

ANALYSIS OF THE FOREST APPROACH IN THE DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MOZAMBIQUE

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes how forests are addressed in local government plans and strategies. The overall objective is to better understand the importance given to forests in the economic development of the country. Specifically, the analysis on this theme seeks to answer the following questions: 1. What is the importance given to forest resources in local development plans? 2. To what extent, and how, are forests incorporated into plans at district level? 3. What is the role assigned to local communities (if any) in forest management based on the strategies analyzed?

The methodology of this research was the textual analysis of the forest references as well as the importance given to this natural resource, based on the documents of the local development plans, namely at the district level.

Results indicate that the local development plans reviewed recognize the importance of forest resources, but the focus varies from document to document. Among the priority actions presented by the documents, the participation of local communities in decision-making processes on forest use has not been addressed in most of these decision support instruments. The role of local governments in forest management is not explicit in most of the district strategies analyzed.

Key Words: Forest, district strategic plans, government, Mozambique.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is of recognised interest that forests and the activities associated with them have a high potential for improving the living conditions of the rural population and for generating socio-economic development, due to the strong cross-sectoral relations that characterise them and which, however, today, such development has been achieved in a very limited way (FAO, 2010b, MEA, 2005).

Admittedly, Mozambique has one of the most advanced policies and legislation for the environment in general and forests, in particular in Africa (Tankar, Rafael, Sousa, Celestino, Viola & Falcão, 2013; Solomon & Matose, 2007). In this legal and institutional framework, the decentralization of forest management and participation of local communities are prominent elements (Matose & Watts, 2010).

In Mozambique, districts are the most relevant local territorial units when it comes to responding to forest management. This is because, within the decentralized and deconcentrated structure of the Mozambican State, they are the levels closest to the population that uses and depends on forests for their subsistence and who, at the same time, have financial and human resources and also a certain degree of autonomy to make decisions about their use.

Districts have several responsibilities that make them play an important role in reducing deforestation and degrade native forests. For example, in the preparation of land use and urban structure plans. Although they exercise less discretion, districts also exert considerable influence on local development through the Economic Activity Services. Despite the responsibility of the districts, in Mozambique, there are still no studies demonstrating the real impact of the action of local authorities in combating deforestation that occurs at accelerated paces, somewhat throughout the country.

This research aims to analyze the approach on forests in strategic district development plans, hoping to contribute to the identification of success factors in forest management, which can be replicated as support in the adoption of good management practices in other forests both at national level as well as in international contexts where tai experiences are applicable. To this end, 18 Plans were selected, preferably focusing on the districts of Inhambane Province, because it is the one that in recent forest inventories has the lowest deforestation rate at national level, but it is not yet known what support mechanisms this unique reality in the country.

Specifically, the analysis on this topic seeks to answer the following questions: 1. What is the importance attributed to forest resources in local development plans? 2. To what extent, and how, are forests incorporated into the plans at district level? 3. What is the role assigned to local communities (if any) in forest management based on the strategies analysed?

2. RESULTS

For a better analysis of the documents, the number of times forests are mentioned in each instrument was recorded in a table. In completing the table, special care was required, in particular with regard to the intention and/or context in which the reference to the keyword forest was indicated.

In cases where the reference was made only as a simple description, i.e. if the word forest was simply mentioned but not developed, the corresponding space was marked with the letter "D" to signify description or statement of facts. In cases where the reference is developed, i.e. when actions to be carried out in the forestry sector are pointed out, it was pointed out in the respective column with the letter "A" to mean action, according to table (1).

Table 1. References on forests in the documents analyzed

Document name	Keyword	Description / context	Statement of fact (D)	Action (A)
Maganja da Costa District Development Strategic Plan (2006-2010)	Forest (10 times)	Ensure the dissemination and implementation of the Forest Law with the support of civil society, adopting measures that favor the sustainable use of forest resources.	D (8)	A (2)
		Implementation of the reforestation program, poor replacement of forest		

