Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission

REACHING CONSENSUS

Multi-stakeholder processes in forestry: experiences from the Asia-Pacific region

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FOREWORD

Since the Earth Summit at Rio in 1992, there has been a significant change in the institutional settings for forest management dialogue and decision-making. Prior to Rio, the most common paradigm could be characterized as a top down one of "government knows best." However, in many countries this led to considerable conflict over many aspects of the way that forests were managed, not least being agreement on the social objectives of forest management. Progress became mired in uncertainty and dissension. Since 1992, there has been a universally accepted focus on the goal of *sustainable forest management*, with its emphasis on integrating economic, social and environmental outcomes. However, a social construct such as sustainability is subject to competing claims over its interpretation, and it is inevitably contested at all levels from the global to the local. This has meant a move towards a more inclusive approach to decision making; one that has involved an expansion of the number of stakeholders involved in debating and making decisions about forest issues.

By nature, forestry is multi-disciplinary and highly complex. In addition to timber needed to sustain forest industries, forests provide a wide range of goods and services that ultimately ensure the well-being of societies. They provide food, medicine and other plant material directly needed by humans, help to maintain the hydrological cycle, regulate climate, harbor biodiversity, protect cultural values, and support other economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism and wood-based industries.

Considering the broad range of people and sectors impacted by forests, decision-making in forestry can no longer be the exclusive domain of governments and the privileged groups of people. For forest management to be successful in today's world, mechanisms must be established to ensure effective participation of diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes. The purpose of such multi-stakeholder processes is to balance the perspectives and priorities of all affected and interested individuals and groups, leading to forest management approaches that better serve the needs and priorities of all. Such processes also serve to foster wider

support and a sense of ownership for the decisions that are taken, so that their implementation will be more effective.

Over the past two decades, a large number of multi-stakeholder processes have been established in Asia and the Pacific to strengthen forest management decision-making. Some have been founded at the regional or international levels, but most are active at national or local levels, where forest management has the greatest immediate impact on individuals. International organizations, such as FAO, should continue to play a role in building the capacity of forestry and other agencies to facilitate and promote more generalized multi-stakeholder dialogues and decision-making.

Experiences of the multi-stakeholder processes in the Asia-Pacific region have been mixed. Initially, progress was been slow, but more recently there is evidence that the forest management paradigm is changing for the better. More and more multi-stakeholder processes are being established and existing processes appear to be benefiting from the experiences of earlier initiatives. This publication is intended to further increase the knowledge and understanding of multi-stakeholder processes in forestry in the Asia-Pacific region. We hope that it will subsequently lead to more rapid adoption of multi-stakeholder processes that are truly effective in delivering the diverse benefits of forests to society in a balanced and equitable manner.

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ACRONYMS

ACICAFOC	Central American Association for Indigenous and Agroforestry Communities
AFP	Asia Forest Partnership
APFC	Asia Pacific Forestry Commission
CAR	Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
COFO	Committee on Forestry
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
CRA	Comprehensive Regional Assessment (Australia)
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DFCC	District Forest Coordination Committee
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Philippines)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGLG	Forest Governance Learning Groups
FLEG	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Task Force
ForestPACT	Forest Partnership for Action and Commitment Today
FPCD	Foundation for People and Community Development
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FSSP	Forestry Partnership
FSSP&P	Forest Sector Support Program and Partnership
FUG	Forest User Group
GFTN	Global Forest and Trade Network
IAF	International Agreement on Forests
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Center

IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
IGO	International governmental organization
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPF	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
LGU	Local government units
MFP	Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme
5MHRP	5 Million Hectare Reforestation Project
MNSC	Multi-stakeholder national steering committee
MSP	Multi-stakeholder process
NFP	National forest programme
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIPAS	National Integrated Protected Areas System
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PAMB	Protected Area Management Board
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center
RFA	Regional Forest Agreement
RIL	Reduced Impact Logging
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TFD	The Forests Dialogue
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VFDS	Vietnam National Forestry Development Strategy
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement

WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCFSD	World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development
WRI	World Resources Institute
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWF/IUCN	World Wide Fund for Nature/World Conservation Union

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"To remain relevant…forestry institutions must evolve into or be replaced by new organization norms that are characterized by open, learning institutions that are based on participation, collaboration and mutual learning through adaptive management and action research."
(Cassells, 2001 p.7)

Unlike in the old days, it does not make sense any more to sit with a few friends in some headquarters office cooking up national plans for forests. You have to involve people in planning if your plan is to have much hope of being listened to and implemented by them.
(Mayers, 2003, p.1)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Persson (2003), in an analysis of assistance to forestry in recent decades, concludes that forestry itself will do little to influence the rate of deforestation, as the main reasons for deforestation lie outside the forestry sector. He also concludes that sustainable forest management is rarely practiced in the tropics except on an experimental scale. In spite of this rather pessimistic assessment, there is little doubt that discussion and debate about forestry will continue. A plethora of institutional arrangements (partnerships, alliances, pacts, etc.) has emerged during the past decade at international, regional, national and sub-national levels to address the topic of sustainable forest management. Many, particularly those that originated at international and regional levels, are motivated by an interest in addressing single issues, such as forest landscape restoration, illegal logging, governance, certification, plantation and fire management guidelines as a contribution towards sustainable forest management. Others, such as the national forest programmes and model forests, are focused on achieving sustainable forest management in a more holistic manner.

Many of these new institutional arrangements can be categorized as multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs), which are perceived as being appropriate institutional vehicles for ensuring that:

- the issues to be addressed do represent those of a wide range of stakeholders; and
- the processes used to address these issues will lead to a workable consensus, which hopefully will contribute to sustainable forest management.

MSPs have been defined by Steins and Edwards (1999) as:

"*Decision-making bodies (voluntary or statutory) comprising different stakeholders who perceive the same resource management problem, realize their interdependence for solving it, and come together to agree on action strategies for solving the problem.*" (p. 244)

Though individual MSPs can be very different, Faysse (2006) suggests that they tend to have a generic objective, which is:

To enable the empowered and active participation of stakeholders in the search for solutions to a common problem. (p. 220)

The effective functioning of MSPs requires the existence of a dynamic and vibrant civil society that has the ability to become organized, to represent a variety of views and to negotiate durable social outcomes. Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region do not have diverse and well organized civil society groups, and these countries tend to retain strong elements of the "government knows best" paradigm and have consequently not embraced MSPs to any great extent. However, even in countries with a well developed civil society, there needs to be sufficient political will by governments, and the associated institutional space, to involve a wider range of interest groups in debate and decision making.

The majority of the processes described in the paper define themselves as MSPs. However, it could be argued that many of them do not really conform to the criteria that would make them MSPs. In many cases, powerful stakeholders such as national governments make use of the processes for informing or consulting, rather than negotiating and deciding together. Many of the national forest programmes would fall into this category, and as a result, the outcomes might not enjoy wide stakeholder support. Even where there is no domination by powerful stakeholders, the primary purpose of many of the processes seems to be to promote discussion and exchange of ideas rather than negotiating outcomes using participatory approaches and involving all stakeholder groups that are likely to be affected by any decisions. In particular, those groups that are marginalized (such as poor local communities) and are likely to be the ones most immediately affected by forest management decisions are often the least represented. Another observation is that most multi-stakeholder processes investigated in this study are relatively recent in origin, and in many cases it is still too early to judge their effectiveness. Indeed, there are few critical evaluations available of the extent to which they have achieved their objectives.

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There seems to be little doubt that where MSPs have been applied effectively, they have produced outcomes that are reasonably durable and, on balance, socially acceptable. However, simply applying the *form* of MSPs without the *substance* will generally not lead to durable outcomes that enjoy a reasonable level of community acceptance. For example, Edmunds and Wollenberg (2003), in an analysis of forest management decision making in China, India and the Philippines, note that institutional structures and interests of the state bureaucracies remain dominant despite the increasing involvement of diverse interest groups.

A clear message from the experience of the past decade is that, unless there is buy-in from all affected stakeholder groups to policy and practice, the outcomes are likely to be contested to the extent that they will be unsustainable. In the current environment, MSPs offer the best hope to negotiate acceptable outcomes that will be more durable and lead towards sustainable forest management. However, the outcomes should be seen as operational "treaties" and not set in stone for all time. They will need to be continually re-negotiated in an on-going policy cycle of contest, debate, consensus, limitation, re-contest, etc.

In summary, MSPs have become widespread (but not universal) and promise the delivery of more socially equitable and durable outcomes that can contribute to sustainable forest management. However, many of the MSPs that have emerged exhibit one or more of the characteristics that Faysse (2006) identified as being unfavorable for their efficient functioning. These include:

- high social inequities;
- a State that is either too strong or too weak to support a MSP process and decisions;
- disorganized stakeholder groups; and
- lack of financial and technical capacities to implement MSPs.

Many MSPs have been stimulated by the interests of international organizations. Some are linked to national frameworks, such as a national forest policy or national forest programmes (NFPs), while some have a more specific regional or local focus. At the national level, it would seem

desirable to bring the MSPs operating within a country under a common framework such as a national forest policy or programme. This would enhance coordination, sharing of information and provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and mutual learning. However, this would need to occur in a way that does not diminish the autonomy of individual MSP initiatives or seek to impose the ideas and/or control of a single interest group. NFP processes, where they exist in any effective form, could focus on developing frameworks and institutional capacity for MSPs to operate. However, there might be a need in some circumstances for capacity building of participants involved in the NFPs to enable them to adopt the characteristics of MSPs that have been shown as being necessary for efficient and effective functioning. However, an important caveat is that unless there is local ownership of the processes, coupled with sufficient political will to engage effectively and respect the negotiated decisions, capacity building is unlikely to lead to improved outcomes.

Many of the MSPs described in this report are concerned with enhancing the quality of dialogue about forest issues where the major participants are often like-minded. They are less concerned with negotiating specific outcomes where the issues are highly contested. However, there are several forest issues in the Asia-Pacific region which are highly contested. Serious application of multi-stakeholder processes to these issues has the potential to contribute to outcomes that are likely to be more durable and at the same time lead to enhanced social, economic and environmental impacts. It could be useful to support the piloting of activities to explore the application of multi-stakeholder processes in situations where serious conflict exists. Among the issues that could benefit from such application include:

- establishment of oil palm plantations;
- establishment of large scale tree plantations (particularly *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia*); and
- avoided deforestation in the context of climate change.

In addition to focusing on specific issues such as those listed above, there are several activities that international organizations could undertake to build the capacity of forestry (and other) agencies to facilitate and

promote more generalized multi-stakeholder dialogue and decision making including the following:

- Advise countries in the region of both the potential and practical limitations of MSPs, particularly where conflict is present, to produce more socially durable policy and practical outcomes leading to sustainable forest management.
- Make countries in the region aware of the key characteristics of effective MSPs, particularly those related to:
    - ➢ creating equitable power relationships;
    - ➢ ensuring balanced stakeholder composition;
    - ➢ enabling effective stakeholder representation and capacity to participate meaningfully in the debates;
    - ➢ agreeing on mechanisms for decision making; and
    - ➢ the cost of setting up and running a MSP.
- Seek ways to enable local level MSPs to become financially self-sufficient.
- Seek ways to link local level MSPs with national processes.
- Support capacity building for key stakeholder groups involved with MSPs.

