Enabling Sustainable Forest Management:
Strategies for equitable development, for forests, for people

United Nations
Forum on Forests

"The UN Forum on Forests ...
an intergovernmental policy
forum to promote "... the
management, conservation
and sustainable development
of all types of forests and
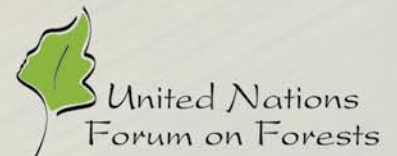stregthen long-term political
commitment to this end ..."

United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat

Highlights from

Enabling Sustainable Forest Management:
Strategies for equitable development, for forests, for people

United Nations
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Introduction

Forests play a critical role in supporting the livelihoods of people worldwide, particularly in meeting the daily subsistence needs of the world's poor. Sustainable forest management can contribute to economic development by providing income, employment, food security and shelter where it is most urgently needed. Finding ways to balance human needs with concerns over the long-term sustainability of forest resources is the very essence of sustainable forest management.
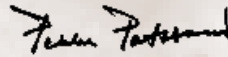
The United Nations Forum on Forests regularly discusses issues of priority concern for the international forest community and reviews progress in implementation of the various proposals for action related to sustainable forest management. In order to facilitate informed discussion at the Forum and beyond, the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat undertook a study on some of the essential elements for creating an enabling environment for sustainable forest management. In particular, the study explored aspects related to building human and institutional capacities, managing forest assets through better governance and ownership arrangements, and challenges and innovations in forest management at the local and landscape levels.

As part of this study, six research papers were undertaken by experts in the field of sustainable forest management. A compilation of these papers will be published in print, and electronically (on the UNFF website) in June 2007. This extract from the publication contains highlights from each of these six papers. They give a sample of the rich lessons and observations that are contained in these research papers.

The views conveyed in these papers are meant to spur discussion and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, the UN Forum on Forests, or its member States.

We encourage you to obtain and read the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat publication, **"Enabling Sustainable Forest Management**: **Strategies for equitable development, for forests, for people".**

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Sustainable Forest Management: What Does It Mean In Practice?

D. Wijewardana

FAO/S. Braatz/FO-0716

"Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development."

Gro Harland Brundtland

The need for sustainable management of forests is well recognized
Since the Earth Summit of 1992, the need to manage forests sustainably has been well-recognized by the international community. The principal focus of the UN forest-related forums since then has been to implement the aims of the Summit through promoting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). The most recent of such proposals was in 2006, when the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) set four Global Objectives on Forests that are central to SFM. These include: addressing the loss of forest cover and forest degradation, forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits and protecting forests, as well as mobilizing financial resources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.

…but progress towards SFM on a global scale has been weak
For several reasons, past efforts to achieve sustainable forest management at the global level have not been very successful. Among them is the lack of broad recognition of the value of well-managed forests for society in the long term. Another is the unique feature of forestry where the same unit of forest may represent a variety of sometimes conflicting values. In such a situation, pursuing one objective implies sacrificing another. However, choosing one objective over the other may lead to debate, particularly in regard

to public forests, given the very different objectives of the various stakeholders. Other complicating factors are the uncertainty associated with interventions in complex forest ecosystems, and the long time dimension. Different forest management approaches not only result in different ecosystems, but also in different combinations of outputs of products and services, over time.

Agreeing on what sustainability means for the practitioner has been made difficult by many factors
Many factors, along with a number of conceptual and practical problems, have made it difficult to agree upon what sustainability means, especially for the practitioner. These factors range from forest management issues related to determining the objectives of sustainable forest management to balancing and prioritizing which objectives should be pursued when there are many conflicting expectations among different stakeholders. In addition, risk and uncertainty associated with interventions in complex forest ecosystems and wide-ranging impacts of different timeframes and spatial boundaries, further complicate the issue.

Among current definitions, the Brundtland concept - meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – has remained the most commonly recognized. Although the Brundtland definition does not offer any practical guidance on implementing sustainable forest management on the ground, many countries have incorporated elements of the concept in their forestry legislation.

Some organizations have substituted a more operational concept of "responsible forest management". This concept includes managing forests based on a number of key principles such as compliance with laws, respecting tenure and user rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights, taking into account environmental impact and protecting high-conservation value forests. Certificates issued, reflecting responsible management, have been used as proxies in the marketplace.

A sharper focus on implementing SFM is needed urgently
The already distressful situation with world forests is likely to worsen with the predicted rise in global population and the further forest destruction predicted over the next 50 years, unless effective action is taken, and without delay. It is necessary to overcome limitations and find a way forward to make progress in achieving the Global Objectives on Forests and, eventually, toward sustainable forest management.

