

FORESTS FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: OPPORTUNITIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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1. Role of Forests in Reducing Poverty

The forest sector¹ plays an important role in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the proportion of poor people, especially in the Asia-Pacific Region. The responsibility of a forest department in contributing to meeting its country's MDG targets is critical, given that forestlands under its jurisdiction comprise a significant percentage of a nation's land area. On these lands, extreme poverty² is often observed in a large percentage of the population.

Studies indicate that poverty is disproportionately rural (World Bank, 2005). Since national forestlands cover a large proportion of rural areas, forestlands represent a crucial asset that can be harnessed to alleviate rural poverty, where many of the traditional cultures have long existed. Agroforests or farm forests established on private lands are also providing many important goods and services that contribute to human well-being. Industries depend on forests for raw materials and employ a significant number of both rural and urban populations.

- In five countries in Southeast Asia, lands classified as 'state forests' range between 33% and 60% of a country's land area while rural population below the poverty line is between 12% to 40%.
- In South Asia, rural population below the poverty line is between 27% to 53%, while state forestlands cover between 2% to 37% of land resources.

Particularly among APFC member countries located in Asia-Pacific...

- Most APFC countries are ranked as having medium HDI. Of the 28 APFC member countries (excluding USA and France), 23 are categorized as having medium HDI and 5 with high HDI. None fall under the low HDI category. (UN, 2005)
- Forests can contribute significantly to poverty reduction in countries with medium HDI rank (among APFC countries) and relatively high forest assets (more than 50% forest cover). These countries are Bhutan, Lao, Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

The need of the poor and challenge to forest departments is even greater on other countries and all the more reason to identify what are the program and incipient opportunities there are with which to build. While figures on 'forest-dependent populations' are still not considered as dependable for policy formulation purposes (some even consider the exercise impractical), a number of international organizations are presently attempting to come up with more reliable and disaggregated statistics. At the household level, nevertheless, the diverse role of forests in the lives of rural people has already been widely documented.

¹ For purposes of this paper, forest sector mainly refers to forest departments, forest-based and forest-dependent people, and forest industries.

² The UN Economic and Social Council in 1993 proposed the following definition of extreme poverty: "The lack of basic security connotes the absence of one or more factors enabling individuals and families to assume basic responsibilities and enjoy fundamental rights. The situation may become widespread and result in more serious and permanent consequences. The lack of basic security leads to chronic poverty when it simultaneously affects several aspects of people's lives, when it is prolonged, and when it severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibilities in the foreseeable future." COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Forty-fifth session, Item 8 of the provisional agenda, Report on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty.

Forests for subsistence and reduced vulnerability

- Food and fodder from forests is a major contributor to household food security. In forest areas of Thailand, for example, 60% of all food comes directly from the forests. (FAO, 1998)
- Fuelwood accounts for 11% of energy use in Asia. Over 1.7 million Asians depend on traditional biomass to prepare, process, and preserve food and as a source of heat. Projections from the International Energy Agency indicate the number of people relying on them would still increase by 2030 even if gradual shifts to other sources of energy are already occurring. (CIFOR, 2002)
- Forests are sources of medicinal plants for over 1 billion people around the world. (WB, 2002)
- Seasonal hunger is avoided in many cultures by a reliance on forest roots and yams. Many other people move into forest lands during times of lost food security such as during natural disasters and instability caused by insurgency.

Forests as farm inputs

- Forest vegetation helps support the resource base by nutrient cycling.
- An estimated 40% of farmers in the developing countries depend on forested watersheds as source of water for irrigating crops or watering livestock. (FAO, 1998). The forest is a source of natural fertilizer and green manure in some cultures.
- Forests harbor genetic resources of plants, animals, and microorganisms that provide the raw materials for genetic improvement in crops and livestock. The wild relatives of avocado, banana, cashew, cacao, cinnamon, coconut, coffee, grapefruit, lemon, paprika, oil palm, rubber and vanilla are found in tropical forests and export products of these crops were valued at over \$23 billion in 1994. (FAO, 1998)

Forests for income generation

- Carpenters, skilled workers, laborers from the traditional crafts to the furniture and construction industries process both for home and export the majority of forest timber (Byron, 1997).

The World Bank Forestry Strategy Paper 2002 broached a global estimate on forest user groups to bring out the point that the MDG targets cannot be met by 2015 without significantly addressing the needs and protecting the rights of forest dependent people. The strategy emphasized the importance of differentiating the poor given the dynamic process of poverty alleviation and the need to identify where potential conflicts can occur as various approaches to poverty alleviation are implemented.

- More than 1.6 billion people depend to varying degrees on forests for their livelihoods.³
- About 60 million indigenous people are almost wholly dependent on forests.
- Some 350 million people who live within or adjacent to dense forests depend on them to a high degree for subsistence and income.
- In developing countries, about 1.2 billion people rely on agroforestry farming systems that help to sustain agricultural productivity and generate income.⁴

³ This figure is taken to be a guesstimate by the World Bank for people dependent on forests for subsistence, livelihood and income. There are many overlapping uses in the categories given, while the entire world population can be said to be dependent for ecological services.

⁴ According to the WB Strategy 2002 Appendix: 1.2 billion people or 80% of world's extreme poor depend to some extent on forests (including agroforests and tree crops) for their income or livelihood, for maintenance of soil fertility and water value), and for fuelwood (for cooking and heat). It is not clear if this refers to same figure above.

- Worldwide, forest industries such as sawmills, carpentry, and handicrafts provide employment for 60 million people.
- Some 1 billion people world-wide depend on drugs derived from forest plants for their medicinal needs.
- Countless rural poor depend on ecological services

The FAO State of the World's Forests 2003 notes that forests are vital safety nets, helping rural people to avoid, mitigate or rise out of poverty. Forest resources are means to avoid or mitigate poverty by providing a source of petty cash for rural households. Products from natural and farm forests can be a basis to help to lift the household out of poverty by functioning as a source of savings, investment, accumulation, asset building and permanent increases in income and welfare.

More refined statistics and forests and poverty may be made possible in the future as definitions for 'forest dependency' and 'poverty' are elaborated and quantified. The evolving definition of poverty and improvements in monitoring relevant criteria and indicators is slowly enabling forest-based solutions to come to the forefront as a strategy for poverty reduction. More disaggregated information is helping organizations and programs in setting priorities, selecting focus areas and targeting beneficiaries.

Impact of Reduced Poverty on Forest Sustainability

The two greatest challenges facing the global economy are eradicating poverty and achieving environmental sustainability (NEF 2006), to which sustainable forest management is a key factor given the large tracts of land classified as state forest areas.

