



Biofuels in Africa (Directions in Development: Countries and Regions)

Donald Mitchell

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A new economic opportunity for sub-Saharan Africa is looming large: biofuel production. Rapidly rising energy prices are expected to remain high for an extended period of time because of the increasing demand in prospering and populous countries such as China and India, the depletion of easily accessible supplies of crude oil, and concern over global climate change. As a result, there is renewed interest in biofuels as an alternative to fossil fuels. Africa is uniquely positioned to produce these new cash crops for both domestic use and export. The region has abundant land resources and preferential access to protected markets with higher-than-world-market prices. The rapid growth in the demand for transport fuels in Africa and high fuel prices create domestic markets for biofuels. The European Union and the United States have approved legislation that requires large increases in the consumption of biofuels over at least the next decade. Imports are expected to be needed to meet these mandates, thus opening the door to African and other developing countries that can produce biofuels or feedstocks for biofuels competitively. Expanding the production of crops for biofuels will affect the entire rural sector in Africa as resources are shifted away from traditional crops and the prices of all agricultural commodities rise. Even smallholders can participate in producing biofuel crops. To promote the sustainability and significant contribution of this enterprise, *Biofuels in Africa* provides guidance in formulating suitable policy regimes, which are based on protecting the rights of current land users, developing revenue-sharing schemes with local communities, safeguarding the environment and biodiversity, expanding institutional capacity, formulating new regulations and procedures, and emulating best practices from experienced countries. This volume will be of value to anyone interested in biofuels, including policy makers, development practitioners, private investors, researchers, and the general public. Now that African countries are trying to significantly increase their energy supply systems, biofuels are an attractive option using both dedicated crops and agricultural waste. This book provides guidance for them to develop a suitable policy regime for a significant contribution by biofuels.—Professor Ogunlade R. Davidson, Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Sierra Leone

Biofuels in Africa is a sorely needed resource for our understanding of the problems of expanding biofuels production in Africa. A high point of the book is a description of the projects that were started in several countries. A very useful book! —Professor José Goldemberg, University of São Paulo, Brazil

As Africa most likely will play the same role for global biofuels as the Middle East does for oil, this comprehensive book on African biofuels should be compulsory reading for anyone interested in either African development or biofuels. The book captures the essence of long-term drivers and opportunities as well the complex challenges for investors and society of this huge emerging industry. —Per Carstedt, Executive Chairman, EcoEnergy Africa

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