



Collaborative Partnership on Forests

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Community-based forest management key to success of REDD+

LIMA, Peru (4 February 2011)_Local communities need to be given a greater role in the management of forests to ensure the best chance for REDD+ schemes to work, experts said as the United Nations launched the 2011 International Year of Forests.

REDD+ stands for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, while fostering forest conservation, sustainable management and enhancement of carbon stocks. Climate negotiators meeting in Mexico in December agreed to move ahead with the global mechanism, which aims to reward developing countries for protecting, restoring and sustainably managing forests. It offers one of the cheapest options for cutting global greenhouse gases.

Research shows that community-based forest management can reduce and can even stop deforestation, underscoring the need for forest communities to play a central role in REDD+ initiatives.

"Forests are the source of livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Therefore, it is these people who have the most to lose when forests are managed unsustainably," said Frances Seymour, Director General of the [Center for International Forestry Research](#). "If REDD+ is to be effective, efficient, and equitable, it must respect the rights and livelihoods of forest communities and involve them in the management of the forests."

Fred Kafeero, Forestry Officer at the [U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization](#), said community-based management creates an incentive for forest communities to invest their traditional knowledge and practices in conservation, reforestation, control of bushfires and fighting illegal forest exploitation and encroachment.

"Community-based forest management fosters local ownership, responsibility and control for the protection and sustainable management of forest resources," he said.

With REDD+ likely to lead to significant funding being channelled to developing countries, there are concerns that the rights of local forest communities may be ignored or that the communities may even be pushed aside in the management of the forests and the sharing of the new streams of revenue. Therefore the recognition of their existing rights and roles by planners becomes central to achieving the objectives of REDD+.

These concerns were among the issues being addressed this week in New York at the Ninth session of the [U.N. Forum on Forests](#) (UNFF). The U.N. General Assembly declared 2011 the [International Year of Forests](#) and the hundreds of forest experts attending the UNFF meeting used the opportunity to launch the Year, which is intended to draw attention to the world's forests. The event is themed, "Celebrating Forests and People."

Around the world, there are an increasing number of studies that highlight successes in community-based forest management. In Nicaragua, for example, a part of the Bosawas Reserve that is managed by the indigenous community was deforested 16 times less than the surrounding area ([see the article](#)). In Brazil, Alto Juruá, the oldest extractive reserve in the country, maintained 99 percent of its forest cover 10 years after it was created. Forests were protected while income diversification appears to have improved the livelihoods of local residents ([see the article](#)).

Many international organisations are working to promote local communities' rights and their involvement in forest management, particularly through advocacy and capacity development.

The [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#), for example, currently works with community-based organisations to enable their greater recognition and integration into national and regional policy processes. They also facilitate forest governance while respecting the community's rights and traditions, said Pascal Girot, IUCN's Regional Programme Coordinator for Mesoamerica and the Caribbean.

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The Collaborative Partnership on Forests ([CPF](#)) is a voluntary arrangement among 14 international organisations and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests. The CPF's mission is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest and strengthen long term political commitment to this end.

CPF members:

- Center for International Forestry Research ([CIFOR](#))
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ([FAO](#))
- International Tropical Timber Organization ([ITTO](#))
- International Union of Forest Research Organizations ([IUFRO](#))
- Convention of Biological Diversity ([CBD Secretariat](#))
- Global Environment Facility ([GEF Secretariat](#))
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification ([UNCCD Secretariat](#))
- United Nations Forum on Forest ([UNFF Secretariat](#))
- United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change ([UNFCCC Secretariat](#))
- United Nations Development Programme ([UNDP](#))
- United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#))
- World Agroforestry Centre ([ICRAF](#))
- World Bank ([World Bank](#))
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature ([IUCN](#))

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