Population is continuously cited as a critical factor that prevents the world from achieving these two objectives. Approximately 3.5 billion people, 58% of the world's population, live in Asia and the Pacific, an area accounting for only about 30% of the Earth's land space. Several of the most populous countries in the world are found in the region, including China with 1.3 billion people and India with 1.2 billion, together accounting for almost 40% of the world's population. Five of the six countries that account for half of the global annual population growth belong to the region, namely Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan. (IGES, 200_). Land scarcity for the growing population of Asia Pacific has already been highlighted in 1997 when FAO noted that overall population density in the region is so high that average land availability is only about 0.9 hectares per capita, less than half of the average for the whole world. Given these figures, population management approaches are being advocated by international donors in many developing countries as a strategy to reduce poverty and environmental pressures.

While population increase in the developing world is a problem especially if the population is not turned into productive sectors of the economy, the equally important problem which receives less strategic international intervention is that of the disproportionately large patterns of consumption in the developed world and the 'ecological footprint' that this leaves on the planet.

"The developed world is built on productivity determined by high consumption patterns and cost efficiency rather than by environmental sustainability. Our planet however, consists of only 11.5 billion hectares of biologically productive space (forests, cropland, grassland, fisheries and wetlands) to support approximately 6.4 billion people. Each person on average can then be allotted 1.8 hectares of 'environmental space' but present consumption patterns in Europe require 4.7 global hectares per European, and the figure is even higher in UK (5.4 global hectares per person), slightly lower in Japan, and twice as much in the USA." (NEF, 2006). The biologically productive space in the developing world is enabling the developed world to maintain its present consumption pattern.

Mainstream macro-economic principles prescribe that poverty can only be reduced through continued – ideally faster – growth of the global economy (NEF, 2006). The tag lines of “fast-tracking” development and “pump-priming” the economy relate to increasing a nation’s ability to participate in global market dynamics and generate foreign trade, following the mantra of international financial institutions that “Economic growth is the principal route to lasting poverty reduction...”(NEF, 2006). The prescription of international lending institutions for developing countries to follow the economic growth strategies of developed nations will further increase humanity’s ‘ecological footprint’ and is essentially a prescription for us to live outside the world’s environmental means. It is this sort of economics encouraging over-consumption in the developed world that has to shift for the world to move towards greater sustainability and poverty reduction.

While it is not presently widely acknowledged that poverty in the developing world is reinforced by the broader pattern of over-consumption in developed nations, the UN is trying to introduce degrees of sustainability through the Millennium Development Goals.

MDG 7 uses 9 indicators for which to say that the world is making progress in environmental sustainability (Table 2). Three of the indicators used reflect the mainstream model of economic growth, and in a way reflect the developed world’s consumption patterns and ecological footprint on the rest of the world. MDG indicators that monitor (1) carbon dioxide emissions, (2) consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs, and (3) energy use per \$1 GDP could help global society become aware of the external pressures reinforcing levels of poverty in developing countries because of the consumption pressures that they create and the imbalance in global development. Developed countries need to be careful that their environmental strategies do not reinforce poverty in the rest of the world.

The 6 other indicators for achieving MDG7 (forest /land ratios, increase in protected areas, access to safe drinking water, access to urban sanitation, and solid fuel reduction) reaffirm the importance of addressing poverty through forest management, as some of these directly relate to actual forest-people dynamics. Behind these indicators assessing reversal of the loss of environmental resources are the problems that developing countries have in contributing to sustainability, because inherent in these indicators is rural poverty, most especially of forest-dependent people. If rural poverty is reduced, then pressure on forests will likely decrease as...

- Increase in educational attainment enables people to deal with sustainable forest management. Culturally-appropriate education encourages the next generation of forest peoples to carry on sustainable forest management principles and practices of their elders with greater participation in governance. Increase in interest to protect areas for biodiversity also stems from better education and greater opportunity.
- Improved water and sanitation in forest villages benefits the health of both people and natural resources.
- With rural out-migration trends, trees are increasingly seen as a low-capital and low-labor means to keep the land they left behind in productive use. Farmers turn to trees to combat declining land productivity.
- Increased recognition given to the role of women in managing household finances promotes a more sustainable and effective use of income derived from forest outputs to benefit the household as a whole.

MDG7 targets and indicators imply that a lot of the changes have to be made both in developed countries in terms of resource consumption, and in developing countries in terms of resource distribution. If poverty reduction is a moral imperative, then resolving our current environmental crises is, in many respects, a practical necessity. Economic models then have to be “reviewed as if people and planet mattered” (NEF, 2006), but this is something which we are not prepared to tackle fully in this presentation.

2. Forest-Dependent Populations and the Poor

Based on current definitions of poverty, people relying upon forests are considered poor if they experience:

- **Poverty in Needs** – those living on income that is less than what is needed to maintain a tolerable life, which is the basis for the international poverty line standard of \$1/day, as adopted from the US poverty line. The \$1-a-day poverty line, in principle, refers to consumption of \$1 per person per day at 1993 prices based on the needs of US citizens. At market exchange rates, this translates into a much smaller amount, between about \$0.20 and \$0.70 per day in most developing countries. The \$2-per-day poverty line has more recently been introduced.
- **Poverty in Capacities** – those with limited capability to do the things they value due to inadequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, access to basic services (e.g. health, water supply, sanitation and education), and capacity to participate.⁵
- **Poverty in Assets for Livelihood** – those with limited assets (natural, physical, financial, human and social) needed to respond to vulnerabilities and risks, which is the basis used by World Bank to develop its Forest Strategy 2002. World Bank believes that people considered poor are those most vulnerable to shocks, trend shifts and seasonality and that a lack of assets can limit the ability of individuals or populations to withstand major stresses and shocks and can compromise the potential for long-term income and economic growth.
- **Poverty due to Social Exclusion** – groups systemically excluded from the labor market, education, or the political process (e.g. marginal socio-ethnic groups, women). On the other hand some groups are under extreme exploitation such as child labor and the selling of children into prostitution.

Forests are not places where people simply live anymore. The people who live simply in the forests are those either wholly dependent upon forest resources for their subsistence and their cultural well-being such as indigenous peoples, or else those pushed by society to live in or near forests and are heavily dependent on forest for subsistence or a level of income. If these ‘forest-based peoples’ are truly isolated, forest areas provide them a level of security or continuity. External pressures however are reaching even the most far flung forest areas such that these areas are now rarely able to provide a sense of security and continuity to an estimated 60 million indigenous people and another 350 million living in or near forests around the world. Corporate investments in resource extraction, insurgency and illegal activities may be present with devastating effect. The poverty that forest-based people experience is often the chronic kind, and ranges from poverty in needs to poverty due to social exclusion.

