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A brother and sister fertilize trees in a village forest, Vietnam

Attending to gender

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Dear IUCN,

Thank you for an insightful issue on "Communicating Forest Values" beyond the usual circle of experts and policy makers. I agree, the sound of chainsaws and dramatic images of clearcut land do a good job of stressing the need for conservation among the general public, but are less helpful when it comes to spreading an understanding of forests as a sustainable resource, or inspiring people to restore degraded land. In our personal green choices, we happily chose wood over plastic, but sometimes fail to make the connection between wood and the solar-powered, carbon-storing, beautiful playground it comes from.

Flore de Préneuf, Communications Officer,
Program on Forests (PROFOR) www.profor.info

Gender mainstreaming in Jordan

Jordan, with support from IUCN, has become the first Arab country to develop a national strategy on gender and climate change. A National Gender and Climate Change Programme for Jordan was agreed by the Ministry of Environment and the Jordanian National Commission for Women last autumn, and a national workshop held in November last year under the theme 'Gender and Climate Change – Towards a Gender Plan of Action in Climate Change in Jordan'. The workshop report can be requested from Rania Faouri, rania.faouri@iucn.org

Editorial

After decades of neglect and marginalization, gender issues have at last found a firm foothold in many forest, land-use and environmental policies. Take for example the UN climate change talks. The negotiation documents went from zero to eleven mentions of gender in Cancun last December. While the increased attention to gender is certainly good news, there is a risk that some of the newly 'gender-aware' institutions are motivated more by a sense of obligation than a conviction that gender matters. If this is the case, they are not only missing the point but also missing real opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of their forest-based programmes and policies.

As anyone who has seen forest communities in action knows, there are important differences between men's and women's perspectives on and approaches to using forest resources for the wellbeing of their households and communities. So taking a gender perspective in forestry has nothing to do with political correctness and everything to do with development and conservation effectiveness: an awareness of the power relations between men and women vis-à-vis forest resources can only help ensure that these resources are used sustainably and equitably. If we ignore gender, there is no doubt that we will fail in our efforts to strengthen forests' contribution to poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Women across the developing world are primary users of forest resources and their sale of non-timber forest products is vital to help cover household expenses and tide them through the leaner times of the year. Their heavier dependence on forests also

means that women have more at stake than men when forests are degraded or forest access denied. Yet the needs and concerns of women are often neglected and the ownership of forests and the sale of valuable forest products are largely under the control of men.

We need to start taking gender issues more seriously, not only to make our work more effective but also to redress gender imbalances by enhancing women's empowerment, strengthening women's rights and ensuring that women get their fair share of benefits. This means taking account of gender differences not only when planning projects but also when designing policy interventions that will affect forest communities. Mainstreaming gender requires real commitment by our organizations and openness to changing the way we work. In IUCN we have seen the value of having an explicit policy and action plan on gender equity and equality, in terms of institutionalizing a gender-aware approach.

This edition of *arborvitae*, produced jointly with IUCN's Global Senior Gender Advisor, takes a fresh look at some of these issues and considers how gender is being addressed both on the ground and in policy discussions on climate change and REDD. By highlighting the importance of gender during this International Year of Forests, we hope to help move the debate forward and centre to give it the recognition that it deserves.

*Stewart Maginnis, Director of IUCN's
Forest Conservation Programme and
Lorena Aguilar, IUCN's Senior
Gender Advisor*

news in brief

Rwanda's restoration: A highlight of the ninth UN Forum on Forests, held in New York in January, was the announcement by the Rwandan government of its plans to restore the country's degraded landscapes border-to-border. "What Rwanda announced is the biggest commitment a country can make to giving nature a helping hand and reversing deforestation and forest degradation," says Julia Marton-Lefèvre, IUCN Director General. "If other countries are inspired by Rwanda and follow suit, then what we could be witnessing is the beginning of the largest restoration initiative the world has ever seen." The aim of Rwanda's Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative is to achieve a country-wide reversal of the current degradation of soil, water, land and forest resources by 2035.

Source: www.iucn.org, 4 February 2011.

Gender in Cancun

Gender enters the climate change negotiations at last.



A delegate laughing during a humorous moment at the climate talks in Cancun

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP16 negotiations, in December last year, were something of a watershed in terms of addressing gender issues. Led by two women, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres and COP President Patricia Espinosa of Mexico, the climate summit produced agreements with numerous clear references to the importance of dealing with gender issues.

“We are indeed celebrating, albeit with some reservation,” said Cate Owen, Program Director of Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), following the climate talks. “We have references to women and gender in the Cancun outcomes which will be a solid foundation for continued work next year. We also secured references in the subsidiary bodies, which means countries

will be further supported to respond to urgent gender issues in their national implementation.” Indeed, the ‘Cancun Agreements’ include eight references to women and gender, such as the following: ‘...*gender equality and the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change.*’ In addition, gender considerations are included in the outcome decisions of two subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC – the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) Decision on the Nairobi Work Programme and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) Decision on the Least Developed Countries Expert Group.

These achievements are the result of a process of evidence gathering and advocacy efforts on gender at national and global levels, as Lorena Aguilar, IUCN’s Senior

Gender Advisor, pointed out during a post-Cancun interview with Healthy Parks Healthy People Central (www.hphpcentral.com). “We started this process of trying to advocate for gender sensitive language for more than two years – when we started this process there was not a single mention of gender issues. We started a long process of building the capacity of parties and delegates to understand why gender is important in adaptation, mitigation, technologies, and financing mechanisms, and now the parties are moving forward....I have to say it’s very encouraging for the first time to see very concise and very good gender text in the negotiations.”

