
Lack of skills and awareness among Carvers, Farmers and Buyers on costing, product development, marketing, presentation, nursery management	Education, training, awareness creation	CBOs, NGOs, umbrella agencies, Govt
Lack of management skills Co-operatives, individual carvers, farmers, companies etc.	Training, awareness creation	NGOs, umbrella body, CBOs
Lack of appropriate marketing structure and strategies	Education, use modern technology, exposure to the market, exhibitions, trade fairs, workshops	Umbrella body, international buyers, co-operatives, NGOs, Govt agencies (museum, KWS) eco-tourism groups, CBOs, individual carvers, wholesale buyers
Wood waste	- Converting/recycling waste (paper, manure, fuel, chip-board) - Minimising waste (selection of wood, training, tools)	Carvers, business people, farmers
Overcrowding and overtaxing of facilities	Provision of additional facilities according to demand (work space, shop, surrounding area, storage, space for wood, hygiene)	Govt, City Council, individuals, co-operatives
<b>GROUP</b>		
Lack of enough wood for the industry	- Plant trees - Use good wood	Carvers, Govt, NGOs, farmers
Management of the industry	Training in business knowledge	NGOs, Govt, local experts
Poverty	- Drought resistant crops - Irrigation - Other income-generating activities	Carvers, NGOs, Govt
Costing and pricing of carvings	- Training in costing and pricing methods - Agreement on common price levels	- NGOs, Govt  - Carvers to agree on common price level
Lack of water	Dams and bore holes	Govt, NGOs, carvers
Lack of co-ordination & follow-up among stakeholders	- Formation of co-ordination committee - Sharing of market information	All stakeholders. Carvers, Govt NGOs, Buyers, Farmers, etc.

The second example is the use of Government as a solution provider without specifying which arms of government. This reflects not appreciating that more often than not government is not in a

position to mount some of the creative solutions, which currently are provided for by, bilateral, multilateral and NGO donor programs

The groups reported back to plenary and detailed discussions were undertaken to come up with shared areas of concern to suggest solutions to the problems identified and to identify which organisations were in a position to address the solutions to the particular problems. Below is the listing of the agreed outputs. More time was spent on refining the nature of the problems, which the plenary decided had to be more than six, than was spent on detailed discussion of the solutions and actors in providing the solutions. Since time was running out, the facilitator and two participants were empowered to rationalise the solutions and solution providers and to offer them to the plenary for their consideration. This was undertaken when the Plenary was considering the Mbagathi Declaration found in Appendix/////////.

## **6. Plenary Agreed Problems, Solutions and Solution Providers**

The final product is shown below. It is a reflection of the most important problems, solutions and solution providers as discussed in Mbagathi.

<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>SOLUTION</b>	<b>BY WHOM</b>
PROB. 1. LACK OF RAW MATERIALS , RESOURCES AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT	Tree growing techniques	Carvers should initiate tree planting. Co-operatives, NGOs, Donors and Forest Dept. Should support
a. Good wood b. Water c. Seed d. Land		a. Farmers, carvers b. Farmers, carvers, NGOs (support) c. farmers, carvers, KEFRI, NGO and donor support d. farmers, carvers, government e. Management of co-operative societies and Forest Dept.
Good working environment	Health education for carvers	Carvers, Co-operatives, Public Health officers, NGOs, Forest Dept. and Donors
Ineffective involvement of stakeholders in tree planting	Creating public tree planting awareness	Carvers, Co-operatives, Forest Dept. Provincial Administration, NGOs, Donors, Farmers
	Carvers to negotiate for specific land from the government	CBOs, Co-operatives, NGOs Industry Umbrella Body, ,Forest Dept. KWS, Lands Office
	Plant trees on private land	Carvers, Business people,

