



Investing in Sustained Prosperity: The African Diaspora for Nature Conservation

Mersie Ejigu

May 22, 2013

Structure of Presentation

- Who are we?
- What we work on and why we chose that area?
- Where are we now?
- Challenges and opportunities
- What can be done for an effective engagement of the Diaspora in nature conservation?



Partnership for African Sustainability (PAES)

- A non profit organization established in 1999 by a group of environment concerned Africans
- Primary objective: promote environmentally and socially sustainable development in Africa based on science and best practices
- Focus: policy studies and development of tools.
- Areas of work:
 - Environmental security, risk, household vulnerability
 - Sustainable development policy, strategic planning and capacity development
 - Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptability



Partnership for African Environmental Sustainability (PAES) cont.

- Source of funding:
 - Self
 - Multilateral and bilateral funding agencies and
 - Private foundations
- Means of mobilizing funding
 - Knowledge marketing – generating project ideas, run around... hoping that there will be someone out there supporting the project
 - Building partnerships around a common cause – conservation of species, ecosystems, restoring ecosystems



PAES Projects (For example)

- Knowledge marketing
 - Integrating land degradation concerns in development policy (thru UNEP-GEF went only half way)
 - Integrated environmental risk assessment and management (capacity building)
 - Prepared and offered also a syllabus for teaching a 3 credit hours MA degree course: Land, Forest, Insecurity, and Conflict as well as Environmental Security Assessment; the latter in collaboration with FESS



Partnership for African Environmental Sustainability (PAES) cont.

- Competing when opportunities are announced
 - Environmental Insecurity, Poverty and Conflict in Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Uganda (funded by EU) co-funded by USAID through ACTS, with which PAES has an MOU



PAES Projects (For example)

- Partnership development, for example, with the Foundation for Environmental Security and Sustainability (FESS):
 - East Africa Food Security Action Plan- Environmental Security Pillar – on going
 - Climate Change and Security in Pastoralist Areas of Ethiopia (USAID funded) (One UN funding)
 - Rwanda: National Strategic Environmental Assessment u
 - Environmental Security Assessment Studies – Uganda, Lake Tana Basin of Ethiopia



Completed Studies (thru Mersie's individual engagement)

- Capacity Development for Environmental Security Assessment (ESA) in the IGAD Region – developed syllabus and offered two weeks training
- Sustainable Indicators Framework and Initial Compendium of Indicators (for UNECA)
- Sustainable Bioenergy Policy Framework and Guidelines for UNECA
- Sustainable Consumption and Production in Africa: Survey of Issues and Possible Policy Actions (UNDESA)
- Guidance for Preparing National Sustainable Strategies- a background document for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).
- Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment in North Sudan (USAID)



Qualify as Diaspora?

- living outside their traditional homelands
- Links to country of origin



Why biodiversity when there are many interesting areas to work on?

- Significant socio-cultural values – perceived as unique heritage, strong sentimental attachment (mother land, father land)











Why biodiversity when there are many interesting areas to work on? (cont.)

- Source of livelihoods to a majority of the population (over 80 percent) – crops, medicinal plants and herbs, livestock, fishing, hunting, etc.
- About 90 percent of the household energy and export earning is derived from biomass
- Determinant of social organization and division of labor among family members



Why the focus on policy studies?

- Biodiversity - a macro concept
 - conservation of species, ecosystems and genes; variability, diversity, integrity
 - sustainable use of species, equitable benefit sharing
 - requires action at:
 - Aggregate
 - market level and
 - community (household) level



Why focus on policy studies? (cont.)

- Gap filler / where many conservation projects, today, are local
 - Projects funded for fixed number of years, but sustaining project outputs requires continuous and long term intervention
 - Initiatives like NCS (IUCN) macroeconomic policy and environment (WWF) – where are they now?
 - PAES focused on developing technical solutions to policy problems – gap filler and also niche



Why focus on policy studies? (cont.)

