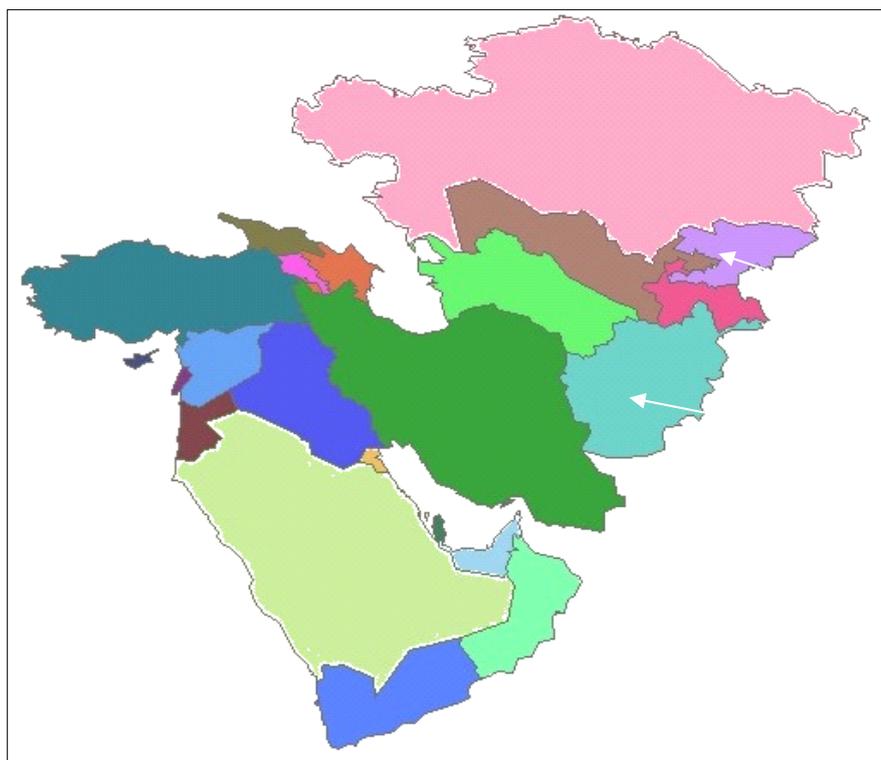


Assessing the access to forest resources for improving livelihoods in West and Central Asia countries



Tadashi Shimizu

2006



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Livelihood Support Programme (LSP)

An inter-departmental programme for improving support for enhancing livelihoods of the rural poor.

Assessing the access to forest resources for improving livelihoods in West and Central Asia countries

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This paper was prepared under contract with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The positions and opinions presented are those of the author alone, and are not intended to represent the views of FAO.

The Livelihood Support Programme

The Livelihood Support Programme (LSP) evolved from the belief that FAO could have a greater impact on reducing poverty and food insecurity, if its wealth of talent and experience were integrated into a more flexible and demand-responsive team approach.

The LSP works through teams of FAO staff members, who are attracted to specific themes being worked on in a sustainable livelihoods context. These cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary teams act to integrate sustainable livelihoods principles in FAO's work, at headquarters and in the field. These approaches build on experiences within FAO and other development agencies.

The programme is functioning as a testing ground for both team approaches and sustainable livelihoods principles.

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Access to natural resources sub-programme

Access by the poor to natural resources (land, forests, water, fisheries, pastures, etc.), is essential for sustainable poverty reduction. The livelihoods of rural people without access, or with very limited access to natural resources are vulnerable because they have difficulty in obtaining food, accumulating other assets, and recuperating after natural or market shocks or misfortunes.

The main goal of this sub-programme is to build stakeholder capacity to improve poor people's access to natural resources through the application of sustainable livelihood approaches. The sub-programme is working in the following thematic areas:

1. *Sustainable livelihood approaches in the context of access to different natural resources*
2. *Access to natural resources and making rights real*
3. *Livelihoods and access to natural resources in a rapidly changing world*

This paper is one of a series which addresses the linkages of poverty and forests in West and Central Asia within the context of sustainable livelihood approaches. It summarises the experiences and findings of the work carried over several years that is described in more detail in the accompanying LSP Working Papers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. KEY CONCEPTS	4
3. APPROACH OF THE STUDY TO ASSESS RURAL AND URBAN POVERTY	9
3.1 Quantative and qualitative approaches	9
3.2 The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (LF).....	9
3.3 LF adapted to forest-poverty linkages	9
3.4 Overview of levels and methods in the LF	12
3.5 The advantages and limitations of the LF	12
4. FORESTS, LIVELIHOODS AND POVERTY.....	14
4.1 Forest resources in the WECA region	14
4.2 Comparison in the WECA region.....	15
5. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POVERTY REDUCTION	18
5.1 Context and conditions (level 1).....	18
5.2 Policies, institutions and processes – PIP (level 2)	19
5.3 Capital assets (level 3).....	19
5.4 Livelihood strategies and outcomes of forest dependent groups.....	21
6. IMPROVING ACCESS TO FOREST RESOURCES IN THE WECA REGION	23
6.1 Forest ownership.....	23
6.2 Reinforcing participatory approaches in rural areas	24
6.3 Green resources in urban and peri-urban areas.....	24
6.4 The potential role of trees Outside Forests (TOF)	25
7. CONCLUSIONS	27
7.1 Lessons learned.....	27
7.2 Reflections on the SLA.....	28
7.3 Recommendations	29
REFERENCES.....	32

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANR	Access to Natural Resources
Caucasus	Refers to the territories of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Caucasus is seen as a sub-region of West Asia (see below).
Central Asia	Defined for the purpose of this paper as the area covered by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. All these countries are former Soviet republics and members of the CIS.
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States ¹
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FONP	Forestry Policy and Institutions Service, FAO
FOPE	Forest Economics Service, FAO
FOWECA	Forestry Outlook of West and Central Asia ²
GDP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LF	Livelihoods Framework
LSP	Livelihood Support Programme
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NWFP	Non Wood Forest Product, excluding fuelwood
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
TOF	Trees outside of forests
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPFG	Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry and Greening
WECA	West and Central Asia

¹ In this report CIS refers to all former soviet countries in WECA, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan.

² FOWECA comprises the following countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contribution of natural resources to the livelihood strategies of poor people has long been appreciated as significant. How to ensure that poor people have rights and opportunities to access natural resources, as well as responsibilities for the sustainable management of natural resources, has become a central question in debates over poverty alleviation. The overarching development issue at the macro-level is: what contribution can natural resources make to poverty alleviation given an increasingly complex reality of globalization, urbanization, rural diversification, technological innovation and livelihoods marked by insecurity and vulnerability to change. So far the literatures on the West and Central Asia (WECA) countries has devoted relatively little attention to access to natural resources (ANR), despite the importance of the sector and its relevance to the livelihoods of the majority of the world's poor. FAO, through its FOWECA study (Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia), has been considering these issues. At the same time, through the Livelihood Support Programme (LSP), FAO has been supporting the use of sustainable livelihood approaches (SLA) to improve the understanding of poverty and formulate effective interventions.

The FOWECA is one of a series of global and regional sector outlook studies to examine linkages between forests and societies and to indicate emerging opportunities and challenges. The FOWECA has operated through an extended consultative process in 23 different national contexts in West and Central Asia.³ Country Outlook papers outline the current situation, trends and future scenarios at the national level. In addition, FAO has commissioned a series of studies on thematic issues relevant to the forest sector, including: (a) policy and institutional changes and land-use dynamics, (b) urban and peri-urban forestry, (c) watershed management, (d) environmental aspects of forests and trees, (e) wood energy, (f) forestry and poverty alleviation, (g) wildlife management and (h) wood consumption trends. The thematic study on urban and peri-urban forestry focuses on the potentials and constraints for urban forestry development at regional and sub-regional levels considering the current experience and future prospects of urbanization in the region that is expected to take place in the next 15 years.

To support the FOWECA, work on the linkages between forests and poverty has been carried out by the Sub-programme on access to natural resources of the LSP (GCP/INT/803/UK).

This paper provides an introduction to, and a synthesis of, a “package” of FOWECA documents that assess access to forest resources for improving livelihood, and urban / peri-urban forestry in the WECA region. It gives an overview of the work carried out by the LSP in support of FOWECA and identifies the lessons learned that could be of use in future forestry projects. The accompanying LSP Working Papers within the package of documents provide more details of specific aspects of the work.

³ FOWECA is coordinated by FAO's Forest Economics Service (FOPE), as a part of a series of regional sector outlook studies. The study aims to provide priorities and strategies for sustainable development in the forestry sector for the next 20 years.

The package of LSP Working Papers comprises the following:

- 13: Poverty and forestry: A case study of Kyrgyzstan with reference to other countries in West and Central Asia by R.J. Fisher, K Schmidt, B. Steenhof and N. Akenshaev.
- 33: Assessing the access to forest resources for improving livelihood in West and Central Asia countries by Tadashi Shimizu.
- 34: Forest - poverty linkages in West and Central Asia: the outlook from a sustainable livelihoods perspective by Pari Baumann.
- 35: Methodology and case studies on linkages between poverty and forestry: Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey by Tadashi Shimizu and Monique Trudel, with case studies by Ainur Asanbaeva, Mona Kananian, Gh.Naseri and Melekber Sülüsoğlu.
- 36: Urban and peri-urban forestry and greening in west and Central Asia: experiences, constraints and prospects by Ulrika Åkerlund in collaboration with Lidija Knuth, Thomas B. Randrup and Jasper Schipperijn.
- 37: Greening cities for improving urban livelihoods: legal, policy and institutional aspects of urban and peri-urban forestry and greening in the WECA region (with a case study of Armenia) by Lidija Knuth.

