



TANA HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SECURITY IN AFRICA

Outcomes Document

6th Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa
“Natural Resource Governance in Africa”



A. Introduction

The 6th Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, also known as the Tana Forum, took place on 22-23 April 2017 in the city of Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. This year’s Tana Forum discussed “Natural Resource Governance in Africa” and gathered close to 250 participants, including eight current and former Heads of State and Government, ministers, ambassadors, academics, heads of international organizations, and civil society and media representatives. Since its establishment in 2012, the annual Tana Forum has continued to act as a unique pan-African platform to confer on common security challenges, as well as to network in a relaxed, open format.

In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and host of the Tana Forum, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, drew attention to how the effective governance of natural resources in Africa could serve as the continent’s engine for economic growth and human development through industrialization, coupled with investments in human capital. He also called for African states to coordinate policy responses towards enabling cooperation across the continent in the governance and use of natural resources.

“Equally, governments should make optimal investments in human capital. We ought to recognize that there is a limit to the extent to which the human condition can be improved solely by relying on natural resources.” ~ H.E. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn



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Picking up on the necessity of regional cooperation, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Republic of Nigeria and Chairperson of the Tana Forum, emphasized in his State of Peace and Security in Africa address, that the task of seeking and implementing solutions to peace and

*“... the way and manner natural resources are exploited and how revenues from them are harnessed and expended have allowed social and political divisions to fester in ways that many countries cannot expect to focus on best practices.”
~ H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo*

security challenges will increasingly become an African-led responsibility, as leading global powers retreat into domestic matters. Alongside these features of the new global order, he also brought attention to how the continent’s natural resources have and will continue to attract foreign multi-national companies, intensifying old and new contestations over their exploitation.

H.E. Thomas Kwesi Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), stressed the importance of education as the foundation of an integrated Africa. Noting the “paradox of poverty amidst plenty” in the African experience, Quartey shared that one of the priorities of the AUC will be to have every African child enrolled in school as a way of combatting their enslavement by fanaticism and ethnic chauvinism.



H.E. Amos Sawyer making an intervention during the Forum

The 2017 keynote address was delivered by H.E. Amos Sawyer, former President of the Interim Government of National Unity in Liberia, on behalf of the current President, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Sawyer underlined that Africa’s young population is the continent’s most important resource, a pivotal source of human capital that needs to be engaged and empowered through education and training. He also stressed that the ‘resource curse’ narrative, which has been used to explain the challenges of combatting poverty despite Africa’s natural resource wealth, is attributable to weak

governance. Adding that African countries needed to develop expertise in contract negotiations to address information asymmetries, he highlighted nurturing a climate of accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in decision-making, particularly of women, young people and persons with disabilities, as critical factors in effectively and equitably managing natural resources.



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As in previous years, the 6th Tana Forum managed to tap into various perspectives and explore how the natural resource sector in Africa can counter and transform the ‘exploitation for few’ narrative into ‘development for all’. As a result of the two-day deliberations on various sub-themed sessions, following are the broad outcomes of the 2017 Tana Forum:

B. Key take-away messages

i. Effective resource management and harnessing sustainable industrialisation

1. Participants recognized that while Africa was endowed with vast quantities of both non-renewable and renewable natural resources, the continent has not fully capitalized on these assets for the peaceful development of its citizens and societies. Rather, Africa’s natural resources have been a source of international and local contestation and mismanagement that have enabled stagnant conflicts to re-emerge and/or new conflicts to erupt.
2. Forum participants also underlined and reiterated that inclusive engagement and participation of resource owners (particularly youth and women) in decision-making is critical to ensuring equitable utilization of natural resources and countering minority interests. This inclusivity and engagement was viewed not only in enabling citizen’s agency towards the productive exploitation of extractive and non-extractive natural resources, but also in sharing the burden of environmental destruction, and the related responsibility to counter this.

3. Without political will to build clear accountability and transparency mechanisms, inclusive of civil society organisations’ (CSO) oversight, reversing the trend of ‘criminal gang mentality’, in which a minority of political elites determine how natural resource proceeds are utilized, was deemed impossible. As a result, participants noted that billions of dollars accrued from resource extraction that continue to be siphoned off could and should instead be reinvested in host communities to promote productivity and stir industrialization.
4. It was also underscored that the ultimate end goal of effective natural resource governance is about accelerating human development and ensuring human security, to enable current and future generations of Africans to live a life of dignity. To this end, the importance of protecting

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human rights in natural resource extraction and management processes, by addressing gaps in national and international regulatory frameworks, was stressed.

5. Given the non-renewable nature of many resources crucial to sustaining the increasingly sophisticated ways of living that modern societies are becoming accustomed to, the necessity for resource management policies to have a long-term generational view was recommended.
6. Participants agreed that taxation systems require strengthening, wherein multinationals and foreign companies, who operate on the basis of taxes as an exception rather than the rule, are followed-up diligently to ensure they pay their dues. A tax system that is seen as credible, stable and transparent (in terms of collection and utilization of proceeds) was cited as one of the pillars to bolstering equitable natural resource governance.

