World Wide Views (WWviews) on Biodiversity

On September 15th 2012, thousands of people around the world took part in a global event on “World Wide Views on Biodiversity”. The programme engaged ordinary citizens in 30 different venues of 25 countries in the process of policymaking and awareness raising to sustain a living and healthy planet. At least a hundred citizens in each participating country attended day-long meetings to learn about biodiversity issues, make up their minds about it, and expressed their views. The meetings started at dawn in the Pacific and continued until dusk in the America (Latin and North America). All meetings had the same agenda and used the same approach in order to make results comparable and useful for policymakers who gathered the following month in India to discuss the future policy measures for preserving biological diversity. The WWviews program is supported by the Danish Ministry for Environment and is coordinated by the Danish Board of Technology with an oversight from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

In Nepal, 104 Nepali citizens gathered in Kathmandu, exchanged views on biodiversity, and voted to the given set of questions on biodiversity. The event in Nepal was organized by ForestAction Nepal. The WWviews event is unique in the sense that it gave ordinary citizens throughout the globe to express, share and enhance their understanding on biodiversity that will ultimately be informed to the policy makers and political parties at national level as well as inform the global policy makers on biodiversity.

The results obtained during the program in Nepal were presented along with those of other nations at the COP11 of CBD on October in India. Link: http://www.forestation.org/app/webroot/js/tinymce/editor/plugins/filemanager/files/Majority%20of%20the%20people.pdf

Designing REDD+ payments: Considering various community based forest management

Under Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) project, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in three community forests (CFs) and three non CFs in Kavre, Rupandehi and Kaski districts. The aim of this discussion was to identify factors motivating people to conserve or degrade forests and in relation to these, compare the differences between the CFs and non-CFs. The project is jointly facilitated by ForestAction Nepal, Portland State University, USA and the World Bank. Out of the thee CFs, Dhobidhara CF, Kavre, is small in terms of area (about 5 ha), where misunderstandings amid its members has paralyzed the normal
operation of the CF. They are now neither managing nor using the forest according to the Community Forest Operational Plan (CFOP). Similarly, Baunkoti CF in Rupandehi district is considered as the model CF in southern Terai. The CFUG operated silvicultural system in 5 ha area of the forest, producing 1,172 trees, 10,300 cft timber, 25 chatta of fuelwood. A total of 1,975 HHs including 494 poor HHs have benefitted from forest products and it has provided employment to about 1,500 people. Furthermore, in Baunnalek CF, Kaski, the users followed conservative forest management technique. The users in this CF have only been extracting few head loads of timber (allocated only three days per year). It was learnt that the users of such less developed market for the forest products can be benefitted by even small amount of REDD+ payment.

In contrast, amongst the non-CFs, Tatletar in Kavre district was an open access forest. Here, the rate of forest degradation was observed to be high due to the lack of consensus on identifying the real users of the forest.

While the other two non-CFs visited for this purpose were proposed CFs - Rohini forest of Devdaha VDC in Rupandehi district and Bahunalekh forest of Pumdi-Humid VDC in Kaski district. In both cases, the local people have not got the formal CF handover certificates and they are unaware of the benefits of REDD+. Therefore, there is a possible risk of users being overlooked while disbursing the REDD+ payments.

Causes and Consequences of Land Abandonment

A month long survey was conducted by ForestAction on the causes and consequences of land abandonment in four districts - Kavre, Lamjung, Parbat and Pyuthan. During the survey, 11 FGDs with key informants and district stakeholders and 248 household surveys were conducted.

The study identified the key causes of abandoned land are less production-more investments, limited manpower in village, climate change, in country and out migration, lack of or damage by road construction of irrigation system, sloppy land, no technical services, increasing wild life, common grazing, farmers attraction towards alternative income sources, lack of grassland, and landslide and flooding. Furthermore, during Maoist insurgency, many people left their productive land (Bari and Khet) and migrated to cities for security reasons and such lands are now barren. In the FGDs, majority of the small farmers expressed that the price of fertilizers, seeds and agricultural labor has become high in the past ten years. However, they further have claimed that the amount of agricultural products are similar to what it was five years back. Hence, investing in agriculture has not been much beneficial to them. Therefore, now the farmers are gradually shifting their occupation towards cash-crop farming like horticulture/agro forestry, vegetable farming, opening small shops or poultry farm and so on. The research also observed that most people import their daily agricultural commodities from the market, scanty presence of male youth, children, and disabled were seen in every village. In Arther VDC of Parbat district, thousands of hectors of irrigation land is barren since five years. According to an 83 years old man of the area, millet, vegetables and cash crops are relatively easy to cultivate than paddy in terms of labor, distance and investment. Therefore, considering the cost-effectiveness of the work, most of the small farmers left their land.
Interaction on Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) for Biodiversity Conservation in Nepal