A clear understanding of SFM is a crucial prerequisite
One necessary step in making progress is to articulate the concept of sustainable forest management in a way that is generally acceptable, easy to understand conceptually, and more concrete, in order to facilitate implementation. It is surprising, but it seems, at times, that there is not yet a widely-shared understanding of the very concept of SFM. What is also missing is a more coherent and focused approach to implement those actions recognized as essential for progress in SFM. This can be achieved by two complimentary appoaches:

1. Consider SFM as a "process", not a state to be "achieved"
It is important to consider sustainable forest management as a process, rather than as an endpoint to be achieved in one huge leap. Much of the controversy over what SFM means arises in defining it as a destination. This is also the recommendation of the Brundtland Commission, which recognized the difficulty in agreeing on a defined state of sustainability.

> *"Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs." (Brundtland Commission)*

Seeing it as a process should help to move away from the perception that irresolvable conceptual issues inhibit implementing action towards SFM, and rather, that it helps to facilitate action, including incremental steps towards it.

2. Cluster SFM commitments into one coherent frame for action
The second recommendation is to cluster the current multiple commitments and recommendations for implementing sustainable forest management in the context of the UN forest-related Forums into a single common approach. The reference frame proposed is that of the seven thematic elements for SFM. They are widely recognized as the key components of SFM. This will not only ease coordination, but also improve efficiency by eliminating duplication, thus saving time and effort. The UNFF secretariat is already working on a preliminary clustering of the 270 IPF/IFF proposals for action on the basis of the seven thematic elements.

Moving from concepts and commitments to action
These two approaches should help lay to rest conceptual arguments relating to sustainable forest management, and pave the way to focus on implementation of action. Moving attention beyond conceptual aspects is a critical first step in the right direction.

Improving Governance for SFM at local and regional levels

E. Rametsteiner

FAO/S. Braatz/FO-0662

"Governance" - frequently used, but widely neglected …

The term "governance" has received a lot of attention over recent years, due to the growing recognition of illegal logging as a pervasive threat to forests and to sustainable forest management (SFM). However, as the title of the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) quite accurately expresses, improving broader aspects of governance is most often considered to be secondary compared to the strong focus on strengthening forest law enforcement. Though law enforcement is undoubtedly an essential component of combating illegal logging and related trade (and of governance itself), the focus on law enforcement alone might often neither be the right remedy, nor the most appropriate strategy to promote SFM. In fact, although offering a considerable number of important lessons and measures, "governance" has hardly been recognized and discussed in its entirety.

… is a key approach to strengthen SFM at the local level

Improving forest governance, understood as the way public and private stakeholders negotiate, decide and enforce binding decisions on forest matters, deserves considerably more attention. Not only is it likely to be more effective than a single strategy focusing on law enforcement in addressing a number of key underlying causes for illegal logging and conflicts over resources. It also offers concepts that reinforce and strengthen the implementation of sustainable forest management on the ground. While good governance is important at all levels, from international to local, it is particularly so at the local level, where a large number of higher level decisions can be implemented, ignored or even contradicted.

Four components form the core of "good governance"

Since the early 1990s, the notion of "good governance" has gained widespread currency as a yardstick against which institutional arrangements should be measured. In a broader sense, the aim of good governance is to create mutually supportive and cooperative relationships among government, civil society and the private sector. Essential dimensions of good governance and key measures include:

1. Strengthening the local rule of law

    - Work towards establishing clearly specified and documented legal rights on land, management and use
    - Pay attention to proper rights for the less-powerful affected on local levels, particularly women and the poor
    - Promote regulatory reform towards fewer, clearer, simpler and more feasible rules wherever possible, recoginizing limited capacities
    - Clarify the legal status of community bodies in relation to forest use and establish clear mechanisms vis-à-vis the central government
    - Establish and strengthen local enforcing mechanisms to secure ownership and tenure rights through empowering people and using modern technology

2. Improving local accountability and transparency

    - Establish clear mechanisms for the provision of and access to information
    - Establish mechanisms and procedures for reporting grievances and misbehaviour
    - Establish clear mechanisms for debate, decisions, judgment and sanctions
    - Involve businesses, "civil society" organizations (NGOs) and disadvantaged groups

3. Strengthening local participatory planning and decision-making

    - Help unorganized groups to assemble in associations, and give them a voice
    - Promote platforms that encourage local coordination and conflict-management
    - Encourage and assist in participatory land-use planning, policy-making and budgeting

4. Improving local governance effectiveness and efficiency

    - Shift from "supervising subjects" to "supporting and activating citizens"
    - Increase responsiveness through reorienting agencies towards tailored rural service providers
    - Develop effective monitoring and evaluation systems at local and central levels

Improving governance is a continuous process …

None of the above is particularly new, or easy to implement. It will often require reinforcing and complementing efforts that have already been going on for some time to achieve gradual improvements in local governance, building on the reinforcing effect of the individual components. Changing governance arrangements typically is a slow and more or less deliberate and difficult process of changing existing rules. Whereby modifying informal rules is more difficult and takes more time than changing formal ones. Effective change requires political will and knowledge of local governance tradition.

