



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

*Sessional Paper No. 1
of 1968*

**A FOREST POLICY
FOR KENYA**

1968

PRINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, NAIROBI

Price: Sh. 1

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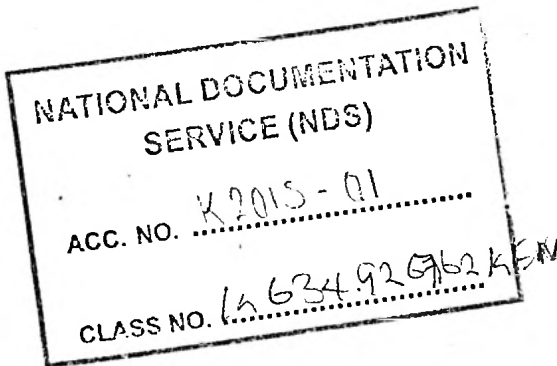
A FOREST POLICY FOR KENYA

PREAMBLE

The last full statement of a forest policy for Kenya was made in White Paper No. 85 of 1957. The country was then a colony and it is fitting that the policy should be modified and re-stated to fit the circumstances of the Republic. The main points of a sound forest policy remain unaffected by constitutional changes but it is essential that, as an independent nation, Government clearly states its aims in this vital field of development.

Object of a Forest Policy

The Forest Estate of Kenya ranks high as one of the country's most important national assets in its protective aspect of conservation of climate, water and soil; as the source of supply of forest produce for all uses by the inhabitants of Kenya; and as a revenue earner of high potential. The object of the Government's Forest Policy is therefore to lay down the basic principles which shall guide the development and control of forestry in Kenya for the greatest common good of all. These basic principles are described under 10 main heads—Reservation of Land for Forest Purposes; Protection of the Forest Estate; Management of the Forest Estate; Industry; Finance; Employment; Local Authority Forests; Private Forests and other Forests not under State Ownership; Public Amenity; and Research and Education.



STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Government, recognizing the great value and importance both actual and potential of the Forest Estate in the economy of Kenya, is determined to:—

1. Reservation

Reserve in perpetuity the existing forests and, wherever possible, add to them so as to provide sufficient land in order to—

- (i) maintain and improve the climatic and physical conditions of the country;
- (ii) conserve and regulate water supplies by protection of catchments and by any other means necessary for the purpose, including the impounding of water in forest areas;
- (iii) conserve the soil by prevention of desiccation and soil movement caused by water and wind;
- (iv) to provide for the needs of the country in timber and other forest products adequate to meet the requirements of the community under a fully developed national economy and to provide the greatest possible surplus of those products for export markets.

EXPLANATION OF POLICY

1. Reservation

The objects of long-term reservation of land in Kenya for the conservation or creation of forests are fourfold. They are, firstly, to maintain and improve climatic and physical conditions of the country. The presence of a sufficient forest cover and its influence on climate, water and soil must remain a matter of major concern to the Government of a country which possesses large areas of semi-arid land with a sparse rainfall. The total area of all forests reserved under the Forests Act is at present 6,670 square miles, or only 3.03 per cent of the total land area of the country. The Government regards this as a dangerously low percentage and its policy is to increase and demarcate the area under forests as far as is practicable, having regard to other land use and to availability of finance.

Secondly, to conserve and regulate water supplies. One of the main benefits which forests bestow is their influence in conserving the supply of water for natural springs and for reservoirs, whether natural or artificial, and in regulating the flow of streams and rivers. The importance of preserving and extending this influence in Kenya in the interests of agriculture, development of water power, and for industrial and municipal use cannot be overestimated, and the Government would be failing in its duty if it did not ensure reservation of all forested land or of land capable of afforestation which is essential to the protection of important catchments and for regulating the flow of important streams and rivers.

Thirdly, to preserve the soil by prevention of desiccation and erosion. Soil erosion with consequent destruction of the fertility of the soil is a major calamity now fully recognized on a world-wide basis, and East Africa has not escaped its baneful effects. It is an important part of the Government's policy, by maintaining or providing sufficient forest cover wherever necessary and practicable, to guard against further soil erosion, to arrest it where it has started, and to assist in creating conditions for restoring fertility to the soil where erosion has already caused a deterioration of fertility.

It may be that research will prove that in certain areas climate, water supplies and soil can be protected as well by other economic crops as by forest cover. In that event a review of land use in selected and limited forest areas may be necessary but until such proof is provided reservation of forests must remain.