The climate summit also showed modest progress in terms of women’s participation in the negotiations. According to WEDO, the participation of women as delegates at the Convention of Parties (COP) 15 of the UNFCCC in Copenhagen in 2009 was 30%, the highest number of women in the history of the UNFCCC. This year at COP16 in Cancun, the number of total female delegates has grown to a modest 34%.

In a side event at Cancun for Women and Climate Justice hosted by the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice (www.mrfcj.org), Kenyan delegate Eunice Warue of GenderCC (www.gendercc.net) highlighted some of the challenges facing female delegates, particularly those from developing nations. She cited difficulties such as a lack of understanding of the rules and procedures, language barriers (for sessions where no translation is provided), and late-night negotiations that make it potentially dangerous for female delegates returning to their hotel rooms in the dark. She also outlined difficulties in ensuring gender issues were addressed in the climate change negotiations. For example, with so many meetings taking place at the same time, there aren’t always enough women delegates to be able highlight the importance of gender in the different discussions. She called for capacity building for female delegates and for efforts to ensure that gender issues are given proper attention and to stress that men are included in the discussion of gender.

Gender and REDD+



Women often rely on the sale of forest products for their basic livelihoods, though they rarely own forest land. REDD+ initiatives need to ensure that women can have a say in how forests are managed

A new gender initiative, jointly launched by IUCN, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) during the UN climate summit in Cancun in December, aims to ensure that women are an integral part of negotiations on REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation). Pilot REDD projects in 40 developing countries are already under way, and as a result of the 2009 climate change talks in Copenhagen, the international community has started working towards a global REDD deal.

“Political will for REDD exists, but donors sponsoring REDD initiatives still do not mainstream gender in projects on the ground even though they have mandate – and hence obligation – to do so,” says Lorena Aguilar, Senior Advisor on Gender for IUCN.

Current REDD+ initiatives state the need to engage indigenous peoples and local communities, but do not recognize the differentiated needs of women and men within communities, according to IUCN and its partners in the initiative. “A typical village in the countries we work with is composed of men with rights to land and women who have ‘courtesy’ land and forest access through their husbands, but no rights,” says Consuelo Espinosa, IUCN’s Senior Forests and Climate Change Officer. “Because women do not necessarily own forest lands, they are often excluded from discussions about how forest should be managed at community level. What worries us is that there is a risk that women would also be excluded from REDD payment schemes for the same reason“, she adds.

“We know that community leaders often neglect women’s issues, and that women leaders are either not offered a

seat at the decision-making table or are ill-prepared to participate effectively if given the opportunity,” explains Lorena Aguilar. “So if REDD+ is to impact positively on the forest-dependent poor, governments should make sure that women, whose livelihoods depend mostly on forest resources, get an equal share of benefits from REDD.”



A girl from a forest-dependent community in India

How gender aware are you?

Do you know what fraction of the world’s working hours is worked by women and girls? Do you know what percentage of girls in developing countries gets married before the age of 18? These and other facts can be found in the Gender Quiz, produced by UNESCO. The quiz is available at <http://tinyurl.com/UNgenderquiz>

Gender and tenure in the Philippines

Maria Zita Butardo-Toribio and **Elvino Balicao, Jr.** describe efforts to give women secure land tenure and a say in forest management.

Various community-based tenurial arrangements have been developed in the Philippines, primarily to address upland poverty and equity issues in forestry, but also to improve on-site forest management by reducing open access and de facto management.¹

Experience shows, however that lack of attention to gender differences and exclusion of women in the issuance of stewardship certificates and land titles can undermine positive gains from community forestry by creating adverse impacts for women and perpetuating gender inequality.²

The case of the municipality of Wao demonstrates that providing secure tenure rights to both genders can promote sustainable forest management and poverty alleviation in upland areas. Wao is one of the most impoverished municipalities in the country and receives technical assistance from the USAID-funded Philippine Environmental Governance (EcoGov) Project, which helped the local government prepare and implement its forest land-use plan.

The combination of forest land-use planning, tenure security and gender mainstreaming has given rise to some dramatic results.

The process of awarding individual property rights (IPR) to legitimate farmer-claimants is part of the Local Government Unit-Department of Environment and Natural Resources agreement for the co-management of forestlands. The IPR, a stewardship contract for three hectares of forestland, provides the holder with the right to develop and derive benefits from the land for 25 years (renewable for another 25 years), on the condition that they will protect and conserve the tenured area in consonance with the municipality's forest land-use plan.

Because of the visibility of men's role in forestry employment and the prevailing patriarchal system, stewardship agreements have historically been awarded only to male household heads in the Philippines. However, the Wao Local Government Unit (with its Gender and Development Team) has been working to mainstream gender equity into natural resource management. Through these efforts, women's knowledge of, and role in, forest conservation and management has become recognized, resulting in the inclusion of women as stewardship contract holders. In the case of married



Shalyn Jarino and her mother sign a property rights agreement with the local government, making them stewards of a forest land in the Banga watershed

holders, both spouses are now asked to sign the stewardship agreement. This enables joint decision-making on utilization and management and business transactions concerning land and forest resources, which is improving gender relations in the area.

