

Workshop Conclusion and Workplan Proposed for 1993-1994

In bringing the workshop to a close, Project Coordinator, **Prof. Pei Shengji** of ICIMOD presented the highlights of major issues discussed and the proposed activities for 1993-1994. Comments and discussions related to the workshop and the workplan proposed followed the presentation.

Conclusion of the Workshop

The objective of the workshop was to bring together all the participating institutions of the project from the region to meet and discuss alternative approaches to the problems of land degradation in the mountain ecosystems of the HKH Region, as well as to recommend the appropriate methodologies to be followed by participating institutions to implement the project on the actual field sites of each participating country. In the first three days of the workshop, interaction amongst all the participants was encouraged through presentation of status reports from case study areas, visits to Nepal Sites I & II, and presentations on approaches and technologies from participants and invitees around a common theme: causes and consequences of land degradation in the mountain ecosystems and alternative approaches to rehabilitating them. During the last two days of the workshop, we attempted to consolidate methods for and measurements of project implementation and monitoring through group discussions which covered: (1) methods of

baseline studies and methodologies for monitoring; (2) socioeconomic aspects of rural resource management; and (3) technologies for the land rehabilitation of degraded mountain ecosystems. A review of the highlights of issues presented at the workshop is given below along with a 1993-1994 workplan, revised on the basis of discussions held throughout the five days.

Formulating the Network for Involving All Countries Participating in the Project

In view of the wide heterogeneity of mountain ecosystems and the major differences in socioeconomic patterns, it is important for the collaborating agencies of the project to meet and discuss approaches to the problems of land degradation and strategies for rehabilitation. This workshop has provided an opportunity for all participating institutions from the region to access and share information concerning land degradation in different countries, as well as methodologies that are being used by the concerned institutions for project implementation in the early stages. Land degradation is a common problem faced in all the mountain ecosystems of the region and can be solved only through on-site research at the ground level. A joint effort to achieve the objectives of the project through all the collaborating institutions has brought up a number of methodological issues that were discussed at the workshop.

These include the composition of baseline studies of the field site, community participation, appropriate technologies for land rehabilitation on the actual field sites, and methods for monitoring the conditions of the project site. From the country status reports presented and the discussions that followed, methodological issues were identified and discussed. Not all details of the approach have been worked out; some require further study. We have, however, moved the project implementation into the field-work stage and commenced networking amongst ourselves.

Use of Proper Technology Identified for Project Implementation and Monitoring

From country reports and technical reports presented at the workshop, technologies for land rehabilitation, using both formal knowledge and indigenous knowledge, and methods for monitoring land degradation and rehabilitation in the mountain ecosystems have already been proposed and discussed by participants. In view of the nature of the project and its limitations, we must keep in mind the importance of the use of proper technology. Collaborative institutions may have their own research interests that could be also integrated into the technologies identified at the workshop. The application of practical technologies for soil erosion control, enhanced soil fertility, and the generation of farmer-needed products from the degraded lands are the priorities. Research components must reflect the objectives of the project; data and information collection should be designed in line with the purpose of rehabilitating degraded lands.

The definitions of land degradation and rehabilitation need also to be addressed. For example, the Nepal site I at Godavari is basically forest land

that has degenerated into shrub land. Some participants suggested that the site is not degraded land because it is covered with shrub vegetation; others suggested that the Godavari site is useless land like a 'green desert' without much productive use and can therefore be considered to be degraded forest land. However, this workshop was not able to address in detail these issues of terminology.

The Consolidated Methodologies as Guidelines for Implementing the Project

One of the important outputs from this workshop is the consolidation of methodologies, as generated during the last two days of group discussions. Participants generally agreed with the guidelines for country collaborating institutions, as a whole, to be followed in the field-based case studies. Some participants suggested that guidelines for baseline studies should be comprehensive enough to include all biophysical elements. Others doubted that this would be possible due to constraints of time and funding. A solution to this problem would be to categorise the elements of the baseline survey into required and optional components, giving some flexibility to each country collaborating institution to make their own decisions.

Guidelines for socioeconomic aspects of rural resource management were also consolidated at the workshop. The work in this area has been rather weak to date; it is important for us to improve. The use of PRA methodologies for site surveys in China and methodologies used in community forest development in Nepal, as introduced by participants, are good examples of these aspects.

Both biological and engineering technologies for rehabilitation were outlined as guidelines for the project. According to

different field sites and conditions, implementation of these technologies must be locally acceptable and ecologically suitable. Indigenous knowledge should be incorporated, for instance, by use of local species for fodder, fuelwood, hedgerows, fruit, and timber; by use of local materials, such as bamboo and rock for construction of simple checkdams; and by use of small-scale water harvesting technologies.

Proposed Workplan for Project Implementation in 1993-94

As the project is six months behind the schedule agreed to by the donor agency, IDRC, and ICIMOD, the real challenge for ICIMOD and country collaborators is to advance project implementation activities as quickly as possible, especially as planting activities on the field sites must be mostly completed in this monsoon season. The main points of the workplan appear below.

Baseline Studies

Baseline surveys have already been started in China and India and partly in Nepal on sites I & II. Pakistan will follow as soon as the project agreement has been approved by the concerned government departments. Completed baseline studies for all field sites are expected by September 1993 (except for the site in Pakistan).

Planting Activities

In the second year of project implementation, seedlings and land were prepared at four sites for planting. We proposed to complete 70 per cent of the planting in the current rainy season and the remaining 30 per cent during the following year.

Supporting Activities

The construction of water harvesting, checkdam, and

energy-saving infrastructures, and training in related technologies at site locations, will be carried out during the second half of this year.

