

# workshop proceedings

## Inaugural session

The workshop was inaugurated by the **Chief Guest, His Excellency, Mr. Badri Prasad Mandal, Minister, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, His Majesty's Government of Nepal.**

**Dr. James Gabriel Campbell, Director General, ICIMOD,** welcomed the chief guest and other invitees to the opening session and expressed his special appreciation to the participants from both Nepal and abroad for making the effort to attend the workshop in spite of the long distances involved in some cases. He said that the level of representation from His Majesty's Government at the opening session, in the presence of none other than the Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, is a testimony to the importance attached to community forestry in Nepal. Being closely associated with the evolution of community forestry in Nepal, he expressed his satisfaction with the tremendous positive impacts that the scheme had brought about in the livelihoods of the people in the hills of Nepal and to their environment. He expressed his wish that some of the lessons learned during the course of implementing the various community forestry projects supported by many long-time supporters, such as SDC, GTZ, the World Bank, DANIDA [Danish International Development Agency], and DFID [UK Department for International Development], could be shared with participants from other countries. Likewise, there were a number of areas in which participants from Nepal could benefit from the experiences of other countries: viz., managing rangelands, wetlands, and protected areas.

**Mr. Paul Egger, Head of the East Asia Division, SDC,** welcomed the guests and participants on behalf of SDC, and then gave a presentation on the interactions between forest policy and land use patterns using Nepal as an example (full text of the presentation provided in Volume II). He highlighted the impact of government policies on people's livelihoods and the environment and illustrated how enabling government policies have reversed the trends of poverty and degradation of the environment in Nepal. According to him, Nepal has transformed from being a country with probably the highest deforestation rates worldwide in the 1980s to one with the highest reforestation rates in recent years. This had become possible because of the persistent efforts of champions who took up the cause of empowering communities to take responsibility for managing the natural resources on which they depend. These champions had also influenced policy-makers to shed their top-down authoritarian approach to managing forests, which had led to 'community exclusion'. Mr. Egger further provided a brief rundown on the involvement of SDC in forestry development in Nepal dating back to the 1970s in Dolakha, Ramechhap, and Okhaldhunga districts

and expressed satisfaction with the way the collaboration with the government on community forestry had matured over the years. Of particular significance in the long history of collaboration was the success in assisting the Department of Forest to formulate appropriate policies that enabled communities to engage in an integrated approach towards natural resource management that recognised the linkages between forests, agriculture, and livestock in mountain farming systems.

**Mr. Badri Prasad Mandal, the Honourable Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal,** expressed his great pleasure and privilege to be with participants from many countries, international organisations, and various projects affiliated with forestry and extended a warm welcome to all. The following excerpts from his Keynote Address reinforce the importance attached to community forestry in Nepal.

“Forests are the largest terrestrial ecosystem. They also provide many consumer and non-consumer goods and services for both present and future generations. However, they have not been wisely used all the time. Presently, forests of most developing countries are declining in both area and quality. This is a serious challenge, as many people depend on them for their survival and prosperity.

Let me share a few words on how we are trying to tackle the challenges of forest depletion in Nepal. Initially, we attempted to control the depletion of forests with only law enforcement mechanisms. However, we later realised that we need to go deeper to identify the root causes of forest depletion. Experience showed that, since the livelihoods of the people depend on the nearby forests, they should be the custodians of these forests. Accordingly, we revised the Forest Act and Regulations, giving more rights and responsibilities to local forest users. We created an incentive-driven, compatible institutional structure so that local people would have a vested interest in conserving the forests and sustainably using them for their benefit. With this change in forest policies, operational rules, and reorientation of forestry staff, the condition of community and leasehold forests has substantially improved. Various micro-level studies have shown that the implementation of community and leasehold forestry programmes in the hills and mountains has led to improved land use and intensification of tree planting even on the farm. The concept and practice of people's real participation has further been expanded to buffer zone and watershed management. We are piloting further innovations in the management of the Terai national forests, so that distance users also get more benefits from the management of these forests. Similarly, we plan to provide incentives to farmers so that they intensify private tree plantation or agro-forestry practices on the farms of the Terai and inner Terai.”

**Mr. Ananta Raj Pandey, Secretary, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation,** expressed his appreciation to the organisers for holding this very important workshop to share experiences in community-based natural resource management in the region. He said

“We have learned from our own experience and practice that the 'control and command' system of forest governance does not lead to sustainable forest management. Instead, a community-based and incentive-focused forest management system appears to be more successful. Our own experience attests to this principle. Severe deforestation in the hills compelled us to devolve forest management authority to locally organised groups of forest users. With this new forest management paradigm of community forestry, we have been able to reverse forest degradation and deforestation in the hills of Nepal. I hope and believe that my colleagues from Nepal will share with you the



Shamjhana Thapa

**Welcome address by the workshop coordinator during the opening session**

impacts of 25 years of community forestry in Nepal in detail. However, let me highlight some of the experiences that we have gained in this regard. The learning from our experience indicates that creating an enabling policy environment conducive to people's participation is essential for sustainable forest management. Similarly, creating locally-owned institutions and facilitating them to function democratically appear also to be very important in the management of natural resources.”

The Secretary went on to add that Nepal has been able to create locally-based community forest users' groups which have become successful in coordinating activities among the members themselves, and, with the forest officials, in activities related first to the management of community forests and then to the use of funds for community development activities generated from the forests. However, he mentioned that they are still facing second generation forest issues: namely, linking forest management with poverty reduction and the promotion of inclusive governance in forest management. This has led to the development of a pro-poor community forestry programme so that poor, disadvantaged groups and women can take an active role in decision-making and benefit-sharing.

On behalf of the organising committee, consisting of Dr. Keshav Kanel for His Majesty's Government, Dr. Renate Braun and Ms. Dibya Gurung for SDC, Nepal, Mr. Michael Nurse for RECOFTC, and Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Division Head, Policy & Partnership Development, ICIMOD, **Dr. Gyamtsho** thanked the chief guest and other speakers for their guidance and encouragement and thanked the delegates from different countries for attending the workshop. He briefly introduced the objectives, structure, and expected outcomes from the workshop and expressed the hope that the participants would be able to analyse the policies, practices, processes, and tools that have contributed positively to successful community forestry management, and also identify their potential and relevance for application in different socioeconomic and ecological

settings in different countries. Another no less important objective of the workshop was to enable participants to interact both formally and informally so that individual and institutional contact and networks could be established that could sustain and promote the cause of community-based natural resource management.