	Use good wood	Farmers
	Implement a. Draught resistant crops b. Irrigation c. Other income generating activities	Umbrella body, international buyers, co-ops, NGOs, government agencies (e.g. museum, KWS), eco-tourism groups, CBOs individual carvers, wholesale buyers
	a. Growing of good wood b. Dam construction, boreholes, water harvesting systems c. Seed Collection d. Identifying land	Umbrella body, CBOs, Farmers, Carvers, FD, NGOs, Donors, Co-operatives, KNFCU
	e. Assist seedling provision by FD and other agencies	Government, local councils, Individuals, Co-operatives
<b>PROB. 2. MANAGEMENT</b>		
Management of the industry	Create Industry wide trade body	All stake holders in the industry, Government Export Promotion Council, KNFCU, NGOs, Donors
Corruption by management in business transactions	Training in business knowledge	All stakeholders, Carvers KACA, KNFCU, NGOs, Buyers Farmers
<b>PROB.3. LEADERSHIP</b>		
Lack of accountability of funds	Transparent measures are to be put in place at all levels Elect able leaders	Carvers, Co-operatives Government, NGOs, Donors
Lack of transparency	Provision of additional facilities according to demand work (space, shop, surrounding area, storage, space for wood, hygiene)	Government Co-operatives NGOs Carvers
Leadership crisis in carvers groups	Election of right leaders by carvers	Carvers, Co-operatives , KNFCU
Poor management of co-operatives	Management training	KNFCU, NGOs, Donors
Lack of management skills: Co-operatives, Individuals, Carvers, Farmers, Companies.	Management training	KNFCU, NGOs Government Supervisors of Co-operatives and Industry, Export Promotion Council, Chamber of Commerce, Donor Programs
Exploitation of carvers	Responsible Leadership Market information	Carvers, Co-operatives, Donors, Industry Trade body
Poor relationship between Carvers, FD, KWS, KNFCU and Administration	Industry wide Trade body	All Stakeholders in the industry
Costing and pricing of products	Training of Carvers. Co-ordination of Donor programs	NGOs, KNFCU, Donors
Poor management of nurseries	Train carvers and co-operatives in Nursery care	NGOs, Forest Dept., Donor Programs
<b>PROB.4. MARKETING</b>		
Lack of appropriate marketing structures, strategies and information	Provide Market information in General Media	NGOS/UNESCO/Government/ Other donors
Lack of wood certification	Provide certification	Donor Business advisers Carvers, Co-operatives, Government Trade organisations Media Houses
		FD, Donors, UNESCO, Export

knowledge and information on its impact on the industry	information. Provide impact data of certification. Prioritise and enhance marketing through trade fairs and exhibitions, education, internet	Promotion Council, Chamber of Commerce
<b>PROB. 5. SKILLS</b>	Training	
Lack of certification knowledge	Certification awareness creation by donor and government	Knowledgeable stakeholders
Awareness/training on: Utilisation Tree planting Good wood, etc. among carvers	Training of wood carvers Holding meetings, training sessions and demonstrations Consultative meetings between related groups (KWS, Foresters, Administration, NGOs) Create awareness on sources of wood Tree planting Use of alternative tree species	KWS, Forest Department , UNESCO, NGOs
Costing and pricing of products	Training in costing and pricing methods Agreement on common price levels	NGOs Government Carvers to agree on common price levels
<b>PROB. 6. CORRUPTION</b>	Accountable measures to be put in place by KNFCU	KNFCU, KACA
Graft, Pilferage, Profiteering Embezzlement	Setting up a Industry wide Standards Committee	Woodcarvers and members of carver groups, traders, Co-operatives, KNFCU KACA, NGOs, Donors
	Colour free bottomed handicrafts	Management of carver groups, Traders, Co-operatives
	Wood testing	Co-op management
	Financial transactions transparency and accountability	Carvers, traders, group leaders Co-operatives, Industry Body
	Need for accountability of organisations and individuals	Carvers, traders, group leaders
<b>PROB. 7. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Lack of training and use of right working tools	Designs Tools and equipment Substitute materials	Farmers, Carvers, KEFRI FD, Donors
<b>PROB. 8. INDUSTRY WIDE TRADE BODY</b>		
Lack of co-ordination among stakeholders	Co-ordination of Donor, KNFCU and Government Programmes in Sector	Donors, Government of Kenya External Resources Dept. Carvers, KNFCU
Encourage farmers to form co-operatives and other types of organisations for specific tasks.	Formation of Sensitisation and Co-ordination Committee Sharing of market information Carvers' safety strategies Law	Carvers, Co-operatives, Donors KNFCU
<b>PROB. 9. WOODWASTE</b>		
Waste in carving Lack of waste disposal	Conserving/recycling waste (paper, manure, fuel, chip-board) Minimising waste (selection of wood, training, tools)	Environmental NGOs Wood industry

## **7. Programming Implications**

### **a. Lack of Industry Knowledge, Funding and Marketing Plans**

It is clear to the consultant that interventions in the sector have not been co-ordinated. There are four aspects of this.