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INTRODUCTION

Background and objectives of the study

Many organizations and institutions have been, or are currently, testing or piloting multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms, aimed at improving decision making in the forestry sector. However, to date, little or no systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the various mechanisms has been conducted. The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific initiated this study to enhance FAO's understanding and ability to support institutional adaptation and reform in the forestry sector. It is anticipated that a review of the lessons learned and experiences of the various processes will better position FAO and other international organizations to support countries in the region in developing and fostering effective multi-stakeholder dialogue and decision making processes and mechanisms. Particular attention is given to the role of national government forestry agencies in the region in facilitating, organizing, convening, and participating in multi-stakeholder processes and mechanisms, and their willingness to engage non-governmental organizations and civil society in such approaches.

Paradigm shifts in forest management

Scientific forestry, as we currently know it, arose in Europe in the middle of the 18th Century. It was aimed primarily at managing forests for the production of key products (generally timber) and it became, and largely remains, the dominant forest management paradigm in most countries. The key stakeholders of this form of forestry are governments and the timber industry. Forest management knowledge and the wisdom for its application are typically possessed by a cadre of scientifically trained foresters, generally working for government forestry agencies or the timber industry. Over time, strong regulatory frameworks for controlling

forest access and use were adopted by governments and applied by their professional foresters. Many countries also nationalized many, if not most, of their forests. Hence, the power to decide most aspects of forest management became monopolized by governments (and foresters), although the timber industry, often by engagement in the political process, was also a significant influence. This paradigm remained largely unchallenged until the mid to latter part of the 20th Century.

During the past several decades, different interest groups have begun to challenge the right of one group (or a narrow range of stakeholders) to dictate the way that forests are managed, and this has resulted in a rethink of the social objectives of forest management. Conservation interests have become increasingly apparent in production forests in both developed and developing countries. In developing countries this has been particularly evident with the adoption of western approaches to biodiversity conservation that have been widely embraced, often to the detriment of local communities who found themselves to be residing in or adjacent to newly created protected areas. In many developing countries, control of forests by the state for state interests has resulted in the interests of many people who live in and around forests, and who rely on forest products for subsistence and other purposes, being neglected. This has major ramifications for local livelihoods and has resulted in a significant challenge to the relevance of conventional forest management. The strengthening voice of a wide range of forest stakeholders, together with the rapid political, social and economic changes that have been evident over the last few decades, have fundamentally challenged the industrial forest paradigm.

The International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) was signed in 1983 and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) came into being in 1986 with a mandate to promote international trade in tropical timber and the sustainable management of tropical forests. NGOs were invited to participate in many of the discussions and debates on the management of tropical forests and they became active participants by the late 1980s. This was an important milestone, as it was one of the first times that governments and NGOs had sat at the table as reasonably equal partners in debating key aspects of forest management.

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This then, was the setting for the Earth Summit at Rio in 1992 (more properly called the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development-UNCED). A major consequence of the conflicts that had arisen in both developed and developing countries during the decades leading up to the Summit was a challenge to the role of scientifically trained foresters (and governments) as the major actors in deciding how forests should be managed. The challenge was mounted by a diverse group of civil society representing a wide range of interests. The pressure was irresistible.

CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR CONSULTATION AND DIALOGUE IN FORESTRY

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The Earth Summit at Rio in 1992 was something of a watershed in the evolution of institutional arrangements for planning and managing the planet's natural resources. The previous paradigm of "government knows best" had been challenged during the previous two decades in many countries, and engaging a wider range of society in meaningful dialogue and decision making was seen to be necessary. New forms of participation were deemed to be an important precondition for success in achieving the goals of Agenda 21. The previous approach was simply unable to provide the social legitimacy needed to meet the challenges facing contemporary forest management. Implicit in this shift to increase legitimacy in forest policy and management was the notion that power over decision making should be shared with a wider range of societal interest groups, although the best mechanisms for doing this were not clear.

The adoption at Rio of the "Forest Principles", with its emphasis on _sustainable_ forest management, provided for the first time a common basis for action at national, regional and international levels (FAO 2005). However, a social construct such as sustainability is subject to competing claims over its interpretation, and it was inevitably contested at all levels from the global to the local. By definition, this has meant a move towards a more inclusive approach to decision making; one that has involved an expansion of the number of stakeholders involved in debating and making decisions about forest issues.

International initiatives followed quickly after Rio to take forward the policy discussions that commenced there. Many of these initiatives were essentially intergovernmental discussion for a, although international NGOs were invited as observers. NGOs were able to use the major

meetings, side meetings and the many intersessional gatherings to promote particular points of view about the way that forests should be managed. Anderson *et al*. (1998) noted that "*International NGOs have taken proactive steps not just to influence global forest policy, but to formulate it; for example, in the WWF/IUCN Forests for Life programme, where protected areas and independent certification are targeted.*" (p. 3). Anderson *et al*. also note that "*National and international NGOs are taking over responsibility for the management of some natural resources such as parks and protected areas.*" (p. 3)

Many of the intergovernmental processes that followed the Earth Summit addressed forest issues, including the Convention on Biodiversity, where forests were included in the programme of work, and the UN Forum on Climate Change. However, the major forest-related intergovernmental process was the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests-IPF (1995-1997) and the follow-on Intergovernmental Forum on Forests-IFF (1997-2000) with a mandate to promote and facilitate implementation of the "Forest Principles". The dialogue produced a list of nearly 300 recommendations for action to be taken by the participating national governments. The follow-up UN Forum on Forests-UNFF (on-going from 2000) was established to keep forest issues on the international agenda and to provide a forum for sharing experiences and encouraging the implementation of sustainable forest management.

Numerous positive outcomes have been claimed from all this international level activity over the past 15 years, although it is not possible to ascribe all of them to the international processes themselves (FAO 2005). These positive outcomes are summarized in Box 1.

Box 1. Perspectives on forest policy associated with the international forest debates post-Rio (adapted from FAO 2005, p. 61)

- Better recognition of the contributions that forests make to sustainable development
- Increased international cooperation and consensus building in attempts to address complex issues
- A greater degree of participation of civil society in decision making

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- Acknowledgement of the importance of forests to sustainable livelihoods, food security and poverty alleviation, including their relevance to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals
- Revised forest policies of multinational and bilateral forest donors and funding agencies
- New financing mechanisms to capture the value of environmental services from forests such as carbon sequestration
- The development and implementation of national forest programmes and criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management around the world
- New efforts to improve governance and forest law enforcement
- The establishment of innovative partnerships at all levels

In spite of these positive outcomes there have been many criticisms of the processes and their achievements, particularly in terms of positive changes to sustainable forest management. As noted as far back as 1996, "*We are now five years from UNCED and have witnessed a vast amount of talking in a multitude of fora. However, the last remaining areas of intact forest in both temperate and tropical regions are being targeted for logging, and deforestation continues apace*" (Gilmour, 1996, p. 1). More recently, Carole Saint-Laurent (2002) noted that *"...negotiations ...have given only cursory attention to substantive forest issues, with greater attention being given to process matters*." (p. 6) In 2005 she went further in referring to the fifth session of the UNFF: "*The session ended in failure, with not only a lack of agreement on a future IAF* (International Agreement on Forests), *but also no real learning from the first five years of the UNFF*." (Saint-Laurent, 2005, p. 5). Persson and Corell (2005) concluded that while the IPF probably had some value, it is doubtful whether the IFF had any, and further: *"...UNFF ought to be classified as an expensive fiasco. The world wouldn't have looked different if UNFF had never started.*" (p. 13).

In spite of these negative assessments of the international processes, there are suggestions that consensus on the International Agreement on Forests was reached at UNFF 6 in early 2006, which could see more emphasis on

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implementation and a focus on the important issues related to the new Global Objectives on Forests (T. Bartlett, pers. com.).

The international initiatives discussed in the previous paragraphs were intergovernmental processes. The World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development (WCFSD) was a parallel process that commenced in 1995 and attempted to engage a wider range of interest groups. The Commission was an independent body made up of a group of political and scientific leaders, and there was an explicit attempt to include NGOs in the forest debate (FAO 1997).

An underlying "sleeping issue" at all of these discussions was the relevance and usefulness of a Global Forest Convention. The idea of a Convention was widely promoted at Rio, but not accepted. However, it continued to be in the background of the global forest debates in the decade and a half that followed Rio.

These initiatives at the international level were often paralleled with initiatives at regional, national and sub-national levels as national governments and other interest groups attempted to broaden the debate on forest management and make it more relevant to their needs. People began to grapple with the paradigm shift from one where one or two key stakeholders held most of the power to make forest management decisions, to one where multiple stakeholders (particularly those representing civil society and those directly impacted by forest management policy) participate meaningfully in decision making. As Mayers (2003) summarized the situation, "*There have been two main sources of multi-stakeholder policy reform processes in recent times: responses to pressure from local levels; and, responses to international opportunity or the polite suggestions of international soft law.*" (p.1)

In summary, progress has been made in forest governance in recent years in some countries; national policy has opened up to more stakeholders; the rights of forest-dependent people have been widely recognized as an important issue and in some cases these rights have been strengthened. However, while prescriptions for good governance and forest management are widely available, practical approaches and commitment

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to implementation are often lacking - the challenge is not what to do, but how to do it.

Key concepts

Several new concepts came into widespread usage during the past decade in the various attempts to increase the involvement of interested groups in the forest debate, and the most important of these are discussed briefly in this section.

Stakeholders/Pluralism/Participation

Stakeholder refers broadly to *anyone significantly affecting or affected by someone else's decision-making activity* (Govan 2002). Much has been written regarding stakeholders, stakeholder identification and stakeholder analysis (e.g. Grimble and Wellard 1996; ODA 1995). Explicit in the discussions at the Earth Summit was the recognition that there are many different stakeholder groups and individuals with a legitimate interest in the outcomes of forest management. As quoted in Wollenberg *et al.* (2005), stakeholder analysis is a process that "*attempts to define stakeholders by their respective rights, responsibilities, returns from a given resource and relationships.*" (p. 20)

Determining which stakeholders should be involved in a process and what weight should be given to their opinions is a vexing question; some people rank or group them in terms of importance for the success of the initiative or as potential beneficiaries. Some distinguish between the core primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders as well as external stakeholders (ODA 1995). An alternative approach is to distinguish between stakeholders (anyone who has an interest or stake) and rightholders (those who have a right, such as villagers who depend on resources for their survival and livelihood (Madhu Sarin, pers. com.).

During the 1990s, this multiplicity of stakeholder interests and views came to be called pluralism (Anderson *et al.* 1998; FAO 1999). Wollenberg *et al.* (2005) define pluralism as "*...the **co-existence of many values** or other human traits in a society with the purpose of enabling*

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individuals to pursue happiness…It views the co-existence of differences in values as real, unavoidable and potentially useful and good." (p. 5)

A key aspect of engaging a wider group of stakeholders in discussion and decision making is the extent of the power that individual groups can exercise over the outcomes. This is generally discussed in terms of the type of participation that is involved. Participation is a very broad term and it is most useful to distinguish levels or degrees of participation as first suggested by Arnstein (1969). The levels of participation are frequently portrayed as steps on a ladder, moving from informing, to information seeking, to consultation, to deciding together, to acting together. The higher up the ladder, the greater the degree of participation in the process, and the more influence and power that can be exercised over the outcomes. An important point to be made about this typology is that appropriate levels of participation may vary depending on the circumstance, and it may not be appropriate, desirable or possible to seek the "higher" levels of participation in all situations.

A key requirement of effective forest and land use planning is to develop processes whereby all stakeholders accept the outcome of a particular planning decision, irrespective of the desired outcome (Cassells 2001). This cannot occur if any of the key stakeholders are marginalized i.e. if participation is token. Conversely, it will also be compromised if any one stakeholder group has disproportionate power and the potential to influence decision making.

