



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

PRESS RELEASE

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2015 African Ecological Futures Report makes celebrating and sustaining natural resources a centrepiece for sustainable development

Report recognizes the importance of both the continent's rich ecosystem and economic development

Abidjan, Tuesday 26 May 2015 – As Africa sustains a growth trajectory of above five per cent in the last two decades and with the prospects of further progress, the narrative has now rightly begun to question the extent to which these efforts may impact the very effort of transforming livelihoods and lifting millions from abject poverty.

If Africa emulates historical global production and consumption models, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the impact on its ecological systems will stifle the quality of life for Africans. There is growing concern over resource nexus points on the continent where there are overlaps between infrastructure development plans and priceless biodiversity assets.

WWF in collaboration with the African Development Bank today launched a far reaching 2015 African Ecological Futures report, on the sidelines of the African Development Bank (AfDB) 50th Annual Meetings in Abidjan. In attendance at the event was AfDB President, Donald Kaberuka, WWF Director General, Marco Lambertini, various dignitaries and guests attending the AfDB Annual Meetings.

The report is a landmark publication of The African Ecological Futures project, an initiative of the WWF Regional Office for Africa and funded by AfDB. The project seeks to provide sustainable growth that understands and responds to the erosion of Africa's ecological base.

The Report engages key decision makers across Africa in a process to identify and interrogate Africa's ecological and environmental future. It presents environmental pressures and identifies emerging scenarios as a means to engage African governments, citizens and decision makers in a process of examining the social, economic and environmental implications of potential trajectories inherent for the continent today.

"Africa has a huge and diverse natural resource base as well as a rich ecosystem suited for economic development. Africa's economic growth is already a defining global story and likely to remain so for the rest of the 21st Century. As the continent embraces improved prospects of growth in the coming decades, we need to interrogate the extent to which Africa's growth is contributing to improvements in livelihoods and reduction in poverty, as well as its overall sustainability," said Mr. Donald Kaberuka, Out-going AfDB President and Mr. Marco Lambertini, WWF's Director General in a joint statement.

The Report's grounding is based on the fact that African Ecological factors can be fundamentally altered by economic and development decisions made today. If considered against the social economic drivers such as population growth, urbanization, consumption patterns, expanding financial flows and investment into the continent, and global demand for food and extractive & natural resource, Africa's potential to sustainably develop comes into sharp focus.

Commenting on Africa's sustainable development, Mr. Kaberuka, said, "Africa has choices, embracing a more sustainable approach to development to generate benefits in terms of environmental security, human well-being and competitiveness. The choices made today about infrastructure, energy and food production will shape our opportunities and options far into the future".

In its far reaching approach the report presents a confluence of factors which have positively sustained the steady economic growth in Africa in the past, that now may either solidify the economic gains and enhance sustainability or compromise the potential for future growth depending on the economic decisions that African countries make today.

In defining the need for an ecological futures review, Mr. Lambertini notes, "Africa now stands on the launch pad of sustained long-term economic development. The question is no longer whether Africa's economy will grow, but rather, what the nature of Africa's development trajectory will be. Will Africa follow the well-trodden pathway of ecologically destructive development, or, with the benefit of others' mistakes and successes, will Africa be able to leapfrog these economies and chart a new ecologically sustainable and socially inclusive development pathway?"

Through a collaborative scenario planning process, four distinct ecological scenarios for Africa were identified. These scenarios include Going Global, Helping Hand, All in Together and Good Neighbors.

Going Global: <i>in which resource rich regions take a planned export-driven path to developing extractive and agricultural commodities, based on centralised decision making and connected economic infrastructure</i>	Helping Hands: <i>in which resource rich areas are the focus of extractive economic activities driven by local actors developing local resources for export through decentralised decision making and supported by local (off-grid) infrastructure</i>
All in Together: <i>in which densely populated areas with renewable resources develop local agricultural industries through participatory decision making and local co-operative schemes driven by local actors</i>	Good Neighbours: <i>in this scenario the future is characterised by a strong drive for African-based development to increase intra-regional trade. As countries begin to take a coherent domestic view with regards to their production and consumption, large infrastructure investment are needed</i>

Mr. Lambertini further noted, "The project plotted biodiversity and ecosystem service assets against development pressures such as agriculture potential, mining potential, infrastructure plans, and demographic trends – to reveal this heat map of where the interactions are likely to be most intense over the next decades. We will need to pay particular attention to how we plan and implement development projects at these vulnerable 'Ecological Frontiers'.

By and large, Africa states are at early stages of economic growth and development, implying a heavy focus on building and putting into place infrastructure related to both production and consumption. Building on this, the Report makes a point that the understanding of ecological futures linked to development in Africa has a strong spatial element (i.e. location and intensity) reflecting the intersection between infrastructure-land development and ecosystem sensitivity; and the temporal dimension (i.e. stage of development) reflecting the evolution of countries' development trajectories and transition from infrastructure development to institutional management.

