

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## A WORD FROM JEAN-PAUL, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Dear readers,

In December 2022, the world witnessed a historic moment at COP 28 in Dubai, where crucial agreements were made to address the pressing issue of climate change.

As we reflect on these global efforts, Better Globe Forestry (BGF) remains steadfast in its commitment to combating climate change, particularly in the arid Horn of Africa.

Through our sustainable tree planting initiatives, we play a role in mitigating climate change impacts, vital for the farmers we work with. While the agreements reached at COP 28 set a global framework,

BGF's work on the ground directly contributes to these goals by sequestering carbon through tree planting, improving soil water flows, and enhancing biodiversity.

Our collaboration with UNESCO to protect the Kaya Kauma forest and Arabuko Sokoke Biosphere Reserve along Kenya's coastal region is a tangible example of our commitment in action. This initiative not only helps to preserve unique ecosystems but also aligns with the broader goal of transitioning to a greener and more sustainable future, as emphasized at COP 28.

Together, we strive to preserve our planet for future generations and ensure a sustainable and resilient future.

We eagerly anticipate a year ahead filled with meaningful progress, but for now we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## BETTER GLOBE FORESTRY SIGNS A PIONEERING AGREEMENT WITH UNESCO



Signing ceremony at the residence of the Belgian Ambassador. From left to right: Kris and Peter Maddens (Ambassador), Jean-Paul Deprins, Alexandros Makarigakis (Regional Director & Representative UNESCO), Claudiah Gachimbi, Jan Vandenabeele, Mary Nyasimi (UNESCO), Rodrigo Lima (UNESCO)

Under the auspices of the Belgian Embassy in Nairobi, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, BGF and UNESCO signed a letter of intent to work together to protect the sacred Kaya Kauma forest (Kilifi County), a World Heritage Site, as well as the Biosphere Reserve of Arabuko Sokoke, both at the Kenyan coast.

Kaya Kauma, as all the Kayas is threatened by environmental degradation due to increasing population pressure, translating into poaching of tree products like timber, firewood & charcoal and construction poles. Kenya's sacred forests have long been protected by cultural beliefs, as holy places and the home of ancestors, maintained by local councils of elders. Those beliefs, however, are being eroded by increasing poverty and an overwhelming need for survival. This is an even more distressing story, as the Kayas are the last remnants of unique biodiversity of plant species, several of them threatened with extinction. Key to their protection is the growth of the living standards of

the surrounding population, which is composed mostly of small-holder farmers. This can be achieved through agroforestry with regenerative agricultural practices, stimulation of nature-based businesses such as processing and trading baobab and tamarind products, and stimulating planting of fruit trees indigenous to the coastal region gone through years of neglect.

Several demonstration farms will be established, research will be conducted on tree species like the Dryland Mahogany (*Melia volkensii*) which BGF has been working with for years, and tree planting with school children will get special attention.

This is to be a collaborative effort by BGF, Pwani University, the University of Ghent (Belgium), National Museums of Kenya, the Kenya Forestry Research Institute and the KenGen Foundation, all entities that will contribute with their specific

expertise to make this project a success. Engaging the local community will be crucial, and the initiative will be building on long-term ties established by Pwani University and NMK. One of the outcomes of this initiative will be a study to extend the forest of Arabuko Sokoke towards Mtwapa Creek, to enhance the resilience of this part of the East African Coastal Region.

### Conclusion

The partnership between BGF, UNESCO, and their esteemed associates represents a significant step towards the protection and restoration of biodiversity in the sacred Mijikenda Kaya forests. Empowering communities and promoting sustainable agriculture and nature-based businesses will play a vital role in ensuring the long-term success of these conservation efforts. By working together, we can contribute to the preservation of Kenya's cultural and natural heritage for future generations.



## CONTRASTING LOFTY GOALS AND REALISTIC ACTION: COP 28 OUTCOMES

The recent United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai, also known as COP 28, held from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 12<sup>th</sup>, yielded significant results. Among these was a historic agreement to allocate "Loss and damage" funding for vulnerable nations and to initiate a "transition" away from fossil fuels. These decisions were made in the face of alarming scientific warnings about climate change. Unfortunately, the objective of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, deemed necessary to avert catastrophic consequences, is likely to be unattainable.

Additionally, there is no clear timeline for phasing out fossil fuels, and the financial commitments to compensate for damages in developing countries, to be funded by the major emitters, fall far short of the actual needs.

Nevertheless, these agreements mark a milestone in the long history of climate negotiations.

Reducing the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere cannot be achieved solely through afforestation efforts aimed at carbon sequestration. However, such initiatives remain crucial in the fight against climate change. They serve not only to capture carbon but also to play vital roles in atmospheric and soil water dynamics, biodiversity preservation, and offer cost-effective means for poverty eradication.



Dryland afforestation in agroforestry lay-out in semi-arid South East Kenya by BGF



Before floods, extensive droughts, resulting in massive death of livestock. A carcass of a cow in Northern Kenya

Better Globe Forestry Ltd. (BGF) operates in the arid regions characteristic of the Horn of Africa, where the impacts of climate change are particularly severe. Natural disasters like floods and droughts exact a devastating toll on local populations, resulting in loss of life and the displacement of millions of people and their livestock. By planting trees in this harsh environment, where errors can lead to the demise of the trees, and doing so in a sustainable and economically viable manner, we contribute to a global movement aimed at safeguarding the environment and the people who inhabit it. Our extensive work with thousands of farmers necessitates scaling up, and our methods and procedures, honed through years of relentless progress, come from the lessons learned, even at a high cost.

Better Globe Forestry distinguishes itself by its commitment to planting trees for specific commodities, such as timber and gum Arabic, which align with our vision of poverty alleviation. We are unique as a company due to our dedication to dryland afforestation through agroforestry and our expertise in this field.



Mombasa road flooded in Tsavo National Park last month of November