Recognition of their tenure rights has opened the door for women to actively participate in community meetings, technical training, livelihood support projects, resource management planning, and forest land-use plan implementation activities. The combination of forest land-use planning, tenure security and gender mainstreaming has given rise to some dramatic results: the municipality has halted illegal logging activities in over 2,000 hectares of watershed, addressed land conflicts, turned 240 hectares of bare forestland into productive farms, and shifted unsustainable upland monoculture to conservation-oriented agroforestry farming with endemic perennials. The tenure holders, both men and women, can now expect higher and sustainable forest-based income, more peaceful communities, and a more secure environment.

¹ (1) Pulhin, J. M. 1998. Community forestry in the Philippines: Trends, issues and Challenges. In: Victor, M., Lang, C. and Bornemeier, J. (eds.), Community forestry at a crossroads: Reflections and future directions in the development of community forestry. Proceedings of an International Seminar, 17-19 July 1997, RECOFTC, Bangkok, Thailand. (2) Guiang, E. S. and G. B. Castillo. 2006. Trends in forest ownership, forest resources tenure and institutional arrangements in the Philippines: are they contributing to better forest management and poverty reduction? The case of the Philippines. In: Understanding forest tenure in South and Southeast Asia. FAO Rome.

² World Rainforest Movement. 2002. Philippines: Lessons on gender from community based forest management. Available on <http://www.wrm.org.uy/bulletin/58/Philippines.html> (accessed August 20, 2010).

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Women owning woodlands: a case study from the US



WOWnet members consult a map during a forest visit

Lauren E. Redmore, Joanne F. Tynon and **Nicole Strong** of Oregon State University describe an initiative to support women forest owners.

Nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) owners control a significant portion of forestland in the US. A growing proportion of these NIPF landowners are women who become primary landowners through inheritance or purchase. In 2005 Oregon State University Forestry Extension developed Women Owning Woodlands Network (WOWnet) to: (a) recognize the growing number of women taking a wide array of active woodland management roles; (b) raise basic forestry and decision-making skill levels among women woodland managers through hands-on educational opportunities; (c) support and increase women's access to forestry-related resources; and (d) encourage communication among Oregon's women woodland managers through the development of statewide and local networks.

While there is a plethora of information on women and land management in developing nations, there are few studies about women in forest management in the

Some feel the need to continuously prove their abilities in working in forestry, and some believe that femininity can be a barrier.

US. Because we knew very little about who these women are, how they manage forestland, and what barriers they face in forest management, we conducted an exploratory study of members of Oregon's WOWnet. Using qualitative methods, we conducted in-depth interviews with 16 WOWnet women to learn about their experiences in forestry and their roles in forest ownership and management.

We found that despite evidence of an overall shift in forestry towards more gender-

inclusiveness, gender roles can still be limiting for many women. Some feel the need to continuously prove their abilities in working in forestry, and some believe that femininity can be a barrier. However, many women had positive experiences in forestry. Women's ability to engage in forestry in a masculine world signifies a broader social shift. While it is clear that women in forestry have been marginalized in the past, their roles are changing now.

We discovered that, regardless of their forest management objectives, WOWnet women consistently emphasized the need for good stewardship of their land, and strived for effective transfer of their land in the future. Involvement in organizations like WOWnet, Society of American Foresters, and Oregon Small Woodlands Associations is an important part of their overall awareness of forest management, forest standards, and forest regulations. These organizations supply information that women in forest management need to know. Results suggest that WOWnet can help women overcome perceived barriers and enable them to achieve fully-realized stewardship of their forests.

It is clear that forestry is changing and women's experiences exemplify many of these changes. Despite the struggles that some interviewees faced in gaining initial acceptance within the forestry community, interviewees were, and continue to be, groundbreakers for women in forestry. It is because of these women and others like them that increasing opportunities exist for women to become active in the forestry community.

We need more land management programs specifically for women similar to Oregon's WOWnet and comparable programs in Alabama (Women in Land Ownership) and Maine (Women and the Woods Program). Forestry extension, in choosing to focus on heterogeneity in ownership, including ownership by women, has shown it can be effective in creating and implementing programs that recognize management diversity.

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Gender and farming in Tanzania

Teija Reyes highlights the potential benefits that agroforestry can bring to women in rural Africa.

Studies from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have shown that men generally earn more than women but do not distribute their incomes evenly among all family members. Since women in this region use their incomes to benefit the whole household, their spending patterns are better indicators of family welfare. In rural areas of SSA, 95 per cent of external resources and technical assistance (e.g. improved seeds and tools) have been channelled to men, although women are responsible for 80 per cent of agricultural work, and their labour inputs particularly in food production normally exceed those of men by 12-13 hours a week. Women also help cultivate men's export crops, even if they do not receive much direct benefit from them.¹ Studies in SSA also indicate that agricultural productivity would increase by more than 20 per cent if the gap in capital and inputs between men and women could be reduced.²

This legislation would certainly help to empower women to improve their lives, if only they were informed about these laws and facilitated to use their rights.

At the same time, there is an increasing number of women-headed households in rural areas of SSA and this trend looks to continue as more men are migrating to urban areas and the AIDS epidemic in the region is mostly affecting young men. These households generally have smaller parcels of land and are often unable to produce enough food, even though they grow more food crops than high-value cash crops.

In the case of Tanzania, customary laws have not allowed women to control the use of resources such as land, high-value cash crops or animals. Women have controlled only those crops grown for home use and those with low monetary value. However, land laws enacted in 2001 now give women the legal right to own land regardless of customary and religious restrictions. This legislation would certainly help to empower women to improve their lives, if only they were informed about these laws and facilitated to use their rights. Widowed and divorced women can still remain landless according to customary laws, which run counter to national laws.

