

**11th AFN Regional Meeting**  
**ASIA REGIONAL EXCHANGE ON FOREST SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO**  
**THE UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (AFMDG)**

**28-30 November 2006, RECOFTC, Bangkok, Thailand**

**Rationale**

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) form a blueprint agreed by the world's countries and leading development institutions to galvanize a global effort to meet the needs of the world's poorest. With core themes of poverty eradication and human security the MDGs are not simply inspirational. The MDGs are clearly linked to an elaborate set of targets and indicators that allow empirical measurement of progress in the drive towards improvements in human well-being, environmental conditions and global partnerships by 2015, as compared to 1990.

Some 1.6 billion of the world's poorest people live in and from forests and are highly dependent on the goods and services provided by forests. These forest dependent peoples often represent the poorest and most marginalized of the world's peoples. Asia is home to more than two thirds of the world's poor, and nearly half of them are in Southern Asia. The greater percentage of these poor are rural and of those, the greater extremity of poverty if not percentage of poverty is found amongst the estimated 450 million poor who live in and from Asia's forests (ADB 2003).

Using forests then as an 'entry point' represents a huge opportunity to engage a large proportion of the world's poor and to mitigate poverty, social inequity and environmental degradation and hence make significant inroads in the achievement of the 8 MDGs. The lives of forest dependent communities are largely miserable characterized by a lack of basic services from health care to education, poor basic infrastructure and often with poor access to basic governance and rule of law. Forests are frequently the focus of serious conflict and ongoing deforestation and forest degradation continues to erode the poverty alleviation functions of forests.

During the last two decades, there have been significant moves in Asian countries to decentralize forest ownership and management. More than 22% of forests are under community ownership/management and this figure is set to grow dramatically with the current trend towards decentralization across the region. In the last two decades one result of decentralization initiatives has been the increasing adoption of community based forest management. The level in the region to which national adoption of community forestry initiatives has taken place has been highly variable and largely dependent on the length of national engagement in locally oriented programs and nationally established policy frameworks.

With respect to the status of community forestry, countries across the Asia region can be crudely grouped according to the "generational" issues they face. India, Nepal, and the Philippines have the longest history of

engagement with government programs dealing with common property resources. The subsequent "generation" of countries includes Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam where policies and/or programs are enacted to varying degrees. Bhutan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan and Timor Leste are at a piloting stage of engaging the participation of communities in natural resource management.

Whilst there is a growing regional consensus that local mechanisms are needed for effective natural resource governance and in particular the recognition of the roles and responsibilities of local communities, many challenges remain. Many stakeholders in the forest sector are experiencing difficulties in integrating community forest management into local and national planning schemes. Explicit articulation of the potential of community forest management in meeting the dual role of both poverty alleviation and sustainable use of natural resources remains weak.

## **Objectives**

This meeting aims to foster national and regional information exchange on how the forest sector contributes to the achievement of the MDGs and what can be done to both raise awareness and improve the contribution of the forest sector in achieving the MDGs. To do this, we need to understand the MDGs and related targets in the light of forest sector actions especially those focused on poverty reduction (MDG1) and environmental sustainability (MDG7).

To achieve this aim, four panel sessions examine the role of four forest sector issues and their interrelation with the MDGs. These include;

1. Linking the MDGs to current Community Forest Management issues in Asia
2. Protected Area Management and Poverty Reduction: MDGs 1 and 7— Realistic or Incompatible joint goals?
3. Partnerships for Development: Multi-stakeholder Alliances and Land Use Planning
4. Social inequity and empowerment: Addressing Social Concerns in Forest Law Enforcement and Governance

The focus of all panel discussions is at the level of local government, NGOs and communities that live in and around forests.

### **Panel 1. Linking the MDGs to current Community Forest Management issues in Asia**

This panel reviews the multiple facets of poverty and varying perceptions on what it means to be poor, in order to provide the basis for the following three panels. The first presentation gives an overview on different ways of measuring poverty and human development such as MDG targets, Human

Development Index, and Human Poverty Index. It also discusses conditions enabling and hindering environmental sustainability.

The discussion panel examines poverty and human insecurity in relation to forest actions currently underway by local government. Local government is a driving force in moving the agenda of basic services to communities, working with them and the NGO sector. Local governments are increasingly supporting incipient actions as community roles and responsibilities in forest management get better clarified.

Case presenters provide examples of local actions linking forests with poverty reduction, provision of basic services, promotion of the role of women, environmental sustainability and human security.