First and foremost is co-ordination in donor programs to the sector. Most donor interventions have been targeted to specific co-operatives and at times to one activity. They therefore are not able to address sector wide concerns of the carvers, the primary mover of the sector from an economic and social point of view.

The second aspect of co-ordination refers to Government of Kenya. Interventions seem not to have been systematically co-ordinated within the Government of Kenya system. It is doubtful there is a clearly thought out national plan on the industry. For example the Forest Department has a lot to say in terms of wood sourcing and perhaps certification in the long term. Yet issues of marketing do not fall under its purview. This is the concern of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The Export Promotion Council is most relevant body for almost all carvings are exported. They were not in the conference. Since 20% of the carvers are in co-operatives of one kind or another there is need to involve the Department of Co-operatives. They were not in the conference. Other Government of Kenya offices, e.g. Public Health, should also be involved given the health needs of the sector. Since carving activities are a significant micro-enterprise, other organs responsible for the development of the micro-enterprise systems should have been at the conference.

The other aspect of co-ordination relates to the changing policy framework on co-operatives. The umbrella co-operatives body, Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives, is increasingly being designated as the ultimate policy and supervision body of the movement. It was not at the conference. Its participation would have been important for it has access to donor resources to train, finance and supervise the sector. It is this body which should be policing the Carvers co-operatives co-ordinating body the Kenya Carvers Co-operative Union- extensively criticised in the conference for lack of transparency and by implication corruption by most of the attendants of the conference.

Finally, the Chamber of Commerce is a significant actor in the marketing of carvings internationally. It was not represented.

Branches of the Chamber in areas of significant carving are a resource to be used by the carvers. This information seemed to be not known by a significant body of the participants- donor representatives included.

#### **b. Participants Preferences for Sector Interventions in Descending Order**

The participants were clear on what needs to be done, and fast, in the sector. Their preferences are:

- 1. Improvements in acquisition of raw materials.**
- 2. Improvements in management of carver organisations especially co-operatives.**
- 3. Improvements in institutional leadership in the sector, including but not limited to co-operatives.**
- 4. Improvements in collection, processing and dissemination of marketing information and marketing techniques.**
- 5. Improvements in industrial and organisational skills across the sector.**
- 6. Termination of corruption in the sector.**
- 7. Research and development in product design, carving tools and implements as well as substitute carving materials.**
- 8. Finally participants were clear that there is a need to bring all participants in the industry under one industry wide trade body to self-police the sector. Participants were cognisant of the need to involve not just the private sector in this but also the public sector including donors and ngos active in the sector.**

In the opinion of the facilitator, these concerns address the needs of the sector in the age of privatisation. That the concerns are addressed this way is documentation of the failure of past donor interventions, past benign neglect by government, and the lack of thinking about the multifaceted development needs of the sector in the past by all.

It is a wake up call both to the industry, government and donors on what needs to be done now if this industry is not to collapse with dire costs to the Kenyan society.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### ***Crisis in the Kenyan Woodcarving Industry - Options For Ecological And Economic Sustainability***

Conference of the WWF-UNESCO initiative on “People and Plants”,  
18-19 September 2000,  
Kenya College of Communications Technology (KCCT), Mbagathi  
Campus

#### **Programme**

##### **Monday, 18 September 2000**

- 8-9 am Registration of participants
- 9-9:45 Welcome address - Paul B. Vitta, Director UNESCO Nairobi Office  
Opening of the Conference - Francis M. Nyenze, Minister for  
Environment and Natural Resources
- 9:45-10:30 GROUP PHOTO AND TEA BREAK
- 10:30-12:30 Presentations  
UNESCO - Robert Höft  
MCC - Cindy Eby, Randall Mast  
Forest Department - Reuben Gikonyo  
KWS - Gideon Gathaara  
Carvers - Samuel Kivuitu  
UNESCO - Samson Muthwii and David Maingi
- 12:30 - 2:00 LUNCH
- 2 - 3 Group work: Review of problems in the woodcarving sector
- 3 - 3:30 Group presentations
- 3.30 - 4:00 TEA BREAK
- 4 - 5:30 Group work: recommendations for solving problems in the  
woodcarving sector

##### **Tuesday, 19 September 2000**

- 8 - 9 Presentation of group work: recommendations for problem solution
- 9 - 10:30 Review of group work
- 10:30 - 11 TEA BREAK
- 11 - 12:30 Plenum discussion
- 12:30 - 2 LUNCH
- 2 - 3 Conclusions and recommendations
- 3:30 Closure