One land-use which offers women in Tanzania real opportunities for economic empowerment is agroforestry. This has always been an activity undertaken largely by women as agroforestry areas are normally situated close to homesteads. Subsistence-oriented home gardens are gradually changing to produce high-value cash crops for



A woman weaving a mat near her home garden, Tanzania

export, such as spices: black pepper, cardamom, clove and cinnamon. The main reason for this is the reduction in public forest areas due to increased population and enlarged conservation areas. Agricultural income bolsters other sectors as well: each dollar of additional value added in agriculture generates 30 to 80 per cent gains in other sectors.³ Boosting women's involvement in sustainable, export-oriented agroforestry would increase income levels for women and the whole community, ease the poverty of women-headed households, and enable women to become more visible in commercial agriculture in the future.

¹Manuh, T. 1998. Women in Africa's development. Overcoming obstacles, pushing for progress. Africa Recovery Briefing Paper. Number 11, April 1998. UN Publication.

²Quisumbing, A.R. 2003. Household Decisions, Gender, and Development: A Synthesis of Recent Research. International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington D.C.

³IFAD. 2010. Rural poverty report 2011. Enabling poor rural to overcome poverty.

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Women's exclusion from forestry

Jeannette Gurung of WOCAN considers why the world of forestry has largely left out women.

A FAO study on gender in forestry in 10 African countries concluded that “gender inequality in forestry organizations in Africa is striking.”¹ This is not unique to Africa, but can be generalized to forestry institutions and the profession itself, worldwide. This article will discuss possible reasons behind this phenomena and the resulting impact on the effectiveness of forestry programmes. The near-complete neglect of gender issues and women's roles within the highly charged debates about REDD+ provides evidence that little has changed in the way that professional

Forestry has been generally regarded as an arena mainly for men's work, business and governance.

foresters view these concerns, despite the fact that gender equality is currently understood in the community of development practitioners as key to reaching goals for poverty alleviation and human development.

The importance of forests to rural livelihoods, as well as to conservation and sustainability is well recognized by members of international organizations, environment and civil society organizations engaged in the design and implementation of forestry programmes. The language of global REDD policies, for instance, refers to the need to engage “indigenous peoples and local communities”, but does not recognize the differentiated needs of women within these communities, signifying an assumption that community participation would ensure their representation – and giving a ‘gender blind’ and therefore erroneous view of reality. Numerous studies have shown that women's concerns are often not the same as those of

men in the community, and that unless they are specified as such, cannot be assumed to be incorporated. Women's issues are frequently neglected by community leaders, and women representatives are often either not afforded a seat at the decision-making table or are ill-prepared to participate effectively. At a recent conference where over US\$4 billion was pledged to a new REDD+ initiative, for example, not a single representative of a women's group was invited to speak, amongst 54 speakers.

Although there are many cases of women successfully managing community groups in forestry and agroforestry projects, women continue to be nominal stakeholders in the decision-making and planning of decentralized and local forestry programs such as those of REDD+ that will channel vast resources into forestry institutions in countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

This poses important questions for REDD+ experts to ponder:

1. What are the possible reasons why forestry and environment experts recognize the specific rights and roles of other groups affected by REDD+, yet deny this same recognition to women of forest-dependent communities, whose livelihoods are also so closely tied to the health and accessibility of forest resources? Why is it that many experts familiar with UN conventions to protect the rights of marginalized groups remain ignorant or disinterested in the Convention to End All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – a convention ratified by 186 countries?
2. Is this due to an inherent ‘male-ness’ of the sector? Or is it because of the higher value that leaders within the forestry and environment sectors place on conservation and the restricted use of forests in relation to sustainable forest management? Or is it due to the effectiveness of other groups to organize themselves in ways that women have not been able to do, to achieve visibility to make their issues known?

Male-ness of the forestry sector

The male-ness of the formal forestry sector is mentioned in studies conducted by FAO on Gender and Forestry in Africa, and with the UN Economic Commission for Europe on women in the forestry workforce in Europe.² These state that forestry is widely identified with men, and that the design of



A high-level meeting on forests, with very few women in evidence

policies and management of formal forestry is almost always male-dominated. During the past ten years, some improvements have been made, but these have been largely imperceptible. An extreme paucity of data makes it impossible to show trends over time or to show the current level of women's participation in the sector. In many countries, reliable statistics on the demographics of the forestry workforce are difficult to obtain, and when it concerns women's participation, data are virtually non-existent. The lack of statistical data on the role of women in forestry is a handicap in policy planning and formulation, leading to the undervaluation and reporting of women's contributions.

Social ideas of specific masculine or feminine qualities are connected to certain roles, positions, tasks and professions. The perception of what is "appropriate" for men and women forms the basis for the distribution of work, the design and evaluation of different tasks, and the criteria for promotions. Forestry is not an exception to this since it has been generally regarded as an arena mainly for men's work, business and governance. Within organizations, households, companies and departments, a gendered organizational logic is at work, which not only reproduces a structure of gender division but also, paradoxically, makes gender invisible.

