

## **Part IV**

# **Land Systems and Natural Resource Management**

This part consists of four papers: three on land resources, land-use systems, and land tenure and one on forest management. The paper on innovative land and resource policy discusses the issues of land-tenure systems and land policies in Asia: such as how well the land tenure and policy regimes will cope with the ongoing rapid socioeconomic changes, what are the implications of a shift from land tenure to resource tenure, and how will the conflict between local and global governance be resolved? It argues for greater devolution of natural resource management with suitable institutional strengthening at the local level. The second paper on the subject deals with land systems, tenure, and policies in Nepal and attempts to relate them to poverty alleviation efforts. It concludes that the government policy on land reforms has been lukewarm and not very conducive to the development of a growth and equity-oriented economy and argues that redistribution of land could augment agricultural productivity and, therefore, needs to be further pursued. The paper on North East India juxtaposes the traditional tribal land ownership and use system with the 'modern' land tenure system and points out how confusion between the two and increasing exposure of the area to the outside commercially-oriented world have led to increasing inequities in control over land and a few land 'sharks' capturing large amounts of land leaving the poorer shifting cultivators with increasingly smaller pieces of land to eke out their livelihoods.

The last paper in this part deals with participatory management of forests. It notes that significant advances have been made in involving communities and local users in the management of forests in the HKH region, mostly to the benefit of rural people and resulting in improved management of forest resources. A lot needs to be done, however, the paper points out, in terms of clarity in policies and strengthening the technical and institutional capacities of local communities. More emphasis is needed

on generating new forest resources that are environmentally and economically desirable rather than concentrating on managing an inherited stock of forest resources.

Land ownership, access to land, and land-use issues are still very critical in a region where most of the people have land as their primary source of livelihood. It is also at the heart of many issues regarding equity in mountain societies. At present, there appears to be relatively little emphasis on this aspect in mountain areas. In view of the fact that it is inextricably tied up with the question of poverty and the conservation of environmental resources, it should receive greater attention from governments in the future.

## **Chapters**

- 14. Innovative Land and Resource Policy in an Asian Context: Options and Challenges** — M. Kirk
- 15. Land Tenure and Poverty: Status and Trends Land Systems in the Hills and Mountains of Nepal** — D. Chapagain
- 16. Changing Land Relations and Poverty in the Eastern Himalayas** — B.P. Maithani
- 17. Participatory Forest Management (PFM): Rediscovery of a Promising Mechanism for Poverty Alleviation in the Mountain Areas of South Asia** — A. Bhatia