In addition to the spatial and temporal dimensions of development, the underlying resource endowment of a country also influences development trajectories (and, in turn, ecological futures). For instance, nations with significant mineral resources tend to adopt an extractive approach; nations with large amounts of arable land tend to become agrarian economies; and nations with rich ecosystem resources (and less of the other two endowments) turn towards conservation and tourism.

The Report emphasizes that regardless of resource endowment and focus, most resilient economies require a strong combination of institutional flexibility, socio-economic empowerment, infrastructural robustness and ecological robustness. Ecological robustness is in many ways contingent on a country, region, or economy's natural resource base and how it is managed for current and future development.

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To read the full report in PDF, visit:

Watch the African Ecological Futures Promotion Video: <http://youtu.be/U7Td5tNvTXY>

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African Development Bank

The African Development Bank (AfDB) Group's mission is to help reduce poverty, improve living conditions for Africans and mobilize resources for the continent's economic and social development. With this objective in mind, the institution aims at assisting African countries – individually and collectively – in their efforts to achieve sustainable economic development and social progress. Combating poverty is at the heart of the continent's efforts to attain sustainable economic growth. To this end, the Bank seeks to stimulate and mobilize internal and external resources to promote investments as well as provide its regional member countries with technical and financial assistance. AfDB is owned by 77 members, including 53 from the region. As the continent's premier development finance institution, the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group borrows from capital markets for on-lending to its regional member countries. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

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WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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African Ecological Futures Report Highlights:



WWF in collaboration with the African Development Bank launched the African Ecological Futures Report 2015 on the sidelines of the African Development Bank (AfDB) 50th Annual Meeting in Abidjan on Tuesday 26th May 2015. The report is a landmark publication of The African Ecological Futures Project, an initiative of the WWF Regional Office for Africa and funded by AfDB. The project seeks to provide sustainable growth that understands and responds to the erosion of Africa's ecological base.



Rationale for Report

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The report takes a careful examination of pressures and drivers of Africa's economic outlay over the next 50 years. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The report explores how plausible development trajectories will interact with Africa's ecological future |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The report emphasises that understanding the development trajectories and their relationship with primary resources is critical in Africa's planning for inclusivity and sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The report has systematically treated this very fluid and dynamic subject by overlaying a continuum of economic decision space over concrete opportunities for a sustainable and resilient development in the continent. |

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The report examines how a confluence of factors have positively sustained a steady economic growth in Africa over the past ten to fifteen years, but may either solidify the economic gains and enhance sustainability or compromise the potential for future growth depending on the economic decisions that African countries make today. It therefore seeks to engage key decision makers across Africa in a process that will identify and interrogate Africa's ecological and environmental future by investigating environmental pressures and identifying emerging scenarios and enhance dialogue about shaping a balanced future for the continent.



Process: Building Africa's Ecological Scenarios

1. Expert Futures Research on Key Systems & Processes:

- Energy, Water, Food, Infrastructure & Extractives

2. High Level Scenario Building Workshops

- With key African Institutions

3. An 'Africa Ecological Futures' Report

- Setting an agenda for influencing Africa's development trajectory

4. Stimulating Social Dialogue on 'Africa's Ecological Futures'

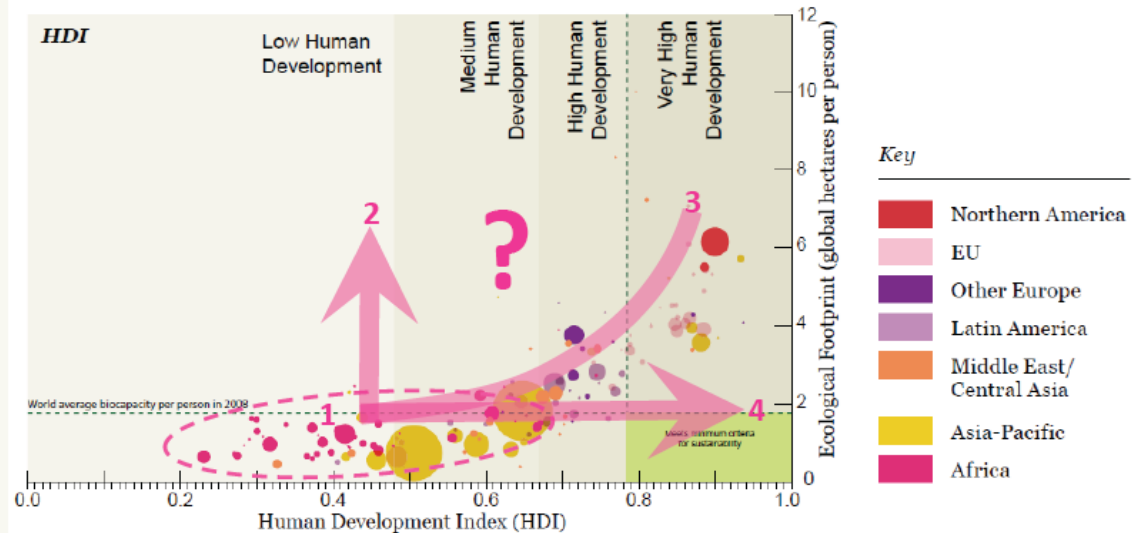
- Social media & Grassroots CSOs outreach

