



African Convention of the Global Sustainable Bioenergy Project

17 – 19 March 2010

Resolution on Sustainable Bioenergy for Africa (Draft* for review)

As the world considers paths to a sustainable future and the role of bioenergy in this context, Africa brings important assets and wants to be an active partner but needs to ensure that bioenergy development is implemented in a way that contributes to critical human needs. A sustainable globe requires a sustainable Africa.

The geographical potential of Africa to produce plant biomass is at least as large as any other continent and far exceeds the requirements for food and basic needs for the African population. This situation gives rise to an opportunity to use agriculture and forestry to produce, in addition to food, bioenergy (transport or domestic fuels or electricity) using clean and efficient biomass conversion technologies. Such bioenergy production could offer very large benefits. These include sustainable sources of energy to serve the needs of rural and urban communities, foster development of the industrial sector, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, agricultural infrastructure development, land restoration and ecologically healthy landscapes.

Africa faces pressing human challenges associated with an interconnected set of issues involving poverty, food security, economic development, gender issues, health and energy security. Energy security is often interpreted at an international level, but when women and girls spend most of their days gathering firewood it has a much more local dimension. Bioenergy has clear potential to be developed in ways that contribute positively to meeting these challenges, including enhancing food security. However, bioenergy could also be developed in ways that exacerbate these challenges. A vision for bioenergy in Africa that is responsive to African challenges is both an urgent need and an opportunity.

Actions need to be taken to ensure that Africa benefits along the full value chain of bioenergy supply and utilisation. These include, among many worthy actions, development of:

- 1) More analysis, understanding, and consensus on the potential of bioenergy to realize a sustainable Africa;
- 2) An accessible information platform using latest IT and mapping technology to provide information about the potential and specific aspects of bioenergy;
- 3) African scalable demonstration projects using latest state of the art technologies and African raw materials for learning perspectives e.g. training to strengthen local manpower;
- 4) Needed human capacity and career opportunities, including creating an African intellectual base, reducing brain drain and engaging existing African traditional knowledge systems;
- 5) The institutional resources to foster coordination across Africa for stakeholder interaction, and suitable strategies, policies and initiatives;
- 6) Pilot projects to show best practices in energy efficiency and resource protection in transport, electricity supply, cooking and other household needs;
- 7) International, regional and local policies on trade, aid, land tenure, and development need to be aligned now to develop integrated value chains of agriculture and forestry for food and bioenergy in Africa.

Bioenergy is one of the most cost effective solutions for a global sustainable low carbon energy future. This future demands sustainable agriculture and forestry in Africa to supply food and bioenergy in support of Africa and the world.

** First draft agreed at African GSB Convention on Friday 19 March 2010*