

Community recommendations

Five break-out groups of community leaders prepared and presented recommendations organized around the five key themes of the earlier sessions:

- organization of CFES;
- finance, credit and investment;
- enterprise structure and productive systems;
- market relations; and
- legal issues.

Within each theme, communities prepared specific recommendations for governments, civil society, themselves and ITTO. Parallel to these meetings, government and civil-society representatives met separately to prepare recommendations for their own groups based on their conclusions and the outcomes of the previous days' discussions. All recommendations are summarized beginning on page 26, following a synopsis of the deliberations of the panel of government representatives.

Government panel

Salvador Anta Fonseca

Mexico

Fifteen million people live in forests in Mexico. Of those, there are 43 Indigenous groups totaling 5 million people. To a large extent, the changes we have witnessed have been the result of the vision of policy-makers and the pressure of social movements to effect change. One cannot say that there has been a constant vision throughout the history of tenure changes in Mexico. Increasingly, programs aim for simplification. We still have not reached our end goal, but we are moving in that direction. The idea is to facilitate and simplify the rules of operation. We have mapped, geographically, a human development index and our goal is to target those communities with the lowest scores against the index. The last batch of application forms for the PROARBOL program that came in were divided by gender. We have seen a lot of immigration from rural areas, but the percentage of women presenting projects (49%) was impressive; moreover, 17% of applications came from Indigenous groups.

Roberto del Cid

Guatemala

I do not have a formal presentation but I will do a quick review. The participants at this conference reflect what Guatemala has gone through since 1996. In that year, the Peace Accord was signed following 30 years of struggle against political conditions that widened the gap between the rich and poor. Civil society played a key role in developing the Peace Accord.

The displacement of the rural population to other countries and the creation of communication networks to coordinate efforts were key to establishing a basis for large-scale coordination. During the dictatorship, which began in 1982, many government bodies were eliminated. The 1985 Constitution addresses the issue of deforestation as a national priority and, in 1996, the Social Forestry law was enacted. Under this law, a series of capacity-building and technical assistance commitments have emerged to promote forest conservation and sustainable use. In addition, the law establishes that 1% of federal income will finance activities for collective properties, including municipalities.

A series of mechanisms were created to support income generation in communities while controlling the expansion of the agricultural frontier. The Government of the Netherlands earmarked funds to support small-scale forestry with the condition that all beneficiaries must have title to the land. Within the Ministry of Agriculture, there is a program on basin management. As part of the strategy, a series of legal instruments has been created to decentralize decision-making to the community level.

Marcia Muchagata

Brazilian Forest Service (SBF), Government of Brazil

Fifty-six per cent of the Brazilian territory is forestland. The forest sector is responsible for 3.5% of GDP and 8.7 % of exports. In total, it generates two million direct jobs.

Brazil wants to establish long-term concessions in public forests for commercial and social use and conservation with a diverse set of actors, many of them community actors. A law for the regulation of public forests was approved in March 2006 after eleven months before Congress, multiple public consultations and 13 public hearings.

We currently have 844 units of public forests under community management, equaling about 132 million hectares. Separately, 63 designated national forests are in the process of being transferred for management by third parties, including communities.

We also have a large number of spaces for society to discuss forestry issues, but sometimes these are conflictive spaces. They include: the National Environmental Council (CONAMA); the National Council for Forests (CONAFOR), which defines the regulations; the National Commission for Public Forests (CGFLOP), a new body created by law that also can define regulations; the National Council for Biodiversity (CONABIO); and the National Council of Traditional Populations (CNPT).

In addition, local participation in the development of forest management plans occurs through councils for extractive reserves (RESEX) and national forests. Finally, there are participatory spaces for other projects and the declaration of protected areas.

In the last four years, public spending on family and community forestry has increased from 2 to 20 million reais. We also have funds for projects, a program to support forest management, demonstration projects and agro-extractive projects. The challenge is to guarantee these funds in the medium and long terms. All these projects are selected through an open-call selection. Most mechanisms like these are short term; there are some longer-term proposals from Minister Marina Silva, but these have not yet been established.