…that can be tackled through different strategies …

Common reform strategies in governance are:

- 'Maintain' strategies, which involve improving control mechanisms.

- 'Modernize' strategies, which involve improving management (managerial modernization) and/or to fostering participation by citizens and user groups (participatory modernization).

- 'Marketize' strategies, which involve reforming the public sector through transplanting techniques common to the private sector.

- 'Minimize' strategies involve privatizing public functions. Privatization, where it works, brings about new enterprises and new markets that are more efficient and better performing.
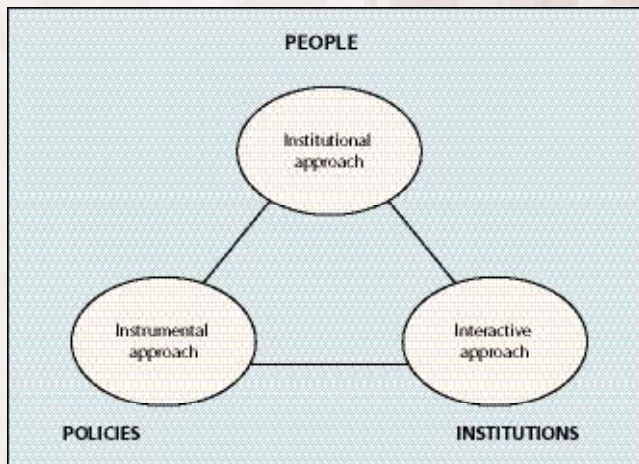

Figure: main approaches for governance reform, addressing people, policies and institutions

…and use different means.

Governance reform strategies can use different means to improve current governance:

- Instrument approaches focus on improved steering in the short- to medium-term by changing legal arrangements (law, regulations, etc.), using economic instruments (economic incentives and disincentives) and informational means.

- Interactive approaches emphasize improvements in cooperation and interactions between individuals and organizations, with the aim to reach satisfying policies in consensus, in order to make programmes and projects more effective.

- Institutional approaches focus on changing institutional and network structures and arrangements with a strategic view to institutionalize key interests and relationships, and thereby achieve more stable "governance" over the long-term.

What is needed: "good governance at local levels" on the policy agenda.

On international and national levels, mainly through the FLEG and national forest programme (nfp) processes, two of the four key dimensions of "good governance" have been taken up and pursued by many countries. In comparison, accountability and transparency, as well as governance effectiveness and efficiency, have not received equally broad recognition. The local level, which plays a crucial role in good governance, has received comparatively little or no attention.

What counts in the end is not how governance is improved, but that different essential dimensions of good governance, and the key role of local-level governance, are much more recognized as essential components in both the FLEG and nfp processes, and in strengthening sustainable forest management. Improving "good governance on the local level" requires a policy discussion in its own right.

Forest ownership and tenure

R. Toivonen
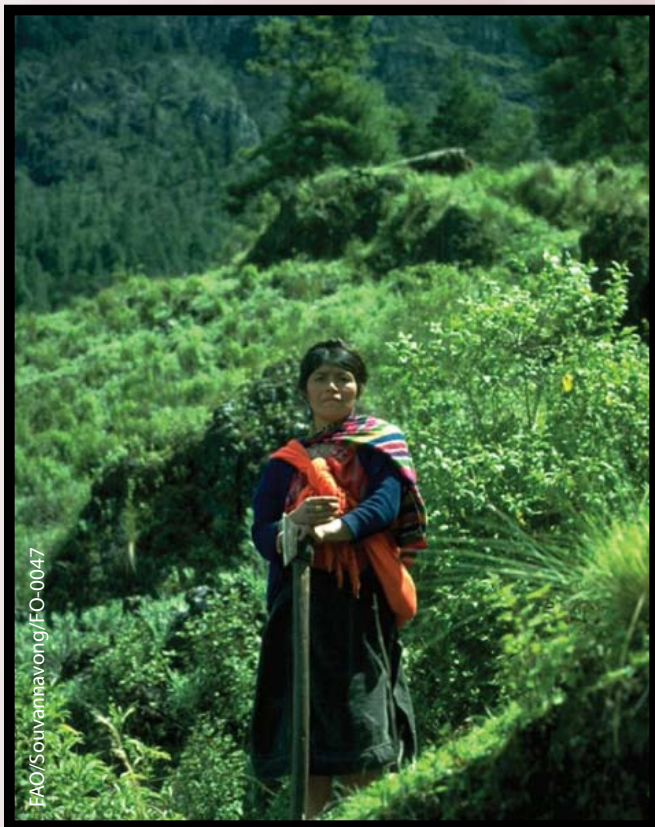
FAO/Souvannavong/FO-0047

Ownership and tenure rights and the related responsibilities have important implications for sustainable forest management

Forest ownership and tenure arrangements define rights and responsibilities related to management and use of forest resources. Formal tenure of forest resources can be separated from land ownership by arrangements such as leasing and contracting. Within the broader scope of forest ownership and tenure, public and private ownership and tenure are the two main categories.