**APPENDIX 2**

**MBAGATHI DECLARATION**

**CONCERNED** about the continued degradation of Kenya's forests and woodlands and the environmental problems thereby caused

**CONSCIOUS** of our contribution to the overharvesting of selected tree species from forests and woodlands

**AWARE** of the need to preserve the diversity of Kenya's forests and woodlands and to protect these for future generations

**RECOGNIZING** the growing awareness about environmental issues in global trade and marketing and the restrictions it imposes on the exportation of products made from destructively harvested trees

**AWARE** of the abundance of fast-growing multi-purpose trees suitable for carving such as neem (mwarobaini), jacaranda, grevillea, mango and others on private farmland and their availability for sale

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the desire of the Kenyan Government to offer land for the growing of trees suitable for carving

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the need for transparency in the woodcarving sector for the betterment of the livelihoods of Kenyan woodcarvers now and in the future

**We as a representation of**

**Carvers, Designers, Buyers, Traders, Farmers,  
Environmental Groups, Development Agencies**

**COMMIT** ourselves to buying, harvesting, carving, selling wood products originating from farmland and plantations while phasing out the use of overexploited slow-growing trees from forests, woodlands and other related land systems

**COMMIT** ourselves to the promotion of tree-planting to replenish the exhausted resources of raw materials for carving and to the establishment of tree nurseries and plantations of wood suitable for carving

**DECLARE** our readiness to work with the Government of Kenya to seek solutions to the degradation of forests and woodlands in the country

**CONFIRM** our desire to work actively towards a certification system for sustainably sourced woodcarvings by setting up transparent and fair systems of wood acquisition and providing to consumers information on the origin and type of wood in use

**DECLARE** our commitment to work toward a more transparent woodcarving sector for the benefit of all parties involved



**THEREBY becoming Ambassadors for environmentally sustainable and socially conscientious wood use**

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS WELCOME**

**APPENDIX 3. FACT SHEET**

- ❑ The Kenyan woodcarving industry supports approximately 80,000 woodcarvers with an estimated 500,000 dependants.
- ❑ Kenyan woodcarvings are worth more than 1.5 billion Kenya Shillings per year.
- ❑ The Kenyan woodcarving industry uses over 50,000 trees equivalent to almost 8,000 m<sup>3</sup> of wood annually. This is equivalent to ten trees being felled per hectare of natural closed-canopy forest in Kenya every year.
- ❑ Until recently, the Kenyan woodcarving industry relied to about 90 percent on three preferred tree species: mahogany (*muhuhu*, *Brachylaena huillensis*), ebony (*mpingo*, *Dalbergia melanoxylon*) and olive (*mutamaiyu*, *Olea europaea ssp. africana*).
- ❑ The selective harvesting of preferred species has led to a decline and locally to a collapse of the tree population and contributed to the degradation of forests and woodlands.
- ❑ The selective harvesting of mature trees of the preferred species has limited the species' regeneration ability (due to removal of the seed source) and endangers the survival of small mammals, birds, reptiles and insects that depend on these trees for food or shelter.
- ❑ The collapse of Kenyan populations of *muhuhu*, *mpingo* and other carving species has caused the problem to be exported into Tanzania, with hundreds of logs being smuggled across the border to meet the Kenyan demand for woodcarvings.
- ❑ Because of the shortage of traditional carving woods, carvers have explored the possibility to use alternative species, most of which are fast growing introduced multi-purpose species grown on farms. These include neem (*mwarobaini*, *Azadirachta indica*), jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), grevillea (*mukima*, *Grevillea robusta*), mango (*mwembe*, *Mangifera indica*) and others.
- ❑ Because of their fast growth, general availability and suitability to produce quality carvings they have been termed "good woods".
- ❑ The use of "good woods" has minimal ecological impact. The trees are planted primarily for other purposes than for carving (medicine, fodder, shade, ornament, timber), they can be pruned, they coppice and they grow five times faster than forest or woodland species
- ❑ A neem tree grows to a diameter of 80 cm in 50 years. A muhuhu tree requires more than 200 years to grow to this size.
- ❑ Carvings from "good woods" can make excellent art objects with innovative designs.
- ❑ Large importers increasingly demand for carvings produced from sustainable wood sources. Only "good woods" can qualify as they originate from managed farms.
- ❑ The Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) of neem trees with diameters greater than 50 cm in the Kenyan coastal strip is over 200,000 m<sup>3</sup>. This species alone could therefore supply a woodcarving industry 25 times the size of the current without negative ecological consequences.