## **Plenary Session 1: Taking Stock of Advances Made in Community-based Management of Natural Resources.**

*Chair: Dr. Keshav Raj Kanel, Deputy Director General, Department of Forests, Nepal*

This session was intended to provide participants with a general overview of the progress made in community-based approaches to natural resource management in South and Southeast Asia. Papers were presented by participants from three regional organisations: ICIMOD, RECOFTC, and CIFOR.

### **Advances in Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region**

*E. Sharma, N. Chettri and P. Gyamtsho, ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal*

The Hindu Kush-Himalayan region is among the most fragile and biodiversity-rich areas in the world. It is home to millions of poor and marginalised people who depend on its biological resources for their subsistence. In recent years, there has been unprecedented loss of biological resources as a result of land use change, change in tenure and management regimes, fragmentation of families, external market forces, and so on. The major challenge to the people living in the HKH region is to use these dwindling resources in a sustainable manner. Among the eminent community-based natural resource management practices that have evolved during the recent past are joint forest management in India and community forestry and leasehold forestry in Nepal. These are augmented by other approaches such as co-management of rangelands, enterprise-based, community-involved biodiversity conservation, and participatory transboundary landscape approaches to development and conservation. The notion that 'conservation and management of natural resources are impossible without people's participation' is now becoming a fundamental principle of CBNRM. Since the 1980s, decentralisation and devolution of authority for management of natural resources are being seen across the HKH region, with participatory management approaches evolving as a popular means of carrying forward this movement. CBNRM is increasingly recognised as a visible approach that enhances conservation and sustainable use. However, these initiatives are portrayed as islands of success without much effort to upscale them. The paper highlights some of the recent advances in community-based natural resource management in the HKH region.

### **Advances in Community Forestry in Asia**

*M. Nurse and Y. Malla, RECOFTC, Bangkok, Thailand*

Over the years, one thing that has become increasingly evident is that there can be no single model for community forestry. Countries in the region have different historical, political, social, and economic settings, and this has given rise to a variety of community forestry modalities. In some areas, rural communities living in or near forestland may use forest resources according to some form of indigenous management system. In other locations, local communities are being seen as legitimate partners for the effective management of forest resources that, until recently, have been managed by government forestry authorities. Approaches taken

vary from country to country. For example, in Nepal, access and use rights to forests are given to forest user groups, whereas, in Vietnam, forestland is allocated to individual households. On the other hand, in Thailand, many community forestry initiatives are happening on the ground without any national framework to legitimise these local efforts. In contrast, the legal framework for community forestry is widely recognised in the Philippines, but it has yet to be translated into a reality that benefits local communities. At present most community forestry activities are planned and implemented within the individual country context (social, economic, political, and environmental). While this is important, many of the problems facing any one country in promoting community forestry are also common to other countries. Analysis of these issues and strategies to address them will be more effective if carried out jointly at the regional level rather than at the individual country level.

The most common problems are lack of sustainable and intensive forest management, livelihoods, governance, and institutional and role of stakeholders' issues. The vision of the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) is for local communities in the Asia-Pacific region to become actively involved in the equitable and ecologically sustainable management of forest landscapes. The implementation of this vision must be undertaken in the context of current international evidence about community forestry and poverty linkages and based on current international commitments to reach the poor.

The linkage of forestry development with poverty is a logical one. The evidence shows that community forestry intervention has provided positive outcomes for communities in developing countries, including the poorest people. This evidence (with examples from policy, strategic, and operational levels in at least one country, Nepal) provides a basis for suggesting that there is a significant potential for community forestry to achieve positive outcomes on a global scale.

## **Changing Perspective on Forests: Research and Policy Interface<sup>2</sup>**

*C. Kumar, CIFOR, New Delhi, India*

The changing paradigm in the forestry sector is pro-poor forestry, a multi-stakeholder approach to governance structure, and multiple products and services. The forest-poverty nexus is seen in the high incidence of poverty in forested regions; forests are increasingly being seen in the context of resources and opportunities for the poor, and the economies of many poor countries depend on forest products. Yet there are weak connections between policy processes, programme formulation, and implementation. Decentralisation and devolution in the forestry sector is a new challenge. Many conflicts have been observed in forested areas between the state and local communities and/or indigenous peoples. Corruption in the forestry sector undermines good governance. The Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), an international research and knowledge institution, focuses on three main themes – (i) livelihoods, (ii) environmental services, and (iii) governance. Regarding livelihood issues, it focuses on cash income from and the subsistence value of timber and non-timber forest products, technologies, institutional mechanisms, and policies. Furthermore, it addresses a range of livelihood issues such as community forestry and equitable use of resources; policies that affect sustainable forest management; financial marketing and technical services for communities; livelihoods and landscape approaches in conservation; and awareness of the importance of forests to local people. On environmental services, the

<sup>2</sup> Abstract compiled by the editors from the PowerPoint presentation, paper not included in Volume II

areas of research include biodiversity, carbon, fires, plantations, and watershed functions. The focus areas of governance for CIFOR encompass community forestry and decentralisation, financial sector regulation, conflicts in natural resource management, adaptive co-management of resources, financial management, negotiating skills, social learning and criteria, and indicators. The CIFOR approach to research embraces policy-relevant research grounded in a solid understanding of forest ecosystems. It targets key global institutions, processes, opinion leaders, and dissemination channels. It works with national and local partners to build local capacity.

## **Plenary Session 2: Lessons Learned from Community Forestry in Nepal**

*Chair: Dr. T.S. Mahat, Professor, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu*

In this session, Nepal's experience with community forestry was shared from the perspectives of various stakeholders: government (Department of Forests), communities Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN), and donor-assisted projects (SDC, GTZ) so that lessons in policy development and advocacy, institutional arrangements, and benefit-sharing mechanisms could be drawn for adoption by other countries and other forms of land use.

### **Nepal's Forest Policies on Community Forestry Development: the Government Perspective**

*K.R. Kanel, Department of Forest, Kathmandu, Nepal*

Forest user groups are managing more than 1.1 million hectares or 25% of the national forests. Although the greenery has been maintained and expanded in some areas, and local communities are getting various benefits, the programme still faces many challenges. These challenges include pro-poor orientation of the programme; focus on income generation activities; managing forests to produce 'in-demand' products and intensification; involvement of local government, and so on. Despite the achievements, the contribution of community forestry to poverty alleviation as targeted by the Tenth Plan or Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan and Millennium Development Goals is limited. In addition, challenges also lie in increasing the productivity of forests and strengthening good governance for equitable sharing of benefits. Therefore, the government is implementing programmes to tackle second generation reforms in three thematic areas: sustainable forest management, livelihood promotion, and good governance.

