Chapter 13
Political Clientelism and Sustainable Development:
A Case of Kenyan Forest Policy

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the dilemmas faced by policy makers and bureaucratic executives in implementing sustainable development policy objectives. The dilemma stems from the fact that while on the one hand, implementation of sustainable development goals requires momentary sacrifices by some segment of the population for the long-term benefits of the whole population, on the other hand, those entrusted to make implementation decisions are in office only for a short period of time thereby constrained to pursue policy objectives that maximize short-time benefits and minimizes short-term costs. To discuss these challenges, the chapter employs the case of Mau Forest Complex conservation efforts in Kenya. It is advanced that political clientelism is the main explanatory factor for both Mau Forest distraction and failure of its conservation efforts. It recommends employment of the incremental model to public policy implementation for forest conservation efforts, as well as political sensitivity and intense grassroots mobilization.

INTRODUCTION

The question of why government policies with great possibilities of welfare benefits fail to bring about the intended results has remained a puzzle for Political Scientists and Economists alike for several years (Sturzenegger & Tommasi, 1998). Every so often there are meetings either at the national capitals or world summits to discuss problems affecting humanity. For instance, as from 25th to 27th September 2015 head of states and government converged at the United Nations headquarters in New York to discuss on discuss as a new global development agenda that would bring to bear end of poverty, protection of the planet and prosperity for all its inhabitants (United Nations, 2017). While these goals relate to the aspirations of many poor people across the globe, the experience of millennium development goals indicates

that if they are not adequately implemented the aspirations my never be realized (Awortwi & Musahara, 2016). In many organizations in both developed and developing countries, there is often a gap between what was planned and what actually occurred as a result of a policy (Birkland, 2015).

One of the reasons that have been put forward to explain implementation failure of many national visions, international conventions and other forms of agreements is the lack of political will (Krueger, 2002). Little efforts have been made however to understands what informs the political will and challenges faced by policy makers and bureaucratic executives in implementing national visions and long-term goals. In view of the foregoing discussion, this chapter discusses the dilemmas faced by policymakers seeking to implement sustainable development projects in situations where such projects take away some short-term benefits from certain populations within their main political constituency.

Consequently, this chapter employs political clientelism theory to discuss challenges associated with implementation national visions and long-term plans in the developing economies. The uses the example of the Kenyan forest policy and Mau forest conservation programmes in particular to elucidate these challenges. The data used in the chapter has been collected through the use of documents review and key informants interview. It is this study is organized into various sections with the first section providing background information about the chapters; the next section discusses factors responsible for the Mau forest restoration policy failure. In doing this, various theories of the policy and processes are discussed; and the utility political clientelism in explaining forest conservation policy failure analysed. This is followed by chapter summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

In his seminal address on 16 March 2016 on deforestation and challenge for sustainable development in Africa, Dr Kofi Annan noted that "the world could miss out in the fight against climate change and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) if the current scale of forest destruction continues" (Yeboah, 2016, p. 1). Forest plays an important role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the environment and changing it's into clean oxygen thereby mitigating the effects of climate change. They also cool the air and add moisture to it.

Additionally, it absorbs pollutant nitrogen dioxide into the soil and changes it into harmless nitrogen. In total forest have the potentiality of absorbing 10 percent of the global carbon emissions. The binding tree roots play crucial roles in land stabilization, the slowdown erosion thereby preventing soil depreciation, the reduce sedimentation thus protecting rivers, rivers, lakes, and fisheries. They also help in purifying water by absorbing pollutants in it thus allowing fresh water to flow into the rivers. In addition to the preceding, the tree roots also prevent flooding and landslides by regulating water movement and holding the soil together. They are also homes to rare animal and plant species (Salim & Ullsten, 1999).

These benefits are however threatened by wanton deforestation. According to Chew (2001) between 1990 to 1995 Latin America was losing 2.2% of its forest cover every year, the Caribbean, on the other hand, lost 2% per year. In the same vein, by 1995 Africa had lost half of its forest. The period that begins from 1995 to 2005, Africa lost 64 million of its forest cover. In total every year, the world loses 7.3 million hectares of its forest. In the last decade, the world lost 37million hectares of its forest thereby undermine efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change. The cost of deforestation among the families whose livelihoods depend on of forest ecosystem such as tourism, farming as well as fishing is estimated to be USD 140,000,000 (Kenya Forest Service, 2015).

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