This vision of reality is influenced by socio-cultural norms and religious conceptions strongly driven by concepts of patriarchy that cut across ethnicities, castes, livelihoods, rural and urban communities, and the educated and the non-educated populace. As a result, men are generally favoured for forests, land, water and other productive resources and women are often excluded from possession and control of land, and from access to decision-making realms, reinforcing the notion of their vulnerability and dependence on men. Gender issues and concerns are then trivialized in key policy decisions and negotiations in both the formal and informal forestry sectors.

The current state of affairs differs significantly from an approach that recognizes rights afforded by international conventions that recognize the roles and rights of women who are the largest group of forest users, and who are at greatest risk of losing rights to forest resources or not



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Women's participation in forestry projects is often limited to activities such as tending tree nurseries, rather than involvement in decision-making

Numerous studies have shown that women's concerns are often not the same as those of men in the community, and that unless they are specified as such, cannot be assumed to be incorporated.

receiving their fair share of compensation for forest protection activities under REDD+ initiatives.

Conservation values for biodiversity

Insofar as foresters and environmental experts support a conservation approach that restricts forest management to minimal human activity, women who rely on forests for livelihood use will be unwelcome actors in biodiversity initiatives. In contrast, the dominant conceptual frame of environmentalists that views Indigenous Peoples as living in harmony with nature may support their demands for rights and engagement in the design of REDD+

within protected areas, for example, while disallowing other community members who may be viewed as exploiters. Yet as most of the world's biodiversity inhabits fragmented landscape mosaics outside protected areas, women and other community members who manage and use forests for a range of land-uses must be considered as primary stakeholders. To integrate sustainable use and conservation in such landscapes necessitates an understanding of the complex and gendered linkages between livelihoods, poverty, sustainability, and conservation.

REDD+ activities are increasing expectations that international mechanisms will provide financial incentives for conserving and afforesting/reforesting landscapes while simultaneously benefiting forest-dependent communities. Now is the time for the forestry and environment community to recognize that women are primary stakeholders of forest management schemes, and that actions to strengthen women's positions and bring them into the discussions and decisions are critical to enabling them to better conserve forests, trees and land.

¹FAO, 2007. "Mainstreaming Gender in Forestry in Africa", Regional Report, Rome: FAO.

²World Bank, IFAD and FAO, 2006. "Gender and Forestry" in *Gender and Agriculture Sourcebook*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Gendering joint forest management

Sejuti Sarkar De, of Society for Natural Resource Management and Community Development (SNRMCD), looks at how women can play a more active role in forest management in India.



Women members of JFM committees often remain silent and do not participate in decision-making

In India, women are actively involved in the collection of various forest products including fuelwood, fodder and non-timber forest products (NTFPs). They participate as wage labour in forest department works and in entrepreneurial activities using forest products as raw material. So women spend significantly more time in forests than men do. Moreover, it is women who are most impacted by forest degradation, due to subsequent shortages of fuelwood, fodder and NTFPs.

Women not only patrol forests but also raid houses to recover 'stolen' wood.

Joint Forest Management (JFM) is a major strategy under the 'National Mission for a Green India' to enhance the country's carbon sinks. In India about 84,000 JFM Committees (JFMCs) protect 170,000 square kilometres of forest. In most states, women from forest-dependent households are members of a JFMC General Body and, as required by law, one-third of JFMC Executive Committee (EC) members are women.

However, it has been observed that the JFMCs are often dominated by the male members of the village who attend meetings and take important decisions, while the

women members remain non-vocal and inactive. Women can nonetheless play a more crucial role in forest protection and help in maintaining the rules set by JFMCs.

In certain forest divisions of India, there have been instances of women forming Forest Patrol Teams and regularly patrolling the forest. One such example is the all-women Maheshpur Village Forest Management and Protection Committees (VFMPs) in Jharkhand where women not only patrol forests but also raid houses to recover 'stolen' wood. In India, the women members of poor households, who cannot migrate in search of jobs, often practice illegal cutting to sell the wood. On village market days, it is common to see women selling head-loads of fuelwood. Due to prevalent custom it is difficult for male forest officials or male JFMC members to catch these female offenders. Women members have been more efficient in catching women offenders and persuading them to stop taking fuelwood illegally.

The situation can be improved with the formation of similar All Women Forest Protection and Management teams throughout India. There have also been successful cases of all-women JFMCs in several states (Orissa, West Bengal, Uttaranchal etc.) and these could be replicated, in say, five per cent of the

JFMCs in all states, initially on a pilot basis. The trained women members could undertake forest patrols, raise awareness of the importance of forest conservation, and encourage adoption of technologies such as low-fuel smokeless stoves. Women's self-help groups can also be trained in alternative economic activities such as raising poultry and pigs, tending tree nurseries, processing NTFPs etc. to decrease the pressure on forests. Special motivation and training arrangements would be required as the majority of women JFM members are illiterate.

For the coordination of such a women JFMC programme, formation of a Gender Cell is recommended in each Forest Range comprising of selected women JFMC EC members and a Divisional Gender Cell which could conceptualize and lead the programme in the entire Forest Division. All the Gender Cells would be directly under the Divisional Forest Officer for better coordination, management and fund flow. This way the women offenders can be changed into forest protectors.

1. *Annual Report 2002-2003*; Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India
2. *National Action Plan on Climate Change*; Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, Government of India
3. Tiwary, M (2004); *Participatory Forest Policies and Politics in India*; Ashgate, England

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Women's micro-finance and forest conservation in India

Mark Poffenberger, of Community Forestry International, looks at the benefits that women's micro-finance groups bring to forest conservation and women's empowerment.