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The African Ecological Futures Project provides insight papers into four major sectors – Energy, Water, Agriculture and Extractives and two cross sectorial catalytic agents – Trade and Investment and Infrastructure Corridors. Each of these papers is a 50-year, scenario-based exploration of Africa's potential development choices as compared to the implications for the continent's ecological future. The aim is to provide potential points of intervention and influence that can help achieve a sustainable and ecologically secure pathway for Africa.



Africa's Ecological Futures



If Africa emulates historical global production and consumption models, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the impact on its ecological systems will stifle the quality of life for Africans. There is growing concern over resource nexus points on the continent where there are overlaps between infrastructure development plans and priceless biodiversity assets.



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Core: Africa's Development vs. Ecological Systems

- The report proposes scenario narratives highlighting the strong interactions between development trajectories and ecological systems.
- Africa's development will be dependent upon the degree to which these ecosystems continue to function as providers of natural resources and attenuators of extreme events.

Ecological Risks:

1. Agricultural land development impacting sensitive ecology;
2. The overlay of large infrastructure at sensitive ecosystems;
3. Poorly designed, operated and closed extractive mineral sites;
4. Overuse of ecosystem goods and services;
5. Management of human settlement and urbanisation

Areas of Intervention:

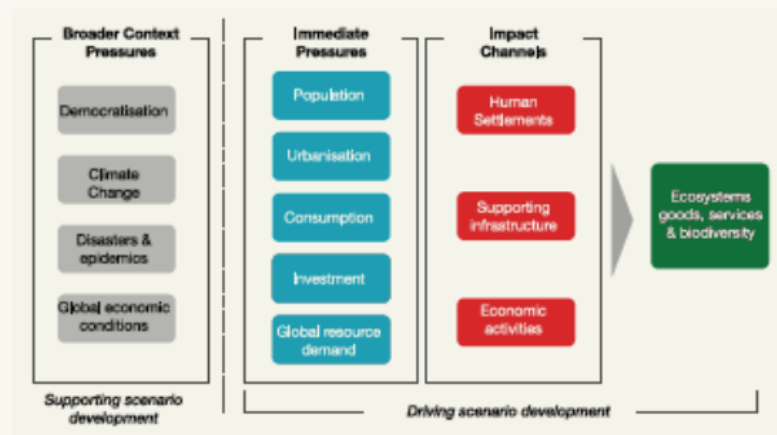
1. Strategic planning capabilities
2. Appropriate investment safeguards and frameworks
3. New partnership models
4. Governance of natural resources
5. Information for decision making

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Africa needs to find a way to shift this outlook onto a new sustainable growth path that incrementally improves human development without negatively impacting the environment. This is necessary if Africa is to stop the limiting factors now evident that will impact future generations significantly.



Pressures Informing Ecological Scenarios



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The project has also differentiated between drivers and pressures. Pressures are the socio-economic stressors that human activities place on the environment from the drivers. Crudely speaking, these pressures reflect where people live, the infrastructure that supports them and their level of economic activity.



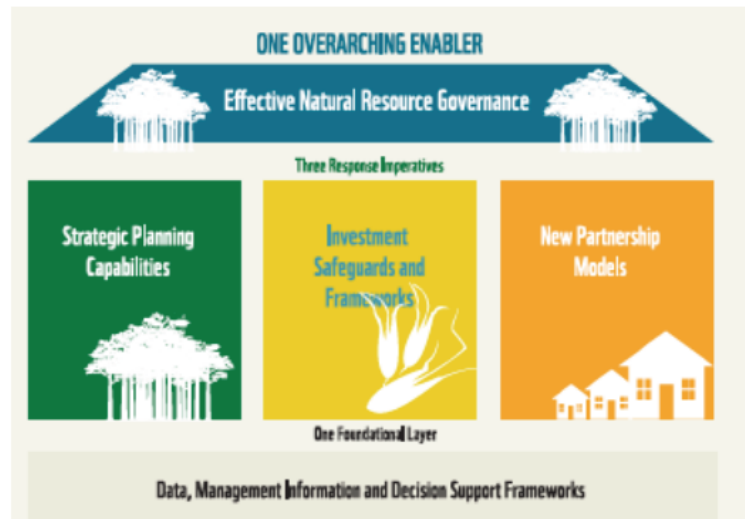
Critical Issues in Ecological Futures Design

