



# **Natural Capital, Resilience and Sustainable Development in Eastern Africa**

## **6<sup>th</sup> Scientific and Policy Conference**

**UNEP, Gigiri, Nairobi**

**28 – 30 August 2013**

### **Conference Sponsors:**



## Executive Brief

The Rio+20 meeting held in June 2012 in Brazil concluded with a package of commitments for action and a broad agreement by world leaders to shape a more sustainable future for the benefit of the planet and its people. World leaders approved the outcome document for Rio+20, entitled “The Future We Want”.

In their statement of a common vision, world leaders recognized that poverty eradication, promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and promoting transition to a green economy through integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems as the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development. The leaders envisaged that a green growth pathway would support economic, social and human development while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration and resilience in the face of new and emerging global challenges.

The national vision statements and development blue prints of the countries in the Eastern African region are now being aligned to the principles of green growth. As economies that are heavily reliant on natural capital, yet confronted by the headwinds of rapid population growth, extreme poverty and the potential adverse impacts of climate change, policy for economic growth in the region must be supported by a strong science evidence-base to achieve a sustainable balance between environment and equitable socioeconomic development.

The Ecological Society for Eastern Africa, in collaboration with key partners will convene the 6th Scientific and Policy Conference on the 28-30 August, 2013.

As the first sustainability conference in Eastern Africa since Rio+20, this seminal conference will build on common vision of world leaders by providing a forum to examine sustainable development in the region by examining broad dimensions of natural capital and resilience as critical elements in the delivery of a green growth pathway.

### Conference objectives

The Natural Capital, Resilience and Sustainable Development in Eastern Africa is open to any one with an interest in, and concern for, scientific, policy and strategic perspectives in harnessing natural capital for resilient and equitable green economic growth. It will address a range of critically important themes relating to the urgent issues of poverty, climate change, ecological scarcity, rapid population growth, and urbanization. More importantly, the conference aims to provide a platform for mainstreaming African intellectual and scholarly output in the global discourse on the green economy and sustainable development goals. Plenary speakers will include some of the world’s eminent thought leaders and practitioners.

The main objectives for this conference are to:

- a. Explore options of ecological resilience in natural and managed systems: including croplands and urban areas;
- b. Show opportunities for integration of environment into social and economic development agenda based on rigorous valuation and accounting for biodiversity and vital ecosystem services;
- c. Provide possible solution approaches to achieve low carbon economy, resource efficiency, resilient and inclusive growth especially in the face of climate change, globalization and rapid population growth;
- d. Advance coherent science evidence-base to inform/influence policy and decision making.

## Conference sub-themes

The sub-themes of the conference will be:

1. Ecological resilience in natural and managed ecosystems of Eastern Africa;
2. The valuation and economics of ecosystems and biodiversity (Marine, Freshwater and terrestrial) in Eastern Africa in the context of rapid economic growth;
3. Resource scarcity and demography; cities as solutions
4. Climate change resilience and future scenarios;
5. Towards sustainability in the extractive industry;
6. Capacity building, policy institutions and governance

## Conference Sessions

Special sessions comprising workshops and high-level panel science-policy roundtables will focus on: the ecological basis for resilient food production systems; cities as engines of sustainability, based on the SymbioCity approach, a conceptual framework for urban development developed by the Swedes; green economy, focusing on evaluating national policy priorities in terms of their ecosystem service dependencies and impacts and advancing sustainable development through extractive industries.

## Expected output

- Increased knowledge on natural capital in light of green growth;
- Dissemination of information through publication of papers in the “Environmental Development Journal” and a general conference report;
- Influencing of policy through brief(s);
- Enhanced networking and increased communication among scientists, policy makers, students, NGO among others from the Eastern African region;
- Platform for student research dissemination and discourse;
- Mainstreaming African intellectual and scholarly output in policy formulation and development planning.

## Dissemination and Outreach

Conference proceedings will be disseminated through the following media:

1. Publication in a special issue of “Environmental Development Journal”. Environmental Development is a transdisciplinary peer reviewed journal of SCOPE, which publishes original research on emerging issues and solutions for environmental and ecological problems, and the development of policies for environmental management within the framework of sustainable growth.
2. Conference reports and proceedings to be distributed to government departments, community-based Organisations (CBOs), NGOs, policy makers and institutions of higher learning
4. Website/blogs: [www.ecsea.org](http://www.ecsea.org). The information will be posted on ESEA and EAI websites as well as websites of partner organizations/institutions.
5. Conference filming. This is necessary as a reference point to produce short documentaries on climate change and adaptive measures for various local communities within eastern Africa. The documentaries produced will be disseminated in schools, conservation committees.

## Our target group of participants

As with previous ESEA conferences, we will seek to bring forth different participants from the Eastern African region and beyond. We will draw participants from various fields that include, academicians, researchers, policy makers (government departments and institutions),

UNEP, the World Bank, African Development Bank, Foreign Missions, International and local NGOs, implementing officers from government and non-governmental groups, private sector, especially business leaders and representatives from community groups, CBOs, and Local authorities.

### **About the Ecological Society for Eastern Africa (ESEA)**

ESEA was founded by ecologists in the Eastern Africa region at the inaugural conference that was held at the National Museums of Kenya in 2007. The society was founded with an aim of integrating ecological information into conservation and development in Eastern Africa. Since inception, ESEA has organized five international conferences.

ESEA seeks to promote sustainable development through wise use of the natural resources for prosperity and future of the people of Eastern Africa. This is to be achieved through high quality research, capacity building, technological innovations, information and resource sharing. ESEA and its work over the years on climate change has continued to create platforms in the form of forums that can bring the region together to share and find solutions to the effects of climate change. It also coordinates the collation and dissemination of important facts relating to ecology, natural resource management and biodiversity conservation in eastern Africa through its good network of experts, CBOs and NGOs where decision-support information is shared. Such networks includes Kenya Climate Change Working Group (KCCWG), Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and at the Climate Change Adaptation Unit, UNEP, Nairobi.

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