Fourthly, to develop the economic production of sufficient forest produce to satisfy the requirements of the community and to provide for exportable surpluses. The forests of Kenya have hitherto been able to supply many of the needs of the community for timber and other forest produce for all purposes. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that the growing needs of a growing population will be adequately met in the future. Provision still has to be made for supplying townships with firewood and charcoal but in farming areas fuel is best grown on the spot. Experience over the past 30 years or more has shown that Kenya is fortunate in being able to grow exotic tree species, particularly softwoods, at a cost and in a period which should enable the resulting timber to be placed on the world market at competitive prices. In addition to the softwood planting programme it is intended to plant valuable indigenous and other hardwoods in areas suitable for their growth. Where it occurs, worthwhile natural regeneration of

2. Protection

Protect the Forest Estate by all the means at the Government's disposal.

3. Management

Manage this Forest Estate on the principle of the sustained yield in accordance with approved plans so as to obtain the best returns on its capital value and on the expenses of management in so far as this is consistent with the primary aims of forest reservation set out above; and to make and maintain an inventory of forest resources.

indigenous species will also be preserved and improved. The revenue from the indigenous timber and from plantations of exotic softwoods is a very valuable direct contribution to the economy of the country, and the Government intends to foster and develop both types of forest products and foster and encourage the timber export industry in the long-term interests of the national economy and where practicable to foster timber-using processes in Kenya. Between alternative uses for timber, preference will be given to uses involving the higher degree of processing in Kenya. That is preference will be given to the export of finished products rather than to the export of semi-manufactured articles.

In an effort to achieve these objects and in view of the fact that the Forest Estate, and in particular the areas available for plantation, is small in comparison to the needs of the country, it is intended not to allow any further excisions for human settlement.

2. Protection

Fire is by far the greatest danger to forests, and it is the policy of the Government to study all methods of fire detection and control in forests which have been successful in other parts of the world, and to apply them wherever possible in Kenya. The provision of adequate communications in forests is an essential part of protection.

Grazing in catchment forests is in principle undesirable and it is the policy of the Government to end grazing, where damage is caused to trees and undergrowth, as soon as possible. Limited and strictly controlled grazing by sheep or cattle is allowed now and may be allowed in certain areas of forests where extensive grass glades exist, when this is not detrimental to the site or to the forest crop; goats should not be permitted in the Forest Estate at all. In certain areas it may be necessary to manage forest and grazing under a dual purpose forest and range management plan.

In principle the Government's view is that the existence of private rights in the Forest Estate tends to endanger the objects for which the Government manages the Estate and such rights are therefore objectionable. The Government's policy is, therefore, firstly to define and limit any existing rights, secondly to negotiate on a just and reasonable basis the final eradication of such rights and, thirdly, to allow no new rights to arise.

3. Management

From what has been said under Reservation it is clear that the objects of forest management in Kenya will be several and will be directed to the production of the specific desired result, whether to produce indirect benefits such as maintenance of stream flow, conservation of water, prevention of erosion, protection of agricultural land, preservation of natural scenery, or whether to produce direct benefits such as maintenance of a supply of forest produce, timber for internal use or export, and to increase the direct revenue to the country's exchequer. It is a basic principle of the Government's policy that all forests shall be managed in accordance with specific plans, more or less detailed as the objects of management require in each case. These plans shall be in accordance with this statement of policy. Forests shall be managed on the principle of the sustained yield. It should be noted that in this sense sustained yields includes increasing yields and this is normally an object of management.

4. Industry

Foster the conception of a mutually interdependent forest industry and integrate to the best advantage of Kenya the production, harvesting and utilization of forest produce, by ensuring close co-ordination between all interests concerned in these aspects of the industry and, wherever opportunity occurs, to encourage industrial processes consuming forest products.

5. Finance

Provide adequate funds, within the limits of finance available from time to time, for the realization of the policy.

6. Employment

Pay full regard to the possibilities of using the Forest Estate for the provision of employment, and in particular to foster and develop under suitably controlled conditions the practice of employing resident forest workmen on the rotational cultivation system for reforestation and forest maintenance work.

7. County Council and Area Council Forests

Encourage, and assist by advice, the establishment and maintenance of forests managed by County Councils or Area Councils for local authorities.

4. Industry

The Government intends that the management of production forests shall have regard to the ultimate utilization of the timber produced and, therefore, to the special requirements of the industries concerned and markets to be supplied as regards species of timber, dimensions and qualities. To this end the Government intends that there shall be consultation at all stages between the Forest Department and the timber milling, marketing and exporting industries, as it recognizes that these activities are component parts of the forestry enterprise.

The Government will seek to increase the ability of local industries to utilize, process or adapt forest products for economic consumption, primarily by fostering an economic environment conducive to private enterprise on which development must chiefly depend; nevertheless the Government is prepared to undertake such development itself if necessary.