> *Here forest tenure specifically refers to legally recognized (formal) or customary (informal) use and management rights of forest resources, while forest ownership refers to property rights to land and use and management rights to the forest resources on that land.*

Public ownership dominates …
Over four-fifths of the global forest area is publicly owned. The public owner is usually a federal or state/provincial government entity, but municipalities and townships also own forests.

Even though the proportion of forests under private ownership is small on the global scale, in certain regions such as the European Union (EU), Central America and the United States (US), over half of all forested area is privately owned. Private ownership includes categories such as individuals, families, communities (including Indigenous Peoples) and other groups, and industrial companies. Industrial companies are the largest private owner group in terms of forest area in some countries. On the other hand, individuals own

most of the privately owned forests in several countries, for example, in the US, in a number of European countries and in Japan.

Table 1. Ownership of forest area 2000:
157 countries covering 79% of global forest area.

Region	1000 ha	Private %	Public %	Other %
Africa	552,326	1.8	97.6	0.6
Asia	566,388	5.0	94.4	0.6
Europe	998,071	10.0	89.9	0.1
North and Central America	698,285	29.9	66.2	3.9
Oceania	204,933	23.7	61.3	15.0
South America	..	..	..	..
World: 79% of global forest area	3,156,243	13.3	84.4	2.4
Russia is included in Europe. Information is incomplete for a large part of South America (for example, Brazil).				

Source: Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005. FAO Forestry Paper 147. 2006.

… but tenure patterns are more diverse.
Formal tenure rights are often separated from land ownership rights as seen for example in Canada, and countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. A typical arrangement is one where the government grants (limited) use and management rights to industry, individuals or Indigenous Peoples' communities. In many African and Asian countries, various public-private forest management partnerships also exist.

In addition to formal tenure rights, some customary rights to forests commonly exist, e.g., access to forests for recreation or for collecting non-wood forest products (NWFPs) by the general public, Indigenous Peoples or other forest dwellers. Formal rights holders and users with informal rights may have conflicting interests regarding the same resource, or there may be a lack of clarity or agreement regarding their respective rights. Current data available on formal tenure arrangements at the global level is limited, and data on informal tenure arrangements is even more limited.

Ownership and tenure arrangements are becoming more diversified.
While regional trends vary, globally, private ownership and tenure arrangements are becoming more common. Tenure arrangements are also becoming increasingly diverse. The trend is likely to continue, and in a few decades a significantly larger share of global forests may be under private tenure or ownership than today. Drivers for increasing private forest management include the general trend towards a market economy and privatization of public assets (for example, in East and Central Europe), increasing household and community involvement in forest management (countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America), and expanding plantation forestry (for example, in Asia and South America).

Successful ownership and tenure arrangements are tailored to suit different circumstances …

Successful ownership and tenure arrangements that support and promote sustainable forest management depend on a variety of factors such as history, culture, traditions, political stability and level of economic development. All forms of arrangements have their pros and cons. In general, open access, i.e., a situation where several groups utilize forests without clear rules, responsibilities, and control, has had a negative impact on sustainable forest management (SFM). Public ownership and management seems often to be considered particularly when the main goal is to produce public goods, such as environmental services. On the other hand, in many cases tenure (with or without land ownership) by individuals, households and communities or industry seems to have had a positive linkage to production and livelihoods.

… but clarity and security are crucial whatever the arrangement.

Clarity and security of ownership and tenure rights are crucial for sustainable forest management. These are necessary in avoiding and resolving tenure-related conflicts. Clearly determined rights and their long-term security are also necessary for attracting the tenure holders to investment in SFM, since investments in forestry are normally made for the long term. Investment in SFM in turn is important for tapping the potential of forests for providing improved livelihoods, income and employment. In this context, efficiently functioning markets are important, since these are a means of turning forest products and services into income for tenure holders. This may require efforts by governments to strengthen the functioning of markets, including, e.g., through the abolition of non-competitive structures such as administrative price-setting, or by the facilitation of market access for small producers.

