



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release

March 19 2007

### **International Conference on Participatory Forest Management, Biodiversity and Livelihoods in Africa is Officially Opened**

His Excellency Ato Girma W/Giorgis, President of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, opened the International Conference on Participatory Forest Management, Biodiversity and Livelihoods in Africa, today – March 19, 2007.

The conference has brought together experts and practitioners to discuss, debate and present recent findings on a range of issues associated with the establishment of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) as a successful approach to managing forest resources effectively.

The expected outcomes of the conference include information sharing, cross learning, relationship building, improved and increased promotion and recognition of PFM, and unified policy lobbying for PFM. In addition, inputs based on experiences of different countries during the last day discussion on Challenges and Opportunities of PFM in Ethiopia, are expected to significantly contribute to PFM development in Ethiopia.

The conference focused on PFM as linked to sustainable livelihoods, equity and local governance, policy and institutions, as well as biodiversity conservation and climate change.

Appreciating the timeliness of the conference, the president stated the need for sustainable natural resource management for sustainable development. For this, the Government of Ethiopia has issued various policy statements and proclamations to mainstream environmental sustainability. He further expressed his hope that relevant actors will take up the lessons from this conference to strengthen the development of PFM in Africa.

Participants are coming from different parts of the world including Australia, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Niger, Tanzania, Mali, Sudan and the UK. Participants from Ethiopia include Regional Bureaus, research centres and non-governmental organisations. A total of 200 individuals are expected to participate in the three-day conference.

The conference is taking place in the hall of the Government of the National State of Oromia, Addis Ababa and will last for three days, 19-21 March 2007.

It was organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional Governments, the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC), Federal Environmental Protection Authority, the Participatory Forest Management Programme of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Foresters' Association, Non-Timber Forest Product Research and Development Project, GTZ, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Ethiopian Coffee Forest Forum, and Forum for Environment; and funded by the European Union.

Further information on the conference can be found on the FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia Participatory Forest Management Programme's website at: [www.pfmp-farmsos.org](http://www.pfmp-farmsos.org)

## **Ends**

For more information and media enquiries please contact, Arsema Andargatchew at the Participatory Forest Management Unit of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia at 011 – 4168483 or 0911- 243396, e-mail [cfwcp@ethionet.et](mailto:cfwcp@ethionet.et)

## **Notes to Editors:**

PFM conference organisers are listed below:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Ethiopia
- The Oromia Regional Government
- Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional Government
- Institute of Biodiversity Conservation
- Environmental Protection Authority
- The Participatory Forest Management Programme of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia
- Non-Timber Forest Product Research and Development Project
- GTZ
- Japan International Cooperation Agency
- Ethiopian Coffee Forest Forum
- The Ethiopian Foresters' Association
- Forum for Environment
- The European Union

## **FARM-Africa**

FARM-Africa (Food and Agricultural Research Management) is an international non- governmental organisation that aims to reduce poverty through developing innovative approaches to natural resource management in Africa. Through our projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania Southern Sudan and Uganda we work in partnership with marginal small-scale farmers and herders to improve the ways in which they farm their land. Working with a wide range of rural communities, we concentrate on four priority areas – Pastoral Development, Community Forest Management, Smallholder Development and Land Reform. With the international headquarters based in London, UK, we have country offices in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Tanzania and Sudan.

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