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**Utilization of Non-Wood Forestry Products in Tropical Africa:  
Examples from the Sudan**

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**Abstract**

Utilization of native woody species is important to the livelihood of the people in tropical Africa. According to the type of their utilization, non-wood forestry products (NWFPs) can be grouped into: foliage and fruits, tannins, gums and resins, oils and extracts, fibers, and medicinal products. The promotion of these valuable indigenous products can make an important contribution to alleviation of poverty by improving food security and economic welfare of rural population. As the ecological balance in arid and semi-arid environments is fragile, sustainable management of the ecosystem is a key to the containing degradation of the natural resources, while achieving sustained development and growth in these regions. There are substantial opportunities to develop new crop production systems (especially woody species) on degraded lands marginal to food production. The success of these production systems will depend ideally on increased production, increased distribution and marketing, and increased consumption. In the Sudan, as in many African countries, these activities are scattered between different agencies. It is therefore not surprising that only very few traditional products have been promoted with some success. We have recently established a research and development program which brings together different activities, such as identifying priority under-utilized crop species, designing sustainable management practices, developing post-harvest processing techniques, and developing marketing methods.

The main objectives of this study are to emphasize the significance of non-wood tree and shrub products found in the Sudan, to describe their utilization and to exploit procedures, opportunities and experiences that will greatly facilitate their development.

**Keywords:** Arid and semi-arid regions, land degradation, natural resource, non-wood forestry products, sustainable production, utilization