Engaging with multiple stakeholders

Various forms of alliances and partnerships began emerging in the mid to late 1990s, partly in response to a sense of frustration over the limited ability of governments and the intergovernmental processes to create meaningful change on the ground, and partly as a recognition that durable and effective changes at the national level required engagement with a wider range of stakeholders than had previously been the case. A primary motivation for establishing partnerships is to enhance performance in problem solving. It is generally perceived that by collaborating, it is possible to combine the ideas, resources and skills of organizations and

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individuals, and produce what no organization can produce on its own. Thus, the synergy created by a productive partnership is expected to produce outcomes that are greater than the sum of individual achievements.

The call for a greater emphasis on involving a wider range of stakeholders in discussions and decisions about forest management was given a much stronger voice during the preparatory meetings for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. A key feature was the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to give even greater emphasis to implementation processes involving stakeholder partnerships, with active participation of government, civil society and business. This led to a call for partnership initiatives to be developed as primary instruments for implementing Agenda 21. Currently, 321 partnerships are registered in the database of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (Uitenboogaart 2007).

One can think of a continuum of institutional arrangements for planning for and managing forests, from single stakeholder management to multi-stakeholder processes. Table 1 gives a simplified schema that illustrates some of the points along the continuum. Defining what constitutes a multi-stakeholder process in this continuum is a somewhat subjective decision. For the purposes of this paper, the first example given in Table 1, i.e., conventional industrial forestry, is excluded from discussion, as it normally operates with a small number of key stakeholders (often only two). Most of the examples used in the paper relate to the final two categories given in Table 1, i.e., issues-based forestry and comprehensive approaches, where explicit attempts are made to integrate economic, social and environmental considerations, and where a range of stakeholder groups is engaged.

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Table 1. Schema illustrating continuum of institutional arrangements for forest management decision making based on multiplicity of stakeholders.

Focus of forest management decision making	Key stakeholders	Level of operation
Conventional industrial forestry	Two stakeholders-government (forest department) and industry	National or sub-national
Issues based forestry	Small number of stakeholders with a particular interest in an issue (e.g. illegal logging, forest landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, protected areas)	Regional or global
Comprehensive approaches to integrating social, economic and environmental aspects	Large number of stakeholders, generally including government forest agencies.	National or sub-national

Multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs)

Multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs) have been widely promoted as a promising means of resolving conflicts over natural resources, first in developed countries and, more recently, as a global good practice (Faysse 2006). Faysse argues that Multi-stakeholder Platforms should be viewed as a negotiation process, always imperfect, but where positive outcomes may nevertheless outweigh negative ones. MSPs can be defined as:

"*Decision-making bodies (voluntary or statutory) comprising different stakeholders who perceive the same resource management problem, realize their interdependence for solving it, and come together to agree*

on action strategies for solving the problem" (Steins and Edwards, 1999: 244).

Wollenberg *et al*. (2005)[1] prefer the term "process" rather than "platform", and describe multi-stakeholder processes as:

"*…courses of action where two or more interest groups provide their views, make a decision or coordinate an activity together.*" (p.45)

Throughout the remainder of this paper the term "process" rather than "platform" is used without entering into any debate about which term is to be preferred. However, it is worth noting that MSPs invariably imply a process that evolves over time. A problem with the definition of MSPs suggested by Wollenberg *et al*. is that this would include negotiations between two interest groups such as government and the timber industry, without any involvement of other interested parties. MSPs generally imply that the stakeholders involved in the process include all those with a legitimate interest in the outcomes, and not just one or two interest groups as in the example given above. Hence, MSPs in this paper refer to those processes where there are multiple stakeholders representing a wide range of relevant views, including those from civil society. Wollenberg *et al*. (2005) note that "*Many groups see the use of MSPs by civil society as more a flexible, efficient and responsive alternative to heavily politicized, bureaucratic government processes.*" (p.45)

Common features of MSPs

Though individual MSPs can be very different, Faysse (2006) suggests that they tend to have a generic objective which he defines as: *"To enable the empowered and active participation of stakeholders in the search for*

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[1] Wollenberg and her co-authors have synthesized, analyzed and summarized the results of a large number of case studies on pluralism and MSPs in which 13 additional authors participated in workshops and other activities. Their guide is the most comprehensive study on accommodating multiple interests in forestry yet undertaken, and is thus used as the primary authoritative reference for this paper.

solutions to a common problem." (p. 220) Empowered and active participation refers to the highest rungs on Arnstein's ladder of participation. Faysse goes on to suggest that there are usually two main expectations behind a decision to set up a MSP. First, MSPs are expected to lead to decisions that are more widely acceptable than decisions resulting from State-led processes with no stakeholder participation. Second, they lead to better and more acceptable decisions than those arising from one-to-one negotiations. It is believed that they facilitate integrative negotiations (i.e., leading to win–win solutions) and that these solutions are found more easily through discussions in which all participate. Experience suggests that a foundation of mutual respect, trust and the will to cooperate needs to be developed between stakeholders at an early stage of the process. Without this, effective participation, including negotiation of outcomes, is unlikely to be achieved.

Wollenberg *et al*. in their comprehensive review of a large number of MSPs identified five common features that are relevant to understanding how MSPs accommodate, coordinate and manage diverse stakeholder interests. A summary of these features includes:

1. Characteristics of the stakeholders, conveners and facilitators: How this group was selected and to whom they are accountable; their legitimacy and the influence and control over decision making both inside and outside the MSP; and the stakes involved for each stakeholder.

2. Context that frames the process: The history of different groups' demands and conflicts, and factors beyond the boundary of the forest or beyond the control of the stakeholders.

3. Shared principles and strategies guiding decisions: The principles for making decisions in the MSP; shared vision or interests; agreements about roles; and people's commitment to the process.

4. Cycles of conflict and cooperation: Processes of negotiation or bargaining to manage conflict and build cooperation and agreements.

5. <u>Mutual adjustments</u>: Processes are ever changing and iterative; participants make adjustments as they learn from experience.

(Adapted from Wollenberg *et al.* 2005, p. 47-48)

Strengths and weaknesses of MSPs

Wollenberg *et al.* (2005) identify the key strengths and weaknesses of MSPs, and these are worth repeating before going on to consider MSPs in the Asia-Pacific region.

Strengths
- Provide a channel for direct participation by different stakeholders.
- Provide an alternative to state-driven processes for input, conflict and collaboration.
- Bring people together who might otherwise not have collaborated or provided input.
- Create opportunities for different groups to learn about each other, communicate, build relationships and trust.
- Can create a more level playing field for disadvantaged groups.
- Can shift power to local or previously marginalized groups.
- Do not assume win-win outcomes and are more explicit about winners and losers.
- More realistic about time required to bring people together and to reach agreement.
- Bring more diverse viewpoints, skills and styles that produce synergies and enhance capacities to innovate and cope with complex environments.

Weaknesses
- Difficult to know people's interests.
- Much depends on the nature of the convener and facilitator.
- Rarely has a sustainable institutional base.
- Creates an artificial context that may not persist after the MSP ends.
- Representatives of interest groups may not be accountable to a constituency.

- Not necessarily legitimate or accepted by authorities.
- Lacks the checks and balances and accountability measures of public decision making processes.
- Has many aspects that cannot all be handled at once.
- Not all stakeholders usually participate.
- Transaction costs can be high.
- Where large numbers participate, in-depth discussion and debate of complex ideas may be difficult. Quality of response often reflects the "lowest common denominator".
- Can give the impression ideas are only legitimate when approved by all stakeholders.
- Difficulty in getting and retaining the input of stakeholders who really matter.

Adapted from Wollenberg *et al*. (2005) p. 72

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESSES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Many initiatives that could be broadly described as multi-stakeholder processes have emerged in the Asia-Pacific region during the past decade or so, and a selection of these is described and discussed in this section. The list is not comprehensive, but is sufficient to give examples of the type and scope of the initiatives.

As a generalization, most, but not all, MSPs that have an international or regional origin tend to be concerned with influencing national policy. Those with a national or sub-national origin tend to be focused both on influencing national policy and changing field practice to move towards sustainable forest management on the ground (balancing economic, environmental and social outcomes). The origin of the initiative is used as the framework for the following discussion.

Initiatives with an international/regional origin

The following initiatives are listed in approximate chronological order based on the date of their establishment.

National Forest Programmes

Description
(Extracted from FAO, 2005, and the nfp website –
www.fao.org/forestry/site/14690/en)
National forest programmes were often perceived during the 1990s as being the natural follow-on from the donor-driven Tropical Forest Action Plans and National Forest Action Plans of the 1980s. However, there has been a tendency in recent years to broaden the perspective of what constitutes a national forest programme (NFP). NFPs in the contemporary

sense refer to a wide range of approaches to the process of planning, programming and implementing forest activities to be applied at national and sub-national levels, based on a common set of guiding principles. The purpose of national forest programmes is to establish a workable social and political framework for the conservation, management and sustainable development of all types of forests, which in turn will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public and private operational and funding commitments. National forest programmes require a broad inter-sectoral approach at all stages, including the formulation of policies, strategies and courses of action, as well as their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The objective of the National Forest Programmes is to achieve the goal of sustainable forest management for the benefit of society and, more specifically, for rural populations. They provide the overall framework to address forestry issues within a context of sustainable development. The concept was introduced by the Inter-governmental Panel on Forests (IPF) as an instrument for putting the IPF Proposals for Action and other internationally agreed obligations into operation at the country level. In particular, the FAO Forestry Department claims to support and promote the introduction and consolidation of participatory forestry processes at all institutional levels. This means strengthening institutional frameworks by adapting policies and legislation, enhancing forestry services and building the capacities of all stakeholders. Greater stakeholder ownership in national forest programme processes, to take account of the needs of civil society, is expected to facilitate the successful implementation of forest policies. FAO is currently developing a comprehensive set of guidelines aimed at improving meaningful participation by stakeholders in the NFP process (D. Reeb pers. com.).

The National Forest Programme Facility is a partnership among developing countries, donors, FAO and other international organizations to stimulate the participation of stakeholders in national forest programme processes through knowledge sharing and capacity building. A major focus of the Facility is to broaden stakeholder participation and empower community service organizations. Hosted by FAO, the Facility operates through a multi-donor trust fund. It began operations in 2002

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and provides direct support to countries worldwide. Presently, the Facility
has entered into Partnership Agreements with 57 countries, including 12
in the Asia-Pacific region (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR,
Mongolia, Nepal, Palau, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu and
Viet Nam) and four regional organizations, including the Secretariat of
the Pacific Community (SPC). Another 30 countries have applied for
partnership.

Impact and effectiveness
The mid-term review of the NFP Facility in 2005 pointed out the
following outcomes of the support:

- Stakeholders' skills to carry out the NFP process in a participatory
  manner are enhanced regarding facilitation, negotiation, formulation,
  and networking.
- Civil society participation in the NFP process is broadened and
  enhanced, especially regarding the capacity of forest-dependent
  people and other marginalized groups to participate in the process
  and benefit from it.
- Enhanced coherence and synergies between the NFP process and
  broader policy and planning processes are achieved.
- Capacities within partner countries are enhanced for policy analysis,
  negotiation of policy goals and instruments, policy formulation and
  design, and implementation of policy instruments.
- Relevant actors have improved access to available information and
  knowledge related to the NFP process at the local, national, regional
  or global levels.

