



Key points from Stakeholder Visions and Capabilities Day 4 March 2005

A paper by

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1. Tsunamis and coastal forest management

There is much evidence from the recent Tsunami that coastal mangroves and forests moderated the effect of the waves. The IUCN study of a section of coast line in the south of Sri Lanka showed conclusive evidence of this. At the same time, many of these communities now have very limited employment opportunities so there is a dearth of labour available for replanting programs. Consequently, we should encourage projects and programs for the effected areas to develop and implement coastal forest management plans with the participation of local communities.

2. Participatory forest management

A number of participants in earlier sessions had criticised the concept of participatory forest management (PFM), but there are many examples of very successful programs worldwide, such as in Tanzania, Nepal and India. PFM can be successful providing there are mutual benefits and trust developed for both the communities and the forest management institution involved. Failures with the concept are largely due to the way the PFM program was developed and implemented, and not with the concept. We should be aware that as with any new program, both the institution and community have to under go reorientation and attitudinal and behavioural change, particularly where the institution has had mainly policing and regulatory roles in their interaction with communities.

A PFM program is identical to any new “traditional” forestry program in that it also requires critical levels of research and development inputs for successful implementation. Additional staff with particular skills are needed and existing staff require skill development training. The question was asked as to how many institutions present at the conference employed community development/social science specialists to support their PFM programs.

3. Stakeholder Perceptions

The following are some key points of each presentation.

Government:

- Forestry institutions tend to be good analysers and planners, but poor implementers.
- There is a need to work better together with other institutions: ”.....don’t fly solo!”

Development Agencies:

- There is potential for forestry to support poverty reduction but Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans rarely include forestry's contribution.
- There is a move away from project to more program support but this needs to be balanced.

NGO:

- A potential role for NGOs is for value addition programs for forest products, such as NTF product development and technology.

Labour:

- Foresters should not ignore the labour force associated with forest production and processing industries. There is a need to achieve a fair go for all forestry workers.

Community:

- Where communities work together with forestry staff, the attitudes of both can change from distrust to acceptance.

Consumer:

- There is potential to develop the concept of "Fair Trade" and apply it to timber. The forest industry is taking much more notice of consumers as their decisions are no longer simply based on needs. Consumers are leaning towards how people are treated all through the product chain, hence it may be possible to market "Fair Trade Timber" that ensures that the timber comes from forests that maximise poverty reduction.

4. Parallel Group Sessions on "Stakeholders Working Together"

Group 1

1. Farm forestry plays a significant contribution to the forestry sector (and is a promising option for the future) - however policy and institutional support mechanisms are required (marketing, planting, transportation, credit)
1. Economic incentives/cash are not the only motivation for sustainable forest management by local communities and can actually be destructive.
1. Social networking/partnership (including trust building) motivates people to take up forest management initiatives.

2. Forest should be managed for multiple uses (agroforestry, recreation, and hunting), by all relevant stake holders and such management should ensure equity in the distribution of benefits and rights.
3. Forest management needs to continuously respond to change.

Group 2

1. Capacity building of all stakeholders is still lacking in forestry programs and is essential at institutional as well as individual level. We need to support new changes in training and teaching curricula.
2. Gender mainstreaming is required in community forestry programs right from the planning stages.
3. Land tenure/ownership and common property resources distribution issues still dominate forestry programs. Conflict resolution mechanisms need to be emphasised although we are still not properly equipped.
4. Effective partnership between Government and civil societies seem to work for good forest management. This was demonstrated through the decentralisation of power for community forestry management.
5. The post project perspective needs to be given due consideration for the continuity of sustainable forest management.

Group 3

- 1) Participatory management, with inbuilt mechanisms for equitable distribution of benefits ensuring gender equity, can substantially contribute to poverty reduction.
- 2) Ecological stability through sustainable management of natural resources is necessary to ensure sustainability of forestry's contribution to poverty reduction.
- 3) Agro-forestry helps in poverty reduction of small farmers and sustainable financial packages are necessary, besides appropriate marketing mechanisms to ensure good returns agro-forestry.
- 4) Ecotourism offers potential to enhance income from forests to improve their contribution to local inhabitants' livelihoods, subject to provision for capacity building.
- 5) Non Timber Forest Products available from adjoining forests make a sizeable contribution to the income of people living in and around forest.

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