



**FARA 4th General Assembly Side Event Report
June 10-11, 2007**

Name of side event:	Launch of Naturally African Platform
Sponsoring organization(s):	ICRAF/FARA
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Background/rationale of the side event (*maximum one paragraph*)

There are many indigenous forest products that are unique to Africa, and with a great potential of improving the livelihoods of rural communities, and most importantly the marginalised groups. These include a range of products, such as gums, bee products, fruits, teas, medicinal and aromatic plants, as well as bio-fuels and essential oils. Except for a few highly commercialised products, the potential of forest products is however under recognised, under-utilised and even underdeveloped, mainly because information on their overall contribution to livelihoods of rural communities is still lacking or incomplete at best.

There have been several efforts aimed at promoting forest products/resources in the past, but progress has been hampered by among other constraints; the narrow product range, inadequate integration of market and household needs, and more important the low level of investment/support in the sector.

It is therefore on this basis that a pan African natural product platform that links research, information and policy geared towards promoting opportunities for small scale African natural products enterprises, becomes a necessary and timely development. The Naturally African platform is a multi-partner mechanism that promotes the establishment of strategic partnerships, as well as exchange of information and mutual learning. In this regard, priority is given to the creation of new market opportunities, issues of equitable returns to producers, technology transfer and development of international standards.

Principle agreements/actions/recommendations (*include who is responsible for implementation & when*)

The idea it was agreed is excellent however the following recommendations to enable the platform be more responsive to the target beneficiaries were suggested;

- Establish and articulate clear goals and objectives.
- Identify challenges and opportunities in the tree and natural product sector.
- Have programs that enable development of competitive value added products.
- Stimulate domestic and regional market for the products.
- Create models and scale out success stories in sector.
- Address the intellectual property rights and tenure rights for the stakeholders.
- The platform it was agreed should work in partnership with other regional bodies already in the sector.

Side event linked to which FARA networking support function? (check one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy and resource mobilization <input type="checkbox"/> Access to knowledge and technologies <input type="checkbox"/> Regional policies and markets <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity strengthening <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnerships and strategic alliances
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Where relevant, note who has success stories, &/or useful resource people or institutions related to side-event theme

Institutions related to the side event are: ICRAF, ASNAPP, NGARA, CORAF/WECARD, and WILD LIVING RESOURCES.
 Facilitation: FARA & ICRAF
 Technical support: ICRAF & FARA