Furthermore, the European Commission Results Oriented Monitoring of
the NFP Facility in 2007 concluded that:

- The catalytic role of the Facility in improving the NFP process is
  quite conspicuous.
- One cannot overestimate the impact of bringing stakeholders around
  the table. Two platforms, the multi-stakeholder national steering
  committee (MNSC) and the forest forum, seem to be particularly
  effective in addressing conflicts through communication

Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission

Description
*(*Extracted from the APFC website:
www.fao.org/forestry/site/33592/en)
The Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) is one of six FAO
Regional Forestry Commissions that cover the world's major geographic
regions. It has the broadest membership coverage of any forestry
organization in the Asia-Pacific region, with 33 member countries.
Participation in APFC sessions and activities also extends to NGOs, the
private sector and academia. The APFC is a forum for advising and
taking action on key forestry issues. It focuses on issues pertinent to Asia
and the Pacific, a region characterized by its diversity and rapid changes.

The Commission discusses and analyzes forestry issues to promote
environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically efficient
technologies and to encourage implementation of appropriate policies in
line with changing trends in forestry. The specific activities implemented
by APFC are decided upon by member countries during each APFC
session, convened every two years. APFC does not formally employ staff,
but rather works through study groups, working groups, networks and
committees established to address specific issues. This informal method
of working enables member countries to participate in activities that are
of interest and/or relevant to their particular country. The Secretariat of
APFC is hosted and staffed by the Forestry Department Group of the
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAPO) in Bangkok.

APFC focuses on three main areas of work:

- Promoting improvement in forest management for multiple benefits
- Forest policy, economics and institutions
- Fostering greater involvement of people in forestry

Impact and effectiveness
The regional impact of APFC has been evidenced in several of its recent
initiatives. The *Code of Practice for Forest Harvesting in Asia-Pacific*,
published in 1999, was developed through a participatory, multi-

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stakeholder process spanning two years. APFC has since continued to promote the development, adoption and effective implementation of national codes of practice for forest harvesting and reduced impact logging (RIL) through various training and awareness raising activities. A recent assessment indicated that the activities have contributed to the improvement of standards of natural forest management, although progress remains slow in much of the region. The positive developments were further indicated by improved regulations, increased interested in forest certification, and publication of RIL guidelines in a number of countries. *In search of excellence: exemplary forest management in Asia and the Pacific* was an APFC initiative to identify and document examples of good forest management in the region. The publication has received positive acclaim throughout the region and beyond, and over 6,000 copies have been distributed. Improved awareness of forest policies have resulted from APFC studies on the impacts of logging bans, effectiveness of incentives for plantation development, and decentralization and devolution.

Model Forest Program

Description
(Details are extracted from the Model Forest website: www.mfn.net and informed by B. Bonnell pers. com.)
The model forest concept originated in Canada in the early 1990s. The concept, which is applicable to all types of forests, promotes the building of partnerships of stakeholders for the development, testing, implementation and demonstration of innovative, sustainable approaches to the management of forests for a range of benefits in accordance with UNCED's Forest Principles. Model forests are generally relatively large in area (existing sites range from 60,000 to 2.7 million ha) and forestry is the main, but not necessarily only, land use. Important activities in model forests include defining sustainable forest management in locally relevant terms, developing and monitoring local level indicators to measure progress towards sustainable forest management, sharing information and experiences through demonstrations and networking, and establishing active feedback mechanisms between local and national or sub-national

policy levels. Individual sites are linked through national networks and through the International Model Forest Network.

Impact and effectiveness
There are currently 43 model forests in 20 countries worldwide with 8 in Asia (one each in China, India, Japan, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand, and two in Indonesia). An evaluation of model forests projects in China, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand by Lai *et al.* (2002) found that, while the overall results were generally positive, there were several gaps and weaknesses that prevented the projects from capturing more fully the potential benefits of the Model Forest approach. These were:

- limited human resources with appropriate skills to facilitate participatory planning and management of forest resources and the identification and appraisal of livelihood and income generation options;
- inadequate planning to effectively reflect stakeholder interests and needs, and address potential conflicts and trade-offs between economic, equity, and ecological objectives;
- inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems to provide documented feedback on the outputs produced from the viewpoints of the target beneficiaries. Reflective learning on the Model Forest approach was not well catered for;
- insufficient clarity about the range of stakeholder interests and characteristics (such as level of dependency on forest resources), and their relationships, influence and motivations; and
- little evidence in some cases of feedback to national forestry and land use policy processes.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Description
(Extracted from Anon (2002), FAO (2005) and the CPF website - www.fao.org/forestry/site/cpf/en/)
The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) is an interagency partnership on forests that was established in April 2001. It is modeled on

the high-level, informal Interagency Task Force on Forests that supported the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (1995-1997) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (1997-2000). The CPF is comprised of 13 international forest-related organizations, institutions and convention secretariats.

The mission of the CPF is to promote sustainable management of all types of forests, and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. CPF's two objectives are to support the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and its member countries; and to enhance cooperation and coordination among its members on forest issues.

CPF members facilitate the work of UNFF by: supporting the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action; providing expertise and advisory services to the UNFF; and assisting in monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests. CPF members enhance cooperation and coordination on forests by developing synergies among partners and carrying out joint programming and collaborative activities, enriching the work of each member organization by the continuous exchange of information and innovative ideas.

The CPF operates in an open, transparent and flexible manner. It interacts and communicates with a wide range of other international and regional organizations, including NGOs, private sector entities and other major groups, involved in forest-related activities.

Impact and effectiveness
While no formal assessment has been carried out, the partnership is valued by the UNFF members, as evidenced by their insistence that it be maintained and strengthened in the new IAF post-2006. The key issues to be addressed are to: obtain greater alignment of the programmes of CPF member organizations with the UNFF agenda; avoid duplication and overlap to facilitate action; and encourage some members to become more active.

The Forests Dialogue

Description
(Adapted from: http://www.theforestsdialogue.org/)
The Forests Dialogue (TFD), formed in 1999, is an outgrowth of dialogues begun under the auspices of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the World Bank and the World Resources Institute (WRI). These dialogues converged to create TFD when leaders decided there needed to be an on-going, civil society driven, multi-stakeholder dialogue platform to address important global forestry issues. TFD's mission is to bring key leaders together to build relationships based on trust, commitment and understanding and generate substantive discussion on key issues related to achieving sustainable forest management around the world. TFD's dialogues are a transparent forum to share aspirations and learning and to seek ways to take collaborative action on the highest priority forest conservation and management issues. International forest and biodiversity leaders oversee the governance of TFD and the planning and execution of its dialogues. They are selected as individuals based on their personal interest and leadership, not as official delegates of any organization or sector. There are currently 22 members of the TFD Steering Committee from the major stakeholder groups including private landowners, the forest products industry, NGOs, retailers, aid organizations, unions and academia.

TFD is developing and conducting international multi-stakeholder dialogues on the following issues:

Forest Certification: six dialogues held.

Illegal Logging: three dialogues held (including one in Hong Kong, March 2005).

Intensively Managed Planted Forests: three dialogues held (including one in China, April 2006, and one in Indonesia, March 2007), next is due in March 2008.

Forests and Biodiversity Conservation: five dialogues held (one international and four regional).

Forests and Poverty Reduction: three dialogues held (including a dialogue on pro-poor commercial forestry in Indonesia, March 2007).

The Secretariat for TFD is hosted by Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in the United States.

Impact and effectiveness
Into its fifth year of multi-stakeholder dialogues, TFD's activities have led to a number of positive outcomes including: development of personal relationships that have fostered collaborative actions based on shared understanding and trust; renewed government actions to address illegal logging; an improved model for effective dialogue between civil society and government; and enhanced collaboration among NGOs and the forest industry.

Forest PACT (Forest Partnership for Action and Commitment Today)

Description
(Adapted from the ForestPACT website www.forestpact.org/)
The concept of ForestPACT arose from concerns at the global level about the slow pace of progress in implementing sustainable forest management. A need was recognized for generating immediate action "on the ground," highlighting positive work in forestry, and building a culture of success in the forestry sector. WWF and IUCN convened a meeting of leading international forest practitioners in March 2000 to respond to this need, and the result was the concept of ForestPACT. It aims to generate action and partnerships in the forestry sector by encouraging pledges for action, and recognizing successes. Individuals, groups, or institutions could become partners in ForestPACT by making a pledge to action that would contribute to ForestPACT's broad objectives of sustainable forest management. ForestPACT partners would form a broad coalition of leaders in sustainable forest management. It was agreed that ForestPACT would be administered at the national level. Thailand was identified as a suitable country to trial implementation, and to date,

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remains the only country where ForestPACT has been tested, essentially as an externally funded project.

Impact and effectiveness
Only one site was chosen as a pledge area for the first year of developing ForestPACT in Thailand. This was an area where villagers were aiming to strengthen forest management in their community forest, a portion of which was located in a national park. Conflicts existed between villagers and the park authority.

Some successes have been claimed from this trial (Guido Broekhoven, pers.com.) in terms of:

- Acting as a forum for sharing information and lessons between organizations working in the forestry sector;
- Linking grassroots initiatives, and advocating grassroots needs to the policy level;
- Coordinating joint initiatives between organizations in Thailand on forestry issues of national importance; and
- Being a matchmaker to bring in partners to fill gaps in existing initiatives.

Consultations between IUCN and the Steering Committee members after the first phase of ForestPACT indicated that many members of ForestPACT had different visions of what ForestPACT should be in Thailand. Some of these differed from the concept conceived at the global level. ForestPACT is currently dormant due to a lack of finance to continue the process.

Asia Forest Partnership

Description
(Extracted from the AFP website: www.asiaforests.org/)
The Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) was announced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002 as a

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type II partnership[2]. It is a multi-stakeholder collaboration of governments, intergovernmental and civil society groups. It promotes sustainable forest management in Asia through addressing five key issues, including the topic areas of:

- Control of illegal logging
- Control of forest fires
- Rehabilitation and reforestation of degraded lands

and cross cutting issues of:

- Good governance and forest law enforcement
- Developing capacity for effective forest management

The partnership acts as a catalyst for existing initiatives by increasing synergies and reducing duplication between programmes. To date, the AFP has provided a formal framework for the exchange of information and experiences. Beyond strengthening existing programmes, it is hoped that the framework will facilitate joint identification of new programmes and research. AFP activities combine national, bilateral or multilateral and regional initiatives.

Partners to the AFP include government and intergovernmental organizations and members of civil society. All partners are equally accountable. Initially, the leading partners (Government of Japan, Government of Indonesia, Center for International Forestry Research - CIFOR, The Nature Conservancy - TNC) undertook to make a stronger commitment to the advancement of the partnership, but did not have more authority or rights than other partners. However, the notion of leading partners has now been abandoned.

The partners meet at least once a year to exchange information, identify further work and consult on on-going activities. CIFOR is currently

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[2] Type II partnerships are voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives contributing to implementation of inter-governmental sustainable development commitments in Agenda 21.

hosting the AFP information sharing secretariat. The partnership is useful as a forum for exchanging information, but has funds for nothing more than to cover the costs of its meetings.

Impact and effectiveness
Several surveys have been carried out among members of the Partnership in order to assess their perception of its effectiveness and to identify ways of improving its operations (AFP 2007). A recent evaluation (Uitenboogaart 2007) concluded that: *"...the AFP adds value at the process level and it offers individual partners benefits, while it does not contribute much to actual problem solving. This leads to the conclusion that an inter-sectoral partnership could result in a feel-good instrument that receives attention with its normative added value at the process level, while the underlying problems remain unresolved."* (p. v)

Forest Governance Learning Groups

Description
(Extracted from www.iied.org/NR/forestry/projects/forest)
The Forest Governance Learning Groups (FGLG), which commenced in mid-2003, are informal alliances of in-country teams and international partners active in 10 countries across Africa and Asia. The groups attempt to connect those marginalized from forest governance to those controlling it, and to help both do things better. They carry out focused studies, develop tactics and tools, hold learning events, and work to effect change. They exchange learning and develop ideas on forest governance to make it function for practical, just and sustainable forest use. In Asia, groups are operative in India, Indonesia and Viet Nam, and they aim to deliver four main outputs:

1. Poverty reduction strategies, national forest programmes, decentralization programmes and related processes that better enable improved forest governance.