Anicet Jean Léon Minsoum'a Bodo

Cameroon

I am director of community programs and I would like to talk about community management. Cameroon's legal framework allowed the country to become a pioneer in the Congo Basin. This happened in two phases: a) community forest management: this was uncommon for local populations to practice: it happened with external assistance but had limited funds and, when the assistance ceased, the program became problematic; b) today, communities are taking ownership of the process but financial support is decreasing.

The excitement within communities around management continues. I contributed to this excitement with the new legal framework, which created a program to deal with problems confronted by community forestry, including illegal loggers. We look for the most appropriate way forward for them, and communities have choices among a variety of options. We have credit lines that can be paid after one year; we also have a sectoral program for forestry. There is a common fund for communities, with 50% of the income received from industrial fees. This is allocated to municipalities and another portion goes to communities. An external independent observer ensures that forest management operations are appropriate. In 1998, 330 communities had received approved permits for timber extraction. In the past few years, 650 plans have been approved and 337 are waiting approval. One hundred and nine public forests have been granted to communities.

Constraints: In general, we face three main constraints in adapting the regulatory framework for communities. We have many ecosystems under the same framework; thus, negligent use is common. The government does not have the resources to prepare management plans for communities. For the Government

of Cameroon, it is important to participate in events like this that encourage the exchange of information so we can improve natural resource management and local development. We are aware of the proposals made here as well as the problems identified. I wanted to present you with more information but unfortunately there is insufficient time. Cameroon is committed to producing a manual with regulatory procedures for community forestry and civil-society participation. We will take into account what was discussed here when we produce this manual.

J.V. Sharma

India

The Government of India has empowered the forest-dependent and forest-dwelling communities with habitation and occupational rights on forests through national legislation called the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006.

National initiatives are in place to encourage local communities to form village-level institutions known commonly as joint forest management committees (JFMCs). The general body of a JFMC consists of all willing adult members of the village and is chaired by a president elected by consensus. There is an executive body for day-to-day functioning. Provisions in the policy guidelines aim to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of women and other disadvantaged groups.

There are three distinct types of rights to forests: 1) individual or community; 2) forest-dwelling scheduled tribes, which reside primarily in and depend on forests for *bona fide* livelihood needs, including pastoralist communities; and 3) other traditional forest-dwellers who, for at least three generations prior to 2005, have resided primarily in and depend on forests for *bona fide* livelihood needs.

So far, JFM has been the main strategy for forest management. All states have issued guidelines to adopt JFM and many have revised these guidelines. Emerging issues include: conducting qualitative evaluations; capacity-building in JFMCs and the Forest Department; the devolution of JFM and closer alignment with poverty alleviation programs; ownership of NTFPs; legal back-up for JFMCs; adding value to NTFPs; and upgrading technology.

The role of NGOs in JFM has been through research, documentation and policy analysis. NGOs have also facilitated forest products-based enterprises, especially linking NTFPs to markets and strengthening institutions.

New legislation is under development to provide occupation and habitation rights to forest-dwelling and forest-dependent communities, to empower people for the ownership of NTFPs, and to provide tenure rights.

Prakesh Sayami

Nepal

Nepal's forests occupy 5.8 million hectares. The concept of community forestry emerged in Nepal in 1976 and was formalized in the current policy in 1987–90. From 1991 onwards, forests have been managed by the community as community forests. Forest user groups are recognized as independent, self-governing entities with perpetual succession. Any part of government forests can be handed over to those communities that are traditional users of the forests. The government provides rights to forest user groups to manage and use their community forests as per their constitutions and operational plans. Forest user groups can have a fund of their own and all income from the sale of forest products goes to that fund; they can freely set prices and find markets for their forest products. There are currently 14 337 community forest user groups, 784 of them composed solely of women. Thirty-nine per cent of the total population, or 1.65 million households, is involved in this activity. About one-fifth (20.5%) of the national forest area has been handed over to communities. Of those 1.22 million hectares, 22 880 are managed solely by women.