<p>Funhalouro District Strategic Development Plan (2011-2015)</p>	<p>Forest (62 times)</p>	<p>essences, ensure the sustainable exploitation of forest and fauna resources, seek mechanisms for the valorization and protection of native plants and incentive to establish community forests, encourage local business to engage in the commercial exploitation of forest resources, mobilize resources for the creation of forest and fauna reserves, establishment of Community committees for forest resource management, creation of Community forests, strengthening the tax burden of the forest surveillance system, implementing Community reforestation strategies.</p>	<p>D (52)</p>	<p>A (10)</p>
<p>Panda District Strategic Development Plan (2011-2015)</p>	<p>Forest (35 times)</p>	<p>Creation of natural resource management committees, training of community forest inspectors, dissemination of the law on forests and fauna, promoting reforestation, monitoring, maintaining and conserving community forests, promoting training sessions for community leaders in forest and fauna resource management, monitoring forest and fauna products, promoting the establishment of community forests, empowering leaders in the fight against forest fires, to train communities in matters of sustainable use of faunistic and forestry resources, to train students in matters of forest seedling production.</p>	<p>D (24)</p>	<p>A (11)</p>
<p>Inharrime District Strategic Development Plan (2011 - 2015)</p>	<p>Forest (44 times)</p>	<p>Ensure the sustainable exploitation of forest and fauna resources, promote reforestation through the installation of community forests, monitor the exploitation of forest essences, seek mechanisms for the valorization and protection of native plants, mobilize resources for the creation of forest and</p>	<p>D (37)</p>	<p>A (7)</p>

		fauna reserves, strengthen the tax herd and the forest surveillance system, produce and distribute forest seedlings.		
Morrumbene District Strategic Development Plan (2011-2015)	Forest (34 times)	Ensure the sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources, creation of community forests, promote reforestation and preservation of forest essences, strengthen the supervision of forest products in transit.	D (28)	A (6)
Strategic Government District Development Plan (2011-2015)	Forest (36 times)	Implement reforestation programs, ensure the sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources, creation of forest and faunistic resource management committees, creation of community forests, encourage local business to engage in the commercial exploitation of forest and faunistic resources to generate employment and income for local families, mobilize resources to create forest and faunistic reserves, strengthen the tax burden and the forest surveillance system, facilitate the formation of forest producer associations.	D (23)	A (13)
Jangamo District Strategic Development Plan (2011-2015)	Forest (31 times)	Disseminate the Law of Forests and Wildlife; ensuring the sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources; promote reforestation actions; preservation of forest essences; encouraging community forests; strengthening the tax burden and the forest surveillance system	D (25)	A (6)
Matutine District Strategic Development Plan (2009-2013)	Forest (38 times)	Develop and implement reforestation projects, ensure the defense of protected forest species.	D (36)	A (2)
Gorongosa District Strategic	Forest (86 times)	forest surveillance and community resource management; strengthening capacity for participatory development	D (71)	A (15)

Development Plan (2006 - s/d)		of community projects, replacement of rare and endangered forest species, limitation of forest exploitation in sensitive places, promotion of reforestation, improvement of forest and fauna management of the park, lectures on the dissemination of the wild forests and fauna law and its regulation, improvement of forest and fauna management, replacement of lost forest species.		
Mocuba District Strategic Development Plan (2014-2020)	Forest (46 times)	Implement standards and regulations for the sustainable use of natural forest resources; promoting the sustainable use of land, forests and fauna; inventory, map and zone the land; disseminate the standards and regulations of sustainable use of natural resources (land, water, forests and wildlife).	D (42)	A (4)
Montepuez District Strategic Development Plan (2008-2012)	Forest (15 times)	Promotion of reforestation; control of uncontrolled fires; awareness and education of populations in the management and conservation of natural resources, disseminate within the communities the laws of Forests and Wildlife	D (10)	A (5)
Mueda District Strategic Development Plan (2008-2012)	Forest (23 times)	Disseminate low-cost energy production technologies as a way to reduce forest intensive use and stop desertification; improve the use of forest and faunistic resources, carry out the supervision of the activities of forest and faunistic operators, produce 100,000 seedlings of shade and fruit trees for reforestation in communities.	D (19)	A (4)

Balama District Strategic Development Plan (2008-2012)	Forest (13 times)	Combat ing the indiscriminate slaughter of the forest, forming 8 forest inspectors and wildlife	D (11)	A (2)
Strategic Development Plan of the Mocímboa da Praia District (2008-2012)	Forest (27 times)	Disseminate the Law of Land, Forests and Wildlife and the Environment; define and delimit the areas of conservation of faunistic forest resources; to acquire means of forest and faunistic surveillance, to create community nurseries for forest resettlement.	D (23)	A (4)
Cuamba District Strategic Development Plan (2007-2011)	Forest (14 times)	Supervision of forest and fauna resources and dissemination of the Law of forests and Fauna Bravia; creation of a shipyard for the assembly of forest nurseries; set up two Community management committees for forest and faunistic resources.	D (10)	A (4)
Moatize District Strategic Development Plan (2007-2011)	Forest (14 times)	Ensuring the management of forest resources in the areas of greatest incidence	D (13)	A (1)
Strategic Plan for The Development of the District of Chiúre (2006-2010)	Forest (45 times)	Disseminate the laws of land, forest and fauna and environment, establish/rehabilitate a forestry industry, improve the use and benefit of the district's forests in gender equity, carry out community projects to generate income from forest exploitation rates, promote reforestation in the wood cutting areas of the Namogelia, Katapua and Mazeze posts, encourage local private and associative investment to promote local forest industries by prioritising	D (35)	A (10)