2. Illegal and corrupt forestry that degrades livelihoods reduced through the adoption and spread of practical approaches to improve forest governance.

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3. Forestry enterprise initiatives and private sector associations that comply with the law and spread practical approaches to improve forest governance.

4. Ownership, access rights, policy and management frameworks that are improved to support local control and benefit from forestry.

The main target groups are forest policy decision makers, leaders in forest enterprise and champions of local community rights.

Major impetus has been given to a second phase of the FGLG, with agreement from the EC to support the work from 2005 to 2009. This is in the form of a grant from the EC's Environment and Forests Budget line.

Impact and effectiveness
IIED steers the groups and produces regular updates (four to date) on the activities of the learning groups and their impact. The April 2007 update notes that there is a growing recognition that tackling injustice in decision-making about trees and forests is now a primary challenge for sustainability in many places. In the future the groups expect to focus in particular on: an international synthesis of key issues on local land tenure and forest resource access; preparing a plan for a film; recording incidents, breakthroughs, setbacks and emerging issues; a second cross-country learning event focused on governance of responsible forest enterprise; international networking; and deepening in-country impact wherever possible.

Rights and Resources Initiative

Description
(Extracted from the RRI website: www.rightsandresources.org/)
The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) was established in 2005 by Forest Trends, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC) in Bangkok, the Central American Association for Indigenous and Agroforestry Communities (ACICAFOC) and the Foundation for People and Community Development (FPCD) in

Papua New Guinea. In 2006, the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), Intercooperation (Switzerland), and the Forest Peoples Programme joined as RRI partners. More recently, Civic Response, a national NGO from Ghana, has joined the RRI coalition.

The Initiative is supported by the Ford Foundation, DFID, IDRC, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, SIDA and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), and engages in collaborative work with a range of global and regional institutions. The Board of Directors of the Rights and Resources Group is composed of representatives from the RRI Partners and supporters.

RRI aims to encourage communities, governments, donors and international institutions to combine efforts to advance two global goals:

- A dramatic reduction in the number of people living in poverty in the forested areas of the world;
- A substantial increase in the forest areas locally owned and administered, including secure rights for individuals and communities to use and trade forest products and services.

The Initiative operates a global campaign including meetings, and also conducts a series of country initiatives. In Asia, these are in China and East Asia and the Mekong Region.

Impact and effectiveness
No assessment available.

Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Process

Description
(Extracted from the FLEG website: web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTARD/EXTFOR ESTS/0, content MDK:20636550 and from material published in Arborvitae 2006).

The Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) process refers to the harnessing of national efforts, and enhancement of international collaboration, to address violations of forest laws and the commission of forest crimes. In particular, the FLEG process aims to eradicate illegal logging and associated illegal trade and corruption. In general, it aims to promote greater protection and sustainable management of the world's remaining forests.

The FLEG process is a worldwide movement, having emerged in different parts of the world (Asia, Europe, Africa, Russia and North Asia), including East Asia. In East Asia, the FLEG process emerged from a series of multi-stakeholder consultations in 2001 prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Ministerial preparatory meetings in Bali, Indonesia.

The consultations ended with the adoption of a political statement (the Bali Declaration) by participating countries from East Asia, Europe and North America, emphasizing the urgent need for effective cooperation to address forestry problems simultaneously at the national and sub-national (or local), and international levels. Although not legally binding, the Bali Declaration is considered by various stakeholders as a significant step by governments in acknowledging the need to combat corruption in the forestry sector.

The Bali Declaration recognizes the responsibilities of both producing and consuming countries in eliminating illegal logging and associated illegal trade and corruption and it lays the foundation for bilateral and international cooperation on a harmonized set of forest law enforcement and protection programs. The Bali Declaration is supported by an action plan which contains a comprehensive list of 70 indicative actions by East Asia FLEG participating countries to be undertaken by and among themselves at the national and international levels. These commitments range from political, legislative, judicial, administrative, research, policy, institution and capacity building, advocacy, information and expertise sharing/disclosure, conservation and protection, as well as bilateral and multi-lateral actions.

To advance the objectives of the Bali Declaration, the East Asia FLEG Task Force composed of representatives from East Asia FLEG countries was established. Alongside the Task Force, an Advisory Group composed of representatives of civil society, industry, and other stakeholders including NGOs, was formed to provide support and information on forestry issues being tackled by the Task Force. The East Asia FLEG Task Force and Advisory Group conduct periodic meetings to review progress on actions to implement the commitments of participating countries and to assess and determine current priorities/challenges of the forestry sector.

Pollard and Maginnis (2006) argue that incentives are ultimately more effective than penalties in moving towards equitable and effective forest governance arrangements. By way of example, there has been switch from timber import bans, which primarily frame illegal logging as a "consumer's problem," to soft instruments such as Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) that are being developed under the EU action plan on forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT). The authors also note that a suite of tools is needed to encourage industry to act responsibly. Among these are credible independent third party forest certification systems, such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and market based initiatives such as the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN), which brings together responsible companies and communities that want to play by the rules.

Impact and effectiveness
It has been argued (Colchester 2007) that the FLEG initiatives focus too sharply on forestry laws, rather than considering wider laws related to forests, such as land tenure regimes and human rights legislation. Many FLEG policy makers now agree that law enforcement measures need to be complemented with steps to review and revise inappropriate laws to ensure that people's livelihoods and rights to their lands and forests are secured. Local people and NGOs need to be included in forest monitoring and FLEG discussions, not left out.

It is also suggested (T. Bartlett pers. com.) that the Asian FLEG has lost some momentum in recent years with only limited progress in

implementing the actions from the 2001 Bali meeting. Efforts are currently underway to revitalize it and have another Ministerial meeting in early 2008. Problems exist with limited participation from some key countries. Also, in the absence of a global framework for FLEG, there is bound to be overlap and inefficiencies between the various processes, including AFP, for individual exporting countries.

Voluntary guidelines for responsible management of planted forests

Description
(Extracted from Carle (2006) and www.fao.org/forestry/site/34028/en)
In response to member country requests, FAO coordinated a multi-stakeholder process to prepare Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Management of Planted Forests (formerly known as the Planted Forests Code) to balance social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions in planted forest development and their contribution towards sustainable livelihoods and land use. The Voluntary Guidelines include guiding principles for policy, legal, regulatory and other enabling conditions, and thus provide a framework for responsible planning, management and monitoring of planted forests.

The draft Voluntary Guidelines were derived through a two year process involving specialists from Governments, the private sector (both corporate and smallholder), non-governmental (social and environmental) and intergovernmental organizations, academics, and other civil society groups that gave of their time and expertise to explore the correct balance. The Voluntary Guidelines were discussed at the Regional Forestry Commissions throughout 2006, as well as at private sector and civil society meetings addressing intensively managed planted forests and sustainable forest management. Based on recommendations and suggestions from these meetings, the Voluntary Guidelines were commended by the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in March 2007. The Voluntary Guidelines are a non-legally binding instrument tailored primarily to governments and investors (public and private sector), policy makers and planners. The scope includes both the planted forest component of semi-natural forests and plantation forests, as well as the full spectrum of planning, management

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and monitoring activities for both productive and protective functions. COFO provided a mandate to proceed towards implementation through collaborating partners. A process led by FAO and collaborating partners has been initiated to strengthen institutional capacity to translate the Voluntary Guidelines into effective policies and implementation actions at the field level.

Impact and effectiveness
The draft Voluntary Guidelines have been supported through independent processes including: The Forests Dialogue (Switzerland, 2005; China, 2006; Indonesia, 2007), The World Business Council for Sustainable Development - Sustainable Forest Industries Working Group (Beijing, 2006), the International Council for Forest and Paper Associations (Rome, 2006) and the Advisory Committee for Paper and Wood Products (Australia, 2004, Rome, 2005; Rome, 2006; and China, 2007).

Following COFO, FAO distributed copies to Heads of Forestry, IGOs, international NGOs and other collaborating partners. Requests have been met for several thousand copies (in English, French and Spanish). A methodology has been derived for capacity building workshops and programme/project preparation support to selected regions and countries. Some countries have initiated their own multi-stakeholder processes to derive their own national guidelines for responsible management of planted forests.

Voluntary guidelines for fire management

Description
(Extracted from FAO, 2006)
FAO coordinated a two year multi-stakeholder process through technical and expert consultations and six Regional Forestry Commissions during 2006 to prepare a set of principles and strategic actions as part of a global strategy for international cooperation in fire management. These Voluntary Guidelines set out a non-legally binding framework of guiding principles and internationally accepted strategic actions to address the cultural, social, environmental and economic dimensions for all levels of fire management. Fire management in this context includes the

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monitoring, early warning, prevention, preparedness, suppression and restoration and the vegetation types include forests, woodlands, shrublands, rangelands, grasslands, agricultural lands and the vegetation types in the rural-urban interface. These Voluntary Guidelines address the social, cultural, environmental, as well as economic dimensions of fire management in integrated approaches in the wider mosaic of land uses in the landscape. Furthermore, they encourage key stakeholder participation in policy dialogue, strategic planning and actions across sectors. Their development followed on from recommendations of the International Wildland Fire Summit, held in Sydney, Australia, in October 2003; the Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Forest Management, held in March 2005, and the Committee on Forestry Session in March 2005.

The 18th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), held in March 2007, commended FAO for facilitating the multi-stakeholder processes to prepare the Voluntary Guidelines and recommended that FAO work together with Member Countries and partners to strengthen capacity towards their implementation.

Implementation is seen as a voluntary, open, and inclusive process that will benefit people, resources, assets, and the environment.

Impact and effectiveness
During the demanding northern hemisphere fire season in 2007, press releases by FAO and the Director General were issued calling for more holistic approaches to fire management, based upon the principles and strategic actions as detailed in the Voluntary Guidelines.

A Fire Management Actions Alliance was launched at the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference at Seville, Spain in May 2007 with 40 founding members. Members are encouraged to implement the Voluntary Guidelines, share information, knowledge and activities and to enhance international cooperation in fire management. The Alliance has a dedicated website on behalf of members on http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/firealliance. FAO welcomes new members to apply to join the Fire Management Actions Alliance. The

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charter and application procedures to join the Alliance are available on
http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/41315/en/.

Following COFO, FAO distributed copies of the Voluntary Guidelines to
Heads of Forestry, IGOs, international NGOs and other collaborating
partners. Requests have been met for several thousand copies in English,
French and Spanish. Translations into Russian, Bahasa and Korean have
been country lead.

A methodology has been derived for capacity building workshops and
programme/project preparation support to selected regions and countries.
Two capacity building workshops in 2007 are in advanced stages of
planning with other region and sub-region requests pending.

Initiatives with a national or sub-national origin

The initiatives described in this section are listed alphabetically by the
country where they originated. Many of these were stimulated (and
sometimes funded) by national governments, in which cases there tends
to be a strong sense of ownership of both the processes and the outcomes.