- To help Kenyan carvers fulfil the criteria increasingly required for export, WWF and UNESCO work with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to achieve certification for “good wood” carvings.
- At the same time, efforts are being supported to establish plantations of trees suitable for carving.

## Press Release

### **UNESCO and the crisis in the Kenyan Woodcarving Industry**

Over 60,000 carvers in Kenya face a severe crisis of depletion of traditional carving woods. African ebony (mpingo), mahogany (muhuhu, muhugu), olive and rosewood are disappearing in Africa after suffering from decades of over-exploitation. Their loss threatens to finally put woodcarvers out of work. This is not only an ecological and economic but also a social and cultural crisis: woodcarving is an essential sector of the local industry with high added value and at the same time perpetuates and promotes African art throughout the world. Sadly, it is perhaps this success that now threatens the very existence of this industry.

Yet there is reason for hope. Indeed, Kenya has an abundance of fine fast-growing woods such as neem (mwarobaini), jacaranda, grevillea and others, which are suitable for high quality carvings. Unfortunately, misconceptions have kept the carvers away from these fast renewable resources. A shift towards these woods would reduce the pressure on the fast-dwindling forests while providing much needed income to rural farming communities and carvers. As international markets increasingly call for sustainably produced goods, "green" carvings made from these farm-grown trees could fetch extremely high prices. The Kenyan carving industry could be booming if it seized the opportunities arising from the global eco-market. Neem alone could sustainably supply a carving industry many times the size of the current and European supermarkets would gladly sell salad bowls made in Kenya.

UNESCO, within its programme on "People and Plants", organizes a conference on existing opportunities for the woodcarving industry. The Conference, which is jointly organized with WWF, will be held on 18/19 September 2000 at the Kenya College of Communications Technology, Mbagathi Campus, Nairobi (Tel.: 891201). It brings together carvers, designers, traders, wood suppliers, exporters/importers, development agencies and environmental groups seeking to rejuvenate an ailing industry.

Over the coming years, WWF and UNESCO expect to introduce an internationally recognized certification system for carvings from farm-grown species. Such a certificate reassures buyers that the wooden rhino does not go extinct.

## APPENDIX 5

### **SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, HON. FRANCIS NYENZE, EGH, M.P, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE WOOD CARVING STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE AT MBAGATHI ON 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2000**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Wood carving in Kenya was started in a very humble way by Mutisya Munge in the year 1918 after the Second World War. This happened at a little known Kambiti village in Wamunyu, Machakos District. The first carving that he made was a walking stick with a human face, which impressed the Local District Commissioner who ordered for more walking sticks. This was actually the starting of the trade. As more orders flowed in from that humble beginning the trade has grown from Wamunyu to all major centres in Kenya and to other parts of the region.

Today the industry has about 80,000 wood carvers supporting about 500,000 people. In total, by 1997 the industry earned about 1.5 billion Kenya shillings in the local and the export market, and thus the craft can be described as a very successful rural based industry. The industry is unique in that it is mainly rural based, using production factors from our rural areas namely labor and raw materials. It requires minimal investment and it is a leading rural based foreign exchange earner for the country.

In the current difficult economic situation in the country characterized by declining farm product, wood carvings prices seem to be relatively stable in the international market, a situation that the Kenyan carver need to exploit to the maximum. It is my hope that this conference will come up with strategic actions for the carver to benefit maximally from the trade.

In the recent past wood carving industry has received a lot of concern and interest among researchers, environmentalists, business community, conservationists and landowners because of the problems which are threatening to make it unsustainable. The

interest of the groups I have mentioned is to put the industry into a sustainable footing. Studies carried out by National Museums of Kenya and KEFRI with support from WWF and UNESCO have shown that the industry is afflicted by a number of drawbacks. In spite of these problems affecting the industry there are many exploited opportunities. It is with this view that the People and Plants' programme of UNESCO has persistently attempted to put in place initiatives to put together the stakeholders in the industry to decide on its future.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Development achieved in the industry is enormous but there are trade offs and limitations that have to be addressed and very urgently. The woodcarving industry has been relying on selected indigenous species, Like, Mahogany, Olive, Mpingo and Rosewood whose growth rate does not balance with the rate of removal. The deficit accruing has caused overexploitation of those species. The over reliance on these species has resulted to biodiversity degradation and a threat to the environment. The end result has been a decline in the amount of wood supplied to the wood carving industry. All in all this is a serious threat to the survival of the industry, calling for urgent intervention measures to reverse the trend.