As part of contributing critically and constructively in the democratization of protected area governance, ForestAction has been organizing series of local, regional and national meetings and interactions on relevance of promoting and advancing 'Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Communities (known as ICCAs)' in Nepal. The aim of these activities is to bring issues and concerns of indigenous peoples and local communities and responses of diverse stake-holders into the public policy debates.

ForestAction with two local organizations (Machapuchre Development Organization and ICCAs of Sikles) have organized a half day regional multi-stakeholder's interaction entitled "Issues and Concerns of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas [ICCAs]" in Pokhara, Kaski on September. Link [http://www.forestaction.org/publications/index/34](http://www.forestaction.org/publications/index/34)

A total of 31 individuals, representing different constituencies (local communities, organizations and institutions) participated in the program. The participants, as a response to a short presentation on the relevance of promoting and advancing ICCAs in Nepal by ForestAction, shared their personal and organizational views and responses. Almost all of the participants agreed on the relevance of recognizing, promoting and advancing the customary laws and practices of indigenous people and local communities on biodiversity conservation and added that the territories and areas conserved by ICCA, through their customary laws and practices have been contributing in the biodiversity conservation since generations. However, the term 'indigenous' has remained one of the most questioned and debated among the participants. Some of the participants from non-indigenous communities have questioned the use, meaning, relevance and its implications in the context of the structure of Nepali society.

Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS): Concern of Civil Society

Government of Nepal (GoN) initiated Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) with the financial and technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank in April 2011. It organized an inception workshop in 14th July 2011 where stakeholders raised the voices on inclusion of concerned stakeholders in the process. ForestAction in partnership with Farmers Organizations (FOs) and other civil society (CSOs) allies; raised their concern participation of stakeholders in the process. It organized stakeholders meeting and conducted consultation with government authorities. Following in March of 2012, a steering meeting of ADS was organized by the government to discuss on the agenda with FOs and CSOs. National Farmers forum, ForestAction and NGO federation participated in this meeting. moreover, it was decided to postpone the ADS process to consider the concerns of the FOs and CSOs; particularly to review the ongoing process. In April 2012, agriculture Minister organized a meeting and decided to include national farmer’s forum in the steering committee. Four members from FOs and CSOs were included in the committee in May 2012. Subsequently, it organized regional and national workshops to precede the earlier postponed process.
During all this time, ForestAction actively engaged itself to make the process updates widely known through press conference, FM/TV interactions and paper media mobilization and keep pressurizing the authority for inclusion.

In September 2012, national workshop was organized where ADS team shared the updates including its draft vision and assessment report. CSOs raised concerns over it and organized a workshop to discuss the issues, where ForestAction team delivered presentation from civil society perspective. Currently, there are various forums which are actively raising concerns on ADS contents.

### Promoting Transparency and Accountability for Right Based Community Forestry

The Terai forests of Nepal are in chaotic condition due to rampant deforestation. The proposed Community Forests (CFs) have no compulsion to submit annual budgets and other reports of their forests at The District Forest Office (DFO). There are also no norms of selling timber or forest product from these forests. Besides, DFO have no legal mandates to control corruption and irregularities of these forests. Considering these issues ForestAction Nepal in coordination with Federation of Community Forest User Nepal (FECOFUN) Morang, initiated the project "Promoting transparency and accountability for right based community forestry in Nepal", funded by The Partnership for Transparency Fund Inc (PTF).

The major aim of this project is to reduce corruption in CFs by promoting innovative, transparent, participatory and accountable governance system.