Challenges and issues for the future

Effective governance of forest ownership and tenure arrangements is both critically important and an ongoing challenge. Governing both the rights and the responsibilities of an increasingly diverse group of public and private stakeholders requires that different stakeholders are aware of their respective rights and responsibilities. It requires effective arrangements to enforce regulations, monitor implementation and impose sanctions, while at the same time ensuring the provision of adequate means to defend the rights of individual parties. In cases of major transfers of ownership and tenure rights, e.g., in a land reform, a cost-efficient and fair process is needed for rights transfer, as well as capacity-building for administrators and the new rights holders to fulfil their new roles.

As governments commonly have the right to regulate forest management in all forests, governments need to find a balance between the responsibility to ensure overall sustainability and the rights of owners and tenure holders. The latter need the freedom to make management decisions that allow forestry to be an attractive land-use option. More consistent data and information on ownership and tenure is a critical step towards effective governance of forest ownership and tenure arrangements. Current data on forest ownership is limited, and more so when it comes to tenure arrangements. This lack of data is perhaps one of the most urgent challenges.

In summary, many of the critical issues related to ownership and tenure highlight the need for developing better governance. This includes issues such as:

- Ensuring clarity and long-term security of ownership and tenure rights

- Proper enforcement of rights and responsibilities, and cost-efficient arrangements for rights transfer

- Capacity-building for administrators and rights holders, particularly new rights holders

- Facilitating stakeholder participation, e.g., in developing management rules

- Promoting efficient markets and market access for small producers

- Balancing the need for overall sustainability with the profit interests of owners and tenure holders

- Improved access to information on forest ownership and tenure.

Promoting forest-based economic development on local and regional levels

E. Rametsteiner

FAO/T. Hofer/FO-0229

Local effects of globalization require SFM to adapt

Globalization is changing the context for sustainable forest management (SFM) profoundly. Regions that are better integrated in a globalized economy face increased pressure to adjust the forest sector to become more responsive and innovative in order to stay competitive. In other regions, making use of forest resources for economic development has proven to be a difficult task, and the risk of collapse of rural societies is real. In both situations, forests contribute, often significantly, to rural income and quality of life, and in a number of ways: directly, as a user of land and resources to transform biological and other assets into a range of outputs, and indirectly, through linkages with downstream processing sectors and the provision of non-market benefits. In more opaque, though nonetheless important ways, forests contribute by providing a desirable location for non-forestry related business activity and a living environment which many people find attractive. To continue to serve these roles in the future, SFM needs to adapt to the changing realities of local needs and opportunities.

The changing role of governments in local development

Successful development is intensely local, despite the fact that most policies, development actions and investments are planned, implemented and evaluated centrally. However, the challenges are many. Promoting local-level development means understanding and meeting the needs of hundreds of millions of small-scale producers, in addition to state forest administrations, large-scale concessionaires and forest industry. A high proportion of these small-scale producers has no formal titles or rights to the land and water resources on which their livelihoods and most of their production depend. Moreover,

much of the production and market exchange are embedded in complex, risk-prone and diverse environments, often in the informal parts of the local economy.

Over the last decade, a number of key principles have emerged on the role of government in economic development. Its role in relation to the private sector is to develop the frameworks and 'rules of the game' which permit space and opportunity for the private sector to operate: building essential capacity, delivering key public services and promoting standards and competition.

Key principles guiding government's role in private sector development

- Focus on core competencies: areas which only government can deliver, not the private sector

- Appropriate for capacity: prioritise according to resources and hierarchy of importance

- Don't crowd out markets: seek to develop rather than supplant private sector activity

- Improve equity and access: address market failures that limit access of the disadvantaged

- Influence values and culture: policies, education and other government 'signals' to encourage enterprise and competition.

(source: Hitchins, 2002)

Key approaches for rural development: livelihoods, asset-building, innovation
Individuals and households on the poor end of the wealth spectrum have to cope with fluctuating incomes from different sources for survival. According to an often-cited study of the World Bank (2001),

more than 1 billion people depend to varying degrees on forests for their livelihoods. Only over time can people adapt and accumulate assets. Rural development strategies need thus to be more holistic than just focusing on one sector, and they are to start from the perspective of households or people. This was the idea behind the development of 'asset and capability' focused concepts, in particular the sustainable livelihoods framework and the less well-known asset-building framework. The innovation-centered approach, in turn, focuses on situations where livelihoods are secured and basic assets are given, but where competitiveness is an issue.

The three development approaches outline paradigm shifts that are wide-ranging if applied in a forest policy context. For instance, the sustainable livelihood approach re-focuses from forest resources to people's needs across sectors. The asset-based approach focuses on people's access to diverse assets, and the development of capabilities to use them. The innovation approach focuses on adaptive capacity and learning in order to exploit new opportunities for profit and to gain competitiveness.