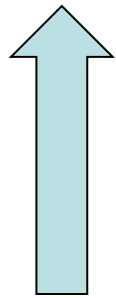
- Policy and policy changes influence the biodiversity degrading or conserving behavior of users considerably:
 - Individual level responses - changing land use, management practices, investment, settlement patterns and migration
 - Community level responses – changing the size of commons, the rules governing uses and transfer of common resources, or the distribution of benefits
 - Aggregate level – fiscal and monetary policy, investment policy, land concessions, area under national parks and protected areas, etc. .



Where are we now?

PAES - 

Globally:



Environmental awareness

Diaspora and related initiatives – tree planting, etc.

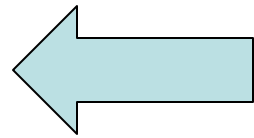
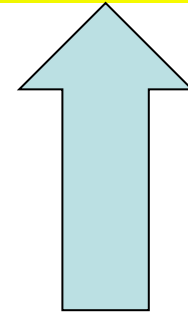
Climate change most unifying agenda



Where are we now? cont

Threats to biodiversity

National Parks, PAs



Feed 9 billion

Energy (biofuels)

Extractive economic growth



Africa's Landmark Initiatives

- The 1900 London Convention for the Protection of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa, which aimed at preventing the indiscriminate destruction of wildlife
- The African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources adopted in Algiers in 1968
- The Revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Maputo Convention),
- The flagship Rio Conventions UNCBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC that all African states are signatories of
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)



Opportunities / Challenges

■ Knowledge

- Massive technical knowledge resides in the Diaspora
 - Generating project ideas
 - Formulating sound projects
 - Negotiations skills
- Network of support –
 - Within the U.S.
 - In the home land
- Enthusiasm driven by love for the motherland and for
- Perceptions / communications – how governments see the Diaspora and how the Diaspora sees governments -



Opportunities / Challenges (cont)

- Limited private investment in the common good (environment /biodiversity)
 - More interest in those areas of investment where investors have better control over the final product
 - Many perceive conservation perceived as an area set aside for grant making, hence not agenda for Government/Diaspora interaction



Opportunities / Challenges (cont)

- Development aid structure and delivery
 - Development aid evolved from a project, program and now to policy based lending/grant; but how much has biodiversity benefited from this change
 - Shifts from small is beautiful to big is beautiful in aid delivery, which made it difficult and overly expensive for small NGOs to find funding
 - Disproportionately greater impact of global financial and economic crisis on resource flows to biodiversity



Opportunities / Challenges (cont)

- Greater competition rather than cooperation among CSOs and nature conservation organizations
 - The good news – “conservation organizations are enthusiastic about engaging the African Diaspora in their work”
 - No well established mechanisms for promoting mutual understanding, effective partnership development