Australia

Regional Forest Agreements

Description
(Adapted from Gilmour, 1998 and extracts from the RFA website
www.affa.gov.au/content/output.cfm)
The starting point for the Regional Forest Agreement framework is the
National Forest Policy Statement, which was negotiated in the early
1990s and signed by the Federal Prime Minister and the State Premiers in
1992. A part of this Policy is the requirement for a process whereby the

State Governments can invite the Commonwealth Government[3] to participate in undertaking Comprehensive Regional Assessments (CRA) of environmental and heritage aspects of forests. These assessments provide the basis for enabling the Commonwealth and States to reach a single agreement relating to their obligations for forests in a bioregion – (the Regional Forest Agreements – RFAs). Commonwealth obligations include assessment of national estate values, World Heritage values, Aboriginal heritage values, environmental impact and obligations relating to international conventions including those for protecting endangered species and biological diversity. The Regional Forest Agreements that come out of the Assessments cover guidelines for ecologically sustainable management of the regional forests, particularly those under public ownership. Thus, the final outcome should be an adequate, representative reserve system and sustainable management of forests outside the reserves. This is in the context of previous commitments by the Commonwealth Government that 15% of major forest types present in pre-European Australia will be reserved.

The timber industry felt under considerable threat during the previous decade, as more and more land was taken from the productive forest estate and added to conservation reserves of various types. It was hoped that a successful outcome of the CFA/RFA processes would provide both better conservation outcomes and long term planning certainty for the timber industry.

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[3] In Australia, the six State Governments have control over land resources, including forests. However, the Commonwealth, through its foreign affairs powers, is the signatory to international conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and CITES. This creates an obvious tension between the States and the Commonwealth, as the latter government at times tries (often successfully) to impose its will on the States through financial leverage and negotiation. For example, the Commonwealth Government has to approve wood chip export licenses and can withhold license approval until the states conform with Commonwealth interests.

The Commonwealth Government had five principal objectives for embarking on the development of regional forest agreements. These were to:

- use an integrated cooperative assessment and planning process to reduce uncertainty about outcomes and to reduce duplication between government requirements and processes in land use decision-making;
- produce durable, long-term decisions that meet the requirements of the governments involved, the community and industry and are consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development;
- equitably balance competing sectoral objectives and coordinate the policies and activities of governments;
- maintain regional environmental, heritage and social values; and
- provide secure access to resources for forest-based industries.

Impact and effectiveness
The RFAs cover regions where commercial timber production is a major native forest use. They do not cover the extensive areas of largely non commercial forests and woodlands, particularly in Queensland, many of which are held as leasehold land for grazing. Ten RFAs are now in place in four Australian states. A Comprehensive Regional Assessment was completed for S.E. Queensland, but because of unresolved conflict between the Commonwealth and State Government, a RFA was not signed for this region.

The following benefits are claimed for the RFA process:

- The signed RFAs boost the process of continuous improvement in forest use and management in Australia.
- The Comprehensive Regional Assessments have added considerably to knowledge of forest uses and values. A considerable amount of information was generated through a social assessment process, about how regional and rural communities use and value native forests.

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- In environmental terms, a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system was created, adding more than 2.9 million hectares to Australia's already extensive forest reserves. The nationally agreed criteria for the CAR reserve system were a major achievement of the RFA process.
- The RFAs provide for 20 years' certainty of access to forest resources for the timber industry. This improved certainty of access is expected to encourage greater investment in value-adding projects and create new jobs in RFA regions.
- Overall, it is believed that the RFAs paved the way for huge advances in Australia's approach to ecologically sustainable forest management.

In spite of the very considerable achievement of the RFA process, there were problems. Gilmour (1998) concluded that among the problems encountered in the process were:

- In some regions key stakeholders withdrew from the development of RFAs.
- Processes to involve Aboriginal interests fully in cultural heritage assessments and forest use planning were not resolved.
- The highly centralized planning approach adopted for developing RFAs led to problems with representation at the sub-regional level.
- More attention needs to be given to the social side of the process to ensure that all stakeholder interests are adequately catered for.

One of the real challenges in the process was the effective incorporation of stakeholder interests. This is essential for any durable outcome, but it is the area which caused the most problems. An elegant technical outcome is of no value if there is no broadly-based stakeholder support.

China

Forest Dialogue Forum of China

Description

The State Forestry Administration of China established the Forest
Dialogue Forum in March 2005, to support multi-stakeholder dialogue to
improve China's national forest policies and to enhance cooperation
among government organizations, NGOs, international organizations,
internal institutes, private sector entities and donor agencies from other
countries. The first meeting took place in August 2005, and follow-up
meetings have taken place every six months. A different agenda is set for
each meeting, with the objectives of the first meeting being to:

- increase understanding of policy implementation in the different
  departments of SFA;
- provide an overview of international initiatives and national progress
  of research, education, and national programs working toward
  sustainable forest management;
- identify areas and priorities for future work identified by the
  workshop;
- enhance cooperation and coordination among stakeholders on forest
  issues;
- establish contacts and linkages between the participants and the
  international community; and
- deliberate and exchange views on practical options for effectively
  enhancing international cooperation.

(P. Durst pers. com.)

Impact and effectiveness
No evaluation has yet been carried out, but the following observations
made by P. Durst (pers. com.) give an indication of the process.

Participants noted that the Forum is characterized by the open nature of
the discussions and international participants have appreciated the chance
to brief senior Government officials on their activities. It is a large event
and more than 100 people participated in the third forum, including
representatives from national forestry agencies and institutions, research
academies, universities, local and provincial governments, NGOs,
projects, and international organizations. Less positively, the large
number of presentations generally preclude the opportunity for serious
discussions during the formal program. There is also little substantive

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progress in identifying priorities for future work, although many possible areas for work and collaboration emerged from presentations. Several participants observed that greater participation by the private sector would enhance the proceedings.

Indonesia

Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP)

Description
(Extracted from www.livelihoods.org/lessons/project_summaries/for3_projsum; and Fahmi 2003)
The Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP) was a six-year forest governance reform programme in Indonesia (2001-2006), funded by DIFID. It provided a comprehensive programme of support to civil society and government organizations, through small grants for community development, training, advocacy, networking, multi-stakeholder dialogue, policy research, grant making and communications work. The MFP has influenced many local forest policy processes and is making a real impact on the lives of forest-based communities, who make up over 10 million of the 38 million poorest people in Indonesia.

It provides small flexible grants within a clear framework for governance reforms and a strong role for civil society. Analysis of drivers of change helps build greater understanding of the power, influence and incentives of different stakeholders operating in a contested policy environment. MFP supports a range of change agents in the local political economy, including local leaders, community based organizations and NGOs, the media, policy analysts and activists, government officials and legislators, private businesses and others. They fulfill a variety of roles, mobilizing citizens, empowering communities, building accountability and transparency, mediating conflicts and multi-stakeholder dialogue, conducting policy analysis and advocacy, and making policies and laws.

The MFP is also developing innovative ideas for local trust funds, practical alternative sourcing of civil society funding, and community

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foundations which provide both grants and support services to strengthen local organizations and voice. The development of these approaches has involved other donors and other NGO and local business partners, and now includes increasing levels of local government co-financing of community empowerment initiatives.

The MFP has helped provide a bridge between civil society and government, facilitating more effective participation by poor marginalized people in local government planning and policy making. This has resulted in numerous pro-poor local government regulations and policy task forces, and changes in attitudes and skills amongst government officials and local community leaders.

Impact and effectiveness
It is claimed that the MFP is now showing real impacts on the ground, with constructive multi-stakeholder dialogue between poor, marginalized communities and local governments leading to reduced conflicts, greater empowerment and "voice", and evidence of improved incomes through changes in policy.

The strongest poverty impacts are starting to result from policy changes that provide more secure access to forest land, better access to markets, tighter controls on illegal logging and greater transparency on international finance and money laundering. These are policies that affect rural livelihoods, vulnerability and exclusion, as well as national economic growth. They reflect a strong focus on more effective democracy and decentralization, and more equitable and productive forest management.

An assessment was carried out of the effectiveness of the MFP by Fahmi *et al*. (2003). It found that, overall, the initiative seemed to fulfill its immediate objectives, reaching an agreement on conflict resolution and a joint action plan between community and government concerning economic development, land conflict and ecosystem functions.

However, this successful outcome was challenged by 300 poor urban families following a post-agreement land reclamation carried out in the

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forest areas, bringing to light some of the weaknesses of the MSP. The main weaknesses were identified as:

- The boundaries of the dialogue were not clearly established at the planning stage.
- The stakeholders running the greatest risk were left most exposed.
- Not all relevant stakeholders were involved.
- Lack of commitment to follow-up.
- Lack of action at the constitutional level.

Nepal

Community forestry and multi-stakeholder processes (Middle Hills)

Description
Community forestry frequently involves only two major stakeholders, the community[4] and the government (generally in the form of forest department officials). However, the way in which community forestry has evolved in some areas of Nepal's Middle Hills has changed considerably during the past decade, and it is worthy of mention because it is a good example of how, with the engagement of multiple stakeholders, particularly civil society, the outcomes can be greatly improved.

By the late 1980s, the modalities for implementing community forestry in Nepal's Middle Hills had been defined and the programme attained a national status. In the early 1990s, the programme expanded rapidly with the major stakeholders to the discussion and negotiation being

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[4] It is important to note that, while local communities are portrayed here as one stakeholder group, in reality they are invariably heterogeneous rather than homogeneous, and contain many different interest groups, such as rich and poor, men and women, graziers, farmers, blacksmiths, etc., all of whom might have different interests in forest management. Development of community forestry agreements requires this multiplicity of interests to be considered and for social agreement to be reached.

government forest officers and the villagers who constituted Forest User Groups (FUGs), the local groups officially recognized and mandated to manage defined forest areas. Following the revolution and the restoration of democracy in 1990, NGOs proliferated as civil society organized and demanded a much expanded role in all aspects of public life. This included a voice in the way that community forestry policy was decided and the way that community forestry was implemented. NGOs representing a range of views and interests are now involved in advocacy at all levels, as well as research and implementation. The government can no longer articulate a policy or a change to field practice without being held to account by civil society. As a result, fora such as the Forest Sector Coordination Committee (at the national level) and District Forest Coordination Committees (at the district level) are becoming much more multi-stakeholder in nature. There are also many examples at the local level (i.e., within the Forest User Groups) where multiple stakeholders such as grass roots NGOs have become involved. This has often resulted in the broadening of implementation arrangements beyond simple forest issues, whereby wider development and equity issues are addressed.

Impact and effectiveness
There are several examples during the past decade where central-level decisions which would have adversely affected community forest users have been withdrawn or modified in the face of trenchant criticism by stakeholder groups, and the government has been forced to enter into a dialogue with these groups to negotiate more socially acceptable outcomes. At the local level there are many examples of FUGs engaging with multiple stakeholders, particularly NGOs, to broaden their development agenda.

District level multi-stakeholder processes (Terai)

Description
Community forestry has been a very successful policy in the hills of Nepal, but it has been a difficult policy to implement in the Terai, the lowlands adjacent to India. A major reason for the difficulties is that the Terai forests tend to be commercially valuable and there are many stakeholders (apart from local communities) with a vested interest in

controlling the forests. One approach to this dilemma has been trial multi-stakeholder processes centered around the establishment of District Forest Coordination Committees (DFCCs), which are established to plan for the use of forests in the district. The stakeholders include Forest Department officials, local and district government officials, NGOs, forest users and industry groups.

Impact and effectiveness
District Forest Coordination Committees have been established in eight Terai districts since 2003, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

Philippines

Alliances of local government units

Adapted from Walpole (2007).

Description
The national agency with the responsibility for managing natural resources in the Philippines (Department of Environment and Natural Resources-DENR) tends not to engage effectively beyond national economic designs of resource exploitation[5]. In particular, it struggles to sustain participation, transparency and accountability with communities. However, the decentralization process in the Philippines is having a major impact in expanding the role of local government units (LGU) in managing natural resources.

