

### Workshops on forest law compliance: taking stock and moving forward

For the past few years, FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) have collaborated productively in the area of forest law compliance. In addition to co-publishing *Best practices for improving law compliance in the forest sector* (FAO Forestry Paper No. 145, 2005), the two partners have organized a series of regional workshops to identify challenges in this area and enhance progress on the ground. The workshops have brought together representatives from concerned government agencies, regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector to discuss and agree on tangible and deliverable actions.

The last of four workshops was held for Southeast Asian countries from 11 to 13 September 2007 in Manila, the Philippines. Organized by FAO and ITTO with the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the workshop reiterated the high-level commitment of the Bali Ministerial Declaration in September 2001 to address illegal logging and its associated trade. It took stock of ongoing initiatives carried out by, among others, the East Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (EA-FLEG) process, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia Forest Partnership and the European Union (through the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan, EU-FLEGT).

The workshop was structured around the following three key elements of any strategy for improving forest law compliance and governance. The participants highlighted general needs and actions for each, identifying key challenges, concrete recommendations and the roles of different stakeholders in implementing them.

- **Policy and legal framework.** Foremost is the need for commitment by governments to review and amend outdated laws, and then to enforce them equitably. Laws need to be harmonized at the national and subnational levels. Mechanisms for enhancing regional coordination and collaboration need to be enhanced, particularly to address transboundary issues.
- **Institutional capacity.** To strengthen the institutional capacity for better forest law compliance and governance, countries should establish multistakeholder processes to develop mechanisms to ensure transparency, avoid conflicts of interest and monitor performance within the broader context of good governance. Workshop participants urged regional and international organizations such as FAO, ITTO and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to support these processes.
- **Knowledge and information.** Ensuring access, transparency, reliability and timeliness of information is a matter of concern, requiring urgent action.

A critical action identified for all stakeholders is to develop

strategic alliances for effective resource mobilization to support the implementation of actions – for example, to promote corporate social responsibility approaches, secure government budget allocations and obtain supplementary donor support for transitional institutional arrangements and capacity building. The participants also recognized the need to engage stakeholders that were not represented at the workshop such as the media, policy analysts and legal experts.

The participants strongly urged governments to make explicit commitments to implement the recommended actions and time-bound next steps at upcoming meetings on forest law enforcement and governance.

Similar workshops have been held in the Amazon subregion, Central America and Central Africa.

### Voluntary guidelines for planted forests and forest fire management

Following collaboration with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, FAO has produced and disseminated two sets of voluntary guidelines, on responsible management of planted forests (available online at [www.fao.org/docrep/009/j9256e/j9256e00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/j9256e/j9256e00.htm)) and on fire management ([www.fao.org/docrep/009/j9255e/j9255e00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/j9255e/j9255e00.htm)). Elaborated through technical and expert consultations, through discussions at FAO's six Regional Forestry Commission meetings during 2006 and through extensive partner feedback, these guidelines address the social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of planted forests and fire management in the wider mosaic of land uses in the landscape. They also encourage stakeholder participation in policy dialogue, strategic planning and actions across sectors.

The guidelines provide a comprehensive review of responsibilities under international commitments for decision-makers in policy, planning and management. They also provide a framework of principles and strategic actions necessary for responsible management of planted forests and fire management at the national, subnational and field levels. The two sets of voluntary guidelines are tools that can contribute to sustainable forest management as well as to achieving broader livelihood and development goals.

The eighteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry in March 2007 recommended that FAO work together with member countries and partners to strengthen capacity towards implementation of the guidelines. FAO plans to assist countries in preparing needs analyses to identify critical areas of support for their implementation, including through regional workshops. The guidelines will be useful in structuring, highlighting and promoting necessary investments in sustainable forest management and sustainable livelihoods.

Organizations are encouraged to make use of these management tools, currently available in English, French and



Spanish, and FAO looks forward to collaboration with major stakeholder groups in the their implementation.

Hard copies can be requested by sending an e-mail to:  
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### Rehabilitation of coastal forests in Aceh, Indonesia

A project to restore vegetation along an Indonesian coastline ravaged by the December 2004 tsunami is ending, but the benefits to local villagers will continue. Across Aceh Province, eight villages have been taking part in FAO's Forestry Programme for Early Rehabilitation in Asian Tsunami-Affected Countries. Villages were selected based on the ecological damage they suffered, the rate of environmental decline and the level of community support.

The US\$1.2 million project, funded by the Government of Finland, was launched in mid-2005 and ends in September 2007. Its objective was to rehabilitate and restore coastal tree and forest resources in tsunami-affected areas through a participatory approach, within the context of integrated coastal area management. Since planting began in September 2006, the project has replanted 247 ha of coastal strip with mangroves, pines and coconut trees. The aim was not only to improve Aceh's environment, but also to help provide sustainable livelihoods for residents of coastal communities and to help the economy and society bounce back.

The Government of Indonesia has estimated that 25 000 ha of mangrove forests and almost 49 000 ha of coastal forest were lost in northern Sumatra in the 2004 tsunami. It is difficult to determine whether the loss of mangrove or coastal forests in Aceh was solely the result of the tsunami, or if coastal land conversion into fish ponds or rice fields shares some of the blame. The coastal mangroves are important to meet a variety of needs: they help arrest soil erosion, provide breeding grounds for fish, block storm surges and provide wood that is converted into charcoal for use as fuel. Crabs and shrimp thrive in mangrove forests, and have been more scarce since the tsunami.