### **Forests, Community-based Governance and Livelihoods: Insights from the Nepal-Swiss Community Forestry Project**

*B.K. Pokharel; D. Paudyal, and B.D. Gurung, SDC, Kathmandu, Nepal*

Community forest user groups (CFUGs) in three mid-hill districts of Nepal (Dolakha, Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga) have been able to practise good forest governance and manage thousands of hectares of community forests, as well as to contribute to improving the condition of the forests and people's livelihoods. There is an increase in forest products available in terms of the trend of sustainable off-take of timber, fuelwood, and fodder. It is shown that, despite the difficult conflict situation prevailing in the country, CFUGs are practising inclusive democracy, in which there is increased

participation and representation of women and disadvantaged groups in leadership positions. These groups are directly contributing to increased access to education for socially-deprived populations through user group funds, self-employment and income-generating opportunities through forest products as ways of earning additional income, receiving greater opportunities for capacity building, and gaining access to group funds in times of crisis and natural disaster. CFUGs have not only contributed to forestry-related matters, but have also contributed to at least 16 areas of services lying within the domains of 17 government ministries.

While trends in governance, forest condition, and contribution of community forestry to livelihoods are positive, contemporary community forestry faces two major challenges. First, the intention and actions of the government, Maoist insurgents, and local government towards the autonomy of CFUGs, especially towards financial autonomy, are not clear. Second, the positive economic impact of community forestry is not as visible as expected in uplifting poor women and Dalit households. To address such challenges, multi-dimensional projects with major components of governance, forest resource management, pro-poor livelihoods, and enterprise-related interventions are necessary. Community forestry is a source of inspiration and a vehicle for change in the villages. These groups should be supported for a few more years to make them fully sustainable and self-reliant. This is possible if the project works through a conflict-sensitive management approach.



Pema Gyamtsho

ICIMOD Partnership Platforms 1/06

**Ms Sangeeta Khadka, Senior Community Development Advisor, with members of Kabhre Community Forest User Group**

## **Community Forestry in Nepal: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges – A Case Study of Gadibaraha Community Forest, Dang**

*G.S. Pandey, FECOFUN, Kathmandu, Nepal*

Although community forestry has made commendable achievements and provided unprecedented opportunities to rural communities, attempts to address the issues of empowering women and marginalised groups and to alleviate poverty achieved only limited success. Currently, the insurgency situation prevailing in many areas is hindering the smooth implementation of the programme and affecting the functioning of many community forest user groups (CFUGs), including that of the Gadibaraha CFUG. Both the security personnel and the insurgents are vying for control of the forests because of the income that they bring or for security reasons. The local people are afraid to enter the community forest, primarily due to threats from the conflicting parties. Although the policy and legal environment in Nepal is very favourable towards community forestry, its implementation is seriously jeopardised due to the lack of recognition and respect for the CFUGs as legal entities by the responsible sectors and actors in the field.

## **Restoring Balance through Community Forestry in the Churia and Terai of Eastern Nepal**

*J. Statz, C. Rai and B. Vickers, Churia Forestry Project, Lahan, Nepal*

Poverty, a dense population, and overuse of forest resources have been directly causing the degradation of Churia forest in eastern Nepal. Initially, the Churia Forestry Development Project adopted three strategies: (i) to increase the productivity of forests, (ii) to reduce consumption of forest products, and (iii) to decrease poverty. The core interventions were soil conservation and watershed management, community forestry, agroforestry, and private forestry to increase the productivity of forests. Energy-saving programmes were launched to reduce the consumption of forest products and savings and credit schemes were established for poverty alleviation. The project has contributed to the formation of about 400 forest user groups covering 52,000 ha of forest area and including over 50,000 households. About 1,000 full time and 12,000 part-time jobs have been created annually through community forestry. Similarly, NRs 7.5 million (approx. US\$ 100,000) has been accumulated in the forest user group funds and mobilised for local community development.

The project envisages several challenges facing the further development of community forestry in the Churia hill areas. The first set of challenges perceived by the project relates to second generation issues of community forestry such as sustainability of the interventions, lack of good governance, and lack of livelihood supportive activities. The second set of challenges relates to the equitable distribution and sharing of forest resources among users. For instance, the strategy focused on resident communities in northern areas, neglecting southern users and thus excluding the traditional distant users. The third set of challenges includes the localised CF approach (fragmented approach) that has little impact in the integrated planning process of natural resource management.

## Plenary Session 3: Presentation of Group Findings on Nepal's Experience in Community Forestry

*Chair: Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, Director General, ICIMOD*

Following Session 2, the participants were divided into three groups: i) policy and legislation, ii) institutions and support services, and iii) user groups and beneficiaries. Each group was assigned a specific task of identifying lessons and practical innovations from the various papers presented in Session 2 that could be used by other countries and adapted to other forms of land use. The following section is a synthesis of the groups' presentations.

The groups acknowledged that community forestry was a successful programme in Nepal. It has halted the deforestation and deterioration of natural forests while meeting the needs of rural communities for basic forest products, as well as generating revenue for financing community development work. They identified the following key points as useful ones for other countries to learn from Nepal.

### **a) Evolution of community forests (CFs)**

In Nepal, the concept of protection and basic management of forests was already rooted in the community. Encouraged by successful results from the initiatives of local communities supported by the forestry department and its partners, it was gradually extended to a larger area. The following elements have been identified as useful lessons.

- Community forestry has evolved by allowing it to be tried and practised first before developing policy and legislation.
- Initially, the forest user groups were formed as local institutions that have access and control over forest resources for their subsistence needs.
- Well-defined rights and responsibilities of the user groups have enabled them to function smoothly.
- Primary users have been authorised to act as managers of the forest and the revenue generated from it.
- The functions of the CFUGs started from protection of forests and gradually progressed towards active management.
- Both forestry personnel and user groups are improving their technical skills in multiple forestry and multipurpose use of forests.
- Community forests are now gradually becoming a good source of income.

### **b) Policy framework**

The following elements of policy development and advocacy had favoured the development of community forestry in Nepal.

