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ITTO-backed community group wins award

A 3000-hectare, community-based forest management project funded by ITTO in Buenavista, Bayombong, Nueva Viscaya, the Philippines has been hailed as a model in forest management.

The area is managed by the Federation of Vista Hills Kalongkong Upland Farmers Associations, Inc, with assistance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, local government units and other members of the Buenavista Upland Development Advisory Council.

Through community participation and with financial support, significant parts of the once marginal portion of the project site have been developed into plantations and agroforestry farms. Natural and secondary forests in the area are being better protected from illegal entry and poaching and enrichment planting is being carried out to assist the restoration of degraded forests.

Last year the project won the Model Sustainable Development Project Award offered by the Nueva Viscaya's Provincial Council for Sustainable Development and now it has also won a similar award from the Regional Council for Sustainable Development. The Federation received the award at a ceremony last March.

The ITTO project that supported the process (ITTO PROJECT PD 21/97 REV.2 (F)) started in 1998 and management was turned over to the Federation in 2002. This model of community forestry in action has now become an important tool for communicating sustainable development experiences and lessons learned with the wider community.

Text based on an article by Benny G. Enriquez in The Philippine Star. For more information contact: Dr Eva Muller, Assistant Director of Reforestation and Forest Management (muller@itto.or.jp)

ITTO awards grant to civil-society/private-sector partnership

A partnership between the Tropical Forest Trust (TFT), a non-governmental organisation based in Switzerland, and PT Hutanindo, an Indonesian logging company, is the first beneficiary of an innovative ITTO small-grants program.

The grant of US\$45 000 will be used by the TFT to train logging teams in the PT Hutanindo logging concession in reduced impact logging and to provide them with the technical support they need to improve forest management planning. The overall aim of the partnership is to enable the PT Hutanindo operation to be certified as well managed—with benefits for the local community in terms of social infrastructure, training, employment and environmental conservation.

ITTO is offering grants to facilitate and support partnerships between timber producers and civil society organisations with a view to promoting progress towards sustainable forest management, certification and access to markets for tropical timber products. The initiative forms part of the

Organization's wider efforts to encourage sustainable forest management in the tropics and the trade of tropical timber products derived from sustainably managed forests.

For more information contact: Mr Amha bin Buang, Assistant Director, Division of Economic Information and Market Intelligence, eimi@itto.or.jp, or Hugh Blackett, TFT, h.blackett@tropicalforesttrust.com

New certification website

The Peruvian Council for Voluntary Forest Certification (Consejo Peruano para la certificación forestal voluntaria), has launched a website (www.cp-cfv.org) containing, among other things, information on standards for the certification of forest management in the production of 'castaña' (*Bertolletia excelsa*) in Peru.

Online forum for funding

An online forum has been set-up by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the National Forest Programme Facility to allow people to share information, ideas and experiences on funding for forest-related projects. The forum aims to assist fund-seekers in soliciting funding for their projects. Representatives of grant-making bodies are also invited to post news and advice for potential applicants. Visit the forum at www.fao.org/forestry/site/17261/en

Indonesian government revises forestry law

In 1999, the Government of Indonesia enacted a new Forestry Law (No 41/1999) which, among other things, banned open-pit mining in protected forests. Last March, however, the government issued Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (or perpu) No 1/2004, which according to the *Jakarta Post* stipulates that all licenses and contracts on mining in forests made before the enactment of the Forestry Law are valid for the remainder of the original term of the license or contract. The issuance of the perpu was followed in May by a Presidential decree specifying the 13 mining companies that would be permitted to resume mining activities. Environmental activists condemned the measure for the destruction it would cause to Indonesian forests, while mining and business interests praised it, saying that it showed that Indonesia honoured its contracts and would also limit the government's exposure to potentially massive legal challenges. The total area of mining concessions released under the law change is about 928 000 hectares.

The government has drafted but not issued (by June 2004) another perpu, which would prescribe penalties for illegal logging and establish a special agency comprising divisions of the Indonesian military, the national police, the Attorney General's office and other institutions with the authority to investigate, apprehend and prosecute illegal logging activities.

Sources: Jakarta Post, Tempointeraktif.com; reported by Budhita Kismati.