Despite the substantial devolution of forest management responsibilities and greater rights to Asia's forest communities over the past twenty years, forest-dependent communities remain among the region's poorest. While women are often the primary forest users, community forest management (CFM) committees are often male dominated. This may reflect the male-oriented forest department staff that support such groups, as well as societal norms and practices. While efforts have been made to integrate women into CFM committees, including requiring a minimum percentage of women representatives, in many countries leadership of these groups remain controlled by men, with a consequent loss of valuable skills, knowledge and perspectives possessed by women in the community.

Lack of economic benefits accruing to community forest management groups may be related to three factors including inadequate capitalization and financial management capability, lack of market information and insufficient authority to make management decisions. Recent experiences suggest that these constraints can be reduced through cooperation between community forest management groups and women-administered micro-finance institutions. The following two cases illustrate how collaboration between women-centred micro-finance institutions and community forest management groups could enhance the productivity and capital assets.

Andhra Pradesh

Some CFM committees have been linked to village-level women's Self Help Groups (SHGs) under IFAD and World Bank projects. By 2003, there were 500,000 SHGs in Andhra Pradesh with a membership of 5 million women who have mobilized US\$238 million in savings. These grassroots micro-finance organizations are helping bring

These women's groups possess attitudes, knowledge and skills that make them effective managers of capital and entrepreneurs.

poor, forest-dependent households out of poverty and indebtedness. In some cases SHGs are being given contracts by various development agencies to manage reforestation and watershed restoration projects. Strategic alliances between village-level CFM committees and SHGs enhance forest management and forest productivity by linking the financial management skills, market knowledge, and capital under the administration of village women with new community forest management institutions and their natural resources.

Northeast India

Community Forestry International is supporting pilot projects in the northeastern states of Meghalaya and Manipur that provide payments for environmental services to indigenous communities for adopting stricter forest conservation and restoration activities. A substantial portion of the payments are used to establish and capitalize women-run SHGs. This activity helps offset the opportunity costs of conservation resulting from lost income from fuelwood collection, forest grazing, quarrying, and other activities that were destroying the forest, while building capital assets for small enterprise activities including pig and poultry raising, horticulture, handicrafts and small food processing enterprises.

Learning from these experiences suggests that these women's groups possess attitudes, knowledge and skills that make them effective managers of capital and entrepreneurs. Discussions with village women indicate that they may have a



Members of a women's self-help group in Andhra Pradesh

greater tendency than their male counterparts to invest in the future of their villages by using financial gains to support schools, health clinics, training, and leveraging other enterprises. By linking women-administered micro-finance groups to community forest management institutions, new capacities are created to better position village-based institutions to manage conservation, environmental restoration, and development contracts from government and donor agencies, as well as creating stronger communities that can engage in forest carbon projects such as REDD.

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Empowering the excluded: community forestry in Nepal



Women community forest user group members prepare their forest resource map, in the Dang district of Nepal

Kanti Risal of Nepal's Livelihood and Forestry Program, outlines efforts to make Nepal's community forestry sector more responsive to gender, poverty and social inclusion.

According to the national Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment commissioned by the World Bank and DFID-Nepal, "*gender, caste and ethnicity are three interlocking institutions that determine individual and group access to assets, capabilities and voice based on socially-defined identity*".¹ The study identified three domains of change where government, civil society and donors can intervene for pro-poor, pro-women and socially inclusive outcomes:

- access to livelihoods assets and services;
- the ability to exercise voice, influence and agency;
- a more equitable "rules of the game" for all citizens to participate in the life of the state and larger society.

Based on the outcomes of this study, Nepal's Livelihood and Forestry Program (LFP), supported by DFID, developed its own Pro-

Poor and Social Inclusion Strategy (PPSI) and a Livelihood and Social Inclusion (LSI) monitoring framework to help track LFP's impact on the above three domains of change. The implementation the strategy has shown the critical importance of some of aspects of LFP's approach. A few of these are outlined below.

Inclusive targeting. LFP's inclusive targeting approach involves working with whole communities whilst addressing the particular needs and priorities of the poor and excluded, to ensure that a larger proportion of benefits reaches them. Using tools such as well-being ranking of households (to identify the poor and excluded), categorizing community forestry user groups according to their forest resource base (to see where extra support is needed) and disaggregating monitoring results in six categories of gender, caste,

class, ethnicity, minorities and other groups, the LFP has been able to identify and address the needs of the poor and socially discriminated groups.

Social mobilization. LFP's social mobilizers work to encourage local-level groups (including community forest user groups (CFUGs)) to listen and understand the rights of all members to participate in decision-making and share the benefits of the group activities. This has led to important changes in the governance and operation of these groups, such as new constitutions that ensure that women and lower caste members are well represented on their committees, sliding scales of membership fees based on the results of wealth ranking exercises, and free provision of firewood to older, weaker individuals. The social mobilizers also work with women and the socially excluded to raise their awareness about their rights and encourage them to play a more active role in their community organizations. They support the establishment of sub-groups catering to the specific needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable – including for example single women's groups, Dalit (untouchable) groups, and non-timber forest product user groups. These groups help build confidence and leadership skills among the poor and excluded, empowering them to participate more effectively in the CFUGs and other organizations.

Efforts are now underway to incorporate these kinds of approaches into Nepal's national forest sector strategy. If successful, this would be a great stepping stone for nurturing democratic, equitable and inclusive forestry sector governance, based on the experiences of community forestry. There is tremendous potential for scaling up and replicating this PPSI and its tools and techniques, not only for community forestry and not only in Nepal, but anywhere where gender inequality, poverty and social exclusion exists.

