



**UN Environment Ecosystem Services Economics Unit chaired a session titled “Macroeconomics Policies and Ecosystem Services” on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November at the first 2016 Africa ESP Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya**

This regional African ESP conference, was held from 21 – 25 November, and it has brought together over 300 researchers and practitioners in the area of Ecosystem Services in Africa

The objectives of our session were to explore the role of natural capital in the decision making, particularly at a national macroeconomic level. Specifically, the session wanted to understand the linkages of natural capital with macroeconomic policies; explore what the data and capacity needs at national level are and discuss the knowledge gaps and future priority of research.

In order to achieve this, we had a group of very good speakers and experts in the subject:

**Pushpam Kumar**, Chief of the Ecosystem Services Economics Unit in UN Environment opened the session by highlighting the importance of integrating the values of natural capital and ecosystem services to attain SDGs. Dr. Kumar also questioned whether the policies in the countries are developed on the basis of macroeconomics.

**Professor John Gowdy** from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, USA brought up the aspect of going beyond natural capital and seeing the environment as a *public good* that should be preserved for future generations by government policy. Gowdy especially highlighted the issue of discounting for the Sudd Wetland.

**Thierry De Oliveira** from from UN Environment, Nairobi presented how to link ecosystem services valuation to informing policies by giving examples from Cote d’Ivoire and highlighting the contribution of forest ecosystem services to the national economy.

**Jan Philipp Schägner** from the Joint Research Center, European Commission talked about mapping ecosystem service values and biodiversity indicators of Africa’s protected areas to inform conservation policies. Schägner highlighted the need of guidance for conservation funding and composite indicators.

**Thiago Mpho** from the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa (GDSA) discussed about Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) addressing an increased dialogue between policy makers in the field of macroeconomics and environmentalists for sustainable development. Furthermore, to increase support for NCA regionally and nationally and to enhance success in account implementation.



**Hannes Lang** from Technical University of Munich in Germany discussed the role of participatory development programs for financial inclusion of the poor focusing on relevant financial services for smallholder farmers, and that financial service meets local knowledge and supports local population.

The contents of this session will be discussed in plenary on the final session on Friday as a wrap up creating the link to policies. ICRAF and UN Environment will work together on a Policy Brief that will highlight the main findings from the workshop discussions and suggested next steps for the practitioners in the region.