Measures to strengthen enabling environments for local forest-based development
The many different development concepts have in common that respective governance arrangements and actions must deal with three similar issues. The following outlines the main strategies and measures to address these:

1. Reducing uncertainty: security of rights, financial risk, information

a. Ensure security of rights by establishing formal ownership and tenure rights and legal status of community and micro-enterprises, by enforcing contracts and effective monitoring and control of forest management, forest products and trade

 b. Reduce financial risks by promoting local initiative and investment, helping mitigate costs and risk and by supporting investment and risk-pooling

 c. Reduce uncertainty through enabling easy access to information and knowledge, learning, e.g., through practitioner networks, and improving business development services

2. Increasing opportunities: assets-pooling, value chains, market access

 a. Pooling local assets by promoting producer cooperatives and company – community partnerships

 b. Promoting value chain cooperation and regional cluster-building

 c. Promoting market access to local, regional and nternational markets

  • Promoting physical market access: transport and market exchange infrastructure

  • Promoting market-based resource allocation and pricing mechanisms

  • Facilitating international market access through quality certification and trade promotion

 d. Support market-building by investing in, experimenting with, and helping to develop viable business models for new markets, including for non-wood goods, payment for environmental services (carbon, biodiversity, water), bioenergy and eco-tourism, as well as using certification as an instrument to gain access to higher-value markets

3. Reducing friction: adjusting regulation, coordination and conflict management

 a. Reducing overregulation and addressing gaps

 b. Supporting coordination and conflict management mechanisms

The bottom line: support markets, recognize diversity and promote empowerment of people

There is a widely-shared agreement on the complementary role of markets and state institutions, and the need for policy to build proper institutions that support well-functioning markets. This includes the development of markets, their support through promoting competition, regulation and legitimization. It is also increasingly recognized that the form that such institutions can or even have to take are very different in different circumstances.

 Another clear focus is the increasing emphasis on people and the need for learning and knowledge build-up. Facilitating better access to opportunities, or creating a situation that allows individuals, households and firms to create their own opportunities, is likely to be more cost-effective for improving livelihoods than focusing support on a particular sector or sub-sector or rural economic activity.

Forests and conflict

R. de Koning

FAO/R. Faidutti/CFU000121

Introduction

Over the last 20 years, some 30 major armed conflicts have taken place in forest areas around the world. The problem was most severe during the 1990's with armed conflicts in forests in Cambodia, Myanmar, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While these conflicts have since greatly been reduced or ended, violent confrontations between government forces and opposition groups continue in forests in Ivory Coast, Colombia and the Philippines. Of lesser intensity but more widespread are incidents of public protest, inter-communal violence, and human rights violations in forest areas, which happen in many countries.

Forest-related conflicts are rarely about just forests; many other factors are involved. While it is clear that a number of violent conflicts play out in forests, it is often unclear how the forest links to these conflicts, who the key players are, and which factor is triggering and sustaining these conflicts. These questions are of key interest when formulating forest-related policies to prevent or mitigate conflict-related damage to forests and promote sustainable forest management (SFM) in conflict areas.

Forest and conflict links

Forests are linked to conflict in two different ways. First, conflicts can spill over to forests, when refugees and combatants seek sanctuary in forested areas and exploit local resources for provisions and marketable commodities. By providing hideout and resources to armed groups, forests can aggravate and prolong violent conflict.

Secondly, forest resources or forest management can also be at the root of conflict. While countries do not generally go to war over

forest resources, low intensity, localized conflicts can emerge from local peoples' restricted and unequal access to forest resources and related benefits. The growing presence of non-local actors such as commercial enterprises and migrant groups in forests often increases pressure on local forest resources and related livelihoods. Dissatisfied local populations often challenge these external parties. The risk of violence tends to grow when deprivation is severe, when conflicts occur in an environment of political instability and when they intersect with ethnic cleavages.

Impacts on people and nature
Forests are not only the venue of conflict - they also fall victim to it. Forests used as hideouts by rebel groups are subject to degradation from hunting, food collection, fuel and other needs of these groups. In addition, counter-insurgency measures adopted by states have proven destructive. Forests have been cut to expose rebel groups (Myanmar and Sierra Leone), and chemical spraying campaigns have been executed to defoliate forest (Cambodia) and destroy illicit crops on which rebels depend (Colombia). These have had negative consequences for forest ecosystems and the health and livelihoods of local peoples.

Cases of 'conflict timber'—i.e. timber harvested/traded by parties involved in conflict, for enrichment and/or to perpetuate conflict—are associated with environmental disruptions and human rights abuses. In Cambodia and Liberia, logging companies are estimated to have cut at a rate up to seven times above the Annual Allowed Cut (AAC) in comparable managed concessions. In Myanmar, secessionist groups have largely logged out the forest along the Thai and Chinese border. The military has been involved in all three countries in exploiting and destroying forests. In many cases of wartime timber-looting, physical intimidation, rape and even murder have tended to accompany these operations.

