

Regional Symposium, Ghana Investing in Bamboo as a Productive sector of the Economy

Location: Ghana

Date: 20-21 July 2021 (revised)

Beneficiary countries: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda

Grant: China-IFAD funded South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) facility

1. Background

The International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR) is an international intergovernmental organisation established in 1997 to develop and promote innovative solutions to poverty and environmental sustainability using bamboo and rattan. It currently has 47-member states including 20 African countries. Since its establishment, INBAR has implemented projects and programmes and provided capacity building and awareness raising on the productive use of bamboo and rattan in up to 80 countries.

Over the past two years, INBAR has been implementing the Intra-Africa Bamboo Smallholder Farmers Livelihood Development Programme with financial support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The programme aims to enhance incomes, livelihoods and climate change adaptive capacities of African smallholder farmers, women and youth by upscaling and increasing their participation in climate-smart bamboo value chains in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana and Madagascar (the programme). Supplementing this programme is the China-IFAD funded South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) facility, an initiative that aims to amplify the programme's impact by strengthening cooperation, knowledge the exchange of knowledge and best practices, and transfer of technology and innovation among Africa countries and from China. The main expected outcomes of the SSTC include:

- i. Improved bamboo value chain conditions through improved awareness, an improved policy framework, and investment promotion in beneficiary countries to alleviate poverty and create jobs.
- ii. Enhanced connectivity between bamboo technical experts from beneficiary countries for knowledge transfer and high-quality standards.

2. Introduction

Bamboo is gradually becoming a formidable material in the global commodity market due to its versatility and ability to transform into multiple products including furniture, construction materials, engineered bamboo products, pulp and paper, plastic composites, textiles, and food, etc. Over the past decade, the international trade of bamboo-based products has been increasing steadily, with a total world's market (domestic and international) is valued at US\$ 60 billion, with an international trade value of over USD 3 billion. In addition, the application of bamboo is contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by creating jobs and livelihoods, improving incomes, providing ecosystem services and serving a viable resource for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

3. The Regional Symposium

The global discourse around bamboo potential as a major international commodity is gaining strong interest among stakeholders in Africa countries. To consolidate these voices and chart a viable path towards the actualisation of ongoing discussion, INBAR is organising a Regional Symposium in Ghana to discuss, exhibit and debate on emerging ideas, innovations and technologies that would foster bamboo development and trade in Africa. The Symposium will be attended by investors, private sector entrepreneurs, policymaker, programme managers, farmers, national standards developers and civil society leaders and the various actors along the bamboo value-chain. Participants of this symposium will come from Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda. The Symposium will provide a unique platform for sharing experience - opportunity and challenges for developing a bamboo-based economy: employment and income generation; industrialisation, and trade development; South-South cooperative exchange of knowledge and best practices in sustainable bamboo development and most importantly investment promotion.

4. Goal of the Symposium

The main goal of the Symposium is to foster the establishment of a vibrant bamboo economy, leverage investments and boost global bamboo trade in Africa by harnessing

innovations and technologies that could transform bamboo into high-quality competitive market products.

5. Themes of the Symposium

At the Symposium, the follow themes will be explored:

- **Capitalising on bamboo's emerging market:** the symposium will discuss and address issues of how Africa countries can create sustainable bamboo resource stock and transform them into high-quality, products that can favourably compete at the global market. The symposium will also discuss how products from Africa can permeate the global market.
- **Innovations and technologies for bamboo development:** the symposium will deliberate on harnessing the potential of bamboo through the application of innovative technologies to develop high-standard products and materials. Here, new processes and strategies for competitive bamboo products development in Africa countries will be discussed
- **Bamboo for eco-friendly living:** Currently, bamboo is mainly used as building materials for rural house in most Africa countries. The symposium will discuss how bamboo can play a more advanced role in urban housing especially taking advantage of the emerging sustainable urban development agenda across African cities and rural area, including the new urban agenda, eco-cities and villages, and sustainable rural living.
- **Mainstreaming bamboo into national development policy and programme:** the symposium will discuss the growing necessity for policymakers and other stakeholders to recognise bamboo as a critical material for poverty reduction, foreign exchange earner, carbon credit earner, and climate change mitigation, etc. and to integrate bamboo into national policies and sustainable development plans.
- **Bamboo and Rattan Standards Development:** the symposium will discuss on the importance of developing company standards, national standards, regional and continental standards of bamboo and rattan to eliminate the absence of standard as a nontariff barrier to trade of bamboo and rattan within countries and intra Africa. This is particularly important as African Union (AU) is championing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

6. Expected results of the symposium

The symposium is expected to deepen the understanding of participants on critical pillars which support bamboo industry development, foster partnership, share experiences, knowledge exchange between policymakers, development programme managers, civil society leaders, private sector entrepreneurs, smallholder farmers and women from INBAR member states.

7. Call to submit an abstract

The symposium is opened to nationals from *Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda*. In particular, the symposium encourages the participation of investors, private sector entrepreneurs, policymaker, programme managers and civil society leaders and people with prospects and a strong commitment to bamboo development and trade.

Language requirement: All applicants should be able to speak and write in the English language.

Offer

The Regional Symposium offers limited financial sponsorship covering round-trip economic flight ticket, accommodation, catering, per diem and transportation in Ghana. We welcome people who can self-fund their participation or be supported by their institutions to participate.

NB: Successful selected candidates are expected to deliver a 10 minutes presentation on any of the four key themes outlined in the note.

If you are interested to join this Symposium in Ghana, kindly submit your online registration form, attaching your valid passport (info page), an abstract and your updated CV latest by **27 June 2021 at 11:59 PM Ghana local time**.

NB: *If you encounter any challenges when submitting your application, please consider using the Google Chrome Browser.*

Click [here](#) to access the online registration form.

Link: <https://forms.gle/yHKGHqHTGPxtpgAj7>