An estimated 1.2 billion of the world’s extreme poor depend to some extent on forests (including agroforests and tree crops) for their income or livelihood, for maintenance of soil fertility and water value), and for fuelwood (for cooking and heat) (WB, 2002). For these ‘forest-dependent people’, forests can serve as a safety net that prevents them from falling further into poverty. Dependence on forests, however, can also be a poverty trap in terms of the low prices fetched by raw products, the increasing internal population as well as in-migration that prompts subdivision of the resource base, the conflict with governments or other external parties regarding access and tenure, and the denial of basic services for government systems that view people on forestlands as squatters.

⁵ The conceptual approach for ‘capacity to participate’ was pioneered by Ms. Amartya Sen who co-chaired the Commission on Human Security and presented a final report to the UN in 2003.

The Millennium Development Goals help societies focus efforts on poverty reduction, and so has provided some windows for the poor on forestlands to claim their access to basic services even if some sectors still consider them as an ‘undesirable presence’.

<i>MDGs</i>	<i>Targets</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
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 (\$1 per day income) 2. Poverty-Gap Ratio 3. Share of Poorest in National Consumption
2. Achieve universal primary education	3. Completion of full course of primary schooling	
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	4. Gender disparity in education (all levels)	
4. Reduce child mortality	5. Under 5 mortality rate	
5. Improve maternal health	6. Maternal mortality ratio	
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases	7. HIV/AIDS cases 8. Incidence of malaria and other major 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 & small island countries’ special needs; debt; access to essential drugs; benefits of new technologies	

The first six MDGs in a sense is a prerequisite for environmental sustainability. As such, the forest sector's effort now should be to realistically or effectively speak of sustainable forest management side by side with addressing basic needs. This has occurred more widely in the last couple of years, but was preceded by a period in forest management programs of recognizing the importance of governance. Simply put, governance means not only policy and government programs, but the incorporation of people into processes of review, strategy and decision-making that gives them a clear relationship with local government.

The Human Development Index is another guide that measures how poverty is being alleviated, using indicators of income, longevity, and education. To support further human development as per HDI indicators, socio-cultural skills on the one hand and politico-economic will on the other have to evolve in most cases.

	<i>HDI</i>	<i>HPI</i>	<i>Levels of Deprivation*</i>
<i>Longevity</i>	Life expectancy at birth	% of people not expected to reach the age of 40 <i>(Age-specific mortality rates)</i>	% of child malnutrition at various stages (from mildly malnourished to severely malnourished) in relation to the total population aged 0-83 months <i>(Can also be a parameter for measuring decent standard of living)</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>	Adult literacy rate	% of illiterate adults	% of school drop-outs in relation to the total population aged 6-21 years old
<i>Decent standard of living</i>	GDP per capita income	% of the population without sustainable access to an improved water source % of the underweight children	% of the population with doubtful/non-potable water sources % of households with unsanitary toilets <i>(Can also be a parameter for measuring longevity)</i>

For the International Monetary Fund, the solution to poverty reduction is “more rapid growth, not a switch of emphasis towards redistribution. Poverty reduction (globally) is best achieved through making the cake bigger, not by trying to cut it up in a different way.” (NEF, 2006) Yet, there are studies based on alternative models of economics that the global “environmental cake” cannot be increased anymore even with technological quick fixes and the only viable alternative now for meeting the moral imperative of poverty reduction is through dividing up the cake differently.

A CIFOR study (Byron and Arnold, 1997) presented a typology of different types of forest users to recognize the varied nature of relationships of people to forests and forest products, and the impact on them of changes in economic, cultural and social conditions. At that time, the paper did not provide a ‘head-count’ of forest-dependent people, as its authors believed that simply adding the numbers is not very useful and can be fast outdated because of the complexity of forest-people relations and the rapid changes in relations observed in certain countries. Instead, it provides a typology of different kinds of forest users, identifies for each type the nature of relationship to forests and forest outputs, the importance of forest outputs in the livelihood system, and the likely impacts of change. This typology is predicated upon the assumption that forest users range from “those who choose to generate much of their livelihood from forests because it is an attractive, viable option” across a spectrum to “those for

whom forest dependency is a livelihood of last resort – a symptom of their limited options and/or poverty – which they will abandon as soon as any plausible option emerges”.

CIFOR now, through its Poverty Environment Network of PhD students and researchers, is attempting to come up with a comprehensive global analysis of tropical forests and poverty to ascertain just how important are forests for poverty alleviation. The program is asking significant questions such as: can forests actually help people out of poverty, or are forests useful mainly as safety nets in preventing extreme hardship? It is exploring how different forest management regimes and policies affect benefits to the poor.

The general model used for sustainable livelihoods analysis centers on the role of policies and institutions and from there affecting structures and processes generating livelihood strategies in order to achieve livelihood outcomes (Bird 2000). The approach is increasingly driven by the awareness of the vulnerability of the poor but does not directly address the shocks, trends and seasonality experienced. In line with the Millennium Development Goals, the World Bank Forest Strategy 2002 committed to target its forest sector programs to benefit populations of indigenous people, the forest-dependent poor, and small agroforestry farmers so as to contribute to global poverty reduction (Box A). The World Bank is now seen to be a lead agency with governments in addressing world poverty in forest areas but developing a poor record.

International investments insensitive to the social context reinforce the poverty and deprivation in many countries. This has been most noticeable in the Congo and in Brazil where recent financing by the World Bank has been highly controversial (Forest Peoples Programme and World Rainforest Movement (eds.) 2005). In Asia investments with State governments in India have reportedly resulted in evictions; increased poverty due to land conversion in Ratanakiri also question the extent to which World Bank has learned any significant social lessons.

Illegitimate forest activities as documented by Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in Asia show very few who are dealing with timber extraction are poor (Asia FLEG 2006).

Insurgency traditionally treated as “external” to the forest sector and is what many development initiatives think they can outrun, but on the ground much more has to be done to reduce the aggravation and sense of social injustice and allocation of resources. Forestry departments and their staff on the ground do have to deal with these situations and have much to contribute to the process.

Box A: World Bank's Forest Policy 2002 and Implementation Updates

World Bank strategy to harness forests for poverty reduction

- promoting policy, institutional, and legal frameworks that ensure that the rights of indigenous and other forest-dependent peoples and communities are protected
- Empowering women, the poor, and marginalized groups to take a more active role in formulating and implementing rural forest policies and programs
- Supporting the scaling up of collaborative forest management so that local communities can manage their own resources, rehabilitate and protect forests, market forest products, and benefit from security of tenure. The emphasis here will be on involving small farmers. A principal mechanism will be much closer integration of forest activities and investments in broader rural development programs
- Working with local groups, NGOs, the private sector, and other partners to integrate forest and agroforestry farming systems into rural development strategies

Challenges to the strategy as identified by World Bank in 2002

- Ensuring participation of the poorest
- Protecting access by the poorest to non-traditional forest products
- Sharing by the state and rural poor in forest benefits
- Integrating forest activities focused on the very poor in rural development strategies

The World Bank Forest Policy of 2002 contains the possibility for improving peoples' livelihood but has seriously fallen short on delivery with many glaring contradictions in its implementation. Marcus Colchester (2006) raises 10 points that show WB is not achieving its commitments and is furthermore lacking accountability in the process. The insensitivity of both the ICF and MIGA in many of their investments as to the social neglect and impact is increasingly documented after the fact, showing a chronic lack of integration and accountability in the overall processes of the Bank. Inadequately built into this, given the present experience with the World Bank, are the review processes and the opportunity for other stakeholders involved in addressing poverty to effectively engage the Bank and its associated activities. This is both a requirement and an opportunity for effective action.