¹ DFID/World Bank (2006). Unequal citizen: Nepal Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment (GSEA). World Bank, Washington, DC.

Women and woodlots in Tanzania

Richard Munang and **Bubu Jallow** of UNEP and **Johnson Nkem** of UNDP report on an initiative to ensure gender equity in woodland management.



Schoolgirls in Makete District, Tanzania

Tanzania is one of eleven countries participating in the CC DARE (Climate Change and Development: Adapting by Reducing Vulnerability) Programme, jointly implemented by UNEP and UNDP using funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. The programme has sought to minimize the climate change risks to development efforts and empower disadvantaged men and women, and has removed barriers impeding the integration of climate change adaptation into development planning and decision-making structures. One of the projects implemented was a study in the Makete district of Tanzania, on woodlot management as an adaptation measure and a means of improving smallholder livelihoods. The study assessed the management practices of smallholder woodlots and the marketing of timber, with special attention to gender roles and land tenure rights. A multistage sampling design was used: four wards with many smallholder woodlots were selected and in each ward, three villages and 10 households in each village were sampled, making a total of 120 households interviewed in the study.

Gender in woodlot management

The selling of woodlot timber is done by the head of the household (generally the father). The mother and children (sometimes as young as 10 years old) are involved only in carrying raw timber by head to the roadside for transportation to marketing points. Male children are considered to have more rights than their female siblings in 80 per cent of households.

Improving woodlot management practices

This research helped strengthen farmers' confidence in how they could manage and market their woodlots in

a way that could greatly improve their livelihoods. The findings also enabled the programme to package woodlot management best practices into a set of guidelines. This was carefully done by involving men, women, boys and girls and empowering them with information on tree species selection, source of planting material, land preparation, field planting and spacing, woodlot tending activities (weeding thinning, pruning), suitable harvesting time, and marketing channels for timber. The development of these guidelines utilized both the local knowledge of farmers and technical recommendations from forest staff and Makete District Council. Involving both women and men in the development and dissemination of the guidelines helped mainstream gender in woodlot management, as women as well as men were able to broaden their silvicultural knowledge and sustainable resource management practices.

Conclusion

The best practice guidelines provided tools to empower disadvantaged women and girls in woodland management and timber marketing. The project which lasted about six months was a test case and showed that significant impact can be achieved with only minimal investment. Indeed, it generated a good deal of interest at the national level and helped mobilize the national government, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to provide the type of enabling environment for scaling up the programme's approach.

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The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of UNEP or UNDP, the implementing agencies, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark that provided funds for the CC DARE programme.

Women in REDD



An indigenous family in Papua Province, Indonesia where IUCN's pro-poor REDD project is being implemented

Jan Willem den Besten of IUCN reports on an initiative to bring a gender-sensitive perspective to REDD-plus decision-making.

REDD-plus is a policy mechanism proposed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and recognizing the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. It is an ambitious plan that requires a turnaround in the way forests are being managed. REDD-plus is included in the Cancun Agreements but a legally binding agreement is yet to be negotiated. Depending on the way REDD activities are defined and implemented, REDD could have positive but also potentially negative implications for those communities that depend on forests for their livelihoods. Women could be particularly affected.

Women across the developing world are both the primary users of forest resources and the main producers of food from agriculture. Although women perform crucial roles in the conservation and management of forests, their contributions are often not recognized in customary tenure and land rights arrangements, nor do they take equal part in official decision-making processes. In most cases

their role isn't even acknowledged, let alone understood. A gender-sensitive approach for REDD starts with an increased understanding of the unique role that women play in the management of forest resources. Second, while their equal participation in formal and informal consultations has to be promoted and advanced, there is an urgent need to strengthen their capacity to negotiate and participate in decision-making.

IUCN aims to contribute to more clarity on REDD gender issues and promote the role of women as part of the implementation of pro-poor national frameworks for REDD. IUCN's pro-poor REDD project (operating in Ghana, Cameroon, Guatemala and Indonesia, and proposed for Uganda) includes studies into gender dynamics of livelihoods and their dependence on forest resources. A Poverty Toolkit is being applied to understand how men and women depend on cash and non-cash income from forest resources and agriculture. A study of villages in Papua Province in Indonesia for example revealed that in some villages, an increase in trees planted on farmland that provide cash crops, could predominantly benefit the income of men. Women on the

A gender-sensitive approach for REDD starts with an increased understanding of the unique role that women play in the management of forest resources.

other hand depend on non-cash income from agriculture and could be forced to clear more land. In the forest-rich western regions of Ghana, the study revealed that women derive a third of their income from forest resources; for women living closer to forests almost all this income is non-cash, while for those living closer to the main road and market town, more of the income from forest produce is earned in cash. This is important information if any REDD activity will imply restrictions on access to forests or if compensation has to be calculated.

Building on the insights gained into the role of women in forest-based livelihoods and forest governance structures, the project supports the inclusion of women in multi-stakeholder processes and hopes that attention to their interests in national REDD strategies will translate into concrete actions. Special attention is required to ensure appropriate representation of women in formal REDD forums and steering committees. IUCN also works with local partners to build women's capacity to negotiate and access information.