What are the results? Forest degradation trends have been reversed and forest conditions have improved. Production has increased and the subsistence needs of



Photo: A. Sarre

many users fulfilled. Support has been provided for the promotion of livelihoods among the poor, and capacity at the local level has been strengthened. Many forest-based enterprises have been developed and the participation of women, the poor and other excluded groups has increased. Access to forests by the poor has improved and there has also been an increase in alternative energy use. Wildlife has reappeared, ecotourism operations have been developed, environmental services and benefits are being provided, and encroachment has been reversed.

Many challenges remain. For the poor, women and other excluded groups, they include improving access to decision-making, infrastructure, group funds and forest land and forest products. Challenges in SFM remain with regards to the backlog of operational plans, insufficient knowledge of NTFP cultivation and marketing, and the under-utilization of community forestry. Finally, we need to work on identifying, demonstrating and replicating poverty reduction practices.

Rosalie Matondo

Republic of Congo

There is a government program for communities and plantations on private lands. Communities participate in the restoration of degraded forests, work on agroforestry plots, and receive training from technicians on plantation techniques. However, the forest code stipulates that any person that plants a tree (be they Congolese or foreigner) has usufruct rights to the land. Owners therefore don't want forests planted on their lands because they are afraid of losing their rights to the land.

There are 1.3 million hectares of forest under concessions for reforestation and agroforestry. All production is exported, although 85% undergoes local processing. FSC certification was awarded in July 2006. These activities generate 2000 jobs.

The forest code has important implications for local populations given the overlapping of legal measures. How do you ensure community benefits when they are acting illegally given the mixed legal framework? Currently there is no legal recognition of overlapping customary rights.

In contrast to our Cameroonian neighbors, we do not have community activities because we have decided to work with individuals. The state is the owner of the land, but the individual can buy the land by occupying it, producing something on it for five years and paying the cost of the title. Communities cannot afford this luxury. Legal conflicts over land have shown that community rights have not been respected. There is a popular notion that traditional agriculture cannot be affected, yet any subsistence activity requires authorization. People are afraid to make money from the land because they will be required to show a land title. We are trying to see how FSC social protection stipulations could address this issue.

Jan McAlpine

Former chair of the International Tropical Timber Council

I am out breath and feel like I have been running behind the Tour de France. You worked so hard to make yourselves understood despite language barriers and you never gave up. I am not here to respond to panelists but to comment on the conclusions and recommendations that you have made and how these might impact on ITTO. As Sobral said, the recommendations you have made here will be taken to the Council this year. The question is how you might be able to obtain support for implementing at least some of these recommendations.

ITTO can promote the concept of benefits of community enterprises globally. You recommend a follow-up conference to review progress towards greater support for CFES. Unquestionably it is within ITTO's mandate and scope to put on such a conference, but a lot more thought needs to go into what such a conference might achieve.

How to get support to facilitate such a conference? Marketing the products coming out of CFES is a key issue. It is important to focus on tropical timber exports and their flow into consuming countries. The big challenge is to think about how to differentiate CFE products from other products: are they parallel or complementary?

In the legal area we need to talk about proposing that ITTO support studies and analyses on land tenure and community forestry. One of your recommendations to strike me is that ITTO could globally promote the benefits of community forest management. That is entirely within its scope and this event is proof of it. Again, a lot more thought needs to be put into what you want to achieve from such promotion.

The DRC minister came away impressed by the wealth of knowledge captured in this workshop. Among the challenges is identifying the countries and regions that need timely attention, and where the money for this set of initiatives will come from.

Creating funds is a popular recommendation, but we need to think about who will create them. Flexibility is also needed in what your thinking is on a fund. Funds could be used for CFE development, training and exchanges. Focus more on the activities and things that you would like to do. In fact, ITTO already has a fund and perhaps there is no need to create a new one. The existing fund needs to be continually replenished, however, and thought should be given to how some of the money in it can be channeled to CFES.

Every government represented in this panel is a member of ITTO. How do you get your interests represented by your government and in the role it plays in the International Tropical Timber Council? Finally, who funds ITTO? Japan,

Switzerland and the USA are the main donors and the Netherlands seems to be coming on board. More reluctant are other European countries.

