

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP ON ENABLING POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Chiang Mai, Thailand
24 September 2001

A collaborative activity of The Ford Foundation, the East-West Center, and RECOFTC

Conference attendees!

You are invited to join in an ongoing discussion on decentralization among a group of forestry practitioners that recently met in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The management of Asia's forests has changed dramatically in recent years as national governments collaborate with local communities and civil society to design win-win land management scenarios. Since 1986, the Ford Foundation and the East-West Center have been documenting the changes through a series of writing workshops in which key actors are engaged in dialogue and debate over new policies and practices. These workshops provided an opportunity for forestry practitioners to assess and anticipate changing approaches to forest management within their own countries, and to compare their experience with other national efforts. The 2001 writing workshop was sponsored by RECOFTC and the East-West Center and held in Honolulu between February 5 and March 2, 2001. It brought together participants from eight countries in the Asia/Pacific region involved in promoting collaborative approaches to environmental management.

Participants focused on decentralization and its promises of administrative efficiency and more equitable distribution of benefits. Their experiences indicate that many decentralization efforts have neither empowered local communities nor improved forest management. Many analyses suggest that for decentralization to be effective, powers need to be transferred to lower level actors who are both elected and downwardly accountable. Empirical analyses of the lines of accountability and distribution of decision-making powers are key to our understanding of the nature of decentralization and its effects on forest management. Equally important is an examination of policy environments and local socio-political institutions as these are instrumental in the promotion of decentralized community based forest management.

The complexity involved in developing and implementing appropriate policy frameworks is reflected in the variety of themes that emerged in this workshop. Three of these themes will be addressed in a pre-conference workshop to The International Conference on Advancing Community Forestry: Innovations and Experiences. These are:

- **How have forest laws and policies enabled or impeded community-based initiatives?**
- **How have forest policies and related land policies affected ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups in society?**
- **What decentralization policies have resulted in effective community-based management of natural resources?**

Participants from the writing workshop will present their papers at this pre-conference workshop. We invite people from national ministries as well as from non-governmental organizations, universities, and research institutions to join us to exchange experiences and jointly explore the

dynamic social and political contexts in which forest management is planned and implemented, as well as new directions in community forestry.

How to Register?

We welcome your participation in this event. If you are interested in attending this workshop, please contact:

Ms. Leela Wuttikraibundit, Program Secretary
Regional Community Forestry Training Center
for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC)
Kasetsart University
PO Box 1111
Bangkok 10903
Thailand
Tel. (66-2) 9405700 ext.1234
Fax. (66-2) 5614880
E-mail: ftcllw@ku.ac.th