		<p>products and by-products for the benefit of communities, identifying specific and common tasks and needs of men and women users</p> <p>training and awareness raising on HIV/AIDS prevention, gender and forest management to stakeholders, to carry out reforestation projects.</p>		
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Source: Own, based on the documents analyzed

Analysis of Plans

In the District Development Plan of Matutuine District, Maputo Province, the reference to forests is detachable 38 times, focusing on the disrespect of legal norms by forest users, occurrences of indiscriminate slaughter of species in this district, including within conservation areas. Only two actions are pointed out in this plan, which are limited in the development and implementation of reforestation projects and in the defence of protected forest species.

In the Gorongosa District Development Plan, Sofala Province, the forest is described mainly with regard to the main species of flora, the types and occurrence of uncontrolled fires, as well as the indiscriminate slaughter of forest users.

This document has recorded 86 references to the forest, with only 15 actions including the following: forest surveillance and Community resource management; strengthening capacity for participatory development of Community projects; the replacement of rare and endangered forest species; the limitation of forest exploitation in sensitive places; promoting reforestation; improving the forest and faunistic management of the park; the realization of lectures on the dissemination of the Law on Forests and Wildlife and its Regulations; the improvement of forest and faunistic management and the replacement of lost forest species.

In the Maganja da Costa District Development Plan, Zambezia Province, the forest is presented in the form of a description of existing types and their territorial distribution. In this plan, 10 references were recorded with only two actions. Such actions include the dissemination and implementation of the Forestry Law with the support of civil society and the adoption of measures that favor the sustainable use of forest resources.

The Funhalouro District Development Plan, Inhambane Province, refers to the forest 62 times with 10 actions. The actions in this document include the implementation of the reforestation programme; the replacement of forest essences; sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources; valorization and protection of native plants; encouraging the establishment of community forests; encouraging local business to engage in the commercial exploitation of forest resources; mobilization of resources to create forest and faunistic reserves; establishment of Community committees for the management of forest resources; creation of community forests;

strengthening the tax burden of the forest surveillance system and implementing Community reforestation strategies.

In the Govuro District Development Plan, Inhambane Province, the forest is mentioned 36 times, with 13 actions. This document highlights the following actions: implementation of reforestation programmes; sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources; the establishment of forest and faunistic resource management committees; the creation of community forests; encouraging local business people to engage in the commercial exploitation of forest and faunistic resources to generate employment and income for local families; the creation of forest and faunistic reserves; strengthening the tax burden and the forest surveillance system; the formation of forest producer associations.

In the Inharrime District Development Plan, Inhambane Province, the forest is mentioned 44 times with seven actions. The actions highlighted in this document include the following: the sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources; the promotion of reforestation through the installation of community forests; the supervision of the exploitation of forest essences; the search for mechanisms for the valorization and protection of native plants; the creation of forest and faunistic reserves; strengthening the tax burden and the forest surveillance system; the production and distribution of forest seedlings.

In the Jangamo District Development Plan, Inhambane Province, the forest is mentioned 31 times with only six actions that include the dissemination of the Wildlife and Forests Act; sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources; promoting reforestation actions; the preservation of forest essences; encouraging Community forests and strengthening the tax burden and the forest surveillance system.

In the Panda District Strategic Development Plan, Inhambane Province, the forest is mentioned 35 times with 11 actions. In this document, actions on forests refer to the following: establishment of natural resource management committees; training of community forestry inspectors; dissemination of the Law of Forests and Wildlife; promoting reforestation; monitoring, maintenance and conservation of community forests; promotion of training sessions of community leaders in forest and faunistic resource management, supervision of forest and faunistic products; establishment of community forests; training of leaders in the field of forest fire fighting; training of communities in matters of sustainable use of faunistic and forest resources; training of students in matters of forest seedling production.

In the District Development Plan of Morrumbene, Inhambane Province, the forest is mentioned 34 times with six actions. Actions on forests in this document include: the sustainable exploitation of forest and faunistic resources; the creation of community forests; the promotion of reforestation and preservation of forest essences and the strengthening of the supervision of forest products in transit.

The Strategic Plan for District Development of Mocuba, Zambezia Province, the forest was registered 46 times with 4 actions dealing with the following aspects: implementation of standards and regulations for the sustainable use of natural resources (land, water, forests and wildlife); promoting the sustainable use of land, forests and fauna; inventory, mapping and zoning of land; dissemination of standards and regulations for the sustainable use of natural resources (land, water, forests and wildlife).