In the international circles carvings buyers have become aware of the negative impacts caused to the environment. This has prompted them to reject carvings from the over exploited species. Locally this has been translated into declining sales of woodcarvings in the world market. The decline has been enhanced by competition with cheap carvings from other parts of the world and other synthetic products. There is need to address this problem so that Kenyan carving can compete favourably with products from other parts of the world.

Coming back home all is not well within the carving industry where management of wood carving groups is heavily invested with inter-clan divisions and lack of cohesion which lack positive impacts required to enhance competition in the present day marketing. Indicators of this state of affairs are the rate of the current group and co-operative disintegrations into small groups and individual carvers, which is not healthy for the growth and the existence of the trade. Other problems observed within the industry include low investment in personnel training, lack of marketing strategies and corruption. The resulting industrial environment forms a good base for middlemen to exploit the carvings' producers. This conference is taking place at the right time before the situation goes out of hand by bringing all the concerned parties together to arrive at a consensus for the way forward.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is important to mention some of the intervention measures being adopted, such as the “good wood” campaign by UNESCO. The aim of this campaign is well known by most of you, calling for the use of alternative woods referred to as “good woods” These woods include the well known neem, Jacaranda, grevillea, blue gum and the mango trees which are successful agroforestry trees. Carvings from these trees are competing well with those of the indigenous species in the local and international markets. The woods or the tree species are quick growing capable of meeting wood required for the industry sustainably.

Efforts to put in place carvings certification system is a milestone in gaining entry into the world market while at the same time ensuring sustainable production of wood for carving under sound environmental management systems. The current pilot certification system in Malindi for neem will form a good base for the process, which can be replicated in the other parts of the country.

To ensure sustainable production of wood carving, planting of the trees used for woodcarving has been a major task within the “good wood” campaign. Carvers’ groups have started tree nurseries with

the aim of planting trees in their farms. Discussions are at an advanced stage between my ministry and carvers groups for joint management of carving wood plantations within the government land. In this area my ministry promises full support.

Education is an important ingredient in the development of any industry. With this in mind efforts are being made to train carvers in effective wood utilization, marketing and business management. The few carvers so far trained are showing signs of adopting new designs and accepting to implement research findings relevant to their needs.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am optimistic that this conference will address all these issues and come up with lasting solutions to the problems affecting the industry looking at the experience and the academic qualification of the participants of this conference, I am convinced that this is the right forum to address the issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Before, I conclude may I now take this opportunity to thank you all for leaving your busy working places to come and participate in this workshop, and also thank UNESCO for organizing this important workshop.

With these few remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare this meeting officially open.

Thank you.

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **List of Participants**

Mr Patrick Amimo

Dr. Edmund G.C. Barrow  
IUCN - The World Conservation Union  
P.O. Box 68200  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 890605-12  
Fax: 254 2 890615/407  
Email: egb@iucn.unon.org

Ms Ann E. Birnie  
P.O. Box 25179 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 561571  
Fax: 254 2 561571  
Email: sebimu@nbnet.co.ke

Dr. Ben Chikamai  
Kenya Forestry Research Institute  
P.O. Box 20412  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 764723/764010/761063/761246  
Fax: 254 2 760034  
Email: kefri@africaonline.co.ke or kefri@arcc.or.ke

Ms Cindy Eby  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Ten Thousand Villages Project  
P.O. Box 14894 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 145 63019  
Fax: 254 2 445177  
Email: ebymast@maf.org

Mr Michael Gachanja  
Kenya Forest Working Group  
East African Wildlife Society  
P.O. Box 20110 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 574145  
Fax: 254 2 571335/570335  
Email: eawls@form-net.com

Mr Gideon Gathaara  
Kenya Wildlife Service  
P.O. Box 40241 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 501081/2/4/501010/501092/6/501196  
Fax: 254 2 501752/505866  
Email: kws@users.africaonline.co.ke

Ms Margreet Hofstede  
Forest Action Network  
P.O. Box 21428  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 718398/714406  
Fax: 254 2 718398  
Email: margreet@uk2.net or margreet@fanworld.org or fan@fanworld.org or fankenya@africaonline.co.ke or fanline@africaonline.co.ke



Dr. Robert Höft  
UNESCO Nairobi Office  
P.O. Box 30592 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 622668  
Fax: 254 2 215991  
Email: robert.hoedt@unesco.unon.org or hoeft@africaonline.co.ke or r.hoedt@unesco.org

