



## **Poverty Reduction through forestry-related activities in Asia: A Seminar on IFAD supported forestry-related programmes**

**Organizers: CIFOR, ICIMOD, IFAD, and ICRAF;**

**Workshop; 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2008; Room No. 212**

Recognizing the great potential of forestry as a promising livelihood option for mountain communities, several action research and development are being conducted by ICIMOD, CIFOR and ICRAF, with financial support from IFAD. A seminar was organized during the Asia-Pacific Forestry Week to share the experiences from IFAD Projects and the Regional partners in this regard.

The Seminar brought together experiences and lessons learnt through different IFAD Projects under implementation in the Hindu Kush Himalayan countries and in South East Asia. The Seminar consisted of presentations that highlighted different approaches taken to address the issues of access to forest resources by disadvantaged communities, livelihood options based on forest resources and the linkage with private sector as well as policy dialogue that address concerns of marginalized communities in transition. The potential of payment for services as a possible tool to benefit the poor while ensuring conservation was also addressed in the Seminar with a presentation from ICRAF on their RUPES experience.

Linked with the seminar, there was also the launching of the booklet '**Payment for Environmental Services – Lessons and Experiences in Vietnam**'. Representatives from IUCN, WWF, CIFOR, ICRAF in Vietnam and FSIV made short presentations on the booklet.

### **Experiences from IFAD funded Grants Programs on Poverty Reduction through Forestry**

The seminar started with Dr Ganesh Thapa, Regional Economist from IFAD's Asia-Pacific Division welcoming participants and giving a brief overview of IFAD's approach to harnessing the potentials of forestry for the benefit of the poor and disadvantaged, particularly in the context of less favoured and marginalized areas such as mountains.

The first presentation was from CIFOR, IFAD's Regional partner who had conducted a study on the potential of forestry in poverty reduction in China, India and Nepal. The presentation touched on the potentials of forest produces in generating income for the poor but also highlighted the institutional arrangements and policy constraints that hamper realization of the full potential of this sector. The CIFOR presentation was followed by a presentation from the North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP), an IFAD Project under implementation in three states of India's northeast region. The NERCORMP presentation outlined the institutional approach that the project had taken to encourage decision making and governance at the local level, particularly the formation and capacity building of the Natural Resource Management Groups (or NarmGs) and the Self Help Groups. Some of the examples provided in the presentation emphatically demonstrated

the powerful potential of community institutions in ensuring natural resource management and promotion of livelihoods based on forestry. Particularly encouraging was the significant area of forests conserved by the NarmGs for providing environmental services and livelihood needs.

The next presentation was from ICIMOD, another of IFAD's Regional partners and the coorganiser of the Seminar, working in the Hindu Kush Himalaya and extending technical support to IFAD's projects in the mountain region. The ICIMOD presentation outlined the comparative advantages of forest produces in the mountain context and the institution's strategic approach in promoting forestry as an option for livelihoods. The presentation touched on the support extended by ICIMOD in promoting MAPs and NTFPs for income generation involving Leasehold Forestry groups and private sector involvement. It then moved to interventions taken to enhance capacity of communities in land resource management and perspective planning, utilizing the Participatory 3 dimensional modeling for perspective landuse planning in the context of shifting cultivation. The presentation also touched on initiatives taken in regarding to fostering evidence-based policy dialogues in the context of management of shifting cultivation.

The ICIMOD presentation was followed by a presentation from the Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Promotion Project from Nepal. The presentation outlined the objectives and the coverage of the Project in Nepal and also dwelt upon the Project's components and activities undertaken to meet the objectives. The presentation also highlighted the fundamental challenge faced by the project implementers in identifying leasehold plots that had sufficient land capability to support forest resources which could be developed subsequently by the leasehold group members.

The next presentation was by ICRAF, the third Regional partner and a coorganiser of the Seminar. The ICRAF presentation focused on ICRAF's experiences in three countries while implementing the project on Rewarding the Asian Uplands Poor for the Environmental Services they Provide (RUPES). The presentation started the rationale behind the project and gave a conceptual framework within which the project was implemented. Examples from Nepal, Indonesia and Vietnam were used to emphasise the conceptual argument. These examples also provided the audience with varied contextual situations where opportunities for payment for environmental services could be designed to convince the buyers to reward the upland poor for their services. The presentation also provided insights to innovative approaches that can be adopted in designing payment for environment services initiatives and showed how the services of even marginalized communities can be appreciated enough by buyers to agree for payments for the environmental services. The presentations were followed by a discussion with questions raised and clarifications sought from the participants. IFAD's efforts were highly appreciated, particularly in regard to their approach of conducting research on specific concerns before embarking on larger interventions. A concern was raised, however, in regard to the rationale of the leasehold forestry project, in particular, in regard to the issue of extremely degraded leasehold plots being handed over to marginalized and disadvantaged households with the expectation that such disadvantaged households would be able to develop the land and earn a reasonable livelihood from such plots. The issue required attention and ways to address the

situation and the presenter informed that the Project was extremely sensitive to the issue and was trying to address this by deliberately avoiding leasing of degraded plots.

Programme:

- 09.10-9.25: CIFOR: Programme for Improving Income Generation for Forest Communities through IFAD's Loan Portfolio
- 09.25-9.40: IFAD funded investment project: NERCORMP's experiences
- 09.40-09.55: ICIMOD: Programme for Securing Livelihoods in the Uplands and Mountains of the Hindu-Kush Himalayas Phase II
- 09.55:10.10: IFAD-funded investment project: LFLP's experience
- 10.10-10.30; Coffee/tea break
- 10.30-10.45: ICRAF: Rewarding the Asian Uplands Poor for the Environmental Services they Provide (RUPES)
- 10.45-11.00: IFAD-funded investment project: CHARMP's experience
- 11.00-11.50: Discussion and Q&A
- 11.50-12.00 Closing Remarks