

## **Background**

Sub-Saharan Africa is highly vulnerable to climate change and variability. With the increased exposure to drought, floods and other environmental stress in our region whose economy depends heavily on climate-sensitive sectors (agriculture, pastoralism, fisheries and forestry), the impact of climate change has the potential to stall socio-economic progress targeted at cutting down extreme poverty, hunger, health problems, illiteracy, malnutrition and even undo years of national development efforts and put at risk livelihood support systems linked to these sectors. Forest ecosystems are common resource pool and their improved management can contribute to reducing the vulnerability of ecosystems, national economies, and community livelihoods to the impact of climate change and variability. Therefore, forests remain an important entry point for initiating climate change adaptation plans in the region. Forest ecosystems do not only cut across other livelihood sub-sectors, they safeguard other ecosystems, while providing physical buffers against desertification, drought, high temperatures, dust storm, land degradation and flash floods, which are common expressions of climate impacts in the region.

The impact of climate change on forest ecosystems may likely follow some direct and indirect pathways that include the following:

1. A changing climate could directly affect availability of products from the forest ecosystem especially high temperatures and low rainfall (this may be positive or negative, with differential effect for different products and environments).
2. A negative impact of climate change on the environment (or agricultural production) would likely increase the reliance that rural communities place on forest ecosystem as alternative sources of food, medicine, fibre and income.
3. An increasing market demand for forest products or their alternative uses (like high demand for fuel wood) could have a synergetic negative impact on the availability of other forest products.
4. Other effects of environmental degradation indirectly resulting from climate change impact (such as drought and bushfires) can affect the forest in its ability to regenerate.

Though, the global discourse on climate change is setting the road map for coping with climate change. Its impacts are local and therefore rigorous actions must be undertaken at both the local and global levels. Such local actions in the region must include: common accord and perception on climate change and forest, how to use forests to initiate climate change adaptation plans in the region, development of national and regional policies that are climate proof and friendly and gives everyone a fair share and ownership of the natural resources on which we all depend on.

In order to address this problem, The Tropical Forest and Climate Change adaptation project West Africa (a part of a global project financed by the European Union, which is also implemented in Asia and Central America) currently working with stakeholders in partnership across local, national and regional levels in Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana is organising a 3 days meeting with regional partners to share results, expand the knowledge-base and experiences from the Africa region that could form a reference material for the region.

## **Participants**

Participants include researchers, practitioners, policy makers, TroFCCA partners and experts in the region.

## **Expected outcomes**

- A common understanding on the state of art in the region
- Future research agenda on Forest and climate change adaptation
- Methodologies for mainstreaming climate change into policies and development activities
- Workshop report in French and English
- Peered reviewed workshop book

## **Workshop Synopsis**

The workshop will cover topics on the following:

- Knowledge on Climate change in Africa
- Regional climate Scenarios for impact assessment
- Adaptation of forest management practices in West Africa
- Using forest goods and services for adaptation to climate change
- Tools and methods for climate change assessment
- Forest, policies, institutions and governance for climate change adaptation

## **Workshop methodology**

The workshop will adopt a participatory approach methodology engaging strategies including presentations, question and answers, break out group that will seek to respond to:

- How to package research findings to different audience e.g. governments, civil society, donors etc
- How to mainstream forest and climate change adaptation into policies, programs and development activities
- Future research agenda for forest and climate change adaptation in the region

## **Workshop dates and venue**

The workshop will take place on 18-20 November 2008 at Erata hotel, Ouagadougou Avenue, East Legon Accra, Ghana. Tel +233-21-506343/515192-4

## **Organization**

The workshop is convened under the auspices of the TroFCCA project, Center for International Forestry Research.