

CONCEPT NOTES FOR ‘FRIENDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE’ (FOTEC)

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

A) AFFORESTATION:

AGRO – FORESTRY: In 2011, FOTEC launched an agro – forestry programmes in its operational communities with a pilot project in Sella Limba Chiefdom in the Bombali District, Northern region where the vegetation is mainly grassland and hence the relevance of project pilot phase.

Economic trees such as Jatropha Curcas, cashew nuts, Moringa etc and some forest trees are also included. Tree nurseries have been already established and transplanting is in progress.

In addition to these trees, farmers are encouraged to set aside certain portion of their lands for biomass production: Fast growing trees like Acacia, Nitrogen Fixing Trees are now planted by farmers which can be pruned at intervals for fuel wood or converted to charcoal using Kilm system for their day to day household energy requirements and parts sold for income generation for poverty alleviation.

The overall objective is to realize a substantial positive environmental impact by reducing Carbon Emissions on annual basis and an accumulated reduction of CO₂ and at the same time contributes towards the UN Millennium Development Goals. Women – particularly those in poor countries will be affected differently than men. They are among the most vulnerable to climate change, partly because in many countries they make up a larger share of the agricultural work force and partly because they have access to fewer income earning opportunities. Women manage households and care for family members mostly children which often limit their mobility and increase their vulnerability to sudden weather – related natural disaster. Drought and erratic rain fall force women to work harder to secure water and energy for their homes. Girls drop out of schools to help their mothers with this task. This circle of deprivation, poverty and inequality undermines the social capital needed to deal effectively with climate change. To achieve this dream, FOTEC has embarked on organizing:

- ❖ **Carbon reduction can give businesses a story to tell beyond emission reduction. Many carbon reduction project bring a range of benefit to local communities in developing countries such as Sierra Leone. These benefits include: employment opportunities, infrastructure upgrades, education programmes, improved energy supply and initiatives which gives local communities new streams of income.**

- ❖ Carbon offset move by FOTEC is an essential tool in line with the global call to low carbon growth. Without using these carbon reduction technologies, rural communities will continue to use traditional fossil fuel power which cannot sustain the carbon management programme of the organization.
- ❖ School Environmental Clubs in our operational communities – This is putting environmental protection and management in the hands of children and youths so that they can participate and understand environmental problems and how to mitigate these problems for better future.
- ❖ Community environmental management and monitoring groups. These include youths, women and physically challenged persons in communities.
- ❖ The introduction of improved stoves to cut down the use of fire wood and charcoal. This will reduce the CO₂ Emission in homes.
- ❖ Plans are underway to contact organizations that deals with renewable energy production eg solar powers, to help us give electricity supplies to rural schools to help children to be able to read at night and use other equipments in laboratories very easily. This will also help reduce the use of kerosene and fire wood for studying in their homes which has lead to more respiratory diseases among women and children in rural communities.

B) AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY:

Slash and burn agriculture has been one of the culprits of massive deforestation in the third world countries. This system was good in the olden days when the population was very small. With the increase in population, pressure on the available land for agriculture has drastically increased.

As a result of this, forests which has been reserved for biodiversity is now dwindling. In this regard, FOTEC has adopted a different approach to mitigating these problems.

To intervene, FOTEC has introduced ecological agriculture – i.e farming in such a way that the resource base is not destroyed for future purpose. In this approach, farmers are encouraged to farm in the low land areas, mainly the Inland Valley Swamps, which have higher potential in crop yields, especially rice production. In most of these swamps, water retention capacity relatively remains naturally wet throughout the year. With this in mind, FOTEC will adopt cropping intensification wherein a pilot of swamp land is cultivated three or four times a year using short variety crops especially rice.

The other aspect of this system is animal husbandry (livestock restocking). In this venture FOTEC encourages farmers to raise farm animals like goats, sheep and poultry in semi – intensive system. The animal will serve as living banks that can be sold to create wealth. On the other hand, their droppings can be used as cheap source of organic manure which can be used in vegetable production by women and in replenishing soil fertility in developed swamps.

WASTE MANAGEMENT:

FOTEC is closely looking at domestic and agricultural wastes management, especially the biodegradable waste management and recycling for the production of organic fertilizers as stated under animal husbandry and energy for rural communities.

A proper waste disposal practice is now in progress and our capacity can be enhanced with potential partners.

It is widely recognized that the access to energy services has strong linkages with development. Rural households in developing countries like Sierra Leone are forced to draw on traditional biomass materials – wood, charcoal, agricultural residue and animal dung's – to meet their daily domestic energy needs.

By doing so, they do not only exhaust these resources, but also pollute the air the breath at home by burning these substances. They often fall prey to acute and chronic respiratory illnesses. The collection of traditional fuel (firewood) devours precious day light hours that children and women in particular might otherwise spent at school, in income – generating or social activities. In such, these rural communities (with increasing population), on sustainable consumption of this traditional energy sources damages not only the biosphere which is our greatest reserve of natural capital, but also human capital as well.

One very promising approach to fight poverty and address the urgent energy needs of rural households is the biogas technology. In the event of waste management, FOTEC is looking strongly at the biogas technology, which is about capturing the gas that result from the anaerobic fermentation of biomass. The plant uses the natural process of anaerobic digestion of biodegradables of domestic, agricultural waste and animal dung (livestock restocking under agriculture) and also night soil. The biogas consists of methane gas that can be used for cooking, heating and lighting the farmer's home. Farmers who keep animals like small ruminant goat and sheep or several pigs under the semi intensive systems can generate enough fuel to meet their lighting needs.

FOTEC working with youth groups in rural communities will encourage the commercialization of this gas as it create employment and income generation. Our specific objective is to achieve economic, environmental and social sustainability.

WATER AND SANITATION – WATSAN:

Improved water supply and sanitation interventions provide a wide range of benefits in rural communities – explicit and implicit.

EXPLICIT: This include higher lifespan reduced morbidity and mortality from various diseases especially among women and children, augmented agriculture and commerce, higher school attendance especially for the girl child in third world countries, lower health care costs, and less physical burden. The time savings can allow women to encourage in non-illness – related tasks and provide more time for them for child care, socialization and educational activities. Furthermore, when safe water is brought closer to homes, the savings in women’s energy expenditure can result in a reduction of energy (food) intake. This savings may then be transferred to children’s intake of food at no extra cost.

IMPLICIT: The implicit benefit to rural communities include higher quality of life due to available supply of drinking water and increased potential for communities to encourage in other improvements once they have achieved improved access to a safe water supply.

Inclusion, FOTEC proposed training communities in hygiene and Sanitation promotion in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Sanitation, other line Ministries and NGO’s in Health and Sanitation programmes.

CULTURE AND TOURISM:

Sierra Leone has a rich and diverse culture which is still underutilized. Also the Tourist sector is vast and still untapped. These range from fine sand beaches which stretched almost two hundred miles along the sea coast. Potential for Eco – Tourist in the country is very promising as we are now working with the Conservation Society to map out game reserves and potential for establishing game reserves for Eco – Tourism, eg the Outamba Kilimi National Park, Tiwai National Park etc.

FOTEC is mapping out cultural heritage sites, like the former slave fortes along the coast etc for future cultural tourism investments.

FOTEC has also proposed to established cultural centers for entraining tourists and cultural libraries for communities.