- The Decentralisation Act 1982 favoured community forestry development.
- The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (1989), which is the main long-term forestry policy in Nepal, strongly supported community forestry as the top priority programme.
- The Forest Act 1993 enshrined forest user groups' rights.
- Policies have evolved from practical lessons from the field, that is, 'from practice to policy' rather than the conventional approach of 'from policy to practice'.

- Forest policies made very clear provisions that encouraged people's participation in community forestry.
- There was flexibility and space in operational plans and rules to take on innovative work at grassroots' level.
- Both the government and people have recognised the centrality of community participation in managing the dwindling forest resources and incorporated it in the policy framework and strategy.
- Persistent dialogue and cooperation with long-term development partners have been influential in creating awareness and influencing changes in the mindset and attitudes of policy-makers in favour of community management of forests.

### **c) Users' motivating factors**

The Forest Act 1993 and Forest Regulations 1995 provided a strong legal framework that explicitly specified the rights and duties of the district forest officers and forest user groups. The motivating factors of the users are as follows.

- The enabling legal framework
- Simple and realistic rules and procedures that are prepared by the user groups and easily enforced
- Well-defined rights and duties of user groups
- Allocation of forest area compatible with the size of user groups identified
- Existing traditional demarcation of boundaries of forest area under forest user groups
- Gradual development of the capacity of user groups from executing simple record-keeping functions to more complex financial and technical functions
- The flexibility provided by existing legislation to allow innovations at local level
- The positive attitude of senior-level authorities in government institutions towards community forestry.

### **d) The process of implementing community forestry**

In Nepal, the Community Forestry Guidelines and Community Forestry Manuals clearly specify the stepwise process for the identification of forests and users, formation of user groups, legal registration, and the handing over and taking over process of forest management responsibility. In addition, there are other technical guidelines on forest management and other guidelines on group management, record keeping, financial management, and other institutional aspects for forest user groups. The development of community forestry in Nepal was helped by a number of other factors, some of which were country-specific. The participants identified the following as some of the most important elements.

- The concept of user groups already existed in communities.
- The Decentralization Act 1982 also favoured community forestry.
- The Forest Act 1993 enshrined forest user groups' rights.
- Rights and responsibilities are enshrined in parallel.
- Forest policies made very clear provisions that encouraged people's participation in community forestry.
- There is a lot of room in operational plans and rules to include innovative work at the grassroots' level.

## Plenary Session 4: Case Studies on Other CBNRMs from the Region

*Chair: Mr. Paul Egger, Head, East Asia Division, SDC, Bern, Switzerland*

This session was devoted to sharing experiences in other forms of community-based management of natural resources from different countries. It included presentations on social forestry from Bhutan, leasehold forestry and protected area management in Nepal, Guzara forestry in Pakistan, wetland management in China, and rangeland and forest management in Mongolia.

### Community Forestry in Bhutan: Experiences and the Way Forward

*Chado Tshering, Department of Forests, Bhutan*

This paper provides a brief history of the evolution of forest policy in Bhutan, particularly in relation to the development of social forestry, and then presents the findings of a nationwide study<sup>3</sup> on community forestry (CF). Forestry in Bhutan has a long history of communal management. However, modern concepts of CF are a recent introduction with the establishment of the first CF in 1997. Despite this slow beginning, today there are 23 approved CFs in various stages of operation. The CF study involved visits to 15 CFs in the country. Some of the main findings of the study are as follow.

- a) The prevailing government policies and legislation are conducive to promotion of CF programmes in Bhutan.



**Social forestry has great potential for success in Bhutan: a typical village in Bumthang, Bhutan**

<sup>3</sup> Case study prepared by the Social Forestry Division with assistance from the Participatory Forest Management Project (SDC-financed) and the Bhutan-German Sustainable Resources Development Project (financed through GTZ).

- b) The community forestry management groups (CFMGs) are managing the forests in a responsible and conservative manner and in general they are following the prescriptions of the approved management plan.
- c) The capacity of stakeholders, including the communities and forestry extension staff in various fields, needs improving, particularly in forest management planning, operational aspects, and community mobilisation skills.
- d) Community forestry has the potential to contribute towards environmental conservation, livelihood improvement, and complementing the government's efforts towards decentralisation and to ensure people's participation.
- e) The principles and approaches of CF should be applied to manage forest resources other than trees: resources that are important for increasing rural incomes and sustaining rural livelihoods.
- f) Strategies and mechanisms should be put in place to address potential issues concerning inequities – among the CFMG members, between CFMGs and non-members, and between resource rich and poor villages.

### **Creating Community Tenure: Policies and Institutions for Community Based Management**

*J. G. Campbell and D. Thapa, ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal*

Defining and deconstructing land tenure is a complex process in South Asia. Tenure is overlapping. The same plot of land is perceived as having a different tenure status from state ownership to private ownership, depending on who is asked. Overlaps exist not only between the land use and use rights of various stakeholders but also between de jure and de facto tenure. Hence, getting a clear picture of the tenure stakeholders is the first step towards establishing a successful community-based land use and natural resource management approach like community forestry.

As actual use and use rights often overlap, management choices affect the interests of the various stakeholders. That is, the short-term and long-term goals of management and the technologies required to achieve them invariably affect tenure and shares received by competing claimants. Therefore, it is important that a co-management approach involving all stakeholders, and taking into account the interest of various groups through a negotiated process, is pursued while developing management plans.

### **Leasehold Forestry – An Endeavour to Reduce Poverty**

*J.K. Tamrakar and G.P. Kafley, Department of Forests, Kathmandu, Nepal*

Nepal's forests, occupying almost 40% of the total area, represent key resources for facilitating land-based economic improvements in the country. At the same time, Nepal, with its hilly and fragile environment, cannot do without the environmental services provided by its forests. Thus, there is a tested, new concept which marries forest management with agricultural management. Degraded forest land is leased out to groups of the poorest people, securing them long-term land use rights, whereas ownership is vested in the government in order to meet the twin objectives of poverty alleviation and environmental amelioration. This concept has been successfully implemented for twelve years and has yielded positive results. While community forestry has been able to improve the health of forests and the local environment, its suitability for tackling poverty alleviation was questionable. In view of this, leasehold



G.P. Katley

**Women planting asparagus on leasehold forest land, which provides an immediate source of income**



Anwar Ali

**ICIMOD Partnership Platforms 1/06**

**Plantation of fast-growing trees on degraded forest land carried out through ICIMOD's People and Resource Dynamics Project**

forestry is seen to be a more poverty-focused approach to managing degraded forest lands and would complement the efforts made under the CF programme.