3. The Poor's Experiences on Forestlands

Four stories depicting the poor's experiences on forestlands were drawn mainly from AFN engagements with country partners and some of the communities they work with. Some examples were also drawn from recent publications of other groups. Each story captures three elements:

1. *poverty situation* - the area's assets (natural, human, social, physical, financial), vulnerabilities (from shocks, trends, seasonality and other external forces driving human insecurity), level of forest-dependence, or level of deprivation using MDG indicators.
2. *conditions enabling incipient actions* to germinate forest-based solutions to reduce poverty or else, *conditions producing instability* that results in further poverty
3. *incipient actions* - mostly at community or local level - to combat poverty or rise out of it. The incipient actions captured relate to the strategies that FAO mentioned in the State of the World's Forests 2003 of: putting people at the center of forest management, integrating forest management into rural development and poverty reduction strategies, partnerships, governance, removal of tenure and regulatory restrictions, improvement in market arrangements, redesigning transfer payments.

The following experiences were chosen in such a way that they could provide some representation of the range of poverty situations of forest-dependent people, the general categories of national forest classifications, some variety of forest types, conditions, and forest management modalities being applied in the areas described. The stories are told according to the order of the country's HDI ranking, starting from the lowest.

Timor Leste: How MAFF is struggling to re-establish social capital

Poverty situation: Three quarters of the population in Timor-Leste, about 630,000 people, live in rural areas. Low-input subsistence farming is the sole source of income for about 80 percent of rural households and agricultural employs three quarters of the labour force (MAFF 2003a). Much of Timor-Leste is not ideal for agriculture, with mountainous, erosion-prone landscapes, poor soils and variable rainfall. Food insecurity is widespread and in general is more prevalent in upland areas. There is generally a 5-month hungry season each year between November and March while farmers are waiting for rice and maize harvests (FAO/WFP 2003). Traditional NRM systems are widespread but have generally been weakened through population displacement and social disruption. In some areas traditional NRM systems are currently being revived and in some cases with support from government and NGOs (MAFF 2003b). The emergency response, following the violent end of Indonesian occupation in 1999, included provision of emergency handouts and paid community work programs reinforced the dependent attitudes of communities (JDAM 2001). Farmers receive very little information about agriculture other than through contact with field staff working directly on projects in their community. Radio is not considered to be an accessible medium for farmers.

Enabling Conditions: The establishment of Timor-Leste's independence in May 2002, following the 'emergency period' from 1999 to 2001, reinstated a level of peace which allowed people to work again in their farms with a level of security. The Department of Forests and Water Resources, having only 56 staff covering the whole country, acknowledges the limits of their human and budgetary resources and so considers that communities should be supported through participatory approaches that build self-reliance and ownership of development activities. There is very little illegal activity other than the extraction of sandalwood near the western border. People have some experience in growing teak and know the use of many plants having a tradition of swidden in some areas that could develop as agroforestry.

Incipient actions: A broad range of agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) projects has been implemented by a range of organizations in Timor-Leste after it came under the UN transitional administration in 2000. In 2004, Oxfam, in collaboration with MAFF, documented and analyzed lessons learned to date by 11 NRM projects to determine the most appropriate strategies for delivery of extension services to farmers and working with rural community-based organizations. Many NRM projects reviewed are supporting communities to plant trees as part of reforestation programs, yet it was found that to develop CBNRM approaches it is more efficient and relevant to community priorities to start with management of existing resources rather than ‘future’ resources as represented by tree planting.

MAFF is signing letters of agreement with farmer groups to implement agroforestry and reforestation under the Agricultural Rehabilitation Project for Participatory Development and Natural Resource Management. The agreement contains the roles and responsibilities of MAFF and the farmer group as well as a group’s proposal for support. MAFF provides technical and financial assistance for the farmer group to implement their proposed activities. Training is designed based on the education level of participants especially with regard to literacy, language and the level of formal educational attainment. Face-to-face contact and practical demonstrations are considered as the best methods for transferring skills and new techniques to farmers with cross-visits to other field sites a useful strategy. Care is now being made in the choice of incentives to be used to ensure that community involvement is motivated by interest in the project and not by the incentive.

A CARE project in Manatuto District aimed to ‘maintain carbon stocks and increase carbon sequestration through the development of community-based resource management systems that will simultaneously improve livelihood security’ This project had been challenged by the difference between the project’s objectives and communities’ priorities, with NRM found to be a much lower priority than food security and income generation. Community members do not see carbon sequestration objectives as relevant to them hence project implementers decided not to emphasize these project aims. There is disinterest in tree planting and a persistent desire to be paid to be involved in these activities. Recognizing the ambitious and challenging nature of the project, some components were dropped during implementation. The project reduced the target area for planting from 1,600ha to 600ha in order to focus on quality rather than quantity. These adjustments illustrate the value of flexible and responsive project management. Valuable lessons regarding NRM were gained at the community level as despite a number of constraints, the project has been able to mobilize community participation. The 3-year time frame of the project clearly is insufficient to achieve community ownership of the activities and sustainability, and is not long enough to provide assurance that the trees planted will survive (and that carbon stocks will be increased).

CONCERN’s approach in its Livelihood Security and Civil Society Strengthening Program Manufahi and Lautem Districts is one that requires considerable effort to establish credibility, as material incentives are minimal. Initially communities demanded money and materials, and were frustrated by Concern’s approach involving many meetings and community based planning exercises. Many community members were reticent to become involved, as results were slow. Staff have also been frustrated by the participatory processes, and have found that it is difficult to involve communities in decision making and that at least initially, communities do not have many ideas of their own for projects. In the longer term, the process is seen as starting to work, especially where the staff carry out community based planning and analysis which the people still find difficult to carry out alone. While not all current groups will be successful, some groups are having good results, with modest livelihood gains. Group members are beginning to see reason in working together and pooling resources. This is serving to motivate other community members to form groups. The project has observed that the rate of development of each group is related to the level of literacy and education of group members. Although all groups need ongoing support, those starting from lower capacity levels will need considerable ongoing support to be sustainable.

