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“Competition for Resources in a Changing World:
New Drive for Rural Development”

Participatory Forest Management and the Creation of Alternative Income Opportunities in Rural Areas in East Africa - A Case Study of the Bale Mountains, Ethiopia, and the Transferability to Kakamega Forest, Kenya

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Abstract

The proposed contribution of an advanced students' project of the Faculty of Spatial Planning at the University of Technology Dortmund will present the social, economical and ecological impacts of the Integrated Forest Management Project (IFMP) in Adaba-Dodola, Ethiopia. This project was initiated in 1995 by the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) in the Bale Mountains in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia. The inducement for the IFMP was the heavy degradation of the remaining natural forests in this area due to uncontrolled anthropogenic use. The overall goal of the IFMP was to protect the remaining forests from further destruction and to develop, use and manage them sustainably. To reach this goal and respond to the problems adequately the GTZ decided to develop a community-based approach which was named the WAJIB approach (local language abbreviation for forest dwellers association). The idea of WAJIB is that the forest dwellers get exclusive rights to use the forest which allow them to earn their livelihood with forest products. In return the WAJIB associations have to guarantee the maintenance of the tree cover. Supplementary measures of the IFMP included the implementation of non-wood-based income generating activities from which the most recognised one is the eco-tourism project in Adaba-Dodola.

The presentation will explain the outcomes of a three-week excursion and the further analysis and conceptual work and will respond to the following questions:

- o What were the effects of the IFMP on the forest and its biodiversity and on the inhabitants of the Bale Mountains Region?
- o How can the forest management in the Bale Mountains be improved in future?

The work is also based on the relation to the BIOTA (Biodiversity Monitoring Transect Analysis) sub-project E14, which is conducted at the Faculty of Spatial Planning and which studies alternative livelihoods with regard to forest and biodiversity conservation in Kakamega Forest, western Kenya. The contribution will comprise if certain aspects of the IFMP are transferable to this region and its natural rain forest. The advanced students' project work started in October 2007 and will end in July 2008 with a final report.

Keywords: Alternative income, BIOTA, Ethiopia, participatory forest management