This paper, by analysing the current situation, tries to establish complementarities between community forestry and leasehold forestry so that greater numbers of poverty-stricken people can benefit than heretofore.

### **Management of Guzara Forests; Policies and Their Implication in Hazara Division, North West Frontier Province, Pakistan**

*Anwar Ali, Pakistan Forest Institute, Hilkot, Pakistan*

The management of Guzara forests in the Hazara Division of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan is carried out through a variety of ownership arrangements. Legally the forests are broadly divided between state (reserved) and private (Guzara) forests. The deeply dissected land-tenure system and the ongoing conflicts between the government and forest owners and users have led to the drastic degradation of the resource. Since 1947, the government has enacted a series of forest policies to manage the meagre forest resources of the country, but none of these policies has been effectively implemented on the ground. Moreover most of the policies were aimed at the generation of revenue from the forests and little attention was given to environmental aspects and rural livelihoods. They were prepared through a top-down approach and community participation was not considered essential in policy formulation. Subsequently, these policies failed to achieve their objectives. Though forest legislation limits the rights of local people in the forests, the majority of them still have access to forest resources in the area. They fulfil all their requirements from these forests, but contribute nothing to the protection and development of the resource. It is feared that if nothing is done to check this process, these forests will soon disappear. The study argues for the introduction of a participatory forest management system and identifies options for and approaches to the sustainable development of the resource and improvement of rural livelihoods in the area.

### **Nepal's Buffer Zone Programme: A Showcase of Participatory Approach in Protected Area Management**

*S. Bajimaya, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Kathmandu, Nepal*

Protected area management is now focused on meeting people's basic needs so that resource use pressures on parks/reserves decrease. The buffer zone programme has made remarkable progress, particularly in natural resource conservation, social mobilisation and social capital generation, development of alternative energy, and human resource development at the community level.

The institutionalisation of different community-based organisations in buffer zones is a stepping stone towards empowering and involving people in resource management. Revenue sharing in buffer zones is considered to be an important factor in reducing park-people conflicts and enhancing the community's perceptions about protected areas. User group formation at settlement level is found to be very effective in improving social integration and encouraging a high level of people's participation. The participatory decision-making processes of buffer-zone institutions have made the people more accountable to buffer-zone communities. Capital generation and mobilisation is one of the key components of community development initiatives.

For the sustainability of the institution and programme, it is strongly recommended to improve buffer-zone legislation, forging partnerships with all relevant partners, establishing sustainable funding sources, and strengthening the buffer-zone networking forum in order to share experiences among various stakeholders laterally and vertically. Furthermore, it emphasizes improvement in management capability by providing training for community and staff at all levels. It is also suggested that a spatial strategy be introduced for promoting each protected area and developing a plan that is pro-poor, pro-women, and pro-special target groups. Adequate conservation awareness and outreach and skill enhancement programmes should be designed to meet the needs of the target groups and encourage local people to be custodians for the conservation of resources.

## **Threat Analysis to Wetland Conservation and Local Livelihoods in North-west Yunnan, China**

*Li Bo, Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge, Kunming, Yunnan, SW China*

The alpine lakes and wetlands in the mountains of south-west China in north-west Yunnan – one of 34 worldwide biodiversity hotspots<sup>4</sup> – represent a unique but inadequately studied and protected aquatic ecosystem. Traditional communities, such as the Tibetans, the Naxi, and the Yi are the prominent groups, and they graze their livestock on the summer alpine mountain pastures where alpine lakes and wetlands are scattered from 2,400 to 4,000 masl or higher. Among these groups, the Tibetan and the Naxi regard many landscape features such as mountain peaks, lakes, and wetlands as sacred sites. The local communities' roles and interests in continuing to manage and have access to these areas are evident, their knowledge about managing natural resources and their cultural linkages with the landforms form the very foundations for local stewardship, as a contribution to maintaining the mosaic alpine ecosystems for the generations who live and will continue to live in north-west Yunnan. However new threats have emerged as a result of tourism projects and are posing problems not only for conserving the wetlands, but also for sustaining local communities' livelihoods. New policy tools and monitoring mechanisms need to be put in place to keep a close watch on wetland development.

## **Community Forestry in Mongolia**

*J. v. d. Horst, DED GTZ Project, Mongolia<sup>5</sup>*

This presentation gives an account of the GTZ community forestry project in Mandal Soum in Mongolia. Historically, the Mongolian forestry sector has gone through drastic changes. In the 1960s, state forestry enterprises were established as 'Forestry Villages' and used for producing timber. In the 1990s, following the collapse of the socialist style economy and entry into the market economy, the state enterprises were privatised, but most of them collapsed after a few years. Former loggers then resorted to illegal logging to support their livelihoods, resulting in rapid loss of forest cover. Ultimately this led the government to change forestry policy to include more conservation measures. In 2000, community forestry was introduced but without permission for commercial use by the user community. The lack of authority to use the forest for commercial purposes meant that the forest user groups (FUGs) were not motivated and illegal logging continued unabated. This has been aggravated by institutional corruption and, as a result, forest degradation is continuing to date.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots/hotspotsScience/>

<sup>5</sup> Abstract compiled by the editors from the PowerPoint presentation, paper not included in Volume II



Li Bo

Wetlands are important sources of livelihood (Yunnan, China)



Enkh-Amgalans Teseelei

A typical pastoral scene in Mongolia

The aim of the GTZ project was to set up demonstration plots and show local forest users and other stakeholders how a forest management plan can be developed and implemented. The management plan consisted of both protection and utilisation activities. The steps included selection of three demonstration plots from existing CF and obtaining recognition of FUGs as an economic entity. A forestry inventory was made and capacity building of government officials and FUG members undertaken. Based on participatory approaches, operational plans were drawn up for the demonstration plots. The results to date have shown that alternative, improved use and management of forests are possible in a practical way if user and tenure rights are addressed. It is expected that the project's experience will form the basis for amending the forest law.

