



# ACADEMIA ENGELBERG

7<sup>th</sup> Dialogue on Science – October 15 – 17, 2008  
in Engelberg, Switzerland

## **Growth Challenges – Mau Forest, Kenya**

The workshop on Mau Forest served as a case study of how economic growth in Kenya is dependent on the country's five upper water catchment forests for provision of energy (biomass and electricity), tourism and conservation, and agriculture (tea sub-sector). The Kenya government's "*Vision 2030*" that targets an annual economic growth rate of 10% pa to 2030 is therefore hinged on sound management of natural resources, especially forest which cover less than 2% of the country's landmass at present.

Workshop facilitators Muthoni Ngatia and Philip Osano highlighted ongoing challenges facing the conservation of Mau forest. These include rapid deforestation, illegal settlements, land disputes, water shortages, among others. A video "Kenya's endangered forest" provided a synopsis of the historical perspectives on the Mau crisis, and the environmental and socio-economic consequences of the deforestation within the catchment area, and off-sites around Lake Victoria, the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, and the Nile waters.

The participants discussed the issues arising from the presentation and video. Through a participatory process, they identified eight (8) stakeholders with diverse interests on the Mau. These include settler farmers, politician and government administrators, the international community (e.g. UNEP and World Bank), the civil society (e.g. religious groups and Non-governmental organizations working on environment), industry players (tourism, power utilities, and manufacturing sectors), and local forest dwellers, the Ogiek community.

Working in five groups, each representing a specific of stakeholder, the participants identified concerns of each stakeholder, the potential conflicts and synergies, and the opportunities for advocacy with government and decision makers. The groups presented and discussed their recommendations in a plenary. The plenary discussions were wide ranging, but focused on identifying general principles for the resource use in Mau forest, specifically on land, the reconciliation of the interest of vulnerable stakeholders such as the local Ogiek community, and the implications of forest degradation on provision of local ecosystem services such as fuel wood and small-scale agriculture for rural populations. The workshop concluded with a set of recommendations, and noted that securing the future of Mau was in the long term interest of local people, and Kenya's economy at large.