Mr Daniel Ikusya Nguku  
P.O. Box 12 Wamunyu  
Tel.: 0145/63230

Dr. Mel Jones  
MicroEnterprise Support Project  
P.O. Box 27551 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 746354/746764  
Fax: 254 2 746764  
Email: meljones@swiftkenya.com or mesp@form-net.com

Mr Edison Kaingu  
Malindi  
Tel.: 0123 / 30248

Mr Jackson Mutua Kalulu  
Kenya Crafts Cooperative Union  
P. O. Box 67530  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 761745/760030

Mr Joshua Kasyoki  
P.O. Box 1282 Ukunda  
Tel.: 0127- 3349

Mr Joseph Kenyatta  
Kenman Design House  
P.O. Box 70299 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 803726/860568  
Fax: 860568

Mr Johnson Kinyanjui  
P.O. Box Box 989 Naivasha  
Tel.: 30164 NAIVASHA

Mr Charles Kirubi  
Renewable Energy Technology Assistance Programme  
P.O. Box 28201 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 535997/535998  
Fax: 254 2 540447/217381  
Email: rteretap@nbnet.co.ke

Mr Joseph Kivinda Muanza  
P.O. Box 82041 Mombasa  
Tel.: 432241 MBSA

Mr Boniface Kivuva Ngunda  
P.O. Box 13095 Nairobi  
Tel.: 766768 NAIROBI

Mr David R. Maingi  
c/o WWF East African Regional Office  
P.O. Box 62440 Nairobi

Tel.: 254 2 572630/1 or 577355  
Fax: 254 2 577389  
Email: goodwood@africaonline.co.ke

Mr Augustin Manyi  
P.O. Box 22 Katangi  
Tel.: 51 KATANGI

Mr Richard Leo Masila  
Kenya Crafts Cooperative Union  
P. O. Box 67530  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 761745

Mr Randall Mast  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Ten Thousand Villages Project  
P.O. Box 14894 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 145 63019  
Fax: 254 2 445177  
Email: ebymast@maf.org

Mr Paul Matiku  
East Africa Natural History Society (EANHS)  
P. O. Box 44486  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254-2-749957  
Fax: 254-2-741049  
Email: eanhs@AfricaOnline.co.ke

Mr Patrick M. Mativo  
P.O. Box 604 Voi  
Tel.: 0147 / 3047 VOI

Mr Patrick Maundu  
KENRIK  
National Museums of Kenya  
P.O. Box 40658 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254.2.743513/742161/2/3/4/742131/2/3/4 ext 209 or 274  
Fax: 254 2 741424  
Email: nmk@form-net.com or kenrik@tt.sasa.unep.no or biodive@tt.gn.apc.org

Mr Titus Maundu Nzambu  
P.O. Box 26 Kivunga  
Tel.: 22 KIVUNGA

Mr Pius Mbeke  
P.O. Box 314 Nanyuki  
Tel.: 32979 NANYUKI

Mr David M. Mbiti  
Daystar University  
Nairobi

Mr Samuel Mbolonzi Kitavi  
P.O. Box 219 Wamunyu  
Tel.: 0145 / 63080

Mr Charles P.K. Mbugua  
Forest Department

P.O. Box 30513 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 764010  
Fax: 254 2 246287

Mr Edward Miller  
P.O. Box 14894 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 560130  
Email: edwardm@iconnect.co.ke

Ms Mildred Mkandla  
Director-General  
EarthCare Africa  
P.O. Box 76358 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 564971/562115  
Fax: 254 2 562115  
Email: ecaf@users.africaonline.co.ke

Mr Benedict Mualuko Muindi  
P.O. Box 12 Wamunyu  
Tel.: 0145 / 63230

Mr David Muasa  
P.O. Box 22 Katangi  
Tel.: 51 KATANGI

Ms Esther Muguire  
Forest Action Network  
P.O. Box 21428  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 718398/714406  
Fax: 254 2 718398  
Email: fan@fanworld.org or fankenya@africaonline.co.ke or fanline@africaonline.co.ke

Mr Benson Peter Muia  
P.O. Box 507 Nakuru  
Tel.: 210612 BOOTH

Mr Cosmas Mulungye  
Makindu Handicraft Co-operative Society Ltd  
P. O. Box 27  
Kibwezi

Mr Benson Musau Mateli  
P.O. Box 314 Nanyuki  
Tel.: 32476 NANYUKI

Mr Julius Musyoki

Mr Joseph Muthoka  
Makongo

Dr. Samson M. Muthwii  
Kenyatta University  
Dept. of Educational Communication and Technology  
P.O. Box 43844 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 810901  
Email: kuchem@thorntree.com

Prof. Gideon C.M. Mutiso  
Muticon Ltd.