You have a lot of homework to do to be sure that people have heard these recommendations and that you have a strategy to advance your agenda. This is a powerful assembly and can have a tremendous impact. You should also work with NGOs like RRI and IUCN, which have a vested interest in advancing your community forest agenda. They can be effective lobbyists because they work with government and other actors in a way you don't. I know that the Council will be helpful and willing to cooperate with you.

Discussion

Comment 1: I am concerned about the lack of representation from Africa.

Comment 2: Jan McAlpine said that there needs to be an agenda for the next Council session. I think we can work on this in the future together but would like to ask governments if it will be possible to get to the next session with a good agenda in place.

Response from the Government of Brazil: The Brazilian government has the serious intention of discussing the outcomes at the next session and defending the recommendations. We have had conversations on how to create measures to support civil-society participation. It is important for the other governments to do the same, since this type of agenda is seldom discussed in Council sessions.

Response from the Government of Mexico: These types of event, in which governments are now active, reinforce our preparation for Council sessions. It definitely helps to know that there are global and regional trends which support patterns in our own countries. Community forestry is already part of the Mexican agenda but it helps to know that there is a worldwide movement.

Closing remarks

Andy White: What is RRI? It is many organizations dedicated to helping governments and communities figure out ways to move forward on this issue. As you know, this conference has been about three years in the making, so there are lots of people to thank. I would like to thank Sobral, Alastair and Patty at ITTO; Alberto, Shyam and Patrice at GACF; and the Government of Brazil. I would also like to thank a few people at RRI, most notably Augusta, who led the design of the study and the conference, Tania, Megan, Andrew Davis for working night and day organizing flights, and Alejandra Martin.

Most notably and importantly, I would like to thank you, the participants. I was surprised to see the level of interest even now. The room is still full. You were very active and this is very inspiring. Thanks to all of you.

One final comment on some of the things I learned this week. You are the face of tropical forestry. As Jan and Marcia said, community forestry is the future of forestry. I say 'the face' because when people say forestry, big industry comes to mind, but I think the image of you is more accurate than the face of forest industry.

If you look at market and political trends, you are the future of both. Big industry is leaving natural forests and, increasingly, it is communities who are managing and commercializing these forests. Yet you are not fully supported by government, industries or NGOs. The case studies this week show how incomes have doubled and how communities have schools and clinics and vaccinations because of your work. This is a tribute to you and this has been very inspiring to me and to everyone at RRI.

In places like Paris, Brussels, New York and Washington, rules on climate change and biodiversity are being created. I don't think people in these places fully appreciate or understand the role that you play; they need to talk to you. This event in Acre has shown the power of people to move this agenda forward.

The government representatives present and ITTO will be fully cognizant of the contributions and recommendations of this event. Until we see each other again, good luck to all.

Alberto Chinchilla: I would like to thank, in particular, the Secretariat of Forests of Acre and the logistics team for supporting us and trying their hardest to make this event turn out well. I would also like to thank RRI. For us in CSAG it has been very advantageous to witness these exchanges of knowledge, challenges and successes, and I think as CSAG we have achieved one of our objectives within the ITTO to make space for civil society.

I think this event marks a new phase. We leave feeling very enthusiastic and we take home many realistic and optimistic requests generated by you all. We thank the hospitality of the people of Acre, the communities and the people who shared their experiences with you.

I would like to thank the press for its coverage. I have never seen anything quite like it. For us, the press is a strategic ally in this community movement. Thanks to the government representatives, to donors, to universities and the different organizations who have supported this event in any way. I would also like to thank the facilitating team and all of you for sharing this new phase of community forestry and the hopeful message that we will take back to our communities.

Carlos Vicente, representing Brazil's Minister of the Environment, Marina Silva: On behalf of Minister Marina Silva, I would like to thank the government of Acre and all its agencies that have been involved. Marcia Muchagata spoke very highly of you. She said you were fantastic and the work here is to a great degree thanks to your hard work.