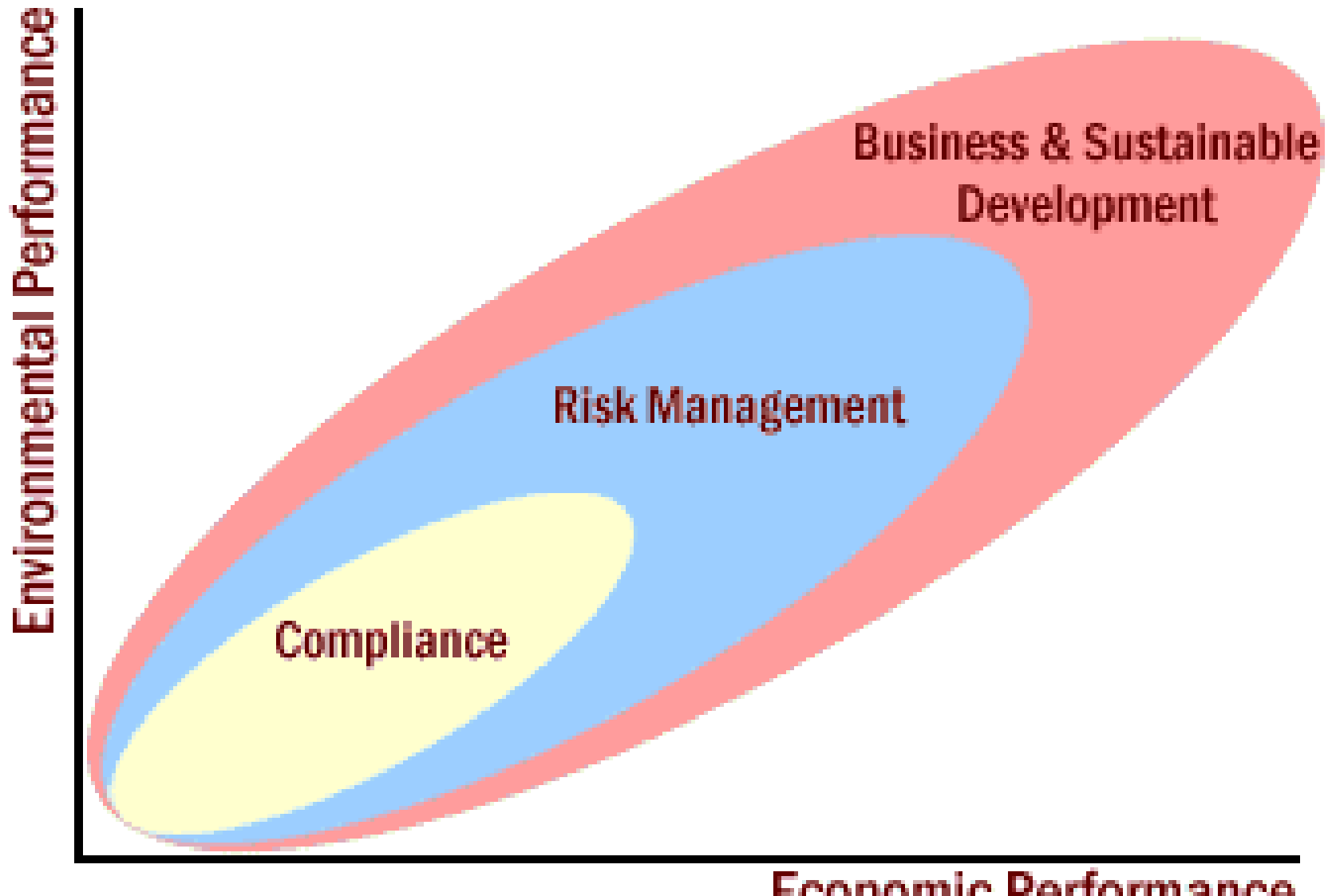


What can be done?

- i. Investing in biodiversity is a development, political, social, and moral imperative. Ultimate responsibility rests with governments, which have to work on:
- Ecosystem conservation as a development priority
 - It is possible to achieve both economic growth and biodiversity conservation at the same time
 - Biodiversity not only as a *means* but also an *end in itself* - rethink the notion of marginal land
 - Biodiversity conservation policies but also mechanisms to enforce policies
 - Demonstrate commitment - the conservation of existing national parks and protected areas



ii. Promoting sustainable development as a business strategy



What can be done? Cont.

- iii. Expanding forums such as this one to enhance:
- Better understanding of the huge wealth that resides in the Diaspora
 - Tangibles - Monetary investment
 - Non-tangibles – knowledge, sentimental
 - Resource leveraging
 - Partnership development
 - Government – Diaspora
 - Diaspora - Diaspora
 - Diaspora and big conservation organizations



What can be done? Cont

- iv. Nature conservation organizations should make every effort to better understand the Diaspora and interact with it
- Source of knowledge
 - Maximize conservation impact, which require continuity



What can be done? Cont

Responsive aid delivery mechanism -

- Example: USAID East Regional Office promoted and funded the PAES / ACTS partnership on environmental security studies



Contact

- Mersie Ejigu
- Tel. (202) 744 4357
- Email: mejigu@paes.org



Thank you