These programs are being valued because there is a conscious effort to not determine the community but rather add a level of diversity and contribute to the broader social capital.

Battambang, Cambodia: How Community Fisheries is Improving Fishers' Income and Protecting Flood Forests

Poverty Situation: Battambang used to be the stronghold of Khmer Rouge and the center of civil war in the mid- to late-1970s. Almost one generation after, the living conditions of people in Battambang, one of the 6 provinces in around Tonle Sap, are still very low. Land for farming is limited and farmers have turned to fishing as cultivable land still poses landmine risks. Fishing areas in the lake are mostly controlled by the private owners such that fishers have very little access to do even subsistence fishing. Health of people living on the lake's floodplains is closely tied to the lake's health as this is where they directly get water for drinking, cooking, bathing and washing.

Enabling Conditions: In 2000, national government released 56% of commercial fishing lots for communities to manage. In Battambang, around 30% of the commercial fishing areas were released. Communities however, were unprepared to take on the new responsibilities, which created an open access situation in these areas. This led government to call on NGOs to collaborate with local departments for fisheries, forestry and environment in establishing community fisheries management mechanisms. In Battambang, 6 NGOs responded to the call, including Leucaena Communications Japonesia.

Incipient Actions: The intense community education about community fisheries facilitated by NGOs like Leucaena helped local people to understand the advantages of the natural resources and environment, and encouraged other people to come and see. Community gained a level of capacity to cooperate among each other for the protection of the natural resources and environmental conservation in their living areas.

In Prek Toal and Koh Chiveang communes, seven villages with total population of around 2000 used community fisheries as an approach to manage 2 fishing lots formerly under commercial control. Village members elected officers to the CF committee. Rules and regulations for access and protection (through patrolling) were agreed upon. Though the CF committees are focused on fisheries, communities included rules against cutting inundated forest for use in fish cages. The community rules also prohibited burning the flood forest to catch animals, water birds and bees. The CF in Koh Chiveang allocated an area as marine sanctuary and organized regular patrolling activities. The only model community members knew was the patrolling arrangements in the adjacent wildlife reserve where World Conservation Society was paying villagers \$9/month/person to protect the birds in reserve against illegal catching. Leucaena pointed out to the villagers that other schemes need to be explored as this arrangement is not sustainable for community management areas in the long run when external support like Leucaena or WCS pulls out. It took a long time to work out the incentive scheme for those involved in patrolling the sanctuary.

Patrolling activities are done by a group composed of CF members and local authorities such as the DoF and police. CF members also monitor the illegal bamboo fencing found in certain areas of Lot #3, which Leucaena helps report to DoF. After less than a year of monitoring work, they were able to remove 80% of illegal activities in the area. The CF mainly employs a soft law enforcement approach wherein those apprehended were given up to 3 warnings, after which the CF patrol team will remove the gear themselves. The 'ceremonial burning' of illegal gear in public informs the rest of the community and in a way promotes transparency, thus helping prevent the resumption or spread of illegal activities.

Leucaena estimates that 70% of people in these villages improved their living conditions after only 3 years of community fisheries implementation. A testimony from Mr. Lun Lath, 46 years old, from Kos

Chiveang village of Prey Chas commune in Battambang: “Before the community fishery was established my family was very poor but now my family is getting better. Through benefits derived from CF, it has been possible to repair our house's roof and also buy a new engine boat.”

Wonosobo, Indonesia: How communities are transforming degraded forestlands into productive agroforestry systems

Poverty situation: Wonosobo ranks the 5th poorest among the 17 districts of Central Java. Over 70% of Wonosobo District's population live in the uplands (154 villages) and depend upon agriculture and forestry for a living. People are able to cope with the land scarcity through the evolved Javanese system of intensive agroforestry that are practiced on small tracts of household forest farms, considered as private lands. People rely on agroforestry to sustain agricultural productivity and generate income from forest and non-wood products.

Enabling Conditions: The traditional Javanese culture of intensive home gardening is a productive system that enables people to go beyond food security and move towards market connections. The role of agroforests is critical to the livelihood systems of many Javanese in the uplands such that they are almost wholly dependent on their agroforests year-round. Yet unlike other traditional peoples who have a similar level of dependence on forests and extremely poor, many Javanese can live above the \$1-per-day poverty line as many upland villages in Java have access to education, water, sanitation and electricity which enables them to gain the skills needed to establish market connections. Their poverty situation in a way is similar to that of the migrants practicing agroforestry in the Caraga region of Mindanao and the Tai who maintain fruit trees in northern Thailand who have other livelihood options beyond the forest.

The condition in Wonosobo is similar to that of Pakistan as documented in a 1993 article in *Population and Environment* on Coevolution of population and environment: The Ecology and Ideology of Feedback Relations in Pakistan. “*The development of farm forestry at the same time that traditional forests are being degraded is not accidental...Farmers' decisions to cultivate trees is associated with the loss of forests on local village or state lands...Farm afforestation is not a simple response to diminishing forest lands, however but to diminishing control of these lands.*” (Dove, 1993)

Market deregulation and liberalization that enables the ‘non-formal’ forest sector to participate were made possible through the national government's policy on *hutan rakyat* and the local government's method of implementation that gives encouragement to the local forest sector in the district. This enables the farmers to capitalize on their forest farms not only for food security, but also for income stability, as they have been able to build with what they have and connect to the market while avoiding policy pitfalls. New technologies allow depots to process smaller diameter logs and more diverse species, thus enabling farmers to generate faster returns and minimize wastage unlike the older, less flexible equipment still existing in Mindanao, Philippines. The market for *Paraserianthes falcataria*, the preferred species of many tree farmers in Java, is growing as the furniture and wood carving industries shift away from more expensive and controversial species like teak

The success of conducive government policies for *hutan rakyat* is evidenced by farmers expanding their agroforestry practice onto state lands, even if conflict with state forest corporation arises. Moreover, the livelihood benefits that people gain from *hutan rakyat* areas is not adequate for them at this point, especially as the next generation of agroforesters take over from their parents.

Incipient Actions: The academe, NGOs are increasing their ability to document the economic benefits of agroforestry and the media is now more consistently publishing conflicts between farmers and the

state forest corporation. The wider availability of information is generating the transparency needed which enables local governments to develop more realistic policies, plans and programs.

Bukidnon, Philippines: How participation in governance is giving greater security to ancestral domains

Poverty Situation: As with most places, extreme rural poverty occurs in places with limited physical assets. Cultural marginalization is high particularly in the south while the area has been subject for decades to landless migrants from neighboring islands. Poverty in the Visayas is partly due to its poor soils and limited connectivity of the small islands.

