



## Second Albertine Rift Regional Forum Kampala, 10-13 June 2008

### **PARTICIPANTS DECLARATION**

We, representatives of governments, civil society and the private sector, having met in Kampala on 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at the Second Albertine Regional Forum organized by the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS).

Realizing that Albertine Rift is a hotspot for biodiversity conservation and has high proportion of endemic plants and animals, and its important role for various biological and ecological processes and community livelihoods and the economy of Albertine Rift countries.

Noting that in spite of many actors in development and conservation operating in the region the impact remains unrealized being scattered and confused in the small circle of the implementers.

Concerned with the effects of environment related conflicts resulting from access and control of resources and the impacts of armed conflicts on natural resources management.

Observing that most of the natural resources in the Albertine Rift region are contagious and transboundary in nature yet their management is mostly localized and limited to national boundaries.

Realizing with concern that the different existing policies in the region have been developed in isolation and as a result, contradict and counteract effective environment management.

Concerned that the various and diverse efforts invested into community development and capacity building are creating united impact on the ground.

Noting with concern the adverse effects of climate change and the weak capacity of the poor communities to cope with these effects on their lives and biodiversity.

Noting with a concern that diversity of conservation and development issues currently affecting the region seriously impact the poor and vulnerable rural populations who depend on the natural resources for their livelihoods

Appreciating the role of NGOs/CBOs in conservation, community development and awareness and government efforts to involve civil society in sustainable development.

Emphasizing the need for transboundary collaboration and networking in implementing conservation activities within the Albertine Rift region.

Realizing the need for concerted effort to realize sustainable development for the good of both biodiversity and people

Noting with satisfaction the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals and subsequent sustainable development mechanisms instituted by the various governments in the Albertine Rift,

Hereby declare and commit ourselves to:

1. Facilitate communication and information sharing at regional level including setting up a desk for regularizing communication and networking of the forum for the regional activities

2. Fundraise for and work towards the establishment of a sustainable financing mechanism such as trust fund purely to address community livelihoods as a component of the network activities.
3. Urge governments of the region to demonstrate more leadership in the implementation of the Albertine Rift Strategy Framework and more donors to scale up support to the transboundary collaboration initiatives to ensure sustainability of programs
4. Call for improved collaboration between institutions – university and actors in the field to support student participation in research and monitoring initiatives
5. Urge governments of the region to develop or harmonize policies, guidelines and agreements required for the sustainable management, use and sharing of benefits of Albertine Rift shared natural resources
6. Constitute a team (working group) of expertise on Climate Change in the Albertine Rift region and seek political support in this
7. Urge governments of the region to ensure transparency and good natural resource governance processes through sustainable and fair natural management in the region
8. Call for harmonized Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines on development activities taking place in the Albertine Rift region .
9. Urge the development of policies to ensure that local communities benefit from the management and use of natural resources.
10. Urge local and central governments to consider increasing budget allocations towards conservation initiatives within the Albertine Rift in order to minimize over dependency on donors.
11. Develop an Albertine Rift Community Development and Livelihood Improvement Strategy and a set of guidelines that will involve all the relevant stakeholders in the Albertine Rift.
12. Urge governments in the Albertine Rift to recognize civil society organizations as important partners in creating public awareness, gender & youth empowerment for sustainable natural resources management
13. Call for the development of strategies to empower women and youth through the establishment of policies and programs to increase their rights of access and use of natural resources
14. Recognize the importance of the Albertine Rift Regional Forum as platform for exchange and discussion of environmental issues in the region and call for establishment of a Forum desk at ARCOS and future support for regular organization of the event.
15. Appreciate the leadership and coordination role played by the Albertine Rift Conservation Society in the region and funding support from The MacArthur Foundation and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for the Second Albertine Rift Regional Forum.
16. Pay tribute to the leadership of the government of Uganda under the wise leadership of HE President YK Museveni, and the people of Uganda for the warm welcome, the hospitality extended to participants.