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Asia-Pacific forestry focus

ADDRESSING THE FORESTRY NEEDS OF ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES AND SOWING SEEDS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

People, livelihoods and forests

During the last two decades, many countries have accelerated efforts to explore innovative forest management approaches for alleviating poverty among forest dwellers and rural communities. Most approaches seek to transfer power from the center (government) to the periphery (the rural poor), and redefine the roles of key stakeholders in forestry. In the process, people have become aware that decentralized forest management can be supportive of local livelihood strategies and contribute to poverty reduction.

To strengthen the decentralization process, usually based on community forest management approaches, FAO is supporting participatory processes in forest

policy formulation and implementation. FAO's work in participatory forestry focuses on:

- capacity building at the local government levels;
- facilitating participatory forestry through enabling policies;
- strengthening the contributions of forestry to local livelihoods; and
- knowledge sharing through formal and informal networks of regional partners and collaborators.



Publications on participatory forestry

- *Proceedings of the regional workshop on forests for poverty reduction : can community forestry make money?* (RAP Publication 2004/04)
- *Community forestry: current innovations and experiences* (RAP/RECOFT Publication: 2003)
- *Communities in flames: proceedings of an international conference on community involvement in fire management* (RAP Publication: 2002/25)
- *Decentralization and devolution of forest management in Asia an the Pacific* (RAP Publication: 2000/1)



Poverty reduction

Forestry can potentially make a considerable contribution to poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific. FAO is working to harmonize forestry's potential with people's livelihood aspirations.

focuses on strengthening the links between sustainable forest management and poverty reduction. FAO's recent work includes:

- clarifying the roles of forestry in rural development and providing support to alternative income-generation activities;
- enhancing livelihoods through improved management of non-wood forest products;
- promoting the sharing of knowledge and experience among countries on community forestry; and
- reviewing practical approaches in forest harvesting and wood processing for the benefit of the rural poor.

Much of the forestry and development debate in international fora currently focuses on how forests and forestry can contribute to the Millennium Development Goals. It is increasingly recognized that forest resources contribute directly to livelihoods in a variety of ways. Asia's forests provide food, fodder, fuelwood and timber to hundreds of millions of people. Furthermore, the forestry sector provides formal and informal employment for many of the rural poor.

FAO has renewed emphasis on all aspects of its program that have a bearing on poverty. Achieving food security – FAO's central mandate – is a key dimension of FAO's efforts in enhancing the well-being of the poor. FAO's support to participatory forestry

FORESTS: more than a safety net?



Many options for linking forests with poverty reduction suffer a common shortcoming. As soon as real money is to be made, forest-dependent people are excluded. On the other hand, many non-wood forest products offer low returns and are often more of a "poverty trap" than a means to escape poverty. The most realistic opportunities for making the poor better off often lie outside forests and the forestry sector. However, the important safety net role that forests play should not be underestimated.

Non-wood forest products

Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) have attracted considerable global interest because of increasing recognition of their potential contribution to household economies and food security. NWFPs also make important contributions to some national economies and to environmental objectives such as the conservation of biological diversity.

FAO has assisted countries in the region in enhancing the sustainable use of NWFPs in order to contribute to the wise management of their forests, the conservation of biological diversity and improved food security for rural people. FAO's work includes:

- studies on the socio-economic importance of NWFPs in 15 countries of tropical Asia;
- promotion of sustainable NWFP management to achieve income generation and improved forest management;

- development of a NWFP marketing information system in Laos; and
- application of the Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) approach to help rural communities identify viable NWFPs and develop markets for them in China, Nepal, Laos, and Viet Nam.

Up-to-date information on NWFPs is disseminated globally through FAO's NWFP-Digest, a free e-mail journal that covers all aspects of NWFPs.

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/12980/en>



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