Numbers of district level (Morang District) discussions and interaction programs were organized by ForestAction and FECOFUN, Morang, where relevant stakeholders, DFO, DDC, APM members, and local communities were present and informed them about the importance of handing over of CFs to the communities for the assurance of transparency and accountability. Due to these interactions, the district forest coordination committee (DFCC) decided to observe the proposed CF's management and governance process for one year and if the process identified as satisfactory by DFCC then the forests will be gradually handed over to the community.

According to this decision and with full technical support from the project, three CFs have been handed over to the communities (Dhankheti CF, Bardada CF and Kopila CF) and three more CFs are in the process of handover. Beside this, the project also partially supported its three network CFs (Namuna CF, Basant Hariyali CF and Tribeni CF) in their management and governance system. After the handover, the improvement in the governance and management system of the forests is clearly visible.

Through this research, it is learned that inconsistency in transparency, management and resource utilization of forestry sector could be corrected by handing over the CF to the related people, and they should also be properly informed about the process of management and governance system of CF.
Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security: Challenges, Opportunities and Capacity Building

ForestAction, in support from Honking, conducted five Village Development Committee (VDC) level interaction program in Gorkha, Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu district. The main objectives of this program were to capacitate the small farmer and to find out challenges and opportunities of sustainable agriculture and food security. Around 35 participants were present in each VDCs including farmers, VDC secretary, District Agriculture Development Officer (DADO), and Local Development Office (LDO). Issues like allocating the 15 percent budget for small farmer, supporting service providers, challenges of small farmers, and agricultural policy of government were discussed. The local partner organizations also supported the two days interaction program in each VDC. These interactions helped in the establishment of VDC level network of small farmers who agreed to constantly discuss and pressurize the service provider to utilize the 15 percent agriculture budget of VDC.

Similarly, a one day district level workshop was organized in Gorkha. District stakeholders from DADO, DDC, LDO, DFO, FECOFUN, NGO federation, VDC secretary, and members of farmer network participated in the program. The workshop was jointly organized by Forest Action and Tulshimehar UNESCO Club. The overall outcome of the program are 1) establishment of a sharing forum between farmers and service providers, and 2) the farmers agreed to start raising their issues and learning related to availability of seeds, fertilizers, marketing of agricultural products and budget to the district of government.

Ban Chautari on Democratization of Annapurna Conservation Area Management

Ban Chautari is an innovative initiative of ForestAction to provide a public platform for open interactive space on all relevant forest policy agenda. In line with this, on 15 July, 2012 at Sap Falcha, Kathmandu FA organized Ban Chautari to reflect on the lessons of Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) management, discuss on the pros and cons of the current management modality, and possible alternative management scenarios. Citing the lack of transparency of revenue generated and funds mobilized by National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and inadequate local involvement in decision making and management of ACA, civil society activists, networks and federations working in the field of community rights, NGOs, and concerned stakeholders are questioning the government’s decision to renew the management responsibilities to NTNC. The stakeholders have presented their dissatisfaction over the linear decision made by the government and have been pressurizing it to rethink on the decision. The discussion, therefore, attempted to bring forth issues from the government, NTNC, civil society and non-governmental perspective. Link [http://www.forestaction.org/policydialouges/view/2](http://www.forestaction.org/policydialouges/view/2)
Publications

Journal of Forest and Livelihood (JFL) - Special issue on Forest Policy process

This special issue of Journal of Forest and Livelihood on forest policy process captures the wide experiences and repertoire of knowledge on the dynamics of forest policy making in Nepal. The articles in this issue are particularly relevant to the present moment of political transition and uncertainty in Nepal. At present, amid a weak political ownership and commitment, Nepal's forest bureaucracy and the donors have advanced a number of forest policy agenda that endanger citizen's rights. There is a need for increased scrutiny and proactive engagement of forestry stakeholders to ensure that these initiatives lead to credible, pro-people policies. The articles in this issue document the multiple experiences and lessons around diverse interfaces.

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Link http://www.forestaction.org/publications/view/123

Agriculture Booklet

This booklet has been prepared with the aim of enhancing civic concern and interest in the policymaking process along its policy impact. In this booklet, an attempt has been made to delve into the causes and effects of the past policies through a review. It is claimed that Nepalese agriculture is not food-centric neither is the framework for agricultural development appropriate. It asserts that the process of formulation of the long-term strategy should be transparent, participatory, inclusive and coordinated, and also the issue of the strategy should have been made a subject of in-depth discussion and brainstorming.

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