The project sought to raise awareness and understanding about the importance of mangroves and the coastal strip, so the community would have incentive to manage the coastal areas for long-term benefits. Hundreds of thousands of seedlings were provided, and the community was involved directly, not only in planting and in maintaining coastal vegetation but also in business and marketing, for which training was provided. Villagers involved in replanting and maintenance of the crops – among them tsunami survivors who were left poor and vulnerable as a result of the disaster – each receive Rp35 000 (about US\$4) for a day's work. The project has thus helped the poor villagers earn money while regaining their coastal forests.

In return for replanting and maintaining the coastal strip, the groups taking part in the project have been given funding to maintain them until they are strong enough to stand on their own,



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which will take about two years. The areas around the young trees have been fenced off to exclude wild pigs and cattle. The project secured letters from district chiefs and village heads promising the replanted strip would not be disturbed. High waves in May 2007 swept away some of the trees, but the villagers quickly replanted them. Local fisherman know the mangroves are needed to support their livelihoods.

### FAO helps Afghanistan restore its forest sector

Through years of war, Afghanistan's forest resources were overexploited to meet the basic livelihood needs of its people. Since 2005, FAO has been helping the country rehabilitate its forest sector.

Afghanistan is a low-forest-cover country; only 2.1 percent of the country remains under forests today. However, forests and trees make significant contributions to local livelihoods. Afghanistan's forests are of three types: mixed pine, cedar and oak in the east; a pistachio belt in the north; and irrigated agroforests and home gardens on lands where water is available. Trees are also being planted around cities and along roadsides.

Uncontrolled natural resource use has resulted in deforestation and forest degradation. The pistachio belt has been dramatically reduced by excessive fuelwood collection, and the remaining cedar forests by overharvesting for illegal export. Many trees planted in home gardens have been abandoned and are now under pressure to meet the increasing wood needs for the country's reconstruction.

A project for institutional and technical support to forest sector rehabilitation under FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme has assisted the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock in establishing suitable conditions for enhancing investment and development in the forest sector. The FAO assistance has contributed to:

- the formulation of a national forest sector development

policy, its translation into local languages and its promotion at decentralized levels;

- the drafting of a strategic plan setting ten priorities for forest sector development;
- the formulation of a new Forest Law;
- strengthening of core staff capacities in tree planting extension, conflict resolution and developing institutional arrangements for community participation, through training and through study visits to China and India;
- rehabilitation of tree nurseries in Kabul and in the provinces through technical support and some provision of equipment, mainly for training purposes;
- improved partnership of the Forestry Directorate with local non-governmental organizations and communities dealing with forest management, through jointly organized activities such as training courses, surveys and workshops.

### Towards a new FAO strategy for forestry

FAO has embarked on the development of a new strategy for its work in forestry, to better align the Organization's work with the rapid pace of change in the forest sector and beyond. The influence of changes such as economic globalization, acceleration of climate change and transformation of global communications is increasingly felt in the forest sector. At its eighteenth session in March 2007, the Committee on Forestry (COFO) welcomed FAO to revise its current Strategic Plan for Forestry, approved in 1999, by the time of the next COFO session, March 2009. The new strategy will be developed in the context of ongoing UN and FAO reforms; an Independent External Evaluation of FAO currently under way will also help shape its outcome.

FAO will seek broad participation in the process. The FAO Regional Forestry Commissions will provide an important channel for inviting the views of member countries. FAO will also provide opportunities for partner organizations to contribute, including the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), the private sector and civil society.

### FAO helps propel new Global Environment Facility strategic programme on sustainable forest management

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has launched a new strategic programme on sustainable forest management as one of several programmes to help countries implement global environmental conventions. The new programme was launched in June 2007 during the thirty-first session of the GEF Council, held in Washington, DC, United States. Although GEF has for many years supported forestry projects that produce global environmental benefits, this new strategy represents a coordinated approach to GEF activities in forestry that will support GEF's

global objectives regarding biodiversity, climate change and land degradation.

As a follow-up to this decision, FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) prepared a strategic programme framework for GEF that identifies priorities for support in the forest sector. It describes the main areas of forest management that GEF will support, the types of support that will be given (e.g. investment, technical advice, capacity building) and the locations (countries, regions, forest types) where support is most needed. The strategy covers the following areas of forest management:

- activities to strengthen the funding of biodiversity conservation in forests and forest protected areas;
- expansion of forest protected areas;
- control of invasive alien species;
- measures to mainstream biodiversity conservation in forests outside protected areas;
- investments in sustainable bioenergy production;
- activities to support the management of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF);
- projects to reduce land degradation in forest fragments and forest margins.

Another innovation agreed at the GEF Council was the removal of the distinction between implementing and executing agencies. Previously, the World Bank, UNEP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were the only implementing agencies for GEF projects, while FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Industrial Organization (UNIDO) and the regional development banks acted as executing agencies. Projects formerly had to be submitted through the implementing agencies. As a result of the new decision, each GEF agency can develop projects in the areas where it has comparative advantage and submit them directly to GEF.

FAO has been identified as a GEF agency with comparative advantage in forestry and has already taken advantage of this new opportunity by preparing forestry projects in Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ghana, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique and Peru. These projects have been submitted to GEF and a number of other forestry projects are being developed for submission next year. Commenting on these developments, Wulf Killmann, the FAO Forestry Department's contact point with GEF, said: "The FAO Forestry Department is now open for business in the development of GEF forestry projects and we are looking forward to working with countries that are interested in obtaining GEF support for implementation of their forestry policies and programmes".

Countries interested in working with FAO on the development of GEF forestry projects can write to: [wulf.killmann@fao.org](mailto:wulf.killmann@fao.org)