

Subregional tripartite workshop on promoting decent work in the forest sector, with a focus on reforestation

Arusha, Tanzania, 7 – 9 March 2023

Introduction

This document is the result of the discussions at the Subregional tripartite workshop on promoting decent work in the forest sector, with a focus on reforestation, held in Arusha, Tanzania from 7 to 9 March 2023, organized by the ILO Sectoral Policies Department (SECTOR) in collaboration with ILO CO Dar. The objective of the workshop was to identify main opportunities and challenges for promoting decent work in forestry in the countries of the East Africa sub-region: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar, with a specific focus on reforestation; and to exchange experiences with a view to contributing towards a sub-regional policy on promoting decent work in reforestation.

The forest sector is an important source of livelihoods for millions of people in the sub-region. Forests provide jobs, shelter, food, and a wide variety of forest products, as well as vital environmental services, including those that help to mitigate and adapt to climate change. At the same time, decent work deficits in the sector persist, being often more pronounced in the informal economy. Furthermore, deforestation and forest degradation constitute a challenge for allowing people to fully benefit from forests and the services and products they offer. Sustainable forest management, including through reforestation, afforestation and forest restoration activities, have the potential to contribute to a forest sector that is productive, contributes to national economies, provides decent jobs, and is environmentally friendly and helps to address the impacts of climate change.

The workshop had 23 participants representing Governments (Ministries of Labour and Ministries responsible for forestry), employers and workers from the abovementioned countries, as well as observers. During the three days, in addition to presentations and discussions led by experts on the topic, participatory approaches were used to enable interactive tripartite dialogue, including through group exercises on the challenges and opportunities for the promotion of decent work for social justice in forestry as well as on national priorities to promote decent work in forestry and reforestation. This approach allowed participants to share their experiences and learn from each other, while identifying key policy priorities for advancing decent work in the sector.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the Tanzania Forest Service Agency (TFS), a half-day field visit was organized in the Arusha region to familiarize the participants with different steps of the wood product value chain. This included visits to a forestry training institute, a tree nursery, a young plantation forest, a plantation forest that was being harvested, a sawmill, and a fibre board factory. The workshop closed with the discussion and agreement on building blocks for advancing decent and sustainable work in the forest sector in the sub-region.

► Building blocks for advancing decent and sustainable work in the forest sector

The following building blocks were discussed and agreed on at the subregional tripartite workshop on promoting decent work in the forest sector, with a focus on reforestation. They identify key areas for promoting decent work towards a more sustainable forest sector, including reforestation, in the countries of the East African sub-region.

1. Decent jobs and sustainable enterprises, including for women, youth and people with disabilities

- Effective policies to promote decent, productive and sustainable employment
- Creating awareness on the opportunities in the forest sector
- Conducive environment for sustainable enterprises
- Transition from the informal to the formal economy and ensuring the enforcement of laws and regulations

2. Social and labour protections

- Living wages and appropriate working hours
- Safe and healthy working environment
- Solid contractual arrangements and sound employment relationships, including on contracting and outsourcing
- Comprehensive social protection systems

3. Skills development and training

- Diversified skills development and training for decent and sustainable work
- Detecting, identifying and addressing skills gaps and shortages, including on technological and digital advancements, through skills forecasting, reskilling and upskilling
- Skills certification, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

4. Labour administration and inspection

- Strong and effective labour administration and labour inspection systems
- Compliance with and enforcement of national laws and regulations
- Addressing financial gaps and capacity building for labour inspectors

5. Gender equality and non-discrimination

- Equal opportunities for all
- Protection of people vulnerable to discrimination
- Combatting violence and harassment at work in line with the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)

6. Just transition to environmental sustainability

- A decent and environmentally sustainable future of work
- Greening the sector and climate justice for saving the planet, leaving no one behind
- Reforestation and promoting green jobs
- Establishing effective partnerships for a just transition towards a green forest sector

7. Policy coherence, capacity building and awareness raising

- Coherent and aligned policy frameworks and their implementation
- Capacity building of tripartite constituents and other stakeholders
- Awareness raising through targeted decent work campaigns

8. Data and research

- Up-to-date data collected, analysed, disseminated and effectively used
- Putting in place effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation
- Evidence-based research, including comparative analysis of lessons learned and best practices

9. International labour standards, fundamental principles and rights at work, and legal frameworks

- Duly implemented and enforced coherent and effective laws, regulations and policies
- Ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards
- Respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work for all: Combat child labour, forced labour and discrimination, and ensure freedom of association and collective bargaining and a safe and healthy working environment

10. Tripartite social dialogue

- Effective social dialogue in all its forms, including freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Organization and engagement of workers, employers and enterprises (including MSMEs)
- Strengthening workers' and employers' organizations and those of other stakeholders

- Effective consultation and engagement of indigenous and local communities
- Sectoral tripartite (plus) platforms, new or existing
- National action plans for decent work in the forest sector

Next steps and way forward

Constituents are encouraged to disseminate the outcomes of the workshop and report back to the relevant authorities as well as relevant sectoral constituents and stakeholders in their respective countries and promote the approaches outlined in the building blocks, including through national action plans and sectoral platforms.

The ILO should continue working with the tripartite constituents to explore opportunities to support the implementation of the building blocks, including through identifying opportunities for development cooperation activities.