In the contemporary decentralized environment, local government units have the opportunity to set their own agendas for natural resource management. However, decentralization has its limitations in terms of roles and responsibilities being transferred without a corresponding transfer of decision making and budgets to accomplish the work. It is

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[5] There are a few exceptions to this general situation where individual projects such as the development of the Ulot Watershed Model Forest have facilitated the development of functional relationships with DENR down to the community level (P. Durst pers. com.).

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especially difficult for small municipalities to mobilize the necessary human and financial resources for effective management. A potentially more effective process is emerging in the form of alliance development that has a sense of community, accountability and responsibility.

In the past five years there has been a trend towards shared management activities by LGUs, particularly for the management of natural resources. Groups that share common natural resources have come together to jointly manage these resources. For small municipal governments, this strategy makes good sense for not only does it address the need for collaboration in managing resources that often overlap administrative boundaries, but it also addresses the issue of limited capacity. By working together, LGUs can pool their financial, technical and human resources to manage the environment more effectively. Collaboration might begin with a coastal or upland focus, but this generally spreads. Of particular importance is that communities are seen as critical stakeholders in identifying concerns and determining appropriate action.

The alliances operate by drawing on the ideas and experiences of people and institutions with various interests and intentions. Decisions are reached only after going through a process of negotiation (bargaining and compromising) and eventually reaching an agreement acceptable to everyone.

Collaboration among local governments is still at an early stage. While there are many LGUs already working in this way, these alliances of LGUs still face many concerns about how to carry out their roles as custodians of the natural resources most effectively. Part of the reality is that while the LGUs have been given more management responsibilities, much decision making power (especially over forest lands) still remains with the DENR.

Impact and effectiveness
An assessment was carried out of eight of the alliances and the main findings were that:

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- Most are focusing on training and capacity building of local staff, and this will serve these groups well in the long term.
- Provincial or municipal leadership remains a key factor in the sustainability of the alliances. Leadership plays a major role in determining which programmes are prioritized and how funds are allocated. Changes in leaders often result in changes in the level of commitment.
- As with all local government alliances, questions of sustainability arise especially around election time. Both provincial governors and municipal mayors serve three years per term and a maximum of three terms. 2007 is an election year, and there are apprehensions about what a change in leadership will mean for the alliances.
- Alliances often fail to implement work programmes due to limited technical and financial resources.
- Communities often regard newly formed agencies as another layer in the bureaucracy, and remain apprehensive about such groups unless definite and positive changes are demonstrated.
- Alliances generate community awareness and participation and obtain the "buy-in" and support of local people. It is this local participation and support that can help sustain activities on the ground more effectively in the long run.
- Several of the alliances have already developed management plans and these will ensure their continuity and provide the basis for the sustainability of their programmes.
- Financial sustainability is a major concern for all alliances. Proposals to seek funding will be an important task of the majority of these groups.
- Lack of information is a limitation in a majority of the alliances. Most of these groups understand the importance of information when trying to arrive at major decisions.
- Some LGUs are finding that, through the alliances, they can attain easier agreement on shared watershed problems and also the delivery of basic services and, though limited at the present time, these responsibilities are expected to influence management and achieve greater human security.

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- As these alliances develop, they are able to contribute to Municipal and Provincial planning frameworks.
- Some international development agencies are increasingly looking to local governments as partners that can make a difference in local sustainable development.

It is too early to say whether these alliances will be able to generate real changes. Their greatest successes to date are in coastal areas where marine sanctuaries identified and supported by local communities, and reinforced by the alliance, are claimed to be improving livelihoods and contributing to a return of biodiversity. Alliances do reflect a social growth in local government and governance in response to desired change. This reflects a situation of policy by demand rather than supply. Such efforts could possibly turn the tide on forest cover loss in mangrove/fish nurseries and agro-forestry areas responding to the socio-cultural needs of greater security. What can be said at the moment is that community awareness and participation has created a sense of improved governance and human security in some areas.

Protected Area Management Boards

Adapted from information provided by P. Durst (pers. com.) and N. Molinyawe (pers. com.)

Description
Protected Area Management Boards (PAMBs) are multi-stakeholder policy making bodies that decide on matters related to planning and resource protection of protected areas in the Philippines. The mandate to establish the Boards comes from the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992, which provided for a major shift in protected area management from the centralized management by the DENR to decentralized participatory approaches through PAMBs. The Boards are supervised by the Protected Area Office through the Protected Area Superintendent that serves as the secretariat. They are chaired by DENR Regional Directors (or their nominees) with representation from local government units, NGOs, people's organizations, indigenous peoples through their Council of Elders and national government

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agencies. Board members are appointed by the DENR Secretary for five year periods and the majority of them are elected officials. Membership of Boards varies from 10 to more than 100 members, depending on the size of the protected area.

As of August 2007, PAMBs had been created for 168 of the 237 protected areas established under the system. The Boards provide fora that bring together a wide range of key stakeholders to make decisions related to the management of protected areas. The intention is that decisions will be made in a transparent and accountable manner based on a majority vote. The decisions are formulated as resolutions or ordinances that guide implementation.

Impact and effectiveness
According to a 2003 assessment by the World Bank (World Bank 2003), PAMBs are emerging as useful models for natural resource management governance across the wider landscape. In situations where PAMBs are adequately funded and all key stakeholders are actively involved, they represent the best hope for providing direction and guidance in instituting effective governance for the Philippines' protected areas (USAID-Philippines 2004). However, many PAMBs have not yet achieved a truly multi-stakeholder identify. Most are still perceived at local levels as an extension of DENR rather than as a joint initiative of local stakeholders. Nonetheless, data collected from protected areas financed by the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility indicate that the establishment of PAMBs as a participatory management tool has resulted in substantial increase in the discussion of natural resource management issues, and this corresponded with an increase in actions and initiatives undertaken on the ground (USAID-Philippines 2004). Among the challenges to be faced is the large membership of some of the Boards which leads to unwieldy and bureaucratic decision making processes.

Viet Nam

Forest Sector Support Partnership

Adapted from www.vietnamforestry.org.vn/

Description
The Viet Nam Government and partners have been working together in the forestry sector under various partnership arrangements since 1999, and these have evolved through three distinct phases.

5 Million Hectare Reforestation Project (5MHRP) Partnership. At a Consultative Group meeting in Paris in December 1998, the Government called on the donor community to work with it to establish a Partnership Support Program for support of the 5 Million Hectare Reforestation Project. In 1999, the Government and 15 international partners signed a Memorandum of Agreement to provide this support. During 1999-2000, it mobilized three joint national-international task forces that studied: the 5MHRP; forest strategy, policy, and institutional issues; and financial investment requirements for the sector. Meanwhile, the ADB undertook a major forest policy study. These four reports were then combined in early 2001 into a "Joint Sector Review".

Forest Sector Support Program and Partnership (FSSP&P). General agreement was reached in March 2001, on the need to broaden the partnership – not only to support the 5MHRP, but the entire forest sector. The FSSP&P Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed in November 2001 between the Viet Nam Government and 19 international partners (now having 25 international signatories), to cover a ten-year period (2001-2010). These international partners include not only multilateral and bilateral donors, but also multilateral organizations and a growing number of international non-governmental organizations. The MOA included 15 major principles of cooperation, as well as a FSSP Program Framework, with nine key results areas, highlighting key areas for sector intervention.

The partners agreed to support three main objectives, which emphasized collaboration and support of government policies and strategies:

- To put in place arrangements for continued collaboration in support of the forest sector of Viet Nam on the basis of agreed policies, strategies, priorities and principles of implementation.

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- A shared commitment to the sustainable management of forests and the conservation of biodiversity to achieve: (a) protection of the environment; (b) improved livelihood of people in forest areas; and (c) enhanced contribution of forestry to the national economy.
- To maximize effectiveness and efficiency in the use of all resources applied to the sector.

In mid-2004, four bilateral donors agreed to establish a multi-donor Trust Fund for Forests (TFF), and a fifth bilateral donor agreed to provide technical advisors for the TFF. To date, these donors have committed almost 30 million Euros, which has been used to support key sector activities, co-finance two major projects, and provide large and small grants for a number of other activities. Discussions are currently ongoing to replenish the fund for the period 2008-2010.

Forest Sector Support Partnership (FSSP). In 2006, following the second major evaluation of the FSSP&P, it was decided to reform the Partnership's institutional structure. In November 2006, new Terms of Reference were agreed upon, and the Partnership was renamed the Forest Sector Support Partnership. A major change in the Partnership was to open it up to all interested stakeholders. These stakeholders include local and provincial representatives, as well as both domestic and foreign private sector entrepreneurs and investors. Thus, the Partnership is evolving to incorporate ideas of public-private partnership. The first big stakeholder meeting, the Forestry Partnership Forum, was held in May 2007, with 160 participants. It was followed by the Forestry Investment Forum, which attracted 150 participants.

The revised Terms of Reference for the Partnership specify that the Forestry (FSSP) Partnership aims to create: an effective Partnership among national and international forest sector stakeholders that contributes to increased dialogue and collaboration on important forest sector issues, and an improved policy framework for the sector, focusing on implementation of the Vietnam National Forestry Development Strategy (VFDS, 2006-2020).

The main tasks of the Partnership are to:

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- promote information sharing and policy dialogue on key sectoral issues, focusing on implementation of the Vietnam Forestry Development Strategy; and
- promote collaboration on mobilization of resources and conducting activities to implement the VFDS.

Evaluation
After five years of implementation, a joint evaluation mission recognized that the Forestry Partnership had succeeded in supporting the development of sector policy and strategy and the enhancement of policy dialogue. The Partnership is also recognized for its achievements in information sharing and communication among stakeholders. The Partnership produces thematic newsletters and has a bilingual website (www.vietnamforestry.org.vn), both of which are well regarded as mechanisms for providing important sector information to both national and international partners.

SUMMARY OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESSES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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Status of key countries in the region

The following table summarizes some of the multi-stakeholder processes in countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Only those that operate at the national or sub-national levels have been selected. National Forest Programmes have not been included in this list as they occur in some form or another in all countries. Also excluded are the community forestry networks that operate in many countries. These exist primarily to exchange information among community forestry practitioners, but some of them are also effective in proposing policy changes to governments to enhance support to community forestry. They are rarely negotiation processes.

Table 3. Multi-stakeholder processes in countries in the Asia-Pacific region

Country	Multi-stakeholder processes	
	National origin	**Regional/international origin**
Australia	• Regional Forest Agreements (10 agreements signed)	
China	• Forest Dialogue Forum	• Model forest (1 site) • National Forest Programme Facility
India		• Model forest (1 site) • Forest Governance Learning Groups
Indonesia	• Multi-stakeholder	• Model forest (2 sites)

	Forestry Programme (donor stimulated)	• National Forest Programme Facility • Forest Governance Learning Groups
Mongolia		• National Forest Programme Facility
Myanmar		• Model forest (1 site)
Nepal	• Community forestry multi-stakeholder platforms (Middle Hills) • District level multi-stakeholder coordination platforms (Terai)	
Pakistan		• National Forest Programme Facility
Palau		• National Forest Programme Facility
Philippines	• Alliances of Local Government Units • Protected Area Management Boards	• Model forest (1 site) • National Forest Programme Facility
Thailand		• Model forest (1 site) • National Forest Programme Facility • ForestPACT (1 site)
Vanuatu		• National Forest Programme Facility
Viet Nam	• Forest Sector Support Partnership	• National Forest Programme Facility • Forest Governance Learning Groups

Lessons learned

The majority of the processes described in the previous sections define themselves as MSPs. However, it could be argued that many of them do not really conform to the criteria that would make them MSPs. In many of them, powerful stakeholders such as national governments make use of the processes for informing or consulting, rather than negotiating and deciding together (i.e., they operate at the lower level of Arnstein's ladder of participation). Many of the national forest programmes would fall into this category, and as a result, the outcomes might not enjoy wide stakeholder support. Even where there is no domination by powerful stakeholders, the primary purpose of many of them seems to be to promote discussion and exchange of ideas, rather than negotiating outcomes using participatory approaches and involving all stakeholder groups that are likely to be affected by any decisions. In particular, those groups that are marginalized (such as poor local communities) and are likely to be the ones most immediately affected by forest management decisions, are often the least represented.