The LSP Sub-programme on access to natural resources initially intended to begin its work in support of the FOWECA with a regional desk study. However, with sparse literature available, a decision was made to focus the initial work on Kyrgyzstan given the experience of the Collaborative Forest Management (LSP Working Paper 13: Fisher et al 2004). Additional work provided a framework for investigating the forest-poverty linkages in the region from a sustainable livelihoods perspective (LSP WP 34: Baumann 2006). The next step was the development of a methodology for carrying out the field work. A training workshop for the thematic study was organized in February 2005 in Izmit, Turkey, and it focused on assessing access to forest resources and the linkages with rural livelihoods in a small group of selected countries in WECA. The participants to the training workshop were invited from Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey as well as from the Ministry of Forestry and Environment in Turkey. After this training workshop, four national consultants carried out the field work and prepared country reports. The methodology for the fieldwork and the findings from the national case studies are reported in LSP Working Paper 35 (Shimizu and Trudel 2006). The FOWECA also implemented another LSP-oriented (and funded) study to analyze the legal and institutional aspects of Urban and Peri-urban Forestry and Greening (UPFG) in the WECA region, together with a case study of Armenia (LSP Working Paper 37: Knuth 2006). Information and conclusions of that study were integrated into the FOWECA thematic study on Urban and Peri-Urban forestry and Greening in the WECA region (LSP Working Paper 36: Akerlund 2006).

Building on the experiences of studied countries (Armenia for the context of urban and peri-urban forestry; and Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey for poverty-forestry linkages in the rural areas), this paper describes how the connections between forests and poverty reduction might be explored in West and Central Asia more generally. In order to

identify some possible similarities and to synthesize some lessons learned, the situation in other parts of West and Central Asia are also explored briefly.

This paper is divided into seven parts. Following this introductory chapter, some key concepts are presented in chapter 2. The third chapter describes the approach and methodology used to assess the issues in the selected WECA countries and the fourth chapter analyzes the current state of forests, livelihoods and poverty. Chapter 5 focuses on the constraints and opportunities for poverty reduction and forestry in the WECA, and chapter 6 reviews issues of improving access to forest resources in the region. The final chapter presents conclusions and recommendations.

The following key areas are identified:

- Theoretical application of the SLA to forest-poverty linkages: the SLA can provide a sense of reality and an overview of the rural poor as well as the urban poor. The SLA is based on an expanded definition of poverty that considers not only material assets and needs but also assets and capabilities. The focus is on people and what they are able to do with the opportunities they have, the obstacles they face and the outcomes they are able to achieve.
- Vulnerabilities: in Turkey and Iran, drought is the most important problem; in Kyrgyzstan, limited agricultural and fodder production due to climate (cold winters and hot summers); while in Afghanistan civil war and long term conflict are major problems.
- PIP (Policy, Institutions, Processes): Land tenure issue is a common factor affecting people's livelihoods in all of the countries as land belongs to the state. In Kyrgyzstan, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the agricultural lands was distributed amongst the local people, but the forests remained under state control; in Turkey, the forest laws describe "forest villager's rights" as part of the new regulations, leading to direct income to the village; and in Iran, lands are considered public lands by the state, making activities illegal according to the "Forest conservation law" equivalent to a loss of income and increase in poverty.

Following the trend of increasing urbanization process in many countries, especially CIS and oil-rich countries in WECA, more people living in urban and peri-urban areas are becoming dependent on UPFG applications in which the institutional change and political intervention are crucial. In expanding opportunities for the rural poor, limited access to, and control over, resources are identified as key issue to be addressed. In the rural areas, active collaboration among poor people as well as the middle class and other stakeholders is required to remove the social and institutional barriers. It is important to strengthen the participation of poor people in political processes and local decision-making.

The LSP provided an opportunity to improve collaboration among the areas of competences within FAO. In this particular exercise, all the stakeholders involved in this study have shown a strong interest and devised ways to advance the thematic studies. This is a good example of how a multi/interdisciplinary team works in and outside of FAO. It has also opened new windows for further collaboration with other sectors of competence.

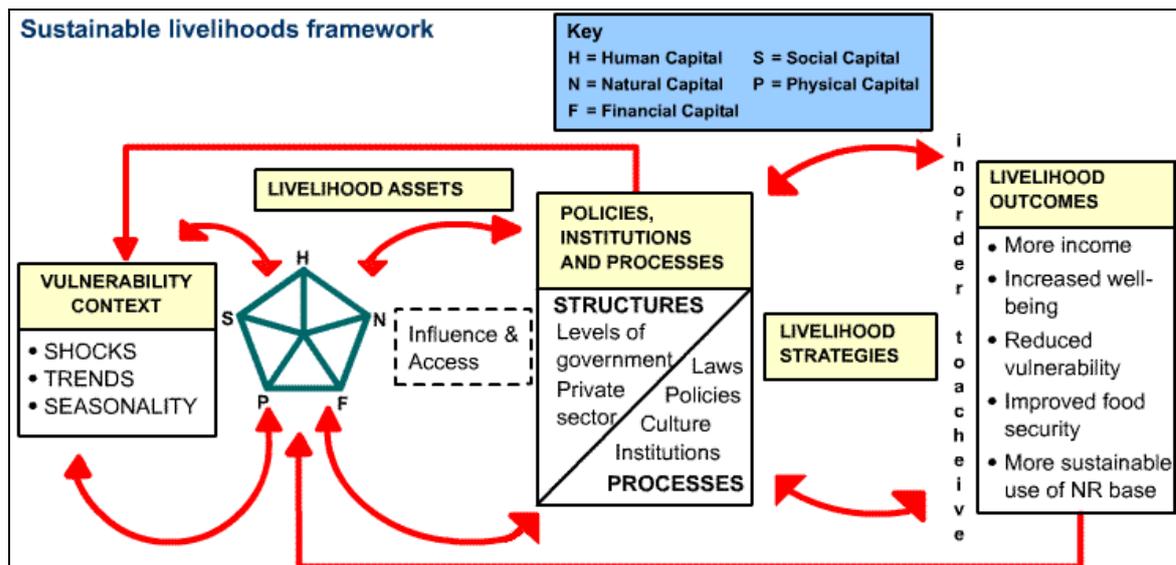
2. KEY CONCEPTS

Concepts of *livelihoods*, *poverty*, *Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry and Greeting (UPFG)* and *urbanization* are often interpreted in different ways. A brief overview of the terms, as they are used in this study, is provided below.

Livelihoods

Livelihoods can be thought of as the ways in which people make a living, and this is not just a matter for the poor. Livelihoods contribute to human well-being, which includes tangibles such as assets and goods for consumption. Poverty can be thought of as a state of reduced or limited livelihood opportunities. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) has developed a livelihoods framework (see figure 1).

Figure 1: DFID Basic livelihoods framework



This framework is a means of assessing the assets which people have to support their livelihoods and provides a way of thinking about developing and supporting sustainable livelihoods. The following is a definition of a livelihood:

A livelihood comprises capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

According to the livelihoods framework, five types of capital support livelihoods:

1. Natural capital (such as lands, water, forests and fisheries);
2. Human capital (such as knowledge and skills);
3. Financial capital (such as income opportunities);
4. Physical capital (such as infrastructure);
5. Social capital (such as social network).

These types of capital operate in the context of vulnerability, which is the context outside people’s control. They can be transformed into livelihood strategies and finally into livelihood outcomes.

Poverty

There are many definitions of poverty. The World Bank uses a simple benchmark for poverty of US\$1 per head per day. By this measure, more than 1.2 billion people (one in five on Earth) are currently living in absolute poverty (UNDP 2003). It is estimated that 75 percent of the poorest people in the world, those living on less than US\$1 per day, live in rural areas (IFAD 2001). Almost half of humankind, around 3 billion people, survives on less than US\$2 a day. Most of the poor are living in developing countries.

This benchmark figure allows us to count the number of poor in the world, but it does not help us grasp the nature of poverty. Increasingly we understand that to be poor is to be perpetually insecure, fearful, and vulnerable to the slightest misfortune. Within most societies, the poor are a marginal group, ignored and generally left to fend for themselves.

This study avoids the narrow definition of poverty which often incorporates more income elements than non-income elements. Therefore this study applies a multi-dimensional concept of poverty adapted from the World Bank’s view as outlined in table 2 below.

Table 2 Multi-dimensional concept of Poverty

<i>Lack of assets</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Powerlessness</i>
Assets include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural capital • Human capital • Financial capital • Physical capital • Social capital 	Multiple risks resulting from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural disasters • Economic crises • Social crises • Political instabilities (including war) 	Powerless caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social differences (including gender) • Inequitable access to resources • Inequitable legal systems • Unresponsive public administrations • Corruption

Adapted from World Bank (2001)

To be poor is to have few assets or resources from which to create a secure livelihood. The resources that most people expect to use to build some kind of security for their family are absent (land holdings, education, robust health, savings, political connections, mobility, knowledge of our rights, etc.) Building a home, feeding a family, and educating children are enormous challenges. In this context, any forest or tree resources that the poor can freely access will inevitably form a critical part of their lives. The primary role of forests and trees in the lives of the poor is thus as a “safety net” – one of many strategies to avoid falling into destitution.

Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry and Greening (UPFG)

The broadest definition of Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry and Greening (UPFG) refers to all activities related to the whole *urban green resource* (Akerlund 2006). The urban green resource comprises all green elements under urban influence such as:

- Street trees and road plantations;
- Public green areas such as parks, gardens and cemeteries;
- Semi-private space such as green space in residential areas and in industrial or specially designated parks;
- Public and private tree plantations on vacant lots, in green belts, woodlands, rangeland, and forests close to urban areas;
- Natural forest under urban influence, such as nature reserves, national parks, and forests for eco-tourism;
- Urban agricultural land, such as orchards, allotments (dachas), etc.

The FAO term “Trees Outside Forests” (TOF), referring to all trees that are not in forests, or on forest lands and other wooded lands in a rural and urban context. Such trees are in agricultural and built-up areas and are part of the above-mentioned urban green resource elements (Bellefontaine et al, 2002).

Urbanization

Urbanization is a multi-layered process with a complex pattern of driving forces (Akerlund 2006). In this region the main driving forces are the following: globalization; oil resources; economies in transition; conflicts and wars; and decentralization.

In the WECA region, urbanization will continue at a rapid pace such that the proportion of people living in urban areas is estimated to increase from 58 percent now to about 63 percent in 2020 (FOWECA 2006). However, Central Asia will still be largely rural (with about 51 percent of the population), whereas West Asia will be primarily urban with 78 percent in urban centres. Among the Central Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will still have more than 60 percent of the population living in rural areas. In West Asia, Yemen will continue to be predominantly rural with about 66 percent of the population. Afghanistan will also be primarily rural. This would suggest a continued dependence on land and other natural resources, including forests and trees, especially for woodfuel, non-wood forest products, etc. High population growth rates in some of these countries (e.g. Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Yemen) will exacerbate the problem.

Forestry-poverty links

Given the complexities of different types of poor people, their need for access to forests and trees is variable.

The safety-net: the use of forests in times of special hardship and crisis

In times of crisis, the “safety net” role of forests and trees becomes more pronounced. Poor people often live precariously with no cushion against adversity. In times of special

hardship, and in the absence of a welfare state, the poor often look to the nearby forests and trees for the means to keep going. Although not as important overall as the goods that those families can produce from farming, trees and forests help families through the “lean season” between the end of one harvest and the next when food is short, or through periods of seasonal unemployment.

If a sudden emergency befalls a family, trees and forests may be one of the few salvations. If the problem is sickness or infirmity, the forest may provide an affordable remedy, if cash is suddenly needed for an unexpected expense like a funeral, products from the forest may be collected and sold, or a standing tree “cashed-in” like a savings account or used as collateral on a loan. In countries where HIV/AIDs has taken a hold, forest foods can help keep families going when there are no longer enough healthy adults left to produce food.

Everyday use of forests and trees

The poor regularly collect goods for subsistence use from forests and from trees outside forests (see Box 1). They do so because they lack alternatives and because the goods can be easily and freely collected locally. Typical products collected for use at home and on the farm are: fuelwood, food and condiments, medicines, fodder, poles and thatch.

Forests and trees are often critical elements of farming systems. For the poor, forests and trees provide a way to maintain soil fertility without recourse to expensive fertilizers. In societies where bush-fallow farming is the normal way of maintaining soil fertility, trees are a critical element of the farming rotation. By maintaining a few trees on farms, poor farmers also have a way to generate some food annually without recourse to new seeds or scarce labour. Many of the tools the farmer needs to work the land or harvest its bounty have their origin in the forest – it is a cheaper option than going to the market place.

Box 1: What do poor people get from forests and trees (adopted from FAO and DFID 2001)

Subsistence goods:	Wood for building, fuelwood, medicines, fruits, bushmeat, fodder, mushrooms, honey, edible leaves, rope and roots;
Goods for sale:	All of the above goods, arts and crafts, timber and other wood products;
Income from employment:	Both in the formal and the informal sectors
Indirect benefits:	Such as land for other uses, social and spiritual sites, health improvement, environmental services, including watershed protection and biodiversity conservation.

Rarely do the poor manage to secure a good job or create a small business that meets all their cash needs. Poor people have to search for many ways of making small sums of cash. Millions of people augment their household income by harvesting, processing and marketing fuelwood, baskets, honey, tools, leaves, meat, and nuts. Forest and tree products are attractive because they are easy to access, they require little capital or technical skills, and the produce can be processed at home and sold locally. These

characteristics often provide women with one of the few opportunities they have to generate income as a group visiting the forest or at home.

Heavily forested regions are often remote, marginalized areas where health, education and transport services are feeble. The only routes out of poverty in these regions are for people to gain access to the valuable forest products, to migrate or to hope for external investment in the local economy. The arrival of large forestry enterprises can provide opportunities for unskilled work in silviculture, harvesting and processing.

The indirect benefits of forests and trees are well known to local people, all the more so when they are compromised. Forests protect fragile crops from desiccating winds, they help keep terraces and slopes stable and erosion free, and they keep water sources flowing. In some communities, trees and forests are also an integral part of local cultural and spiritual identity.

3. APPROACH OF THE STUDY TO ASSESS RURAL AND URBAN POVERTY

3.1 Quantative and qualitative approaches

For the review of UPFG in the WECA, two desk studies were carried out by researchers, focusing mainly on urban poverty in the context of urban and peri-urban areas. During several months quantitative as well as qualitative data was gathered, drawing on material available on the Internet and in the literature (Akerlund 2006 and Knuth 2006). For the context and conditions, as well as Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs), the researchers relied on secondary data and carried out key information interviews. All statistics on urban population are from UN Population Division's online *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision Population Database*. Reports from several UN agencies such as UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNEP and FAO provided relevant information (Akerlund 2006). No personal visits were made to the countries. However, universities, local municipalities and NGOs also supplied information on national level through reports and personal communication.

3.2 The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (LF)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (hereafter Livelihoods Framework or LF; see figure 1 as shown at chapter 2) was chosen as a conceptual and methodological framework for the study in four countries. The work paid particular attention to the linkages between the context, vulnerability, rural poverty and access to forest/tree resources (Baumann 2006 and Shimizu and Trudel 2006). For the collection of primary data (especially livelihood assets) from local people using and managing forests in the rural areas, four consultants were recruited from Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey in late 2004. After a one-week training workshop in February 2005, each national consultant carried out field studies of at least two villages in rural areas with certain criteria. Applying the LF in each context and condition, each national consultant compiled the country studies (Shimizu and Trudel 2006).

The LF, as illustrated in chapter 2, presents the main factors that affect people's livelihood and the relationships and linkages between these factors. A sustainable livelihoods perspective is useful for looking at the contribution of forests to people's livelihoods as well as for enabling an understanding of rights, access and the influence of the broader context. The LF was used in this study for the following purposes:

- To develop a check-list of questions that can be explored in the fieldwork;
- To compare forest-poverty linkages between countries;
- To analyse the information each national consultant collected in the fieldwork in the broader national context.

3.3 LF adapted to forest-poverty linkages

A sustainable livelihoods perspective is useful for looking at the contribution of forests to people's livelihoods as well as for enabling an understanding of rights, access and the

influence of the broader context. This section provides an overview of the key elements of the livelihoods approach adapted to the particular issue of forest-poverty linkages.

Context and conditions

Contexts and conditions comprise characteristics or events in the external environment that shape people's livelihood systems. In the LF this is referred to as the vulnerability context which is characterized by shocks, trends and seasonality. This definition has been expanded for the purpose of examining forest-poverty linkages to include factors such as demography (population growth, urbanization, immigration and emigration), social development indicators, social differentiation, political and institutional trends, macro-economic changes, climate, agro-ecology and environmental factors, in particular the state of forests. What these factors have in common is that they shape part of the context and conditions which affect people's livelihoods and over which they have limited control. For this reason the LF above characterises this context as consisting of shocks, trends and seasonal factors, for example:

- Shocks may be natural (floods, droughts), economic (economic crisis) or political (conflict).
- Trends are more on-going processes of change and may be economic, demographic, technological or climatic.
- Seasonality refers to trends that have a seasonal dimension such as employment opportunities and food availability.

Events over which people have limited control such as forest degradation, economic and political changes will have a critical impact on forest-poverty linkages. Not all of these events are negative; however one of the notable features of poverty is that systemic events do have a tendency to cause an increased vulnerability on the part of the poor. The poorest are often unable to benefit from trends even when they do move in the right direction (such as a good market for NTFPs) because they lack assets and strong institutions working in their favour.

Livelihood assets: natural, human, social, physical and financial capital

People use a range of livelihood assets – also called capital assets – in order to pursue various livelihood objectives. These assets are defined as:

- Natural capital: natural resource assets (land, soil, water, air) and environmental services (nutrient cycling, hydrological cycle);
- Financial capital: cash, credit, savings / debt and other accumulated assets;
- Human capital: skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health;
- Social capital: networks, groups membership, social relations, claims and associations;
- Physical capital: infrastructure, transport, shelter, affordable energy, communications.

People require a range of assets to achieve livelihood outcomes and a defining feature of the poor is usually that they have limited access to any given category of assets. Capital assets can yield multiple benefits (natural capital can yield financial capital for instance) and can be converted into each other (financial capital can buy natural capital).

