

*For Immediate Release*

## **Researchers Identify New Frontiers in Natural Resources Management for Africa**



*Cross section of the Conference Participants*

**Accra, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2016** – African researchers have identified new frontiers in natural resources management, to help position the continent to effectively address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2016-2030. This was one of the outcomes of a conference organised by the *United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA)*. The conference, which was organised under the theme “*New Frontiers in Natural Resources Management in Africa*” aimed to reflect on emerging frontiers for sustainable management of natural resources in Africa.

### ***Domestication and Localisation of the SDGs***

The discussions at the conference emphasized the need for African countries to focus on addressing the economic, environmental and social challenges facing the continent, especially in the area of natural resources management, so as to be able to achieve the transformative change required by the 2030 Development Agenda. This transformative change, according to Professor Godwell Nhamo of the University of South Africa (the Keynote Speaker at the conference), must involve changes in economic structures to promote employment and inclusive growth. He added that in order to make this economic change environmentally sustainable, profound changes are required in production, consumption patterns and energy use through legislation, regulation and public policies. Prof. Nhamo indicated that the SDGs also require changes in social structures and relations, and this must include addressing the growing economic and political power of the elites.

Highlighting the approaches for domesticating and localizing the SDGs, Prof. Nhamo called for increased awareness on the SDGs, stakeholder engagements, green economy promotion and policy coherence to ensure growth. He emphasized the need to develop appropriate indicators to establish baselines for measuring, reporting and verifying the SDGs' implementation and progress at household, local, corporate, national and regional levels.

### ***New Frontiers***

Participants at the conference resolved that new frontiers for research on the sustainable and efficient management of the continent's natural resources need to be identified. Five areas for cutting edge research that were discussed include *Sustainable Land and Soil Management; Sustainable Mining Practices; Blue Economy including Oceans, Lakes and Wetlands; Energy, Climate Change and Environment; and Natural Resources and the Global Value Chains.*

The conference participants also agreed on the need for Land Degradation Risk Map for Africa, Policy on Traditional Medicine and Herbal Trade, Development of National Biofuel Policies, Periodic Monitoring of Certified Mining Areas for Compliance and Rehabilitation of Polluted Sites, and improvement in Research Funding in Africa.

In his closing remarks, the Director of UNU-INRA, Dr. Elias T. Ayuk, reiterated the need for building capacity for research in natural resources management in Africa as the continent strives to achieve the SDGs. He said "the knowledge and experiences shared in this conference and the proposed actions will be useful in attaining the global goals and in achieving the success that we want".

The participants of the conference came from Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo and Zimbabwe. The conference was dubbed the College of Research Associates (CRA) Conference and it marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of UNU-INRA. It was held under three key areas: Natural Resources Accounting, Trade and Green Economy; Governance, Policies and Institutions for Natural Resources Management; and Science, Technology and Innovation.

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### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

#### ***About UNU-INRA***

UNU-INRA's mandate is to contribute to the sustainable management of Africa's natural resources through research, capacity development, policy advice and dissemination. The Institute is one of the 14 Research and Training Centres / Programmes (RTC/Ps) that constitute the United Nations University's (UNU) worldwide network. UNU-INRA operates out of its main office at the University of Ghana campus, and also carries out some of its major activities through operating units (OUs) in five other African countries, namely Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Namibia, Senegal, and Zambia. Each of these OUs focuses on specific areas of natural resources management.