Monitoring System

Monitoring of project implementation should commence at the same time as planting in June-July, 1993. Soil-erosion control plots should be established on all field sites by no later than December 1993.

A database for managing the project should be established at each collaborating institution by October 1993.

Annual progress reports from country collaborating institutions should be submitted to ICIMOD by the 1st of December each year. The final report should be submitted by March 1st, 1995.

Second Workshop of the Project

A second workshop of this project was planned for the end of Phase I to discuss the important findings and to put together a proposal for a training programme (Phase II) for restoring degraded lands, based upon the inputs developed in this phase. Some participants suggested that the second workshop be held in China because implementation work on the China site was started first and the site is relatively larger than others in terms of the land involved (150ha) and villagers involved (136 households of farmers). However, the final decision for the timing and venue of this workshop will be made next year, depending upon the progress made in field implementation.

Extension of the Project

In view of a six month delay in commencing project activities, it will be necessary to extend the

project for another four months to the end of April 1995. A proposal for extension of the project will be submitted to IDRC, Canada, in due time after the workshop. A proposal for the second phase of the project was suggested by all collaborating institutions. It is necessary for ICIMOD to formulate a formal proposal and submit it to IDRC in early 1995.

Comments from participants on the concluding session of the workshop and the proposed

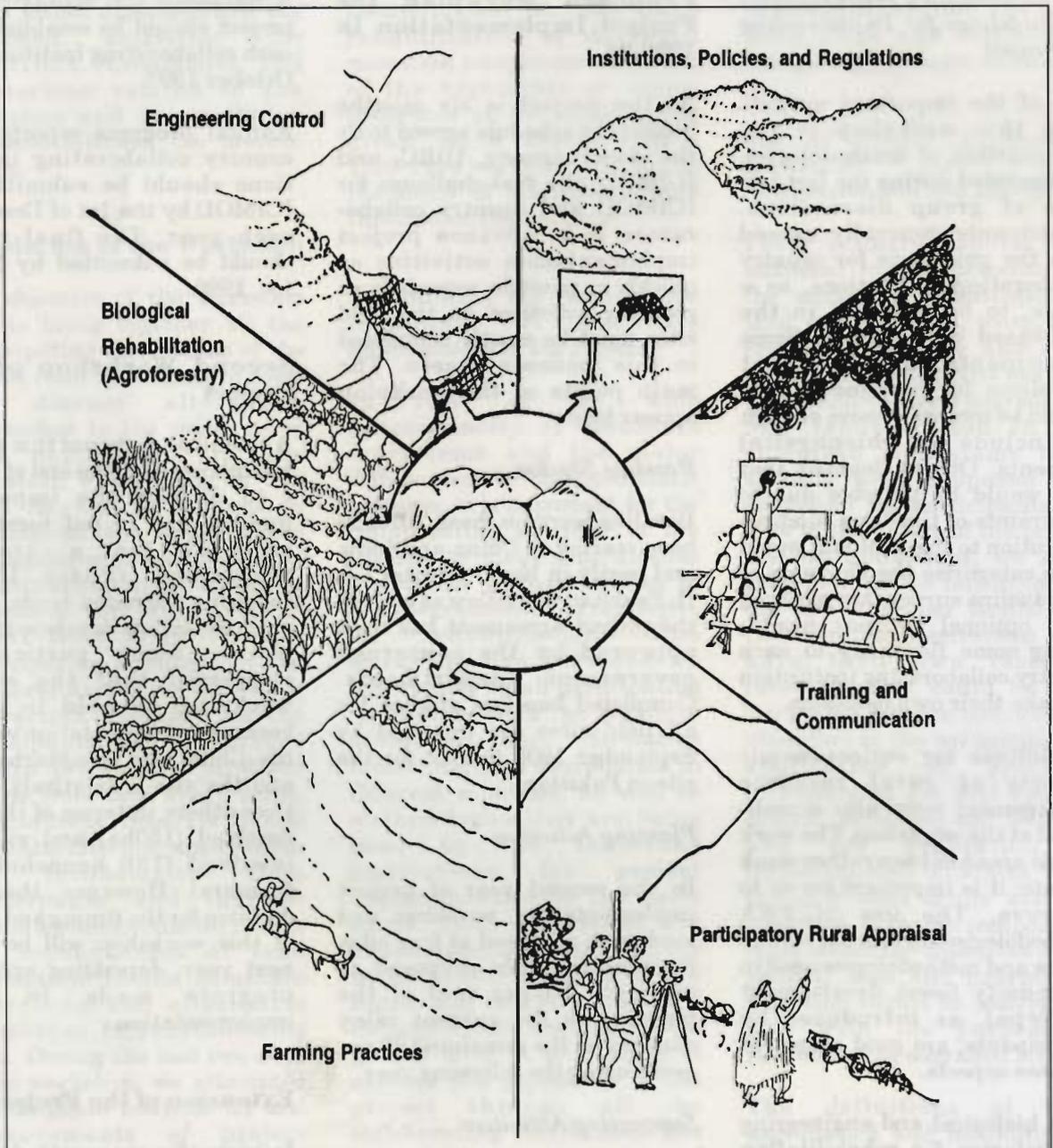
workplan for 1993-94 were positive. Participants from the Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) have extended their willingness to collaborate with the project once their Government approves the project.

The Closing Session

Dr. Tacke closed the five-day session with his congratulations to the participants and a reminder of the urgency of commencing with planting

activities during the current rainy season.

In his review of ongoing work at the ICIMOD Complex at Godawari, Dr. Tacke remarked that, although not a seriously degraded area, Godawari provides an opportunity for recognising the potential of the site for increased use and productivity through more intensive management. In closing, he thanked the participants for their hard work and deliberations.



Integrated Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands in Mountain Ecosystems