## **Pasture Management in Mongolia – Challenges and Opportunities**

*E.A. Tseelei, SDC, Mongolia<sup>6</sup>*

Grasslands in Mongolia make up approximately 82% of the land area and are home to 23.9 million head of livestock. They provide the source of livelihood for 175,900 herding families and provide employment for 45% of the workforce. The pastoral sector accounted for 21% of the national gross domestic product (GDP) in 2003. Nomadic herding is a way of life for Mongolians and is deeply rooted in the country's long history and rich culture. Recently pasture management has taken centre stage on the government's development agenda because of rising concerns about desertification and loss of livelihood for herders.

Currently more than 76% of the country's pasturelands are subject to overgrazing and desertification, and the rate of degradation is increasing drastically from year to year. The livelihood of herders is at risk as a result of the combined effects of fast degrading pasturelands and frequent natural disasters like drought and severe winters. This situation, which represents a classic case of the tragedy of the commons, was brought about by the privatisation of livestock ownership in the early 1990s, following the collapse of the collective system, without corresponding changes being made in the tenure of pastures – which allowed literally free access to all, anywhere and any time.

After the recent crisis induced by repeated drought and severe cold winters, the herders are willing to learn new skills and adopt appropriate technologies to improve their pasturelands. There is increased willingness among herder groups to cooperate and more authority is devolved to local governments to plan and regulate land use within the framework of a new land law. If pasture degradation is halted, Mongolia will have the opportunity to produce organic livestock products using its natural environment and extensive areas and to promote tourism as a major alternative source of income generation for the herders.

Many development agencies are presently assisting the Mongolian Government in improving the condition of pastures and supporting the livelihoods of herders. SDC introduced a programme in 2003 now popularly known as the 'Green Gold – Pasture Ecosystem Management Programme'. The programme is designed to test and introduce appropriate technologies and methods to improve degraded pastures, promote collaborative management, and support more enabling policy reforms on land tenure to enhance sustainable management of pastures and livelihood strategies. The programme has, for the first time in Mongolia, involved herders in the formulation of

<sup>6</sup> Abstract compiled by the editors from the PowerPoint presentation, paper not included in Volume II

the plans so that their concerns and priorities are included. It is also fully managed by Mongolians with minimum backstopping with the objective of building in-house capacity for planning and implementing community-led pasture management plans.

## Mining in Mongolia – Challenges and Opportunities

*M. Birvaa, SDC, Mongolia<sup>7</sup>*

Mongolia has huge resources of minerals with an estimated 6,000 sites with deposits of copper, gold, fluorspar, coal, and others. The minerals were exploited by the government under the framework of the Gold Programme in the early 1990s and the Mineral Law of 1997. In recent years, the number of mines and mining production has skyrocketed with now over 135 companies accounting for 50% of industrial outputs and 40% of export earnings. The earnings have been invested in supporting the development of social service sectors.

With rising unemployment and poverty, informal 'Ninja' mining has emerged as a means of income for many affected people. These illegal, unauthorised, and unregistered miners are posing a serious social and environmental threat as their numbers have increased from around a thousand in one or two provinces in the 1990s to at least 100,000 in 12 provinces at present. They include the urban and rural poor, herders who lost their animals during the drought and 'zuds' (severe cold winters), students, and pensioners. The environmental impact is substantial – the placer mines are causing sedimentation of rivers and increasing turbidity of water and the hard-rock mining is exposing the soil, water, and air to contamination by mercury. The demand for fuel results in cutting down trees, while mineral prospecting is rendering pastures into wastelands.

Ninja mining has the potential to be a useful livelihood strategy for the poor if some form of regulation can be introduced. It has also created secondary opportunities for

establishing services, such as lodgings and eateries, for the community of ninjas providing income and employment to other poor people. With no other more lucrative alternatives, the numbers are likely to grow.

Some socially-oriented projects were introduced to assist the Ninja miners and create awareness among the formal and informal miners about the environmental impacts of indiscriminate and random mining. A draft law on artisanal mining is being prepared which is aimed at regulating the level and intensity of mining and reducing negative environmental impacts.



Munkhjargaal Birvaa

**A 'Ninja' miner at work at a mine site in Mongolia**

<sup>7</sup> Abstract compiled by the editors from the PowerPoint presentation, paper not included in Volume II

## Plenary Session 5: Presentation of Group Work and Recommendations on Cross-sharing of Lessons

*Chair: Mr. Jochen Statz, Team Leader, Churia Hill Forest Development Project, Lahan, Nepal*

The participants were organised into four groups to identify areas in which the lessons and learning from community forestry could be applied to other forms of land use in Nepal as well as other countries and vice versa. The groups were on i) Leasehold Forestry, ii) Social Forestry, iii) Joint Forestry and Guzara Forestry, and iv) Wetlands and Rangelands. The findings of the groups are synthesised in the following sections.

### **i) Cross-learning between community forestry and leasehold forestry in Nepal**

The main difference between community forestry and leasehold forestry is that CF covers all the households in a community without discriminating between them in terms of socioeconomic status, whereas in leasehold forestry only poor households are included. Similarly, all types of forests are eligible to be handed over to communities under community forestry without considering their condition, while, under leasehold forestry, only degraded forests are considered. Community forestry helps to satisfy the needs of all users for basic forest products, as well as promoting community development activities such as drinking water provision, roads and trails, and schools, whereas leasehold forestry provides options for individual households to improve their standards of living; both are ultimately aimed at developing the condition of forests.

In one decade, leasehold forestry has proven to be an effective instrument for poverty alleviation and rehabilitation of degraded forests with the active participation of poor households. However, there are many lessons that leasehold forestry can learn from community forestry, as summarised below.

#### *Policy*

- Adopt the process and criteria for selection of participants from community forestry.
- Learn from the constitutions of CFUGs and use them in leasehold forest groups.
- Adopt a decentralisation approach in delegation of authority to a district forest officer for leasing lands to poor families.
- Learn about natural resource management in community forests and apply it to the leasehold forests.

#### *Institution*

- Learn from community forestry about federation (organisation) of leasehold groups at district and national level.
- Learn about participatory decision-making from CFUGs, as this is a tested model for participatory and collective decision-making for benefit-sharing, resource management, and conflict resolution.

#### *Users/beneficiaries*

- Adopt participatory approaches.
- Learn about capacity building for groups.
- Learn about collective management and sharing of inputs and benefits from community forestry.

Equally there are some valuable lessons that community forestry can learn from leasehold forestry, mainly in terms of policy

- Leasehold Forest Policy (2002) is a good policy which creates a good link between ecological rehabilitation and poverty alleviation.
- Inputs and benefits come and go directly from and to individuals (i.e., the poor).
- The understanding that you have to do something specific for the poor if they are to benefit.