Through a collaborative scenario planning process four distinct ecological scenarios for Africa have been identified. Each scenario describes a world in which a different approach is being taken to two critical issues:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Locus of governance and decision making around infrastructure-land development and natural resource use, contrasting centralized coordinated planning versus decentralized organic decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus of economic production, associated infrastructure - land development, contrasting export-led global trade in resources and goods versus intra-African trade enabled by increasing consumption by both urban and rural inhabitants |
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Response Opportunities Ecological Systems

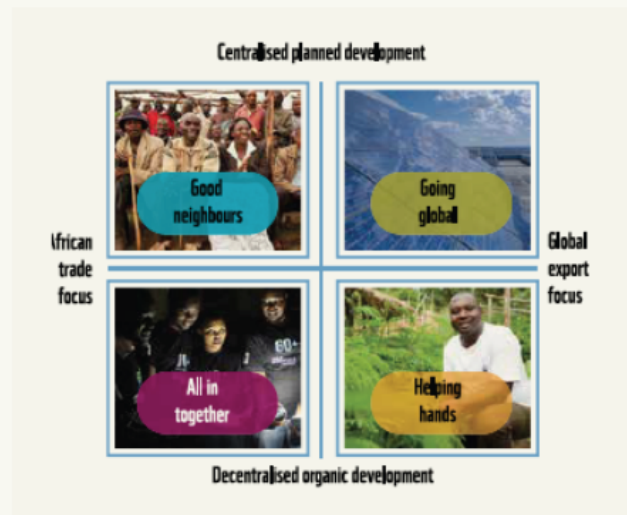


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While each ecological scenario is distinct, there are commonalities in both the risks that will be faced and the response options available. This framework helps stakeholders to think through the challenges and response options open to them and based on insights from the scenario process.



Ecological Futures Scenarios



Illustrative case studies have been presented for some of the scenario descriptions. These are intended to provide a perspective on some of the key tensions and trade-offs associated with the scenarios, as well as emerging responses that are being explored by local role-players. While there is some alignment between these cases and the scenarios, they are not intended to imply that all the issues have been resolved nor that they are necessarily replicable best practice. In fact some of the cases actually have aspects of more than one scenario, as may be expected with the complexity and diversity of real world situations. This reiterates the point that scenarios are not predictions of actual futures, but rather plausible stories that allow us to explore complex situations to guide our current actions



Four Ecological Futures

Going Global: *in which resource rich regions take a planned export-driven path to developing extractive and agricultural commodities, based on centralised decision making and connected economic infrastructure*

Helping Hands: *in which resource rich areas are the focus of extractive economic activities driven by local actors developing local resources for export through decentralised decision making and supported by local (off-grid) infrastructure*

All in Together: *in which densely populated areas with renewable resources develop local agricultural industries through participatory decision making and local co-operative schemes driven by local actors*

Good Neighbours: *in this scenario the future is characterised by a strong drive for African-based development to increase intra-regional trade. As countries begin to take a coherent domestic view with regards to their production and consumption, large infrastructure investment are needed*



A Resilient African Future

Ensuring infrastructure policy, planning and implementation explicitly recognises the value of ecological assets	Using regional economic integration to build resilience
Exploiting the opportunities of the green economy	Establish transparent and simple 'rules of the game' to guide investment and encourage development of private sector guidelines on responsible activity

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Data is need in order to understand ecological vulnerability and make decisions that are sensitive and reflect the value of Africa's ecology. Decision makers need to understand where sensitive areas are, how they are threatened by economic activities and have access to suitable frameworks that allow decisions about trade-offs to be made.



Report's Recommendations

Governments: <i>should play a central role in establishing the legislative and regulatory framework in which other actors provide and ensure an appropriate enabling environment for investment.</i>	Regional Economic Communities and Continental Bodies: <i>have a central role to play in ensuring that spatial planning and corridor development is robust and considers ecological impacts.</i>
Trans-boundary Entities: <i>have an increasingly prominent role to play in managing natural resources and need to ensure they are able to facilitate cooperation among government, business and civil society actors.</i>	Financial Institutions: <i>both African and international, have a major role to play in the economic development of the continent, although their investment approaches may be very different.</i>
Development Agencies: <i>still play an important role in supporting national development priorities. Both multi-lateral and bi-lateral support should continue to focus on strengthening institutions to provide African nations with the capacity to shape their own responses.</i>	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations: <i>play a vital role in providing consistent and vocal advocacy that establishes the value of protecting and managing ecology in Africa</i>