Whatever the particular benefit that is being derived from forests will depend partly on the other assets available to the household / family / community. For instance, artisanal use of forests will need human capital resources of skill; deriving fodder benefits entails having

livestock and forest management may require social capital assets. An analysis of how different assets are linked and how certain combination of assets produce portfolios that in turn affect the pursuit of different livelihood strategies is critical for an appreciation of forest-poverty linkages. These factors will affect the stake that people have in forests as well as their capacity and willingness to take part in sustainable forest management.

Policies, institutions and processes (PIP)

Policies, institutions and processes play a critical role in shaping the conditions on which people access forest and tree resources. This influence is exerted in a number of ways: institutions and policies shape contextual factors and conditions, they are important in determining access to capital assets and they affect livelihoods through structuring opportunities and constraints. The LF gives central importance to policies, institutions and processes and therefore draws attention to how they shape access across a range of scales from the micro to the macro level. A livelihoods understanding of institutions encompasses both formal and informal institutions as well as the processes through which they operate. An analysis of institutions therefore involves paying attention to the politics of power and control that influence access to forest resources. Table 2 provides an example of how policies, institutions and processes may influence access to forests.

Table 2: The relevance of policies, institutions and processes (PIP)

<i>Type of Institution, Policy and Process</i>	<i>Impact on Access to Forests</i>
Public sector	Capacity of the public sector to make and enforce legislation.
Private and commercial	Existence and type of market for forest products.
Civil Society	Existence of NGO and community based networks to manage forests and defend access and rights.
Policy	National forest policies, national development policies, international conventions and forums.
Legislation	Formal forest legislation and distribution of property rights and actual effectiveness of legislation. Access of forest dependent groups to legal jurisprudence.
Informal Access Rules	Local conventions on forest access, informal rules of use and collective action.
Processes	Formal and informal relations of power in forest access and management, intra-household customs and division of labour.

Livelihood strategies, objectives and outcomes

Given a particular asset profile and set of opportunities and constraints people may pursue a combination of livelihood strategies. It is increasingly accepted that poor households in particular pursue a range of livelihood strategies as part of a household livelihood portfolio. It is also increasingly accepted that the objectives that are pursued vary widely. Whilst increasing income levels is usually the most important; others may include well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved security and investment in human capital. The particular livelihood strategies and objectives being pursued will depend both on the capital assets available to poor people, the broader context and the policies, institutions and processes that structure constraints and opportunities.

An analysis of these strategies and objectives from the perspective of forest users themselves will be critical for an understanding of forest-poverty linkages as well as the potential for various forest-based poverty reduction initiatives. The type of outcomes (forest degradation / management, increased incomes, micro-enterprises, etc.) that are being generated from forest-poverty linkages are therefore important for the study to explore.

3.4 Overview of levels and methods in the LF

To understand the livelihoods context of forest-poverty linkages, as outlined in the LF, it is not possible to cover all of the issues in-depth due to the time and budget constraints. The key questions set out in the LF above are grouped into three levels of enquiry for further analysis.

Level 1: Context and conditions

Level 1 relies on secondary data collection and key information interviews. Some of this information should already be available from the background reports and Internet. To understand some of these issues through the fieldwork (level 3) by examining local perspectives these issues.

Level 2: Policies, institutions and processes

Level 2 also relies mainly on secondary data collection and a review of the key policy and documents that form the context of forest policy. Some issues can be studied at the local level using key informant interviews and participatory methods. Some of this information should be available from the background reports. On understanding local perspectives (both forest users, managers, local NGOs) of the policy and institutional framework, the actual and informal situation are more important than the formal and legal framework.

Level 3: Capital assets, livelihood strategies and outcomes of forest dependent groups

Level 3 is based mainly on the collection of primary data from local people using and managing forests. For the collection of primary data, this is usually the fieldwork of groups using forest resources. Methods of study depend heavily on key informant interviews, focus group discussions and participatory methods (i.e. PRA). It is crucial for the researchers to identify case study sites that cover diverse types of forest-poverty linkages in as much depth as possible given limited time resources.

3.5 The advantages and limitations of the LF

The LF was chosen to provide a conceptual framework for the study of rural poverty in four countries. The LF is based on an expanded definition of poverty that considers not only material assets and needs but also assets and capabilities. The focus is on people and what they are able to do with the opportunities that they have, the obstacles they face and the outcomes they are able to achieve.

The different studies such as UPFG (Akerlund 2006; Knuth 2006) and CFM (Fisher et al 2004) showed that LF can be applicable taking into account some considerations according to the different level of LF (see table 3).

Table 3: Overview of Study Themes and Methods

Study themes and countries	Rural poverty (Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey)	UPFG (Armenia and other WECA countries)	CFM (Kyrgyzstan)
Urban or Rural poverty	Rural poverty	Urban poverty	Rural poverty
LF applied or not	Yes	No	No
Level 1: Context and Conditions	External driving forces such as shocks (natural and economic), trends (economic, institutional and gender) and seasonality (food availability and emigration).	External driving forces such as shocks (economic and politic), trends (demographic and macro-policy) and seasonality (employment).	External driving forces such as shocks (economic and politic), trends (demographic and economic)
Level 2: Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs)	Public sector, Private and commercial sectors, civil society, Policy, Informal access rules and Processes	Public sector, civil society, Policy, Legislation and Processes	Public sector, Donors, civil society, Policy, Informal access rules and Processes
Level 3: Capital Assets, Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes of Forest Dependent Groups	Livelihood assets analysis at local level	Not done	Two detailed case studies Not referred to LF

Stage-wise use of different techniques may increase the completeness and accuracy of the information collected. Semi-structured interviews with key informants, agencies, institutions and authorities are more often used in order to collect secondary data or general information. Visual aids such as mapping, seasonal calendars are more adequate for the population as a whole, including different groups of age, gender, literacy, education, etc. It provides opportunities to reinforce the link between people, groups for discussion, build trust and understanding of different issues and factors influencing their livelihoods, in order to think and implement strategies for future actions in a cohesive way.

It was concluded that the LF framework provides a useful way of thinking about the linkages between context, vulnerability, poverty and access to forest resources. It is a good instrument to examine poverty and the forestry-poverty linkage in a broad sense:

Overall, the two major limitations to the application of the LF were encountered:

- Some familiarity with a multi-disciplinary and multi-perspective approach is required. The researchers should have a good knowledge on forestry, sociology, economy and legislation. It is also very important that the researchers have good personal contacts at different levels that guarantee an easy access to the information;
- The implementation of the LH frameworks is a long process, and requires time, human and financial resources as well as involvement and training of all stakeholders.

4. FORESTS, LIVELIHOODS AND POVERTY

4.1 Forest resources in the WECA region

In the WECA region, physical geographical features of the region vary from the mountainous areas, with sometimes humid and temperate climate, to rangeland and desert. On the whole, the WECA region is very sparsely forested and its scarce forest resources are mostly linked to mountain ranges and rivers, the exception being shrublands occurring in arid areas (FOWECA 2006; Fisher et al 2004). This is reflected in the area statistics for all 23 WECA countries of the region given in Table 4. In terms of availability of forest and other wooded resources, countries with relatively high forest cover of above ten percent of their land are the Caucasian countries, Turkey and Lebanon. Forest covers of the Central Asian countries range between three and ten percent of the land area. Nearby Iran has a forest cover of the same scale. The countries of the Arabian Peninsula form a distinct group as far as forest resources are concerned. In all but one of these countries (Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar) the cover of forest and other wooded land is below one percent of the land area and plantations, to a considerable part established for urban greening purposes, prevail in most of these countries.

Table 4: An overview of land use

Country, Subregion and Region	Land Area	Arable Land		Forest and other wooded land		Permanent Pasture	
	1000 ha	1000 ha	% of total land area	1000 ha	% of total land area	1000 ha	% of total land area
Armenia	2,820	495	17.6	365	12.9	835	29.6
Azerbaijan, Republic of	8,260	1,783	21.6	990	12.0	2,683	32.5
Georgia	6,949	799	11.5	2,810	40.4	1,940	27.9
Kazakhstan	269,970	21,535	8.0	18,959	7.0	185,098	68.6
Kyrgyzstan	19,180	1,345	7.0	1,182	6.2	9,365	48.8
Tajikistan	13,996	930	6.6	552	3.9	3,198	22.8
Turkmenistan	46,993	1,850	3.9	4,127	8.8	30,700	65.3
Uzbekistan	41,424	4,484	10.8	4,199	10.1	22,219	53.6
Central Asia and the Caucasus	409,592	33,221	8.1	33,184	8.1	256,038	62.5
Afghanistan	65,209	7,910	12.1	867	1.3	30,000	46.0
Bahrain	71	2	2.8	0	0.0	4	5.6
Cyprus	924	72	7.8	388	42.0	4	0.4
Iran, Islamic Rep of	163,620	15,020	9.2	16,415	10.0	44,000	26.9
Iraq	43,737	5,750	13.1	1,749	4.0	4,000	9.1
Jordan	8,893	295	3.3	135	1.5	742	8.3
Kuwait	1,782	13	0.7	6	0.3	136	7.6
Lebanon	1,023	170	16.6	242	23.7	16	1.6
Oman	30,950	38	0.1	1,305	4.2	1,000	3.2
Qatar	1,100	18	1.6	1	0.1	50	4.5
Saudi Arabia	214,969	3,600	1.7	36,883	17.2	170,000	79.1
Syrian Arab Republic	18,378	4,593	25.0	496	2.7	8,338	45.4
Turkey	76,963	25,938	33.7	20,864	27.1	13,167	17.1
United Arab Emirates	8,360	75	0.9	316	3.8	305	3.6
Yemen	52,797	1,538	2.9	1,955	3.7	16,065	30.4
West Asia	688,776	65,032	9.4	81,622	11.9	287,827	41.8
Total FOWECA region	1,098,368	98,253	8.9	114,806	10.5	543,865	49.5

Cited in FOWECA 2006; 6 / Source: FAO Stat 2002, FAO 2006

The low-forest cover might be the most common feature in the WECA countries. Although forestry not the most important sector, it is nevertheless important for environmental aspects such as biodiversity, protection of water reserves and erosion-vulnerable lands, and for local livelihoods of the majority of the poor population.