Leasehold Forestry and Community Forestry can complement and support each other in the following aspects.

- Community and leasehold forestry should be put on the same footing at policy level, rather than prioritising one or the other, as both have specific applications depending on the socioeconomic and ecological conditions.
- The leasehold forestry approach can be applied to some community forests to address the needs of the poorest members.
- The management systems of community and leasehold forestry should depend on the needs of local people and available resources.

## **ii) Cross-learning between community forestry in Nepal and social forestry in Bhutan**

The Bhutan Forest Policy 1991 and the Forest and Nature Conservation Act 1995 both emphasise the need to reinvigorate traditional forestry institutions and engage local communities in the management of forests. It retracts the centralisation approach to forest management and commoditisation of forest resources promoted by previous forest policies and legislations. The Forest and Nature Conservation Act 1995 clearly spells out the user rights of communities and individuals with regards to forest area management. Further, to facilitate implementation of participatory forest management, a set of rules regarding social and community forestry was also incorporated in the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules 2003. Although Bhutan introduced community forestry in 1997 and is still working under a centralised system, there has been a great deal of learning in a short period of time. Some of the key lessons from Bhutan's social forestry programme are as follows.

### *Policy*

- Forest management should be holistic to accommodate all functions and roles (conservation, biodiversity, community needs, watershed and river protection, wildlife, carbon sequestration, and so on).
- Improved upstream-downstream relations are needed (nationally as well as regionally) recognising the impact of forest use upstream on the ecology and livelihoods of people living in downstream areas.

### *Planning process*

- Participatory land use planning allows for integration of the concerns of various stakeholders.
- Forest management unit level planning allows for ease of implementation and monitoring.
- 'Simple mapping' can be applied to the forest inventory process



Pema Gyamtsho

**Early trials on a private silvopastoral plantation in Dhur Bumthang show very promising results (altitude 3,100 masl)**

### *Policy*

Forest policies in Nepal and Bhutan developed around the same time. Nepal's Master Plan for the Forestry Sector was launched in 1989 while Bhutan's was launched in 1991. However, some major differences exist between the policies of the two countries with regard to community forestry. Nepal's forest policy is broader and allows forest user groups to decide about forest management, forest utilisation, and use of funds. Taxation is the key instrument used for regulating the sale of surplus non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and other forest products in-country and abroad by user groups. The Forest Act 1993 explicitly favours the devolution of forest management to user groups and district forest officers are authorised to allot forests to user groups. In Bhutan, authority is still centralised. Only the forest directorate can approve the management plans of community forest units. The district forest officers are not authorised to hand over forest plots to forest user groups.

### *Institutions*

In Nepal, forest user groups are registered under the Forest Act 1993 and Forest Regulation 1995 as a legal entity and an autonomous body. The apex level organisation, the Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN), has a nationwide network and is very strong in advocacy for the protection of user group rights. Bhutan can learn much from Nepal about institutionalisation of community forestry.

The delegation of authority from central to district level is much more comprehensive in the case of Nepal with the district forest officer having authority to hand over forests

to user groups, whereas in Bhutan only the Head of the Department of Forests can approve such an allotment. In Nepal, NGOs are actively involved in capacity building of community-based organisations (the forest user groups), whereas there is no involvement of NGOs in the forestry sector in Bhutan. Community forestry development in Bhutan is more complex in view of the concessions already given to rural households on timber for house construction and fuelwood and grazing rights in state forests. Under the circumstances, there is little additional incentive for communities to come forward to adopt community forestry. Bhutan is also facing equity problems, particularly at the internal and regional level.

### *Users/beneficiaries*

Both Nepal and Bhutan widely adopt participatory processes in community forestry. In Nepal, community forest user groups (CFUGs) are well established and functional, whereas in Bhutan they are still in the initial stages of formation. Therefore, CFUGs in Bhutan can learn much from the CFUGs in Nepal – from developing constitutions to formulating and implementing management plans, particularly in the areas of social inclusion and gender mainstreaming.

### **iii) Cross-Learning between community forestry in Nepal, joint forest management in India, and Guzara forest in Pakistan**

Guzara forests (GF) in Pakistan are held under a variety of ownership arrangements. Legally, the forests are broadly divided between state (reserved forest) and private (Guzara) forests. Due to the complexity of forest ownership, the Guzara forests are not managed and their condition is deteriorating rapidly. They are in the public domain where use-rights are claimed by local people without taking responsibility for management. There are government policies and laws, but they are not effectively enforced by government agencies.

Joint forest management (JFM) in India has evolved from the urgent need of local communities for water, watershed conservation, and basic forest products. Most of the JFM schemes are protection-oriented and started from degraded forests like leasehold forests in Nepal. The revenue is shared between the Forest Department and the communities. Community forestry in Nepal is much more liberal in its policy and legal framework than JFM in India, since all accessible forests (without considering forest condition) can be handed over to the local communities as per their capabilities and willingness to manage them. Some of the major lessons that could be shared between the various management systems are as follows.

- The user group formation process used for CF in Nepal could be adopted by JFM in India and GF in Pakistan.
- While the structure of management plans is similar in all the countries, the objectives of the plans in the cases of JFM and GF can be reoriented more towards fulfilling the social needs of local communities. Privileges and rights need to be transferred to local communities for management and use of forests in Pakistan and some areas of India, as is done in Nepal.
- The mechanism for sharing revenue between the government and local communities under JFM could be adapted to CF in Nepal and GF in Pakistan to reduce the conflict of interests between these parties.
- Guzara forests in Pakistan could be converted into community forests with minor adjustments.

#### iv) Cross-learning between community forestry in Nepal and the Mongolian approach to forest and rangeland management

The group discussing this topic recognised the wide differences in tenurial systems for forests and other natural resources between Nepal and Mongolia. In Mongolia natural resources, such as forests and rangelands, are still very much free access common pool resources with little regulation on their use and exploitation. Therefore, the application of lessons from CF in Nepal would only be possible if changes in resource tenures are legislated that would allow communities to own or lease forests and rangelands on a long-term basis. However, it was acknowledged that the concept, principles, and processes of community forestry in Nepal can provide useful lessons for Mongolia. The following areas were identified as particularly promising.

