

Field Visit to Dhaireni Rehabilitation Site, Kavrepalanchok District

On the fourth day of the Regional Conference, the Participants were taken on a field visit outside the Kathmandu Valley to observe and interact with the local population involved in some of the field activities of ICIMOD.

The project visited was the 'Rehabilitation of Degraded Land in Mountain Ecosystems' Project, Nepal Site II, Kavrepalanchok District which is being implemented at Bajrapare (Site I) and Dhaireni (Site II) in Kavrepalanchok District. The sites were established in April 1993. The activities of the project focus on the rehabilitation of the degraded community forest in *Bajrapare ko Ban* (Bajrapare) and *Dhaireni Pakha ko Ban* (Dhaireni) with the involvement of local communities at all levels of project planning, implementation, and site management.

The primary objective of this action-research project is to improve the production of biomass and the range of other useful products from the degraded forest by facilitating traditional methods and incorporating new technologies in their activities. In addition, the project also aims to demonstrate the usefulness of nitrogen-fixing plants, hedgerows, and grass strips as a soil-water conservation method and a production option in forestry. Demonstration of water-harvesting techniques is also one of the main project activities. Research studies in soil erosion, species' performance, and natural regeneration are also undertaken among the main activities of the project (see Table 4 for more details).

The main collaborating institutions for this project are the Forest Users' Group Committees of Bajrapare and Dhaireni, the Village Development Committees of Rabi-Opi (within which Bajrapare lies) and Panchkhal (within which Dhaireni lies), and the District Forest Office, Dhulikhel.

Following a brief presentation by the leader of the Forest User Groups on the project activities, participants raised a number of questions. Some of these were related to the nature of appropriate biomass species, while others pertained to issues of leadership, community interest and participation, and economic benefits derived from these activities.

Following this, two presentations were organised. The first one was by the District Forest Officer who provided a brief overview of the conditions of forests in the district and the measures being undertaken by the Government to promote better management of district forest resources. The second presentation dealt with another field-level action-research project being implemented by ICIMOD in the same watershed which has attempted to quantify resource degradation processes brought about by human intervention in mountain ecosystems. The presentation focussed on the detailed micro-level data generated on different aspects of resource degradation. The participants had extensive discussions on both of these presentations.

Field Visit to District Administration Office, Kavayam District

