



IFFA Statement on International Day of Forests 21st March 2017

The International Family Forestry Alliance celebrates the International Day of Forests 2017. This is the first year for implementing the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development and the intense follow up to the Paris Climate Accord.

Globally, Local forest smallholder's contributions to and potential benefits from these vitally important political goals cannot be underestimated.

When strong policies and good governance on Land tenure are in place, the most important source of encouragement for family forest owners and farmers to invest in long term activities such as tree growing is in place. Secure tenure is the basic condition for their interest in the management and protection of established trees, and for more trees and larger forest cover.

The green carbon cycle in sustainable management of forests is the world's greatest contribution to three climate actions; the carbon sink in standing trees and long life-span products from wood, the sequestration of CO₂ in growing trees, and substitution of fossil Fuel intensive products by wood-based building materials and household goods.

Besides insecure tenure, there is a second major constraint on smallholders' commitment to growing more trees: fair access to markets when it comes time to harvest those trees. Also, forest extension services may be supportive with advice for handling harvest and reforestation. An individual smallholder is in a very weak in the market place, and in seeking access to these services. Therefore, the right to and support of strong collaboration by forest smallholders in the form of their own producer organizations is also an essential condition. Strong, effective producer organizations provide the basis for fair trade, respect from markets and authorities and the strong incentive to plant two trees after harvesting one.

This contribution to climate action, better livelihoods, clean water, erosion control, the possibility to send children to school, and many other benefits for the family, the community and the larger society, very much in the spirit and research of Nobel Laureates Elinor Ostrom and Wangari Maathai, is what IFFA wants to highlight for the International Day of Forests 2017.