4.2 Comparison in the WECA region

Historically as well as culturally and geo-politically the WECA region is heterogeneous, but considering the similarities in current driving forces for urbanization, three different sub-regions have been identified (Akerlund 2006). These are:

- The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan), sharing a common urban development history and institutional setting
- The oil-economy countries (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates) where the oil has been and still is the main driving force for urbanization.
- The “third cluster” (Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Cyprus), which do not have a specific element in common, except that they do not pertain neither to the CIS (first cluster) nor to the oil-economy countries (second cluster)

The UN Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative measure of poverty, literacy, education, life expectancy, childbirth, and other factors for countries worldwide (UNDP 2005). Even though urbanization might seem unsustainable, there is a strong, positive link between national urbanization and national human development. For the issue of urban and rural poverty, HDI is high in countries with an urbanization level over above 70 percent. Countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia) that have urbanized earlier have higher incomes, more stable economies, stronger institutions and are able to better withstand the volatility of the global economy (Akerlund 2006).

By the year 2000, most countries in the region had a level of urbanization between 50-70 percent (see table 5). Only the oil-economy countries (except for Iran and Iraq), and Jordan and Lebanon have more than 70 percent of the national population living in urban areas. The CIS countries of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are still predominantly rural. Least urbanized are the post-conflict countries of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Yemen. The three clusters are developed with consideration to the driving forces for urbanization. According to the urban population prospects, 12 of the 23 countries will have exceeded a level of urbanization of 70 percent by 2020. Today only 7 countries have an urbanization rate higher than 70 percent.

CIS countries

The CIS countries comprise the former Soviet republics of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. These countries differ in terms of resources, geographical features and level of development, but share the Soviet history and carry a similar Soviet heritage in terms of urban planning and institutional setting. The current transition process, shifting from a centralized economy to a market economy starting in 1991 when most of these states gained independence, has had a big impact on the urban situation. Today, Central Asian countries are predominantly rural, except for Armenia and Kazakhstan, while the level of urbanization in the Caucasus countries is around 50 percent (see table 5).

A combination of emigration from urban areas and centralized governance that does not promote foreign investment or urbanization makes the urbanization processes rather slow in CIS countries. The rural population is less mobile and often resides in rural areas (Akerlund 2006).

Table 5 Estimates of forest resources and level of urbanization in WECA countries for the year 2000 (except Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates)

Country	Land area ⁴ [‘000 ha] a,b	Total forest area [‘000 ha] a,b	Forest area per capita [ha/capita] a,b	Level of urbanization 2000 ^c	Human Development Index (HDI) ^d value	HDI rank
1. CIS countries						
Kazakhstan ⁵	267,074	12,148	0.7	55.8	0.761	80
Kyrgyzstan ⁶	19,180	1,003	0.2	34.4	0.702	109
Tajikistan	14,087	400	0.1	25.8	0.652	122
Turkmenistan	46,992	3,755	0.9	44.8	0.738	97
Uzbekistan	41,424	1,969	0.1	37.3	0.694	111
Armenia	2,820	351	0.1	65.0	0.759	83
Azerbaijan	8,359	1,094	0.1	50.5	0.729	101
Georgia	6,831	2,988	0.6	52.7	0.732	100
2. Oil Economy countries						
Iran	162,201	7,299	0.1	64.4	0.736	99
Iraq	43,737	799	n.s.	67.9	n.a.	n.a.
Saudi Arabia	214,969	1,504	0.1	86.2	0.772	77
3. Third cluster						
Afghanistan	64,958	1,351	0.1	21.9	n.a.	n.a.
Cyprus	925	172	0.2	68.8	0.891	29
Jordan	8,893	86	n.s.	78.7	0.753	90
Lebanon	1,024	36	n.s.	86.6	0.759	81
Syria	18,377	461	n.s.	50.1	0.721	106
Turkey	76,963	10,225	0.2	64.7	0.750	94
Yemen	52,797	449	n.s.	24.7	0.489	151

(Adapted from Fisher et al, 2004 and Akerlund 2006).

(Legend: n.s.: not significant, indicating a very small value; n.a.: not available.)

Sources: ^a (FAO 2000), ^b (FAO 2001), ^c (UN Population Division 2004), ^d (UNDP 2005)

The oil-economy countries

Oil is the main driving force and, in some oil-rich countries, the only natural resource. None of those countries are rich in forest and resources. The oil-urbanization processes of the Gulf States caused a massive transformation in the urban landscapes including greenery process in the cities. In the Gulf States only 26 percent lived in

⁴ The “land area” figure refers to the total area of a country, excluding areas under inland water bodies.

⁵ The remaining 70.8% of the forested area in Kazakhstan are categorised as mixed broadleaved and coniferous stands.

⁶ These figures for Kyrgyzstan are not entirely consistent with the data given in section 5.1. Another, lower figure for the forested area, 797,000 ha (1995), is given in (Timber Section UN-ECE/FAO 2000, Table 1, p. 62). This illustrates the uncertainties of estimates of national forest resources from CIS countries, which are to be taken with caution, in particular in cases where, as in Kyrgyzstan, no data from a recently conducted national forest inventory are available.

urban areas in the early 1970s. In 1990 the figure was 73 percent. Large exceptions in this region are Iran and Iraq which have a long urban tradition with very old cities such as Baghdad and Tehran. Due to conflicts and societal changes, organized urban development has been facing a delayed urbanization in 1980s despite of rich oil resources. In Iraq, the number of involuntarily displaced people has increased in the urban areas, raising the level of urban poverty (Akerlund 2006).

Third cluster countries

Except for Turkey, none of these countries are very rich in natural resources. None of the countries have the wealth of oil, with a direct consequence on the general lack of resources to finance rural development as well as urban development in comparison with the oil economy countries. In Lebanon, Jordan and Syria a combination of meagre natural resources (including limited quantities of arable land and access to fresh water), little diversified national economies, inadequate subsidy system, has led to rapid demographic growth and uncontrolled urbanization. Agricultural societies with rural majorities have abruptly changed into largely urban societies with a limited base in industry and services (Akerlund 2006). In addition to the migration from rural to urban areas, the considerable numbers of refugees and internally displaced people (IDP) has an impact on the urbanization process in the urban fringe of main cities as well as rural livelihoods in the remote areas (see box 2).

Box 2; IDP in Afghanistan (cited in UNDP 2004; 41-44)

Afghans comprise the second largest number of refugees and IDPs in the world, after Palestinians. Not too long ago, it was estimated that one in every three Afghan was either a refugee or an IDP, prompting the United Nations to declare Afghanistan as *the major site of human displacement in the world*.

The IDPs were estimated at 1 million at the beginning of 2002. During the course of 2003, some 70,000 IDPs returned to their places of origin, predominantly in the northern and western provinces. However, the southern and western parts of the country – Kandahar, Helmand, Nimruz, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces – still host approximately 200,000 IDPs. They are comprised primarily of nomadic *Kuchi* who lost their livelihoods during the four-year drought, and Pashtuns uprooted by ethnic violence in the north and west of the country.

5. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

As described at chapter 3, the SLA is a useful tool to look at forest-poverty linkages. It is one that can be replicated in other national contexts and one that complements the approach taken in the UPFG and CFM work to identify the constraints and opportunities for poverty reduction in the WECA region.

5.1 Context and conditions (level 1)

This section provides an overview of some of the forces in West and Central Asia. In the SLA, geopolitics, globalization, climate change, conflicts and war are considered external factors as they are factors over which poor people do not have control.

Climate change:

In the SLA, the vulnerability context refers to the shocks, trends and seasonality that affect people's livelihoods such as floods and mudflows, snow, etc. The climate is the major vulnerability factor as people depend on natural resources. Viruses and pests are other vulnerabilities factors in Iran. In Turkey and Iran, drought is the most important problem. In Kyrgyzstan, the use of natural resources in mountainous areas is affected by natural and social factors such as limited agricultural and fodder production due to the climate (cold winters and hot summers).

Globalization

Globalization of the economy is now perhaps the strongest driving force in the urbanization process today. Globalization also affects the changes in commodity prices such as cotton in the CIS countries. It allows foreign investors to develop sectors in other countries, and they tend to invest more in urban than in rural areas. The impacts of globalization on urban areas have turned cities into centres for services and manufacturing, rather than centres for production and industry (Knuth 2006).