Several of the MSPs such as ForestPACT and the Local Governance Learning Groups are in the nature of small scale pilot initiatives with limited institutional linkages. Consequently, they are not likely to have any significant impact unless they can be scaled up.

Another observation is that most multi-stakeholder processes investigated in this study are relatively recent in origin, and in many cases it is still too early to judge their effectiveness. Indeed, there are few critical evaluations available of the extent to which they have achieved their objectives.

O'Hara and Puhlin (2006) note that participatory processes are well developed and applied in village settings in the Philippines and many other countries, but are applied much less at the national level. They describe trials in the Philippines aimed at testing participatory approaches at the national level, whereby stakeholders from all levels are brought together in a multi-stakeholder process to discuss and decide on policies to support community-based forest management. In 2006, these processes

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were brought under the auspices of the Philippine National Forest Programme.

Some MSPs such as the Model Forests, while demonstrating useful approaches for addressing diverse forest issues with a range of partnerships across large areas of the landscape, remain enclave developments. In some cases, there has been a close connection between the Model Forests and the national government, as in the Philippines (B. Bonnell, pers. com.), but in many cases the connection has been tenuous.

One of the explicit assumptions behind functional MSPs is that stakeholders should be able to organize themselves and have the confidence to assert views that may be contradictory to those expressed by powerful groups such as governments, corporations or political parties. A vibrant and vigorous civil society is probably a pre-condition for the effective functioning of MSPs. This is borne out in countries that apply strong central planning approaches to their natural resource management. For example, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, China and Myanmar have not embraced MSPs to the same extent as countries with more open and inclusive societal systems. However, while a vigorous civil society might be a necessary condition for the development of multi-stakeholder platforms, it is not sufficient, as the situation in India demonstrates.

India has a very strong democratic tradition and a vibrant civil society. Nonetheless, the key national agency for forestry (Ministry of Environment and Forests) has traditionally exercised strong central control of key national policy decisions. For example, India developed a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan with extensive engagement of civil society (the process was an effective MSP). However, the Plan has not been released by the Ministry. Perhaps more significantly, the Supreme Court of India has exercised a major role in deciding many aspects of forest management through public interest litigation (Madhu Sarin, pers. com.). In spite of the situation at the national level in India, a few of the states sometimes engage in processes that can be likened to MSPs, such as the multi-stakeholder working groups for Joint Forest Management. The lesson to be drawn from these examples is that MSPs can not be expected to be viable if there is not

sufficient political will to engage with multiple stakeholders in an open, transparent and participatory process. Further, appropriate institutions and the availability of effective resource management facilitators are also necessary. Experience suggests that traditionally trained foresters tend not to be very effective in performing these facilitation roles because of their narrow perspective and often a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo*.

The water resources sector has made considerable progress with using multi-stakeholder processes for addressing conflicting and competing claims over water access and use. This is perhaps because there has been a long tradition in many countries of various forms of catchment management boards and committees. By their very nature, these tend to be somewhat multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral and bring together governments and civil society, even if the partnership is often unequal. Much of the available material for analysis of the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder processes comes from this sector (see for example, Faysse, 2006).

Many MSPs have not met initial high expectations, and Faysse (2006) suggested that many have been implemented in an unfavorable context, primarily of social inequities and where there are unresponsive institutions. Faysse has identified five main issues as being crucial to success:

- Creating equitable power relationships;
- Ensuring balanced composition among key stakeholders;
- Enabling effective stakeholder representation and capacity to participate meaningfully in the debates;
- Agreeing on mechanisms for decision making; and
- Cost of setting up and running a MSP.

Faysse also notes that some countries provide an enabling environment for successful MSPs, based mainly on well-organized stakeholder groups, few power imbalances, and a State that fully supports the process and its outcomes. He cites the case of groundwater overuse in California being negotiated through MSPs, with the results being largely successful.

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However, many documented MSPs, set up in unfavorable circumstances, have fallen short of expectations, with large differences between theory and results on the ground.

"Unfavorable circumstances" include:

- high social inequities;
- a State that is either too strong or too weak to support a MSP process and decisions;
- disorganized stakeholder groups;
- lack of financial and technical capacities to implement MSPs; and
- a non-participatory culture.

In reviewing the multi-stakeholder processes that have been operating during the past few years in the forest sector in the Asia-Pacific region, most of them can be characterized as exhibiting one or more of the unfavorable circumstances given in the list above.

Funding is a critical issue for most MSPs. By and large, without the injection of external funds, the initiative stalls or dies. One of the few exceptions to this is community forestry in the Middle Hills of Nepal. Forest User Groups, the institutions at the heart of community forestry, generate their own funds and use them for forest management as well as community development and other activities. The engagement with multiple stakeholders in many cases has emerged as a natural reaction to a felt need or in response to pressure from civil society. The resulting institutional arrangements are, in effect, flexible and adaptable social learning opportunities. The lesson to come from this example is that MSPs that are addressing locally perceived needs and have the ability to generate their own funds are likely to be more sustainable than those that are responding to outside agendas and rely on outside funding.

Edmunds and Wollenberg (2002) note that the implications of multi-stakeholder negotiations for disadvantaged groups of people are seldom critically examined. They argue that negotiations that seek to neutralize differences among stakeholders pose considerable risks for disadvantaged groups. They go on to suggest that negotiations that are explicit about the

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conditions affecting disadvantaged groups and that emphasize politically informed behavior and selective alliance building promise better outcomes for disadvantaged groups. However, this begs the question of how these improved outcomes will emerge. There is an implicit assumption that the MSPs need to be managed to promote social learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
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Conclusions

Persson (2003) describes the various phases that have characterized the forestry debate during the past 40 years as: industrial forestry, social forestry, environmental forestry and sustainable management of renewable natural resources. He concludes that we may now be in a fifth phase, which places emphasis on poverty reduction, governance, institutions and the rule of law. Many of the issues-based partnerships and alliances that are currently operating (and are described earlier in this paper) reflect the topics in the final phase of this list. However, there is also a change of mood afoot with rapidly emerging public awareness of the potential of climate change to have a severe impact on global environmental and economic systems. This is likely to impinge on the forest debate, with more emphasis given to issues such as payment for environmental services and avoided deforestation. Persson concludes his analysis with the statement that forestry itself will do little to influence the rate of deforestation, as the main reasons for deforestation lie outside the forestry sector. In spite of this rather pessimistic assessment, there is little doubt that discussion and debate about forestry will continue.

It is evident that a significant change is underway at all levels, from international to local, in the way that forest debates takes place, consensus is developed and action is carried out. The old top down "government knows best" approach is giving way to alternative approaches, primarily because of the ever increasing voice and influence of civil society. Multi-stakeholder processes have emerged onto the global scene and been adopted as appropriate institutional vehicles for ensuring that:

- the issues to be addressed do represent those of key (or at least a broad range of) stakeholders; and
- the processes used to address these issues will lead to a workable consensus, which hopefully will contribute to sustainable forest management.

However, this change has not been universal, and even where MSPs have been adopted the results have not always reflected the concerns of many of the interest groups. Edmunds and Wollenberg (2003), in an analysis of forest management decision making in China, India and the Philippines, note that the institutional arrangements and interests of state bureaucracies remain dominant, despite the increasing involvement of diverse interest groups.

Many MSPs such as Model Forests, remain relatively small enclave developments, and some have only a tenuous link to national policy processes. However, there seems to be little doubt that where MSPs have been applied effectively at national and sub-national levels they have produced outcomes that are reasonably durable and, on balance, socially acceptable.

A clear message from the experience of the past decade is that, unless there is buy-in from all affected stakeholder groups to policy and practice, the outcomes are likely to be contested to the extent that they will be unsustainable. In the current environment, MSPs offer the best hope to negotiate acceptable outcomes that will be more durable and lead towards sustainable forest management. However, the outcomes should be seen as operational "treaties" and not set in stone for all time. They will need to be continually re-negotiated in an on-going policy cycle of contest, debate, consensus, limitation, re-contest, etc.

Many MSPs have been stimulated by the interests of international organizations. Some are linked to national frameworks, such as a national forest policy or national forest programme (NFP), while some have a more specific regional or local focus. At the national level, it would seem desirable to bring the MSPs operating within a country under a common framework such as a national forest policy or programme. This would

enhance coordination, sharing of information and provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and mutual learning. However, this would need to occur in a way that does not diminish the autonomy of individual MSP initiatives or seek to impose the ideas and/or control of a single interest group. NFP processes, where they exist in any effective form, could focus on developing frameworks and institutional capacity for MSPs to operate. However, there might be a need for capacity building of participants involved in the NFPs to enable them to adopt the characteristics of MSPs that have been shown as being necessary for efficient and effective functioning. This refers particularly to ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are engaged in the process, and effective participatory techniques are applied so that marginalized and disadvantaged stakeholders can be empowered to negotiate effectively. However, an important caveat is that unless there is local ownership of the processes coupled with sufficient political will to engage effectively and respect the negotiated decisions, capacity building is unlikely to lead to improved outcomes.

Persson (2003), in his review of assistance to forestry during recent decades, takes a rather pessimistic view of the effectiveness of much of that assistance. However, he does conclude that much can be done by strengthening what he refers to as the "basics" in order to achieve the overall objective of sustainable forestry. These are areas in which most developing countries have problems. They are:

- improving policies;
- capacity building (at least certain aspects);
- strengthening of analytical capacity;
- strengthening of research; and
- developing systems for learning.

At least some of these "basics" can be addressed with relatively low cost approaches using institutional arrangements of partnerships, alliances and MSPs.

Recommendations

Many of the processes described in the previous sections are concerned with enhancing the quality of dialogue about forest issues where the major participants are often like-minded. They are less concerned with negotiating specific outcomes where the issues are highly contested. However, there are several forest issues in the Asia-Pacific region which are highly contested. Serious application of multi-stakeholder processes to these issues has the potential to contribute to outcomes that are likely to be more durable, and at the same time lead to enhanced social, economic and environmental impacts. It could be useful to support the piloting of activities to explore the application of multi-stakeholder processes in situations where serious conflict exists. Among the issues that could benefit from such application include:

- establishment of oil palm plantations;
- establishment of large scale tree plantations (particularly *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia*);
- avoided deforestation in the context of climate change.

In addition to focusing on specific issues such as those listed above, there are several activities that international organizations could undertake to build the capacity of forestry (and other) agencies to facilitate and promote more generalized multi-stakeholder dialogue and decision making including:

- Advise countries in the region of both the potential and practical limitations of MSPs, particularly where conflict is present, to produce more socially durable policy and practical outcomes leading to sustainable forest management.
- Make countries in the region aware of the key characteristics of effective MSPs, particularly those related to:
  - creating equitable power relationships;
  - ensuring balanced stakeholder composition;
  - enabling effective stakeholder representation and capacity to participate meaningfully in the debates;
  - agreeing on mechanisms for decision making; and

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> ➤ the cost of setting up and running a MSP.
- Seek ways to enable local level MSPs to become financially self-sufficient.
- Seek ways to link local level MSPs with national processes.
- Support capacity building for key stakeholder groups involved with MSPs.

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