P.O. Box 14333 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 860772  
Fax: 254 2 860771  
Email: muticon@wananchi.com old;muticon@nbnet.co.ke

Mr James Mutiso  
P.O. Box 22 Katangi  
Tel.: 51 KATANGI

Mr Daniel Mutiso Ngonze  
P.O. Box 82041 Mombasa  
Tel.: 432241 MBSA

Mr Daniel Mutua Munywoki  
P.O. Box 38 Nyahururu  
Tel.: 32289 NAAHURU

Mr Paul Mutua Mwandiko  
P.O. Box 5 Makindu  
Tel.: 0302/22465 MAKINDU

Mr Joseph Mutuku Mutei  
P.O. Box 82041 Mombasa  
Tel.: 432241 MBSA

Mr Solomon K. Mutunga  
P.O. Box 12 Wamunyu  
Tel.: 0145 / 63232

Mr Peter Muyanga Nguli

Mrs Mwendee  
Ormolu Authentic Crafts  
P.O. Box 46274 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 725366  
Fax: 254 2 446206  
Email: top@swiftkenya.com

inc Mwendee K. Mwendwa

Mr Paul Mwikya Ndungi  
P.O. Box 82041 Mombasa  
Tel.: 432241 MBSA

Mr Pius Ndambuki  
Tel.: 0123 / 30248 MALINDI

Ms Susan Nduku Musomba  
Shimba

Ms Angelina Nduta Mwenda  
Kenyatta University  
Faculty of Environmental Studies  
P.O. Box 43844  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 810901/12

Ms Grace Wambui Ngugi  
KENRIK  
National Museums of Kenya

P.O. Box 40658 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254.2.743513/742161/2/3/4/742131/2/3/4 ext 252 or 274 or 448930/3  
Fax: 254 2 741424  
Email: nmk@africaonline.co.ke or plants@africaonline.co.ke

Mr Martin Ngungu  
P.O. Box 27 Kibwezi  
Tel.: 110 KIBWEZI

Mr Ashford Njenga  
GTZ-Kenya (ITFSP)  
P.O. Box 47051 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 524656  
Fax: 254 2 524651

Hon. Francis M. Nyenze  
Minister for Environment and Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 67839 Nairobi

Mr Amos Nzioka Nthiwa  
P.O. Box 604 Voi  
Tel.: 0147/3047

Mr Alex O. Obara  
WWF-EARPO  
P.O. Box 62440  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 332963/332833  
Fax: 254 2 332878  
Email: eafrika@wwfnet.org or wwffearpo@arcc.permanet.org

Dr. Dorcas Beryl Otieno  
Kenyatta University  
Environmental Socio-Cultural Studies  
P. O. Box 43844  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 789516  
Fax: 254 2 789516  
Email: sika@form-net.com

Mrs Stella Simiyu  
National Museums of Kenya  
Plant Conservation Programme  
P. O. Box 45166  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254.2.742161/742131  
Fax: 254 2 741424  
Email: nmk@form-net.com or biodive@tt.gn.apc.org

Mr Patrick Strömvall

Dr. Paul B. Vitta  
UNESCO Office Nairobi  
P.O. Box 30592 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 622353/621234  
Fax: 254 2 215991  
Email: p.vitta@unesco.org or uhnai@unesco.org

Ms Jane F. Wamboi  
Kenyatta University

Faculty of Environmental Studies  
P.O. Box 43844  
Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 810901/12

Mr Joseph Wambua

Mr David Wambua  
P.O. Box 82041 Mombasa  
Tel.: 432241 MBSA

Mr Francis Wambua  
P.O. Box 314 Nanyuki  
Tel.: 32476 NANYUKI

Ms Anastasia Wanjiku Kagunyu  
P.O. Box 12241 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 331078 (c/o Chege) 210687 (Ruth)

Mr Kai-Uwe Wollscheid  
GTZ-Kenya (ITFSP)  
P.O. Box 47051 Nairobi  
Tel.: 254 2 524656  
Fax: 254 2 524651  
Email: [kuwollscheid@hotmail.com](mailto:kuwollscheid@hotmail.com)

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **Selected Presentations**