In particular the Government intends to participate in a company for the production of paper from our forest resources and to operate a sawmill as an example to the timber industry and for training purposes. It is the intention to increase the degree of participation by Africans in the timber-using industries. Government recognizes the important part which industries based on forest products play in meeting the basic needs of the people of Kenya, particularly in housing and will especially encourage the development of such industries.

5. Finance

The Government appreciates that, in order to implement its forest policy, adequate funds to cover long-term plans will be required. It also recognizes that continuity of management, and therefore of financial provision, is essential for the successful cultivation of a slow-growing crop.

6. Employment

The Government is satisfied that its Forest Estate offers a most important field for employment. This importance is specific and twofold. Firstly, employment in the forests of resident forest workmen has become traditional, and provides, in most areas, because of facilities to cultivate, added income which greatly augments the normal wages. Secondly, the employment of resident workmen with cultivation provides a significant increase in the food production of the country. The employment of resident workmen in the forests has led to the establishment of villages with schools, shops, churches, water supplies and dispensaries. It is intended that through local authorities these welfare facilities should be maintained and extended. Government is providing and will continue to provide adequate and improved housing accommodation for its forest workers.

The work of forest conservation calls for well trained and highly skilled men. Forest Rangers, Foresters, Assistant Conservators and Conservators are carrying out highly scientific work to make Kenya self-reliant as far as timber and other forest products are concerned.

7. Local Authority Forests

Because forests located in one district may be necessary for the provision of water supplies and/or timber to other districts or provinces the Government intends to manage all forests of national importance. Nevertheless, there is scope for the establishment of forests by local authorities for purely local purposes. In such cases the Government will assist the local authorities by the preparation of management plans and advice on technical matters as required. Where forests on Trust Land are managed by the Government it is the intention that a proportion of any revenue will be paid to the county council concerned. This will ensure that

8. Private Forests and other Forests not under State Ownership

Encourage the establishment and proper maintenance of private forests including farm woodlots not only for productive but also for protective purposes.

9. Public Amenity and Wildlife

Foster the value of the forests as areas of natural beauty or special interest, develop recreational facilities and preserve wildlife, both flora and fauna, in so far as is consistent with sound forest management.

10. Research and Education

Promote research and education in all branches of forestry and forest products and foster by education and propaganda a greater understanding among the people of Kenya of the value of the forests to them and their descendants.

the county council receives some money even although in the process of developing the forests Government's expenditure may exceed receipts.

8. Private Forests and other Forests not under State Ownership

The Government desires to encourage and assist with advice and any other ways the practice of farm forestry by private owners for protective as well as productive purposes. Not only is it more economical for a farmer to grow his own fuel and poles than to transport them long distances from a forest but by proper siting the trees can be made to provide shade and shelter from the wind. In steep areas properly managed trees can not only stabilize the soil but by proper management they can be made to yield forest produce without causing danger of erosion. In certain cases farmers will be encouraged to use otherwise unproductive land to grow trees to supply specific markets.

9. Public Amenity and Wildlife

The Government recognizes the value and importance of the forests of Kenya as areas of public amenity, and intends, within the limits set by the principles of sound silviculture, to develop and use the forests to fulfil the needs of public amenity and recreation, and to preserve their natural flora and fauna. As far as possible the principle of multiple land use will be followed so that forests in addition to fulfilling their protective and productive roles will be available for recreational purposes by the public. This will include the preservation of areas of special scenic value. Nature Reserves have been and will be declared for the protection of the flora and fauna either for amenity purposes or for scientific study. In the protection of fauna in forest areas the Forest Department will seek the co-operation, advice and assistance of the Game Department; as far as is possible the main plantation areas should be sited in those forests where the stocking of game is not sufficient to cause a conflict between the two interests. Where National Parks adjoin forests co-operation will be maintained with the Parks Authority on all matters of common interest and in particular on the prevention of uncontrolled fires.

10. Research and Education

The Government is convinced that the ultimate success of its forest policy depends largely upon the practical application of the results of scientific research to the task of growing new or of developing existing forests. The same consideration applies to the successful use of the timber available or becoming available in future from the forests. This postulates the necessity, as part of an integral forest policy, to make adequate provision for—

- (a) high level scientific research to be carried on;
- (b) for the training of forest staff to enable it to apply to the best advantage the results of research; and
- (c) for the training of Kenya citizens in various aspects of forest exploitation and of timber utilization and sales.

The Government intends, within the limits of finance available from time to time, itself to maintain an adequate scientific staff as well as to make the fullest use of facilities available at research institutions within and outside the country. The Government intends also to maintain its own training schools to provide practical training in forestry at the sub-professional level and to provide training for members of the timber trade in various aspects of forest utilization.

Nairobi.

Ministry of Natural Resources.