Enabling Conditions: Rapid environmental degradation of resources in the forests and the seas, coupled with pervasive poverty, led to the promulgation of several natural resource management policies and programs in the early- to mid-1990s that provided windows for people participation. The local government code set the stage for decentralization, the integrated peoples rights act established the basis for forest tenure change in ancestral domains, the national program on community-based forest management replaced concession arrangements as the country's preferred forest management modality. More recently, tenure arrangements for people living in or near protected areas have been clarified and the watershed approach was declared as the national approach to sustainable forest management. Donor support helped drive this change process.

The provincial ranking for Human Development Index prodded government to acknowledge the imbalance of basic services between Luzon and provinces outside the region. The Social Reform Agenda of the 1990s facilitated investments in village infrastructure and liberalization of air and sea transport to Visayas and Mindanao. Now, numerous foreign-funded projects are supporting Mindanao to complement the on-going Peace negotiations.

Incipient Actions: Sitio Bendum, a hamlet in Bukidnon Province, represents a composite of the MDG already occurring as a result of forest-related actions. The process of ancestral domain application that the Bukid-non Pulangiyan people underwent was a worthwhile endeavor in itself as it has led to several positive spin-offs. First, it has produced a level of security in the area, in that government does not anymore identify them as rebels. The community has now shifted from swidden to permanent agriculture, and the hungry season is now shortened. Second, the dialogue process encouraged other government officials to visit the area, resulting in delivery of certain basic services and positive improvements in infrastructure. The two bridges leading to the sitio were cemented not because of a sectoral adjustment loan, but because of the ancestral domain application process. The most important spin-off is that they are learning to withstand external and legal forces. Even though they do not yet have adequate power and support to stop everything that they are not in agreement with, they have gained an experience of visiting local government to request specific support and the respect to be consulted when possibly affected by activities.

While these positive developments were happening, the ancestral domain policy was being challenged in national courts, resulting in the neglect and politicization of program implementation, until finally reinitiated. Though the community was negative towards the unclarity of the program at certain points, they did not lose a stability that they had gained because of the complexity of events and so are more readily able to engage again with the reinitiated program again. The program was increasingly viewed as only one of the multiple aspects pursued, hence their negativity towards the program did not override their willingness to reengage. It is communities relying on only one activity happening that tend to become negative to a re-initiation of an activity.

It is important to realize that this sense of 'stability' has become evident in Bendum after a span of 15 to 20 years. The change process started at a time when there is no government program operative in

the area at all and the impact only became evident beyond the life of a program. This case illustrates, though there is no noticeable change in forest cover, the social processes that have to occur before significant shifts in environmental condition can become evident. The environmental management processes are there passively in terms of an ancestral management plan but actively in terms of water source protection and resource access procedures within the community. Increased literacy and improved access to health services helped them secure a level of stability and are some of the elements by which the next phase will be built.

Agusan del Sur is one of the top-earning provinces in the Philippines yet it ranks among one of the 20 poorest provinces. The provincial government wanted to do an environmental code. In the process of crafting the code, they learned that some villages are not able to secure basic services. Because they are treated as squatters and illegal occupants, line agencies (Department of Education, Department of Health) are hesitant to construct schools and health centers in villages on state forestlands. Since then, through forest management programs, the delineation of village centers is attracting better basic services.

Elsewhere in the province, the use of inappropriate species for reforestation of watershed areas prevented communities who were contracted to plant from benefiting from the trees. Change in area designation has resulted in broken promises from DENR and incite conflict once trees have matured. The provincial government formed the Provincial Technical Working group composed of the different line agency representatives in the area. The PTWG came up with a 14-point action agenda to address these kinds of community-environment concerns.

In Bohol, the newly-created Bohol Poverty Reduction Management Office took on the task of tackling these issues and hosted a provincial forum on NRM for poverty reduction with support from AFN. The summit enabled BPRMO to program forest and NRM in its provincial poverty alleviation strategies. This provided a boost to the budding social capital of the newly established Carood Watershed Management Council convened by 6 low HDI municipalities.

4. Opportunities for Action

The previous section we highlighted where incipient action or activity gives way to a consolidation of factors that can result in a clear upliftment of people from a level of poverty. This section describes opportunities for action at the national or regional levels that can support these incipient activities.

The primary level of poverty that we are describing and trying to respond to today is defined by a general context of insecurity, instability or vulnerability. This means not jumping from crisis to crisis and the majority of the poor who have to jump feel that they do not have options and do not see opportunities for change. To get to the majority of the poor population, societies need to aim for increasing the level of stability and in this way decrease unsustainable practices. Only with a greater level of stability can we see some movement towards sustainability.

If the goal is halve poverty by 2015 through forest-based solutions, human security would be needed to provide stability. Human security means safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease, and repression. It also means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, whether in the home, in work, or in community (UN-CHS, 2003). Such threats can exist at all levels of national income and development. If applied to the forest-poverty context, human security means ensuring that forest-dependent poor get a level of stability both through the accomplishment of millennium development goals in an area and also through a decrease of external factors that produce instability and drive them further into poverty. These factors are insurgency, insensitive investments, and illegal activities that make the situation of the poor chronic. These factors bring about instability into an already difficult livelihood context and are not generally localized, minor, isolated or occasional problems. Most communities do not have the security that allows them control the area so that no one else extracts it and develop a regulated system of their own that is sustainable.

We have to work towards decreasing the instability so as get to the incipient actions. Greater stability contributes to decreasing conflict situations and increasing people's capacity to manage natural resources. Often, just the confidence in people which leads them to believe that they are capable of managing helps increase their capacity for management, even if they are not yet actually managing. Connecting them to a level of security (e.g. health) is sometimes a very simple act of assisting people in learning about it, and this in itself already helps them expand their options and bring about a sense of stability even if they are not yet going to act on it. The ancestral domain process, for example, got IPs in the Philippines to invest their time in more productive discussions. The polio vaccination in the Philippines that reached all even marginal areas contributed to the family thinking that they have an option. Enjoying a level of stability provides people with space to internalize their other responsibilities. In Bohol for example, the floating restaurant initiated by a CBFM peoples' organization was gaining money until they opted to stop it and follow the rule of law, after the coast guard invited them to a seminar where they learned that it takes P50,000 (\$1,000) to operate it within coast guard regulations. They are able to respond to the law because they have a level of security and are aware of other options. Accomplishment of the MDGs in an area helps people to move to another aspect of the economy and society beyond heavy forest dependence.