### **Panel 2. Protected Area Management and Poverty Reduction: MDGs 1 and 7—Realistic or Incompatible Joint Goals?**

This panel examines the conflicts and opportunities created as countries aim to increase the ratio of land area under protection to maintain biological diversity (MDG 7, Target 9, Indicator 26).

The overview presentation examines the linkages between poverty and protected areas and describes the range of poverty reduction approaches in protected area management, given that different categories of protected areas provide different levels of access to local communities. It also cites some of the challenges faced in integrating protected areas and poverty reduction strategies.

Case presentations are chosen from countries that have some of the highest ratios of surface area under conservation in South and Southeast Asia as of 2004. (Malaysia 24%, Cambodia 22%, Thailand 19%, Nepal 17%)

### **Panel 3. Partnerships for Development: Multi-Stakeholder Alliances and Land Use Planning**

Appropriate land use planning is a path for providing an integration of basic needs, environmental management, and economic opportunities to communities. This panel reviews land use planning policies and operations in different countries, with focus on:

1. Risk management, watershed management, and comprehensive forest land use planning at district level; and
2. Agreements wherein local government is one of the prime stakeholders.

The overview presentation examine the importance and challenges faced with land use planning involving various stakeholders, such as awareness of land use planning process, incentives for participation, technical capacity, and coordination among different levels of government bodies.

#### **Panel 4. Social Inequity and Empowerment: Addressing Social Concerns in Forest Law Enforcement and Governance**

The topic of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade has attracted much attention at both international and national arena, leading to various efforts and commitments at international for a, among countries, and from corporations and NGOs. This panel focuses on the local context of forest law enforcement and trade.

Panel presentations cover:

1. The stakeholdership of local governments in relation to forest departments and communities;
2. Ways to reinforce community forest protection and strengthen multi-sectoral teams for better forest law enforcement;
3. Processes, laws and roles and responsibilities for local communities in monitoring and enforcing rights over forest resources;
4. Specific efforts in combating illegal forest activities and reducing transaction costs, including, but not limited to, the development of verification schemes and legality standards for wood producers.

#### **Mechanism for Panel Presentations:**

Each session starts with an overview presentation to provide a working base line on basic concepts and establish connections with regional and international contexts. This is followed by one to two presentations that share site-level experiences and focus on the interface of forest sector policies and programs with poverty reduction strategies.

An open forum follows the panel presentations, during which time one to two more delegates join the panel to serve as discussants. A panel facilitator manages the discussions.

Due to the time constraints facing each panel, it is very important that panel presentation (in PowerPoint or other means) be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes.

Presenters are requested to develop written papers for the panels and are asked to bring hardcopies as well as digital files. PowerPoint presentations and the full text of the papers will be made available to all meeting participants on a CD. After all presentations have been completed for each panel, one hour is available for questions and discussions.

In weaving these together, four things need to be highlighted:

- o How the MDGs relate to forests with respect to poverty, human insecurity and social inequity
- o What are the methodologies to achieve MDGs, possibly in a community context
- o How MDGs can be related to situations of conservation
- o How MDG as a method relate to the development of watershed alliances

**Panel Discussion Groups:**

Each panel meets separately to discuss their experiences and address sub-group discussions questions provided by the organizers. The goal of the sub-group discussions is to compare the experiences of different countries in the Asia region with the four panel topics. Each panel group is asked to present their findings on the final day of the workshop.

**Millennium Development Goals**  
(summary of relevant items)

<b>MDGs</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, proportion of people below the poverty line 2. Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	1. Proportion of people below poverty line (US\$1 per day income) 2. Poverty-Gap Ratio 3. Share of Poorest in National Consumption
2. Achieve universal primary education		
3. Promote gender equality and empower women		
4. Reduce child mortality		
5. Improve maternal health		
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases		
7. Ensure environmental sustainability	9. Integrate sustainable development in country policies and reverse loss of environmental resources  10. Halve, by 2015, proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation 11. Improve of lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020	25. Proportion of land area covered by forest 26. Ratio of area protected for biodiversity to surface area 27. Energy use per \$1 GDP 28. Carbon Dioxide emissions per capita 29. Consumption of ozone depleting CFCs 30. Proportion of population using solid fuels 31. Proportion of population with sustained access to improved water source 32. Proportion of urban population with improved access to sanitation 33. Slum population as percentage of urban
8. Develop a global partnership for development	12. Rule-based open trading and financial systems; least developed, land-locked and small island countries' special needs; debt; access to essential drugs; benefits of new technologies	