Finally, IUCN is working to translate insights developed as part of this project into recommendations and to feed these into climate negotiations at the international level. Much work remains to be done to truly mainstream gender issues in REDD-plus. It simply isn't enough to focus on increased participation of indigenous peoples and other local stakeholder groups – specific attention needs to be given to the potential impacts of REDD-plus on women, and measures to ensure that the needs of women forest users are addressed.

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All in one bucket? Combining mitigation and adaptation for women's empowerment

Rebecca Pearl-Martinez and **Annaka Peterson Carvalho** of Oxfam America look at how integrated efforts on climate change can help empower women.

There is growing interest in the potential synergies of combining climate mitigation and adaptation activities in the field. Benefits can include stretching limited resources, ensuring that mitigation efforts do not have a negative impact on the adaptation needs of women, generating political will and encouraging coordination across government departments, and providing a common platform for measurement methodologies such as carbon accounting and gender indices. Such joint mitigation-adaptation efforts require a more coordinated approach as they often involve different arms of government. Women's ministries, in particular, will need to be strengthened to enable them to engage more fully on climate change and to help ensure that the activities undertaken respond to the specific impacts on and roles of women.

Below are two examples of initiatives that combine mitigation and adaptation benefits and place women's empowerment squarely at the centre.

One of the best examples of a project with both mitigation and adaptation benefits is one that has trained over 10,000 women in Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras, and Nicaragua in harvesting Maya nuts from the forest for food and income. Over 40 years, each Maya nut tree sequesters over one ton of carbon dioxide and provides other ecosystem services such as soil, water, and biodiversity protection, flood mitigation, and ecosystem resilience to climate change. More than 800,000 new trees have been planted by communities and 60 local partner organizations. Women involved in this program earn income, learn new methods to ensure their family's food security and nutrition, have access to traditional medicines, and have an added incentive to protect existing forest.

Women's ministries will need to be strengthened to enable them to engage more fully on climate change.

The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) has innate contributions to both adaptation and mitigation in Cambodia and Vietnam, where changing weather means greater risk and uncertainty for farmers. Women in Cambodia and Vietnam are the primary food producers,



Vietnamese farmer Hoang Kim Vuong at her SRI farm in Yen Bai province

as well as being responsible for the well-being of their families. SRI is a package of agricultural practices that can be used by farmers to boost yields of hand-planted rice without significantly increasing inputs such as fertilizer or pesticides. SRI plants are stronger, healthier, and have deeper root systems, which allows them to draw on more moisture and nutrients in the soil and enables the plants to tolerate climatic stresses. Some of the mitigating effects include: (1) reduced standing water, leading to decreased methane and nitrogen emissions; (2) reduced fertilizer use, leading to decreased carbon and nitrogen emissions from manufacturing; and (3) sustainable increases in the productivity of existing land, preventing the conversion of carbon sequestering forests to agricultural uses. By adopting methods like SRI, women farmers have been able to improve their own lives and, at the same time, have the potential to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

These initiatives are at the forefront of a growing trend to tie mitigation and adaptation together, with the intention of creating more robust and synergistic benefits. Time will tell if such projects deliver lasting benefits for gender equality.

For more information about these two cases, see www.theequilibriumfund.org and www.oxfamamerica.org/articles/yem-neang-spreads-the-word-in-a-new-way-to-grow-rice.

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arborvitae

The next issue of **arborvitae** will be produced in May 2011 and will look at forests and the law. If you have any material to send or comments please contact:

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Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Laureate and founder of the Green Belt Movement, talks to **arborvitae** about her views and experience on integrating gender issues in natural resource management and conservation.

Gender considerations have been at the heart of the work of the Green Belt Movement. Could you tell us a little about how gender fits within the GBM's approach?

In the GBM, which is largely in Africa and more intensively in Kenya, we know that women produce and buy most of the food for their families and communities, which are very dependent on the land, soil, rivers, and forests for their livelihoods. When we started, we went to the women because they are the people who deal with these primary natural resources. For us it was almost a natural thing to reach out to the women and ask them to participate in the restoration and protection of those resources. But what we saw over the course of the years was that it became necessary to work not only with the women but also with the broader community, with the men and the youth, because in the end dealing with the environment means dealing with the community. Within the Green Belt Movement, our focus continues to be protection, restoration and conservation, using women as the driving force – and they are really very good at it because that is what their livelihoods are about.

Are there instances when the gender cause can be pushed too far, pushed against certain cultural norms of societies to the point beyond a comfortable balance?

Well I think it is very important to move within the boundaries we can accommodate within our cultures, within our religions. While trying to minimize the aspects that hold women

back, we also don't want to put women on a platform where they will feel uncomfortable to compete. It is difficult for women to move ahead without alienating themselves from the society to which they want to belong. They still want to get married, to have families, to be perceived well by their communities. This is the case for women around the world I think. I haven't come across a woman yet who thinks "Yes, I have arrived" in that sense. There are still a lot of challenges.

Gender advocacy has traditionally been left up to women. How can we get more men to take up the cause?

Well actually there are already a lot of men who support the cause of women at the parliamentary and local levels. In Kenya, for example, we just passed a new constitution that is extremely supportive of women and this was advocated for by many men, not only women. There are fewer and fewer men who would consciously oppose policies that support women.

Partly it is our own traditions, our poverty and attitudes, even our religion, that continue to hold women back. It is here that men play a much bigger role, because they are often the protectors and enforcers of traditions and religions. So we need to work on men, but we also need to work on ourselves, to change attitudes, continue to believe in ourselves and support each other, in order to make the kind of progress that is still needed.