Moving from poverty to sustainability is not an automatic transition. It takes a long period of time and effort across various segments of society, and even then there is no guarantee. Many upland communities are poor because they live in degraded forest areas and wood is not likely to be their source of sustainability at least in the next 20 years. A recent comparative assessment of upland and coastal communities in the Philippines found that coastal communities that have mangrove assets tend to be organizationally stronger and more active in protection than upland communities that have degraded/cogonal lands as assets and received labor wages for planting under World Bank's sectoral adjustment lending programs (SECAL) in the 1980s (ESSC, 2003). The program used contract

reforestation as a mechanism for rehabilitation and did not sort out timber harvest benefits or intermediate opportunities from intercropping or agroforestry with the communities who were employed to plant. For greater chances of success and sustainability, upland environment rehabilitation strategies in degraded areas need to take into consideration how poor people can benefit from these efforts beyond being wage laborers in tree planting activities. In forest- rich areas, people are still driven to poverty because resource exploitation or conservation activities do not recognize people's relation with the land, or else basic insurgency is happening in the area. The primary needs in these areas are conflict management and reassessment of the development associated with large-scale exploitation or conservation.

There is much evaluation - and in many cases even justified criticism - of forest management programs in the past, as well as the limited success of many of the 'established' models and their replicability. At the same time, there has also been an inadequate evaluation and value given to the diversity of social programs and actions wherein communities have found that they can establish a greater degree of security than they previously are able to maintain. This has allowed for yet an un-estimated degree of incipient activity that although often not acknowledged, are being utilized in many of the specific programs and have become some of the basis for future effective sustainable forest management programming.

CBFM programs are currently assessed in terms of whether people are performing their responsibilities in protection and management, but often, what does not get reviewed is whether the community is surviving or not. To review their survival, programs also have to give greater attention to reviewing OTHER factors that are often seen as outside the forest sector and the responsibilities of other line agencies. CBFM means more than implementing a forestry program. CBFM is actually a social education process that complements community learning and local knowledge, where people learn that there are things that they can and cannot do according to the law and that there are sustainability principles that they need to consider. This view of CBFM is what is presently incipient and what can help get to the majority of the poor population.

Outside of coping with lack of basic services, communities are actually managing a degree of stability which is the basis of sustainability and management. Government programs and community-based initiatives that are sensitive to other factors affecting communities' management capacities are able to harness the variety of impact potentials of CBFM. CFM processes are enabling communities to get a broader view of their resource base, know the livelihood practices that are at least in part seen to be sustainable, increase transparency and accountability, and get some level of 'recognition' – formal or informal – of their role without aggravation. The process is also providing women with a greater say in managing the resources of the family. In places that have some basic services such as formal education, communities are gaining greater capacity to organize and interact among themselves and with local government, tap micro-credit and savings schemes, explore production schemes that add value to products from the forest, and sustainably engage with markets based on their resources.

In this "landscape" of security, certain opportunities can and are actually emerging. Often, these opportunities gain particular strength from one aspect or interpreted through the perspective of one aspect, but actually are realized with the existence of other contributing factors around them. For purposes of relating to macro-economic analogies, these contributing factors may be described as:

- o Protecting the pie –changes in the role of communities and the support communities are getting. Strategies that 'protect the forest pie' include payment for ecological services ,buffer zone management, and tourism;
- o Enlarging the pie – incorporation of agroforestry, timber production on private lands, and development of orchid and orchard areas in one sense have improved conservation;
- o Dividing the pie differently – withdrawal or closure of large-scale operations and transferring rights and responsibilities enables a shift to smaller-scale operations that employ less destructive processes of extraction.

There are many groups working to reduce poverty of forest-dependent populations in ways that protect, enlarge and ensure an equitable distribution of the forest pie. Some groups work towards ensuring social equity in resource access/tenure and in the market value chain. Others focus on adding value to forest products and services, improving market transparency, or improving quality of governance. Others are facilitating joint actions for tackling poverty and ensuring sustainable development.

Joint actions

In this paper, joint actions refer to how societies are tackling rural poverty at the regional and international levels. Some incipient actions already occurring:

- UN Education for Sustainable Development - UN
- AFN Cross-country learning - How can some areas learn from others Regional local government exchanges with community participation - AFN field symposium on land use planning for human security
- RECOFTC-SNV meeting in Ho Chi Minh on Forests and Poverty Reduction

Actions that organizations operating in the region such as FAO and APFC can get involved in:

- Support transparency efforts in the World Bank policy on forests – Encourage the re-initiation of the External Advisory Group with representation of indigenous peoples and others, as originally agreed during World Bank policy consultation meetings with civil society.
- Participate in development of principles to guide standards of legality - Asia FLEG is a good venue to discuss standards of legality to protect the rights of poor forest-dependent people caught in dynamics of illegal activities. Asia FLEG is planning to organize a ministerial meeting within the year to deal with forest law enforcement and governance and has set up a regional steering committee composed of representatives from 4 producer country governments, 4 consumer country governments, 2 environmental NGOs, 1 social NGO, and 1 private sector/industry.
- Set up an ASEAN mechanism to discuss CBFM in the region, similar to the recently established ASEAN Center for Biodiversity, as means to implement a number of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Enhancing Quality of Governance

Good governance is already widely accepted as a practical concept for achieving equitable and sustainable development and forest departments can contribute significantly to enhancing quality of governance at the local and national levels. The challenge for Asia-Pacific societies is how to nurture emerging governance mechanisms such as:

- *Local government alliances at the landscape level* – Municipalities/districts sharing a similar natural and socio-cultural background and experiencing interrelated environmental problems due to gaps in landscape level land use planning and management are learning to form alliances. The model forest approach is providing the basic principles by which these alliances could be made to work towards sustainable forest management. Inherent in the success of joint efforts that focused on resource access and tenure in the last decade is the realization of the need for the incorporation (or acceptability in some cases) of local government officials in the programs. Local government involvement in CBFM processes enables communities to benefit from local pump-priming activities in the form of small financial allocations e.g. health, water or education programs.

- *Payment for environmental services* – PES has the potential of working well in contexts where upland areas are providing environmental services to urban centers that national government considers as economically vibrant. Payments for environmental services could become a source that finances forests for poverty reduction, though this is still at an infancy stage in Asia-Pacific. PES schemes have yet to take off as it takes a long time for collaboration to germinate across various sectors including forest departments, water authorities, local governments, and communities in both upland and lowland.

Some actions to enhance the quality of governance:

- *Participation, transparency and peer accountability are crucial elements in forming effective alliances.* Documentation of facilitation processes that capture the shifts in dialogue over time between government departments and community efforts help alliance members look back on strategies that helped them reach positive agreements so that they could come up with a variety of collaboration options for effective policy implementation. Effective ‘communities of practice’ are those engaged in a knowledge management process which helps them recognize that things can work even when they do not seem to be working in the beginning.
- *Identification of existing agreements and support possibilities* could be taken as an initial step in exploring schemes relating to environmental service payments while larger mechanisms (e.g. carbon sequestration) are still at an embryonic stage and accrual of benefits to the poor are not part of its present design.