I would like to say that for the Brazilian government this event is extremely important. A platform was created to share experiences and address the challenge of promoting community forestry and the protection of forests worldwide. The proceedings will be used as a fighting flag within the social movements and, above all, the Rio Branco Declaration shows an ethical dimension.

Participants spoke about the importance of having productive activities that conserve forests, but at the same time you spoke of the difficulties in gathering support. Yes, we have technical issues, but solutions for those already exist; but we are at an ethical crossroads. We know what we need to do; now it is important for all parties to do their jobs. When Minister Marina Silva met with the Brazilian participants they presented her with a letter in which they spoke of the importance of creating a national policy for community forest management. When we return to Brasilia we will speak to various sectors and we will include your letter in the monthly meeting to begin discussions on this national policy. This document will be a very useful input to the policy.

Countries like Ghana and South Africa presented a proposal to work jointly in the development of a cooperation agenda; as soon as we return to Brasilia we will get started on this. Finally, I would like to thank all community forest managers for conserving our forests and wish that all of you return back home in peace.

Manoel Sobral Filho: If it weren't for the support of the government of Acre, if it wasn't for the community forest management policy created in this state over eight years ago, we would not be here today. We also have a person from Acre as Brazilian Minister of the Environment; this would not have been possible without the contributions of this state.

I would like to thank all the people that made it here. I know many of you traveled 40–50 hours, some even by boat.

If there is one thing I regret it is that this conference happened too late in my tenure in ITTO. The logistics were very difficult—as one of our partners said, it took three years to make this event possible—but we are very pleased with the results. I have been working for ITTO for 20 years and participated in over 200 events but I never saw a more dedicated group. I am very proud of all of you.

The main thing is the recommendations that emerged from this event. The recommendation of Minister Marina Silva to create a thematic program for

community forest management within ITTO will, I assure you, be implemented. We will allocate resources for this in the next biennial work programme. It may not be much, but it will be a start. We need more information on how CFES contribute to economies; we still need to know more and to share information worldwide. CFES still have a long way to go, but the potential is great.

I would like to thank all of our partners. I won't list people by name to avoid the injustice of forgetting someone. I would like in particular to thank the interpreters, who worked very hard. I would like to thank Juan and his excellent team. I don't want to talk much more but I would like to conclude by saying that I did not want any international organization or government speaking at the event, only communities. Unfortunately, I was defeated in my request, but I think we created a good space for communities here and I hope that you will be able to maintain and expand this space in the future, including in ITTO.

Carlos Duarte (Government of Acre): I think that at the end of this conference we no longer have that division between governments, communities and NGOs. One key success in this event was the pro-community feeling; everyone participated and contributed with ideas and a lot of enthusiasm.

I would like to thank everyone and not exclude anyone. I would like to thank ITTO, the Ministry of Environment, and all of you who participated directly or indirectly. Everyone gave heart and soul to make this event possible.

I would like to apologize to the communities if there were any problems with the organization of the event. And now it is time to leave. Community groups can use the opportunity to present their contributions on how to improve the state of community forest management. Thank you.

Tribute to Dr Sobral



Andy White (left) and Dr Sobral speak to the press during the conference. Photo: A. Sarre

Andy White and Alberto Chinchilla

Andy: Alberto and I want to take this opportunity to say a special word of thanks to Dr Sobral. This is the last major public event of his career with ITTO, which has spanned nearly 20 years including eight as executive director. This fellow transformed ITTO. It was very conventional and not beneficial to conservation or people. But he embraced conservation at a time when it was not a popular thing to do in the Council. This is not

recent; he has worked over a long period to change perceptions within the Council. Alberto and I would like to acknowledge him and to offer this as a small token of our appreciation for his major contributions to tropical forests and its people. He says he will retire but I don't believe him. I got him dominos to play during his retirement. Thanks, Sobral, for all your service and many years of work.

Roberto del Cid, Government of Guatemala: We have been commissioned by the Government of Guatemala, through the National Institute of Forests, to recognize the work and support of Dr Manoel Sobral. We know that even if your mandate is coming to an end, you will always be a supporter. We present to you this plaque and a pin as a reminder of your commitment. Thank you.