Table: timber harvesting during periods of armed conflict in major cases.[1]

	Period	Harvest in million m³/year*	Exploitation beyond AAC in m³/ha
Liberia	1997-2003	0.5	65
Cambodia	1990-1997	2.5	30-40
Myanmar	1996-2006	3	

* Not all felled timber represents conflict timber according to the definition. In Cambodia and Myanmar, not all timber revenues were touched by conflict parties or invested in war efforts.

Disputes over forest access do not necessarily evolve into civil war, but their humanitarian consequences can be considerable. For example, in 2002, Indonesian newspapers reported 18 light injuries, 33 serious injuries, 110 arrests and 8 deaths related to conflicts involving communities, logging and pulp mill enterprises and police and military services.[2] Damages to the forest in local disputes occur

1   Table drawn from: de Koning R., and D. Capistrano (forthcoming). Sustainable Forest Management and Conflict (Report submitted to UNFF). CIFOR.

2   Jarvie J., R Kanaan, M. Malley, T. Roule, and J. Thomson (2003). *Conflict timber: Dimensions of the problem in Asia and Africa, Volume II: Asian Cases* (Final report submitted to USAID). ARD, Inc.

when different stakeholders try to enforce their respective claims to forests by rushed exploitation. The most frequent damage from disputes over forest access is the inability to manage affected areas sustainably.

Mitigating effects of conflicts

Where violent conflicts spill over to the forest, forest management alone cannot solve these conflicts. However, forest management can have a role in mitigating the destructive effects of conflict on forests and in post-conflict reconstruction. Examples include:

- Application of environmental/forest management principles in refugee camps
- Implementation of peace parks and best practices for forest conservation in conflict-sensitive forest areas
- Forest-based employment for ex-combatants, e.g., timber industries, plantations and protected areas, consistent with good forest management principles
- Application of the Geneva Convention that prohibits war-time environmental destruction and looting of properties
- Other legal mechanisms such as the Draft Convention on the Prohibition of Hostile Military Activities in Protected Areas.

The UN and individual importing countries can take measures to prevent armed parties from accessing international commodity markets through border closure, export bans and other so-called 'smart' sanctions, such as asset freezing. Such measures have proven effective in Liberia and Cambodia, although they were implemented late in the conflict. It has been recommended that the UN adopt a common definition of conflict resources.

In areas with low-intensity conflicts around forest exploitation and transformation, forest policies have a crucial role in mitigating conflicts and promoting more sustainable management, inter alia, by clarifying, brokering, documenting, enshrining and enforcing rights and responsibilities of different parties involved. Secure access to forests can enhance forest-based livelihoods and provide local communities better bargaining positions vis-à-vis outside interest groups. This can dampen local resentment and related conflicts.

Conclusion

Sustainable forest management will not resolve the violent conflicts that devastate forests. However, in reducing the impact of war on forests, ensuring tenure security and promoting SFM and its capacity to contribute to sustained livelihoods, forests can make an important contribution to peace and stability. This will require development and strengthening of institutions for negotiation, conflict management and forest-related decision-making, and measures to address inequities that generally lie at the root of conflicts over resources, including forests.

Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: Current Issues and The Way Forward

By Don Wijewardana

FAO/M. France-Lanord/FO-5573

Development of C&I is a major global achievement

The seven thematic elements of criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management (SFM), common to all nine internationally recognized C&I processes, are widely recognized as the key components of SFM. In recent years, good progress has been made by international organizations, some of the C&I processes, as well as a number of countries, in using and promoting C&I. There is increasing recognition of the role of C&I as a major tool for monitoring, assessing and reporting progress in achieving SFM. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recent publication of the Global Forest Resource Assessment 2005 shows how the seven thematic elements can be utilized to develop regional and global assessments of progress in SFM.

C&I are a powerful policy instrument as well as a practical technical tool

The significance of criteria and indicators lies in the dual role they play as a policy instrument and a technical tool supporting SFM. The policy role is critically important, since it reflects the commitment of governments. As a technical tool, C&I can form the basis for monitoring trends in forest conditions at the national and forest management unit (FMU) levels, based on the main elements of sustainable forest management. The information generated through their use can also assist in developing strategies for sustainable forest management, focusing research efforts where knowledge is still deficient and identifying weaknesses. Within a C&I framework, each country can develop its own system for determining sustainability.