- Formation of user groups and their constitutions
- Development of management plans and their implementation
- Sharing of responsibilities between the government, communities, private sector, and NGOs in managing natural resources
- Formulation and legislation of enabling policies for CBNRM
- Capacity-building of beneficiary groups and government officials in participatory approaches to planning and implementing management plans for common resources.



Samjhana Thapa

Group discussions

## Closing Session

*Chair: Mr. Mike Nurse, Manager, Regional Analysis and Representation, RECOFTC, Thailand*

**Dr. Golam Rasul** presented a summary of the proceedings of the workshop and the key findings from the plenary and group discussions. The report was acknowledged by the workshop participants to be a fair record of the workshop's process and deliberations, and it was suggested that it be edited for formal publication.

The Chair then opened the floor for discussion on the conclusions of the workshop and the next steps to be taken. The following consensus emerged from the discussions.

- 1) Recognising that there has been an extraordinary overall success of community-based forest and resource management when enabled and supported by strong policies and programmes, and that a number of second generation issues are now emerging which need to be addressed, this wealth of experience provides a proven basis for promoting, expanding, and consolidating community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) within a very heterogeneous environment – within community forestry which we know the best – and also in biodiversity, rangelands and pastures, and watershed and community agroforestry systems;
- 2) Acknowledging the commitment of the governments and the awareness already generated about community-based management of forests and other natural resources, the delegates from each country should take the initiative to identify priority areas of intervention and action plans to accelerate the process in their respective countries;
- 3) Appreciating that SDC and GTZ have made immense contributions in terms of financial and technical assistance to the cause of community-based management of natural resources in the region and have accumulated years of experience from different projects, they should continue to provide support to the region in formulating and implementing forest and land use management programmes; and
- 4) Considering the complementarity between the mandates and their relative areas of strength, form an informal working group among the international agencies to provide support to the participants and other relevant partners in each country to take forward their agenda for priority action. (CIFOR has a distinguished history as a research-based institution; RECOFTC is similarly distinguished in capacity building; and ICIMOD has a strong programme to support policy dialogue and advocacy. Such a grouping should include SDC and GTZ which are both core supporters of the above institutions.)

Following this, Dr. Renate Braun, representing SDC on behalf of Mr. Joerg Frieden, Country Director, Nepal, and Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, representing ICIMOD, gave the closing remarks.

**Dr. Renate Braun, Assistant Country Director, SDC Nepal**, emphasized that Nepal's experience can serve as a useful example of how community-based, incentive-focused forest management and the devolution of forest management authority to local groups can reverse forest degradation and deforestation of hills. She stressed that people's

participation and locally owned democratic institutions with equitable benefit sharing and social inclusion in decision-making processes are crucial for any kind of sustainable management of natural resources with other ecological, socioeconomic conditions to enable and ensure sustainable livelihoods and tangible poverty alleviation.

Concluding, Dr. Braun reiterated the importance of an enabling policy environment and legal framework for safeguarding both local interests related to sustainable and improved livelihoods as well as national, regional, and global interests of protection and conservation. She stressed the need for more collaboration among regional centres, donors, and countries working on forestry and other natural resources and expressed her hope that the workshop had provided a good opportunity for the creation of new partnerships and collaborations among many of the participants. She thanked all the participants for the active part they had taken in making the workshop a success.

**Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, Director General, ICIMOD**, expressed his satisfaction with the workshop and mentioned that it had been a personal and professional pleasure for him to join others in this important regional workshop on forest policies and land use policies in Asia. He said that the discussions had been stimulating and frank and that the workshop had attained its objective of enabling countries from the region to learn from each other; and to identify needs for addressing new and old policy issues, applied adaptive research, and capacity building. However, the environment for carrying forward the recommendations from the workshop is not all rosy. There are some potential dangers, and some active forces within, with which we have to work and continue to debate and find both policy and practical solutions.

On the one hand, there is the concern that, in some countries and with some resources, there is still great resistance to providing sufficient tenurial and related resource use rights and decision-making powers, along with the skills training and back-up support needed, to empower local communities adequately. On the other hand, constant dangers of rights and tenure control being withdrawn have emerged. Whether in the name of increased biodiversity conservation, or in the name of imposing greater equity through outside decision-making over resources, or in the name of unnegotiated taxation or revenue-sharing, there are many rationales for undermining community decision-making. They may have good intentions, but the consequences for long-term institutional growth and sustainability are often not considered.

Dr. Campbell concluded that there is a need to get together often in forums such as these and to keep working vigilantly to develop and adapt policies and programmes that will increase the ability of these vital natural resources to support the sustainable development of poor mountain regions. He assured the participants of ICIMOD's continued interest and commitment to following up on the workshop results and towards supporting such dialogues in future.

**Mr. Mike Nurse**, the Chair for the Session, thanked all the participants and speakers and expressed his satisfaction with the way the workshop was conducted and the results of the various sessions. On behalf of RECOFTC, he extended his appreciation to the participants, the organisers, the sponsoring agencies, and all those who worked behind the scenes to make the workshop a success.

## Feedback on the Workshop

At the end of the workshop, participants were requested to provide feedback on four key issues regarding the workshop.

1. What did you like about this workshop?
2. What could have been better?
3. What was the contribution of the workshop to enhancing the understanding of CF and other forest management practices in the region?
4. What sort of follow-up would you recommend?

On the first issue, the participants particularly mentioned the good learning experiences provided during the field trip. It was food for thought for outsiders who were not aware of the context of community forestry in Nepal. Similarly, the sharing of the forest and rangeland management practices applied by Mongolia and other countries using the user group concept was a good learning exercise for Nepal as well as other countries. The workshop also helped to share awareness about different modalities of natural resource management in this region, and gave excellent information about different policies, practices, and contemporary issues in various countries.

Regarding the second question, the participants would have liked to have had in-depth and detailed discussions on second generation issues of community forestry in Nepal, leasehold forestry, joint forest management or collaborative management, and Guzara forest management.

On the third issue, the participants explicitly expressed that community forestry is more than managing trees. Issues and concerns in CF are beyond the forests; rather it is a social process. It is not a blueprint approach, but a set of principles and philosophies that should be taken on board in achieving community forest management. The workshop had enhanced the understanding of different modalities such as leasehold forestry, buffer-zones, and other forms of forest management.

In relation to the last issue on follow-up, the participants recommended building a network at regional level to share experiences, learning, and spin-offs for scaling up community-based management of natural resources. There should be better collaboration between international action (ICIMOD, RECOFCT, CIFOR) and national action and projects.