Migration

Migration exists in all countries and is a mainly male-oriented livelihood strategy for income generation that is either temporary or permanent. In Iran, young men migrate which leads to women carrying out both traditional female and male tasks such as ploughing, repairing the wooden tile roofs, etc. In Turkey, emigration has increased, and the loss of young people has also adversely affected production even as villagers rely on wages from work outside the community.

Geopolitics

The changed global political situation with the collapse of the Soviet Union and development of the European Union has affected the WECA region. For example, livelihood insecurity comes from economic crisis as in Kyrgyzstan.

Conflicts and war

Civil war and long term conflict as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen as well as most of Caucasus countries affect much of the population in rural as well as urban areas.

5.2 Policies, institutions and processes – PIP (level 2)

The PIP dimension of the SL framework comprises the social and institutional context within which individuals and families construct and adapt their livelihoods. As such it embraces quite a complex range of issues associated with power, authority, governance, laws, policies, public service delivery, social relations (gender, caste, ethnicity), institutions (laws, markets, land tenure arrangements) and organizations (NGOs, government agencies, private sector). Countries of the WECA region distinguish between private and public forest ownership. In some countries, such as Armenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the forest is still the exclusive property of the state (Akerlund 2006).

The study of UPFG and the field studies of four countries have highlighted land tenure issue as a common factor affecting people's livelihoods. In Kyrgyzstan, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the agricultural lands was distributed amongst the local people, but access to forest resources and pastures remained under the control of the local administration or the state forest farm. This has led to conflicts for access to land and resources between foresters on one side, and Aiyl-okmot or local people on the other side.

A similar situation exists for the forests in Turkey which belong to the state and are managed in the name of the State by the General Directorate of Forestry. The collection of non-wood forest products is done by the residents on a tariff basis. The forest laws describe "forest villager's rights" as part of the new regulations in the Turkish forestry system, leading to direct income to the village. In Iran, lands are considered public lands by the state, making activities illegal according to the "Forest conservation law" and as forests are very valuable to the Talesh nomads for its cultural and social values, it has meant for many a loss of income and an increase in poverty.

5.3 Capital assets (level 3)

The SLA provides the opportunity to compare and understand the different aspects of livelihoods strategies and processes, assets and income which translates into a lack of basic needs and services, which influence people's outcomes. Regarding human capital, professionals involved in UPFG are mainly from backgrounds of planning, forestry, architecture and agriculture. No education specifically aimed at UPFG has been found in any of the countries and there is an indication of lack of education, capacity, awareness and technology related to UPFG in the region (Akerland 2006)

The CIS countries

In the urban settlements and cities of the Soviet Union, urban planners placed high attention to UPFG, and a large number of parks, gardens and trees along roads were created in many cities. Unfortunately the state of the urban green resources has been deteriorating due to the lack of financial support for maintenance and development as well as to the increased pressure of exploitation, especially in Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Akerland 2006). In the rural areas, the uncontrolled exploitation of forests for fuel wood and communal land for grazing, together with the lack of land preservation measures, has caused significant soil erosion and

degradation, seriously threatening crop and livestock production. In Kyrgyzstan, access to forest resources and pastures remained under the control of the local administration or the state forest farm (Fisher et al 2004).

Regarding human capital, education used to be very high before the collapse of USSR. There are still moderate standards of skills, knowledge, capacity to work, and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood outcomes.

Financial capital is defined as the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. Many rural poor live on credit, with loans from their relatives or neighbours, or by borrowing from money lenders, in order to buy more livestock (e.g. walnut forest: cash income from the sale of products on market in Kyrgyzstan).

The oil economy countries

Even though all oil rich countries are arid and semi-arid in nature, UPFG activities have been strongly encouraged and promoted using oil revenues and an often strong central planning (Akerlund 2006). The urban beautification and environmental improvement are highly appreciated by urban settlers. In countries where there are almost no significant forests such as Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, there are a limited number of natural assets available for rural population.

In Iran, agricultural loans are available for rural people but with a high rate of interest. The government of Iran implemented in 2005 an old age pension for rural people and a “Rescue Committee” provides training for poor families with no or low capacity to work.

For the human capital in UPFG, the oil-economy countries have the professional capacity to implement good practices of the UPFG. But in United Arab Emirates, for example, where the issues of UPFG are rather new, there is a lack of skills and experience in the field of management (Akerlund 2006).

The third cluster

The urban green resources in these countries are limited under the circumstances of disorganized urban development and a high rate of urban poverty caused by a strong rural-urban migration. Most of the population is located not in the central urban areas, but outside of the city (Akerlund 2006).

In these countries, social capital relates to the formal and informal social relationships (or social resources) from which various opportunities and benefits are significantly important for the people in their pursuit of livelihoods, due to the limited availability of other assets such as physical and financial assets. It was observed that social relationships are strong in the rural areas. At the remote community of Trabzon in Turkey, villagers help each other, and the community decision-making process includes the different groups of the society (e.g. elders, rural council, householders, etc.)

In the case of Turkey, the education situation varies from one to the other depending on the location, and in remote and mountainous areas it is very low. In Afghanistan, decades of war and recent droughts have caused a mass displacement of people and contributed to the level of education, the studies highlighted the literacy issue as one major effect on gender difference (98 percent of the women are illiterate).

5.4 Livelihood strategies and outcomes of forest dependent groups

For the rural poor as well as the urban poor, it is often a daily struggle to cope with shocks and stresses with the range and combination of limited activities and choices. Under this environment, they cope and adapt their own livelihood strategies which include how people combine their income generating activities, and the way in which they use their assets (see table 6). The result of the study in four countries shows that livelihood strategies have been identified and can be seen as common between countries with their own specificity such as the role of women compared to men and youth, and the role of the authorities and institutions and how they influence the livelihoods strategies and outcomes (Shimizu and Trudel 2006).

In Kyrgyzstan, as an example of the CIS countries, rural people's dependence on natural resources is total and has led to the absence of any other source of income. All activities are related to the use of natural resources: 1) Livestock raising; majority of rural people own livestock; 2) Haymaking: a limiting factor; 3) Altitude limits the agricultural possibilities at village level; 4) Firewood collection is poor; and 5) The collection of nuts is a main source of income.

For the villages visited in Iran, their livelihood strategies can be described as: 1) mixture of animal husbandry and farming; 2) Raising livestock, farming, and supplementing wages as a labourer for industries or forestry; 3) herder, farmer, or labourer ; 4) Peddler in cities (30 km distant); 4) Migration to cities: youth (20-30 years old); 5) Children do not attend school in summer as they work in the field; 5) Animals are insurance for hard times; 6) Some villagers share their land (e.g. with brothers) as there is not enough land and money for new house or new lands for young families.

In Turkey, 1) Village people make their living from agriculture, forest use, and jobs outside the village; 2) Sındıran villagers rely on wages from work outside the village; 3) Development of private hunting areas is being encouraged; 4) The Village Legal Entity and individual villagers are being encouraged to carry out private afforestation; 5) Loans and training courses are also provided to support and improve beekeeping, 6) Training courses are organized for encouraging using good seed and modern techniques with appropriate machinery.

In Afghanistan, 1) Livestock and pistachio nuts are the main source of income; 2) Men carry out farming activities and women are skilled at weaving coarse carpets, large woollen socks, and felt carpets; 3) Fuel wood, and grazing play an important role in the livelihood of the poor and the landless in rural area.

Table 6; SLA based typology of rural and urban population on forest-poverty linkage in the WECA region.

	Level 1; Shocks and trends	Level2; PIPs affecting Livelihoods	Level 3; Assets	Livelihood strategies
U r b a n	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial-ization of Land • Forest fires • Markets Cuts in social policy expenditures • Labour Market Restructuring • Removal of Food Subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ-ment • Housing • Education • Health • Transport-ation • Technology • Environ-mental • Land legistration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour • Income • Health • Housing • Education • Social Networks; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased involvement in informal sector • Street Vending • women take second job • Migration to rural areas • Remittances • Borrowing from Moneylenders
R u r a l	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought • Crop Failure • Resettlement • Flooding • Changes in Commodity Prices • Lifting of Subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural • Education • Health • Macro and Micro-Economic • Natural Resources; • Employment • Forest and farm ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land • Water • Labour • Livestock • Health • Credit • Education • Income • Family • Savings • Infrastructure, • Social Networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual Labour • Migration to Cities • Drought- resistant Crops Use of Traditional Medicines • Selling Livestock • Non-farm Activities • Poaching in Protected Areas • Borrowing from Moneylenders;

6. IMPROVING ACCESS TO FOREST RESOURCES IN THE WECA REGION

6.1 Forest ownership

Poverty is increasing and natural resources are being depleted. As external driving factors, political and social conflicts are escalating in some countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan.

The importance of the roles that forests and forestry play in rural and urban livelihoods is by now well recognized. However, in the WECA region, many countries are still at an early stage in the process of developing and introducing forms of poverty-oriented forestry appropriate to their situation. The need to address the importance of forest-poverty linkages is widely accepted by the international communities, though it is important to support a reorientation of forestry to involve rural and urban users who draw upon forests as well as trees out of forests for part of their needs.

Recent changes in forestry increasingly reflect interpretations of the role that the forest sector needs to play in urban and rural livelihoods. As in many countries in transition, the need to adapt to changing external driving forces is continuously crucial. There is a need to try to anticipate whether the present livelihoods that are responsive to local needs and aspirations will be relevant to future change.