*“Strong and credible national systems are the barriers to the negative effects of international plans to exploit African natural resources with limited regulation.”
~ Ms. Obiageli Ezekwesili*

7. Rural electrification and industrialization around state lakes and inter-state river basins was proposed as key to deterring host communities from destroying these natural resources. Given that one of the challenges for many rural African communities is access to sources of energy,



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electrification and the related industrialization that follows were considered as viable means of changing population structures from dependence on agriculture. The issue of working towards increasing the productivity of land through industrializing agriculture was also noted, particularly highlighting that Africa’s industrialization can take advantage of global technological progress and leap frog to building climate resilient green economies through harnessing renewable energy.

8. The enormous potential of blue economies was also underlined, referring to sectors such as fisheries, tourism, shipbuilding and seabed mining, amongst others. However, the capacity of Africa to explore sea-bed mining, given the capital and human resource intensive nature of the industry was raised as a potential challenge, amidst the recognition that the sector is now subject to intense global competition.



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- Likewise, participants also acknowledged the need to involve environmental diplomacy when dealing with land and forestry issues in order to avoid conflict and ensure inclusive participatory practices with youth, women and other community representatives. This also includes trans-boundary issues at all levels of governance. Additionally, the need to diversify and regrow forests for sustainability was highlighted.

ii. Strengthening Political Leadership and Building Capacities

- Moral leadership was recognized by participants as a central building block for effective natural resource governance. They noted that leadership entailed many qualities and could take many forms, ranging from promoting a vision that links passion to socio-economic growth, peace and security, and the ability to inspire, to motivate and to mobilize. However, several participants noted a number of factors hindering leadership and effective governance on the continent, most importantly the erosion of trust in institutions and in leaders themselves. Therefore, critical reflection on how to build strong political leadership and inspire trust in leaders was noted as a necessary factor to make natural resource governance work for the African renaissance instead of against it.
- Utilizing indigenous systems of knowledge in the management of natural resources, particularly in forestry, was also viewed as a way of capitalizing on local know-how and augmenting African agency in responding to African problems.
- Participants also underlined that behind most resource-based conflicts are human rights abuses and a lack of good governance and impunity. Establishing national, regional and global accountability frameworks that hold both governments and multi-national companies accountable was identified as a key way forward to tackling impunity and instilling transparency. The role of CSOs in monitoring and mobilizing towards this goal was also underlined. Political leadership is therefore viewed as the engine that can drive a non-rent-seeking, political economy in Africa, with governments espousing the moral responsibility and

“Leadership is a love affair. We must fall in love with the people that we serve and have them fall in love with us.” ~ H.E. Dr. Joyce Banda



H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo delivering the annual State of Peace and Security in Africa 2017

“Leadership is all about handing over to the next person when your time is up.” ~ Mr. Brian Kagoro

political authority to be at the forefront of setting their own agendas, reflective of the aspirations/contribution of their people.



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13. Governments need to have the capacity to properly negotiate contracts and manage revenues toward adequate distribution of wealth among citizens. Similarly, the need to capacitate those who are charged to manage, protect and govern forestry was also underlined. In this vein, stronger global frameworks and the implementation thereof were demanded to counter a race to the bottom in standards.

iii. Follow-through on implementation of policies and norms

14. Given the role of agriculture in African economies, participants reiterated the importance of land and agricultural reforms that are consultatively formulated and allow for greater connection of farmers (mostly women) into commercial value chains. This value chain should then be linked into agro-industries. Building the infrastructure around agriculture was identified as a key element of development and economic transformation.

“Human development and human security necessitates governing life in common – to live well, live long and live in dignity.” ~ Prof. Funmi Olonisakin

15. Another important issue that was discussed around reforming natural resource management was the need to go beyond the mere formulation of sophisticated and theoretically sound policies, and invest as much in the actual implementation of these policies and frameworks. Further, African leaders should have political astuteness to know that strengthening institutions alone is not sufficient if personnel in those institutions are not qualified enough.
16. It was deemed essential by participants to reconcile the differences between norms and policies set internationally, regionally and nationally with their everyday application and implementation.

iv. Regional integration and inter-state collaboration on resource management



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17. Regional cooperation was seen as critical to mitigating the effects of negative spill-overs from ineffective resource management and vice versa. Instead of being wary of their neighbours and turning to international partners for support, African states should develop their resources management mechanisms together and seek out their comparative advantages regionally. Similarly, the demand side of resources, particularly conflict-sensitive resources in



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different parts of the continent, needs to be addressed through strengthening regional as well as international chains of accountability and transparency.

18. The management of trans-boundary natural resources is seen as critical to transforming borders into links and bridges between communities and countries as sources of cooperation. This element of cooperation also extends to creating governance synergies wherein land-locked African countries can have better access to and from the sea.

C. Conclusion

The 6th Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa was concluded on the afternoon of April 22 with the announcement by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn that the Tana Forum has been legally established as a Foundation and office space allocated for its full establishment as of May 2017. To enable the transition to Foundation status and support the new Board, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo was also requested to extend his role as Chairperson of the Forum for another year.

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