The Montepuez District Strategic Development Plan (2008-2012) refers to the forest 15 times, pointing out only five actions and the remaining 10 are simple statements of fact that point to the forest as one of the components of the territory and some problems related to the lack of sustainability in its use for various purposes. Among the actions recorded in this document are the promotion of reforestation; the control of uncontrolled fires; the awareness and education of populations in the management and conservation of natural resources and the dissemination of the laws of Forests and Wildlife within communities.

The Mueda District Strategic Development Plan (2008-2012) has 23 references to the forest, with only four actions that boil down to the following: dissemination of low-cost energy production technologies as a way to reduce forest intensive use and stop desertification; improvement in the use of forest and faunistic resources, supervision of the activities of forest and faunistic operators, production of 100,000 seedlings of shade and fruit trees for reforestation in communities.

Balama District Strategic Development Plan (2008-2012) has 13 references to the forest with only two actions, whose focus is the fight against the indiscriminate slaughter of the forest and the formation of forest and wildlife inspectors.

The Strategic Development Plan of the District of Mocímboa da Praia (2008-2012) has 27 references to the forest, with only four following actions: dissemination of land, forests and wildlife laws and the environment; definition and delimitation of forest and faunistic resource conservation areas; acquisition of means of forest and faunistic surveillance and creation of community nurseries for forest resettlement.

The Strategic Development Plan of the District of Chiúre (2006-2010) includes 45 references to the forest, of which 10 are the following actions: dissemination of land, forest and fauna laws and the environment; establishment/rehabilitation of a forestry industry; improving the use of the district's forests and benefits with particular attention to gender equity, carrying out community projects to generate income from forest exploitation rates; promotion of reforestation in wood cutting areas; encouraging local private and associative investment to promote local forest industries by giving priority to products and by-products for the benefit of communities; identification of specific and common tasks and needs of men and women users of the forest, to empower and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention, gender and forest management to stakeholders, to carry out reforestation projects.

Moatize District Strategic Development Plan (2007-2011) there are 14 references, almost all in the form of statements of facts and only one action is pointed out, and it is limited to ensuring the management of forest resources in the areas of greatest incidence.

The Cuamba District Strategic Development Plan (2007-2011) has 14 references to the forest, with four actions. Such actions are: Supervision of forest and fauna resources and dissemination of the Law of forests and Fauna Bravia; creation of a shipyard for the assembly of forest nurseries; creation of community management committees of forest and fauna resources.

3. DISCUSSION

Almost all district plans analyzed point to forests as one of the important components of the territory and point out some problems of lack of sustainability in their use. However, as a general rule, these plans do not indicate relevant interventions in this sector, which may justify the weak intervention of managers at this level on the forest area.

This reality may be linked to gaps in industry legislation, coupled with the fact that there are no mechanisms expressed on the cross-cutting link between the different levels of state administration in the forest approach. It can also be admitted the probable lack of institutional capacity coupled with the negligence of planners/decision-makers at this level on the forest area.

In addition, the fact that the development plans of the selected districts include few or no concrete actions in the forestry sector may be due to the centralization of decisions on licensing to forest explorers, as forest exploitation permits are generally granted at provincial and national levels, in accordance with the Forest and Wildlife Act.

In the strategic district development plans analyzed, the actions range from two to 15, with simple statements of facts prevailing. In view of the previous finding, it is recommended that, in the process of drawing up the next local development plans, concrete actions should be included with a view to ensuring inclusive and sustainable forest management.

The analysis of district development plans has allowed us to note that, in general, their structure is uniform. Its structure is in accordance with the political and administrative institutions existing in each district, and its planning model is almost immediate, in the sense that they do not have a long-term temporal scope.

Final Considerations

In general, among the priority actions in the documents analysed, the participation of local communities in the decision-making processes on the use of forests has not been addressed.

Although it is recognised that local communities should play a leading role in the management of natural resources, their role in forest management is not explicit in most of the district strategies analysed.

The fact that there is a time limitation of district strategic plans for only five years means that districts seem to give little importance to the future of forests in the medium and long term, meaning that local development can be somewhat attainable in this time horizon.

There are also limitations combined with access to the documents under analysis, since it was not possible to collect information from the districts themselves. As a general rule, these decision support instruments, with a few exceptions, are not accessible for public consultation.

In view of this finding, it is recommended that the Government, in the process of drawing up the next programmes, policies and development plans at national, sectoral and local level, should include, in all its priority options, concrete actions to ensure inclusive and sustainable forest management.

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