

Certified sawn timber production help save forest, and combat poverty

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LOCATED in Kilwa District, south-eastern Tanzania Liwiti village is one of the few community forest certified by Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). With an estimated population of 270 people (2012 census) the village covers 27,900ha with extensive miombo woodlands and high conservation value coastal forests, a biodiversity hotspot of global significance. Despite its richness in forest resources, Liwiti village lacked skills, knowledge and information to effectively sustainably management its forest. Combined with lack of negotiating as well as market skills and



experiences, the village was resorted to selling harvesting rights to timber business people. Through a collaboration between WWF and MCDI a partner in the Sida funded leading the change programme- Liwiti village began receiving support to strengthen its capacity for sawn timber production for solar kiln drying. Since the programme began to be implemented forest management practices have improved remarkably. Last year, one of African leading safari company and eco-lodge chain, Grumeti placed an initial order for 2,500 pieces (equivalent to 37.5m³ standing trees) of sawn timber from the village, for a premium price of \$25,000 (\$670 per m³). After receiving the first consignment, the lodge locator 1,300km from Liwiti has already placed a second order and is considering setting up a long-term supply contract for 15-20m³ annually. “Now, we are champions of timber business... other villages can learn from us. This is a new opportunity to manage our forests to provide maximum benefits to our people, who in turn care for the forest. We (women) are also are empowered in the process to take over leadership positions and decide on forest resources” confirms Rehema Hassan, Liwiti village executive officer. This signifies a ground-breaking development for sustainable forest management in Tanzania, and in Africa. Liwiti and the other 13 FSC certified villages supported through Sida funded programme, are pioneering Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) and underlying the value of forest certification “I am positive what we are doing is sustainable; both in conservation and development realm Liwiti is one of the most inspiring success stories. Besides increased in village land brought under forest conservation we are witnessing thriving of wildlife in the forests and protection of Mavuji river sources. On the same note, the economic residence we are supporting tangible benefits to the community at large. For instance, I understand the \$25,000 from the first sale of FSC-certified sawn timber by Liwiti village to Grumeti goes to development funds and has been earmarked for the construction of a new classroom and teachers house in the village’s primary school. This makes us conclude that forest is the new deal and its benefits are widely spread,” concluded Makala Jasper – chief.

SOURCE:- <https://www.ippmedia.com/en/features/certified-sawn-timber-production-help-save-forest-and-combat-poverty>