Large numbers of rural households in WECA region are still subsistence users of forest and tree products. The FOWECA report (2006) shows that external factors, such as demographic changes, economic trends and political/institutional changes, have different implications for urban and rural households that literally depend on the inputs from forests and trees. Providing little opportunities for livelihood enhancement, the forest product activities are critically important for the very poor, for whom they can be as important as the potential income growth that forests and trees can provide to those able to benefit from such opportunities (e.g. pistacio in Afghanistan and walnuts in Kyrgyzstan). They can be distinguished as the *capable poor*.

Countries of the WECA region distinguish between private and public forest ownership. In nearly all countries of WECA, forests are exclusively state-owned, the exception being Cyprus with 42 percent of the forested area in private ownership in 1996, and very small areas (i.e. around one percent of the total forested area or less), are in private hands in Israel, Jordan, Syria and Turkey (Fisher et al 2004). In some countries, such as Armenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the forest is still the exclusive property of the state (Knuth 2006). Ministries or agencies of the central government in most countries of WECA region control forests.

In contrast, the privatization of agricultural land is complete or nearly complete in all CIS countries. In practice, however, this process has resulted in mixed impacts due to the extremely small and fragmented plots and ownership by the elderly or others with little interest in farming (IFAD 2002).

6.2 Reinforcing participatory approaches in rural areas

Limited access to and control over resources in rural areas are identified as the key issue to be addressed. It is also clear, at least in many countries of the region, that the application of SL approaches to improving access to forest resources has the potential to contribute to poverty reduction.

In order to enable this to happen, there is a need to develop new approaches and institutional arrangements which improve access to forest resources by the poor. There have been a number of attempts to implement various collaborative and participatory approaches (e.g. CFM in Kyrgyzstan) to forest management which have potential implications for achieving this. However, institutional change of this type has not proved to be easy.

A community that is well organized, assertive and confident – whose people have identified what they want and are actively seeking the resources to get it – may have little need for social process; all the process can be focused on achieving the material improvement they seek. In contrast, a community that is divided, disorganized, and unable to reach agreement about what it wants requires a slower process designed to build cohesion and confidence.

Participatory approaches have been around for more than two decades; there has been so much research that there is a danger at times of forgetting exactly why these approaches are chosen. They are sometimes presented as a panacea for the perennial problem of sustainability, or as a way of assuring results. But this application of participation addresses the needs of implementing and funding agencies rather than those of the communities that experience the intervention. It is true that participatory approaches can enhance the likelihood of sustainability and the achievement of results, but if they are undertaken for these reasons alone, priorities become confused.

In downtrodden and oppressed communities such as in Afghanistan, basic assets (e.g. human and physical) have often been lost. If conducted in an appropriate way, PRA and other participatory survey for information gathering can be a powerful tool for raising awareness and increasing skills.

The community / collaborative forest management is not a new approach, however this will allow rural poor to enrich greater access and rights over their own natural resources such as NWFPs and fuelwoods. This will be achieved through building capacities of rural poor (human capital) and applying social capital (the network and the capacity to work in collaborative way).

6.3 Green resources in urban and peri-urban areas

Most green resources in urban and peri-urban areas are owned by the municipality or the government, including forest parks, shelterbelts and green belts. In Yerevan, Armenia, there are two main owners of green space and urban and peri-urban forests: the Municipality is the owner of green areas, gardens, orchards, parks and cemeteries; and the state owns some land that is part of the state forest fund and located within the boundaries of the municipality and on its fringe (Knuth 2006).

In many countries of the WECA region, land planning is not part of a coordinated and well planned process for UPFG, hence the development of cities and urban areas is often achieved at the expense of forest and agricultural lands. This challenge can only be faced with proper land use planning, through the adoption of land planning schemes or the development of other integrated land use programs. Therefore, ecological and economic zoning of UPFG areas is of great importance in resolving issues concerning effective use, protection and recovery of forest resources and to prevent uncontrolled urban stretch (Akerlund 2006, Knuth 2006).

6.4 The potential role of trees Outside Forests (TOF) ⁷

The challenge to improve access to forest resources in the WECA region can be manifold. In any particular situation, different categories of users such as IDPs in rural areas and migrants from rural to urban areas are likely to possess different combinations of assets and opportunities, and constantly place different demands upon the forest resource. It may be necessary to manage for sustainable flows from surrounding forests by exploring new sources of supply from TOF in the agricultural and marginal land.

A great number of the rural poor depend on trees outside forests, engage in farming and rely on both their farmland and nearby forests for forest products. The forest-dependent poor may also include people who process or trade forest products, often in urban areas. In rural areas, the very poor are invariably the landless with no ownership or use rights to trees on farms. In urban and peri-urban areas, the focus must be on helping to meet basic needs such as fuelwood, charcoal and timber for building materials. The poor regularly collect goods for subsistence use from trees on farms and forests as well as urban green belts. They do so because they lack alternatives and because the goods can be easily and freely collected locally.

Smallholders in farming have effectively managed their tree resources grown on farm lands in the past. But due to increasing demographic and social pressures, change in cultivation practices and increased demand on agriculture, traditional tree-planting practices have been broken down. Today there exists a growing desire among rural poor to increase productivity and raise income levels by practicing all types of production systems where trees are adopted in place of other crops, or livestock.

Even where trees are an integral part of cropping or livestock systems, their role outside forests has been less well documented and appears to be ignored. Against financial crises, the role played by the tree component as a saving bank has received little attention. Trees for the poor are not a panacea, but the evidence suggests that

⁷ Trees outside forests refers to trees* on land not defined as forest and other wooded land. This may include agricultural land, including meadows and pasture, built-on land (including settlements and infrastructure), and barren land (including sand dunes and rocky outcroppings). It may also include trees on land that fulfils the requirements of forest and other wooded land except that ; i), the area is less than 0.5 ha ; ii), the trees are able to reach a height of at least 5 m at maturity *in situ* but where the stocking level is below 5 percent; iii), trees not able to reach a height of 5 m at maturity *in situ* where the stocking level is below 10 percent ; iv), trees in shelterbelts and riparian buffers of less than 20 m width and 0.5 ha area (Bellefontaine et al, 2002).

* Tree: The expression « tree » in Trees outside forests includes both trees and shrubs.(Source : FAO, 2001)

they have more potential for reducing deprivation than has been recognized in most of the mountain areas of WECA.

To explore the untapped potentials, TOF has attracted interest by researchers as well as policy-makers for rural development, quality of life and better environment (Bellefontaine et al, 2002). Most of the TOF practitioners are smallholders of land, expecting to escape poverty by increasing off-farm income. Food security throughout the year is truly important for them. Livestocks are important components of TOF practices in many countries in WECA. Marginal lands are often incapable of sustaining stable and dynamic cultivation of agricultural crops. Planting trees on salt affected soils, for example, appears to be an ideal land use which can provide fodder, fuelwood and timber as well as have better effect on soil condition.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Lessons learned

Collaborative effort

The LSP programme has provided an opportunity to improve collaboration among the areas of competences found in projects and in Services with their regular programmes of work. In this particular example, all the stakeholders involved in this study have shown good collaboration and spontaneous ways to advance the study. This is a good example how multi/interdisciplinary team works in and outside of FAO. It has also opened new windows for further collaboration with other sectors of competence.

The FOWECA outlook study (2006) offers new perspectives as various scenarios and related regional strategies for development are proposed. It can provide a long-term (to the year 2020 or 2025) framework for the institutional development needed to improve access to forest resources in the WECA region. The synergy effect created with the two programmes (LSP and FOWECA) has been highly positive.

The collaborative effort has created local capacities on which we can certainly build. The roster of people who have contributed to the various activities could facilitate the search of professionals/specialists (at local level as well as regional/international level). Additional aspects in WECA (e.g. forest ownership, conflict management) could create a good basis for innovative developments and proposals related to improving the rural livelihoods in WECA.

Operational approach

To achieve broad development objectives such as poverty alleviation, FAO should focus on a few areas in each country of WECA where it has a distinct comparative advantage, and where it can influence its resources for maximum impact. In this respect, successful operation will be measured more by the impact of specific programmes on targeted beneficiaries (either the rural poor or urban poor) than by macroeconomic change and an overall reduction in the number of poor depending on forest resources including TOF. At this level, the impact of FAO projects can be monitored and evaluated by changes in capital assets, livelihood strategies and outcomes of the forest-dependent poor. Successful operation can also be measured by the uptake of project strategies by governments and other UN agencies (such as UN-Habitat and IFAD) and donors, thus enhancing impact and allowing for wider coverage in the region.

Future programme activities in the WECA should also seek to build on past successes and continue to target neglected areas where FAO can ensure maximum visibility and establish a platform for dialogue with state governments and municipal offices, donors, civil society and other stakeholders on topics of critical importance to the rural poor as well as the urban poor. In this respect, marginal areas, such as mountain and arid zones, will offer a special opportunity as they may be neglected by other donors even though they are home to some of the poorest and most vulnerable people

in the region. FAO has also gained considerable experience with the small/medium enterprise development and is helping to pioneer new institutional approaches that ensure improved access of the rural and urban poor to working capital and investment resources they need for increased productivity and market participation.

Although the specific focus of FAO operations varies from country to country and from sector to sector, each programme should seek to address the underlying causes of poverty for the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the region.