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), by setting firm deadlines to make progress on the four global objectives, has

drawn attention to the urgency of action to implement measures for sustainable forest management. C&I offer the facility to do this both as a policy instrument and a technical tool. There is ongoing work to clarify, simplify and enhance operationality in advanced C&I processes, which will add to their usefulness. FAO's recent publication, FRA 2005, shows how the seven thematic elements can be utilized to develop regional and global assessments of progress in SFM. There has also been some serious effort to present the IPF/IFF proposals for action in terms of the seven thematic elements[3]. However, the fact that recent attempts to stimulate action among processes and countries that have remained on the margins have been less successful suggests a major effort is needed to build on recent successes.

However, a renewed effort to promote C&I is needed
Despite past successes and the evident future potential of the tool, the enthusiasm that prevailed in the 1990s to adopt C&I appears to have diminished recently. Although there are nine internationally recognized C&I processes, only three are working with some degree of effectiveness – ITTO, MCPFE and MPCI. The rest are at different stages in developing and assessing C&I use. This divergence exists not only among Processes but also between countries within them. A further concern is whether this trend is an indication that the sustainability message promoted internationally over the past 15 years is not getting through. The fact that recent attempts to stimulate action among processes and countries that have remained

on the margins have been less successful suggests a major effort is needed to build on recent successes. Progressing towards SFM requires both expanding the depth of application of C&I as well as widening the number of countries belonging to a C&I process and applying them effectively.

To be effective as policy instrument, all countries need to join
So far, a significant number of countries remain outside any C&I process, including some countries with large areas of forest, such as Laos, Kazakhstan, Madagascar and Vietnam. However, sustainable forest management is important for all countries, regardless of the size of forest area. The exclusion of so many countries is of concern because it suggests the possibility of a sizeable share of global forests not being considered for sustainable management. The commitment of these countries as well as building their capacity to use C&I are of utmost importance. This involves ensuring the adequacy of both financial and human capacity. Enhanced stakeholder participation is also essential to ensure success. For this, all relevant parties need to be involved in decision-making and implementation of C&I at the national and sub-national levels.

C&I processes need considerably more support
It seems an irony that while C&I are promoted as a major policy instrument and a powerful technical tool for SFM, they do not have an internationally recognized common platform that reflects this preeminence. As a result, their promotion and development are carried out on an ad hoc basis by a handful of concerned international organizations and a few committed C&I processes. This situation has to change if the full potential of this powerful tool is

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3   The UNFF secretariat has produced a preliminary conversion of the proposals for action into the seven thematic elements.

to be realized. A major step in this direction would be for the UNFF to recognize the current C&I processes as a major voice in its activities. A prerequisite for this, however, is for the processes themselves to form into a cohesive group.

There are a number of aspects related to C&I processes that need to be addressed. These include establishing secretariat facilities for them, as well as establishing means of coordination within, as well as between, processes. Efforts by a number of international organizations, such as the FAO, have gone some way in meeting this need, but in the long term, to be effective, such needs have to be met from within the processes themselves. In addition, there have been calls for an international technical advisory group to assist in all processes benefiting from progress made in some of the advanced ones.

As technical tools, C&I need continuous further development
There is still work to be done to achieve a common understanding on key concepts and definitions; a number of indicators were not clear or not operational; ways to amalgamate different data streams into national reports have not been properly developed, and once data was available over a number of assessments, how to aggregate them in a measurable way have not all been properly addressed. The expertise of organizations such as the FAO, used in work such as the FRA 2005, needs to be harnessed in addressing this issue. Research has to play an important role, as many of the criteria still need suitable indicators to clearly reflect changes over time. However, it is important for research to focus more closely on what is required for effective implementation of C&I.

The UNFF, CPF members and countries need to act
The success of C&I as a primary tool in promoting and measuring progress in SFM depends on success on two broad fronts: increasing the number of countries using C&I, and deepening progressively the level of application. It is only when both these conditions are met that positive progress towards sustainable forest management is made. For the UNFF, C&I is possibly the principal tool to streamline the implementation of commitments and to assist in assessing progress in the achievement of UNFF objectives, in particular the four global objectives. The UNFF, the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and countries, as well as other relevant parties, need to act in cooperation to use the full potential of C&I.

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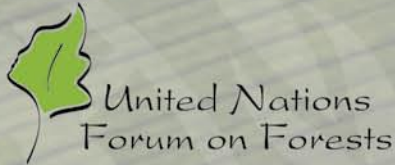
Global Objectives on Forests

In 2006, the UN Forum on Forests agreed on four Global Objectives on Forests, a significant milestone in the international commitment to sustainable forest management. Member states agreed to work to achieve these objectives, globally and nationally, by 2015.

• Global Objective 1

Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;

• Global Objective 2

Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people;

• Global Objective 3

Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests;

• Global Objective 4

Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.

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