

## ANSA Conference 2019

### **Sustainable Innovations in Natural Resources Management – Approaches for and from the African continent**

Natural resources play an important role in socio-economic development. Currently, despite advances in technological development, natural resources continue to be one of the most essential components for the development of both the industrialized and the developing countries. For instance the construction sector as well as the automotive and the other industrialized productions inter-alia depend on certain natural resources. At the same time natural resources can provide a source of livelihood and development for communities in regions where these resources get extracted. However, these resources are usually finite. The ever growing human population and accelerated growth of urban resource consumption puts pressure on the existing natural resources. Although population growth has stagnated in developed economies, an exponential growth is forecast for developing countries. According to the United Nations survey of 2015, more than 1.3 billion people will be living in Africa by 2050 with the majority of the population less than 30 years old. Africa with its growing population currently faces several developmental challenges that include but not limited to the supply of safe drinking water, affordable housing, food security and affordable energy. In order to curtail youth unemployment, many African countries are focusing to promote manufacturing and value addition of agricultural produce. Growth of the manufacturing sector will put pressure on existing natural resources. In fact competing interest for access to cross border resources such as water is already creating tensions and potential conflicts among African economies. Presently, practices being used to exploit and process existing resources are inefficient and results in waste of materials, air and water pollution, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. Although some countries have put in place laws and regulations to protect public health, the environment and biodiversity, lack of capacity for enforcement worsens the situation. Civil society, the media and other non-state actors have continued to raise concerns with limited success. For Africa to achieve sustainable economic growth, improved security of lives and property, environmental

protection and biodiversity conservation, there has to be a shift from the current unsustainable economic models to a more sustainable one.

In the developed economies, a policy shift towards sustainable use of natural resources is gaining attention. Sustainability generally implies responsible use of available resources to meet our current needs and also leave some to the future generations. Other goals being targeted are to protect public health, promote safe working environments, eliminate pollution, protect biodiversity and other endangered species, minimize greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change. Key tenets include good manufacturing practices, waste minimization, responsible waste disposal, recycling and reuse, eliminating plastics usage, maximizing use of renewable energy sources and eliminating use of fossil resources. To achieve sustainability in socio-economic development, new strategies and technologies need to be established. This has given rise to new inventions or innovative technologies.

In recent years there are countries that have already made significant progress in the direction of sustainable natural resources, among them Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Hence there is a certain perception that it would be useful to replicate and deepen such examples. The aim of this year's ANSA conference is to provide a platform for exchanging ideas, raising awareness for this emerging development topic and promoting dialogue between young scholars and interested people from Germany and Sub-Saharan African countries on the conference topic. The forum will also offer the opportunity for two experts to introduce their contributions to a more sustainable use of natural resources. Since the conference participants will be critical decision makers once they return to their home countries or be dealing with the topic in their sectors of activity, the created knowledge and awareness of the theme has the potential to have a broad outreach and future impact. In this sense, for this year ANSA intends to deepen its field of reflection in the defense of improved visions for an innovative management of natural resources.