In the case of mountain communities in Kyrgyzstan, for example, the Swiss project (KIRFOR) experience shows that this will require recognition of the unique challenge of working in these areas and special consideration of both the opportunities for interaction with other parts of the national economy and possible constraints (Fisher et al 2004). Because of the physical isolation of these areas, close cooperation with governments and other donors is likely to be necessary to develop the physical and social infrastructure needed to support economic participation at regional and national levels.

Finally, with regard to gender, the role played by women in rural households, and in an environment where male migration for work is an important household coping mechanism, FAO operations must also seek to ensure that women have access to the proposed investments and are adequately represented in all relevant institutions and organizations.

7.2 Reflections on the SLA

It is widely acknowledged that a livelihoods approach provides a useful, logically consistent framework for thinking through the complex issues influencing the lives of the poor. In particular it draws attention to the ways in which policies, institutions and decision-making processes influence access to natural resources, and determine strategic livelihood options available to poor households. From the country studies, it is evident that effective promotion of poverty alleviation requires changes in institutions and attitudes, knowledge and information levels, processes and skills.

SLA promotes an approach to development problems that transcends individual sectors such as forestry and agriculture. Building cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary partnerships is a complex challenge (Dube and Schmithusen 2003).

SLA does not necessarily aim to address all aspects of the livelihoods of the poor. The intention rather is to employ a holistic perspective in the analysis of livelihoods, in order to identify a manageable number of key entry points where intervention could be strategically important for effective poverty reduction, either at the community/local level or policy level.

Reflecting on the above mentioned issues, SLA should be responsive to forest-poverty problems and linkages. Possible activities in this context are the following:

- Assessment of the role of poverty dynamics and other factors with respect to prevailing trends in land degradation, deforestation and natural disasters.

- Assessment of the impact of urban expansion on the state of natural resources (forests, rangelands, water).
- Advocacy to raise the awareness of government and civil servants regarding priority linkages of poverty dynamics and environmental change at the national (macro) and sub-national (meso) levels, and achieve a clear recognition of the need to develop relevant policies.
- Based on country characteristics, identification of specific poverty indicators integrating environmental dimensions. Examination of the feasibility of spatially disaggregated indicators. Establishment of data collection and processing systems. Where feasible, the building of retrospective time series for these poverty indicators.
- Assessment of current dimensions of poverty pressure on forest resources: counting of rural population by forest boundaries, assessment of broad patterns of use by sector.
- Identification of the vulnerable populations with regard to specific livelihoods, e.g. access to forest resources, migration, and unemployment.
- Capacity building (e.g. multi-disciplinary workshops with exercises in formulating sustainable livelihoods strategies).
- Support to monitoring activities, including at the methodological level (design of indicators, problems related to the collection of data on population and environment etc.).

The needs for these various inputs to country policies should be systematically assessed in the context of programming at the country level.

7.3 Recommendations

National forest outlook studies and forest planning

Given the long-term nature of forest management, the identification of future trends in the sector is an important element of national planning and decision-making. Traditionally, outlook or projection studies focused on markets for forest products out of concern about meeting future demand for wood. More recently, socio-economic aspects such as population growth, urbanization and changing incomes have become major driving forces in these exercises.

To make national forest outlook studies and long-term planning more geared toward alleviating poverty in the WECA, methodologies and approaches could be improved in several areas. Although the recommendations below are mainly directed to national authorities, they can provide an insight into the wider context in which other stakeholders should operate.

- Analysis of trends and outlook for income and employment generation. Employment, both in rural areas and urban/peri-urban areas where jobs can alleviate poverty and stimulate local economies, is one of forestry's most important benefits. National forest outlook studies could convert future market

projections into projections for income and employment to support broader livelihood strategies. More sophisticated analyses could look at the income and employment effects of options to meet future demands for wood products. Eco-tourism in mountain zones is getting much popular in recent years and will generate more employment than conventional forest harvesting.

- Focus on non-wood forest products (NWFPs), woodfuel and forest services. The traditional focus of national studies and long-term planning neglects the importance of NWFPs, woodfuel and forest services to rural communities, especially poor people. Examining the future for these goods and services in urban and peri-urban areas can highlight their importance, identify challenges and opportunities and assist with the development of policies that alleviate poverty.
- Participation in national forest outlook studies and planning exercises. Because of their technical nature, forestry outlook studies and planning exercises mostly involve experts in statistics, forest management, economics and planning. If specialists with a social science background such as cultural anthropologist background were included on the team, it could broaden the scope. Urban planners are also essential for multi-disciplinary teams of UPFG.

At the national level there is a need for analysis of forest policy, both on paper and its implementation in the field, focusing on its implications to poverty reduction including PRSPs.

A further step might be the exchange of relevant experience of UPFG (targeting the increasing number of urban poor) and community based forest management (analyzing the potential role of rural poor) between neighbouring countries, possibly at occasions such as sub-regional meetings.

Meetings held in the process of the preparation of the FOWECA have provided such an opportunity. Similar sub-regional meetings should be organized in cooperation with other international agencies such as UN-Habitat and IFAD as well as regional NGOs and private sectors.

Poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP)

PRSP describe a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programmes that promote growth and reduce poverty in a cross-sectoral manner. They also identify external financing needs to achieve these two goals. Since July 2002, PRSPs are required for countries to receive concessional lending from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). When preparing these documents, governments use a participatory process, involving civil society and development partners, to explain poverty and its causes, analyze constraints to faster growth and poverty reduction, set goals and targets and establish indicators to measure progress. The process is country-driven and results-oriented, based on a partnership approach and a long-term perspective to poverty reduction. PRSP is better known processes that have significant potential to address poverty alleviation and food security in a cross-sectoral manner.

Pro-poor policy and legal frameworks

Policies and legislation that promote the rights of poor people in communities are often those that are developed and implemented through open, transparent and participatory processes. These approaches are also characteristic of good governance, a prerequisite to creating a stable environment for social and economic development. The following principles can provide a basis on which to build national frameworks that help to alleviate poverty in rural as well as urban/peri-urban areas.

- **Simple laws and regulations.**
If legislative requirements are kept simple, chances for compliance are likely to increase significantly. For many poor people, overly bureaucratic regulations and complicated policies tend to breed resistance because they are not well understood. In many cases, the problem is exacerbated by their lack of capacity to conform, for example, to provisions that call for unnecessarily complex forest management plans.
- **Secure land tenure and access rights.**
With particular regard to forests and trees outside forests, policies and laws need to grant or at least recognize the rights of poor people and communities to use the resources on a long-term basis (whether through temporary issues or permanent rights). Indeed, lack of secure land tenure and access rights are two of the main causes of land degradation and natural resource depletion.
- **Clearly defined rights and responsibilities.**
As shown in the UPFG study, legislation needs to clearly define the rights and responsibilities of all parties, including government, communities, the private sector and individuals. It also should contain provisions that either exclude outsiders or control their access to the resources over which communities and poor people have jurisdiction. Sanctions for violators should be stipulated as well.
- **Participatory decision-making.**
Experience has shown that when forest policies and legislation institutionalize meaningful consultation processes, decisions related to resource management reflect the priorities and needs of rural poor people and the communities in which they live. The fact that their voices are being heard motivates them to stay involved and committed to using forests and trees outside forests in a sustainable manner for long-term benefits.

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Further information about the LSP

The Livelihood Support Programme (LSP) works through the following sub-programmes:

Improving people's access to natural resources

Access of the poor to natural assets is essential for sustainable poverty reduction. The livelihoods of rural people with limited or no access to natural resources are vulnerable because they have difficulty in obtaining food, accumulating assets, and recuperating after shocks or misfortunes.

Participation, Policy and Local Governance

Local people, especially the poor, often have weak or indirect influence on policies that affect their livelihoods. Policies developed at the central level are often not responsive to local needs and may not enable access of the rural poor to needed assets and services.

Livelihoods diversification and enterprise development

Diversification can assist households to insulate themselves from environmental and economic shocks, trends and seasonality – in effect, to be less vulnerable. Livelihoods diversification is complex, and strategies can include enterprise development.

Natural resource conflict management

Resource conflicts are often about access to and control over natural assets that are fundamental to the livelihoods of many poor people. Therefore, the shocks caused by these conflicts can increase the vulnerability of the poor.

Institutional learning

The institutional learning sub-programme has been set up to ensure that lessons learned from cross-departmental, cross-sectoral team work, and the application of sustainable livelihoods approaches, are identified, analysed and evaluated for feedback into the programme.

Capacity building

The capacity building sub-programme functions as a service-provider to the overall programme, by building a training programme that responds to the emerging needs and priorities identified through the work of the other sub-programmes.

People-centred approaches in different cultural contexts

A critical review and comparison of different recent development approaches used in different development contexts is being conducted, drawing on experience at the strategic and field levels in different sectors and regions.

Mainstreaming sustainable livelihoods approaches in the field

FAO designs resource management projects worth more than US\$1.5 billion per year. Since smallholder agriculture continues to be the main livelihood source for most of the world's poor, if some of these projects could be improved, the potential impact could be substantial.

Sustainable Livelihoods Referral and Response Facility

A Referral and Response Facility has been established to respond to the increasing number of requests from within FAO for assistance on integrating sustainable livelihood and people-centred approaches into both new and existing programmes and activities.

For further information on the Livelihood Support Programme,
contact the programme coordinator:
Email: LSP@fao.org

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http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe4/pe4_040501_en.htm

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<http://intranet.fao.org/en/departments/sd/en/projects/lsp/index.html>