Enabling Market Access

Market access mechanisms are needed to enable forest-based solutions to move the poor out of poverty and into sustainability. Some of the emerging mechanisms are:

- *Fair trade networks* that harness the purchasing power of consumers through raise their awareness towards purchasing morally-upright and environmentally-responsible products. These are happening in countries where consumers enjoy high purchasing power and can opt for the higher-priced but fairly-traded goods, but are more difficult to actualize with consumers in low-income countries where low price is still the main basis for deciding what brands to buy.
- *Forest certification and chain of custody processes* that increase the accountability of forest-based industries in producer countries so that they can penetrate markets in the developed world. The continuing challenge for many forest certification systems is to maintain their credibility in the global market. The other challenge is to find a process that levels the playing field for local communities engaged in planting ‘controversial species’ (e.g. teak).
- *Corporate social responsibility (CSR)* that calls on multinational corporations to account for their social and environmental investments and show their contribution to social development and environmental sustainability. Greater documentation of the social and environmental pitfalls of some multinational corporations is leading to increased pressure from highly-aware consumers and starting to affect bottom lines. As a result, some corporations are beginning to use their advertising and marketing budgets for corporate social responsibility actions.

The era of relying on forests to spur national economic growth through foreign trade is already fading, because decreasing local supply will likely not be enough to sustain increasing global demand.

Traditional forest-based sectors such as furniture industries are adapting to the resource scarcity by coming up with new designs using other more abundant and less ‘controversial’ materials. There is potential, however, in tapping the local market if societies invest in skills that enable the growing rural population to secure market access for their products:

- *Skills in sustainable and efficient harvesting and processing that help small- and medium-scale, labor-intensive industries.* While this strategy may not be seen as efficient from the standpoint of

economies of scale especially in the short-run, it is proving to be an effective strategy for reducing poverty in the long-run. The experience of small-scale tree farming on *hutan rakyat* areas in Indonesia is one of the examples where this strategy is working for poverty reduction.

- *Promotion of natural regeneration as a cost-effective way of restoring forests* so that much needed funds can be diverted to poverty reduction. As yet, there are very few projects with assisted natural regeneration as their specific objective. Natural regeneration strategies need not only technical skills but also good governance over remaining natural forest blocks and effective protection of secondary forests. The design of strategies need to pay special attention to the needs and possible responses of local communities and should integrate mechanisms that provide forest-based and forest-dependent communities with a renewable resource separate from the naturally regenerating forest.

Points to Ponder

Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission member representatives are well-positioned to play a fundamental role in influencing world dynamics such that these are able to respond to poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability by 2015 is largely hinged upon actions in APFC member countries given that half of the world population lives in Asia-Pacific and most of them have medium HDI ranking. A lot can happen as forest departments in Asia-Pacific region begin to shift from being a timber regulatory agency to becoming a social development agent, just by relating forestry actions with broader social realities and by avoiding actions that create instability. In light of its significance, APFC might wish to consider initiating regional exchanges on ways to strengthen the linkages between forestry and poverty, such as:

- Mechanisms that support rather than control forest-based and forest-dependent communities.
- Ways for integrating forestry programs with that of other line agencies and finding the compatibility and complementation with government structures other than their own.
- Strategies to improve equity in timber and NWFP production and processing.
- Skills and technologies for wood waste reduction.
- Establishment of connections with other line agencies so that they can harness support for forest-dependent people.
- Spearhead actions that encourage more integrated joint actions through its connections with the UNFF, ITTO, World Bank, ADB, ASEAN and other regional and international mechanisms.

To support APFC initiatives, research organizations could:

- Look further into the poverty and what sustains it, in order to capture the factors external to the forest sector that are driving poverty.
- Help society understand much more fully the incipient actions and draw out the variety factors that these are dependent upon, to find out how to give emergent stability to these incipient actions.
- Put more emphasis on proving the economics of agroforestry and other existing systems of management that work for communities so that government can have greater basis to value them more.
- Study the economics of specialized markets, which is what global NGOs are now doing.
- Document the stabilizing effect of forest management modalities done through communities. Bring out value of communities by capturing what makes their actions sustainable. What prompts local communities to choose to optimize resource use over time rather than maximize use over a short period?

- Help forest departments increase capacity through building awareness on the value of certain practices or attitudes with communities. What is the retooling and retraining that has to go on in forest departments to keep them up to date on what is going on?

Academic institutions can help build the next generation of forest-dependent population by giving future foresters and land use planners the tools for local capacity-building and conflict mediation side by side with silvicultural practices and technical forestry. Community forest management could be made into a core subject rather than an elective or a minor degree.

Forest-based industries could help reduce poverty beyond wage employment of forest-dependent populations. Industries could shift from focusing on production to providing technical services on efficient production and effective product development that could help farmers and local producers improve their market access. An example is yet to be found wherein a pulp industry operates based on giving technical advice to farmers and producers rather than controlling large areas of land and employing staff on less than minimum wage.

International non-government organizations are in a good position to find out why certification is not working for communities, and why carbon sequestration activities are not coming in with the level of impact that was expected on forests. Also, more concrete evidence needs to be gathered to show that areas where human security and basic services do exist exhibit a more viable resource utilization based on community management and market engagement.

Box B: FAO on Forests and Poverty Alleviation

The State of the World Forests 2003 identified three main ways of achieving forest-based poverty alleviation: preventing forest resources from shrinking if they are necessary for maintaining well-being (“protecting the pie”); making forests accessible and redistributing resources and rents (“dividing the pie differently”); and increasing the value of forest production (“enlarging the pie”). All are vital, but they are applied differently, depending on forest use and the strategies adopted.

It is also recognized that, in examining the forest-poverty relationship, there is a need to consider all types of disadvantaged people, irrespective of their level of poverty or of whether they are landless or have access to land. Even small differences in the level and type of household assets influence how forest people use their local resources (Barham, Coomes and Takasaki, 1999).

The report discussed the different opportunities and obstacles to forest-based poverty alleviation based on the following categories of Forest Use:

- conversion of forests to agriculture
- wood products
- non-wood forest products
- environmental services
- employment and indirect benefits

Conditions enabling forest-based solutions to impact on poverty reduction are:

- decentralization
- forest tenure changes
- anti-corruption campaigns
- withdrawal of concession holders
- growing markets
- market deregulation and liberalization
- new technology
- growing environmental threats

Strategies that FAO is recommending to pursue are:

- people-centered forestry
- removal of tenure and regulatory restrictions
- improvement in marketing arrangements
- partnerships
- redesign of transfer payments
- integration of forestry into rural development and poverty reduction strategies

Source: FAO State of World Forests 2003

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