

EDITORIAL

FAO's Forestry and Forest Products Division, the forerunner of today's Forestry Department, was established in late spring 1946 – so FAO Forestry observes its sixtieth anniversary in 2006, prolonging the celebrations of the sixtieth anniversary that FAO celebrated in October 2005. On this occasion we thought it fitting to cover a range of topics rather than a single theme. Topics range from policy development to on-the-ground practices. We hope that this issue will offer something for every reader.

The first article, by D. Kneeland, examines the progress and the challenges of FAO Forestry at 60, demonstrating how FAO adapts its work to a changing world. The article briefly recalls the first 50 years – which were covered in a full issue of *Unasylva* in 1995 – and then focuses on programme developments in the past ten years: in institution building; monitoring, assessing and reporting on forests and forestry; the evolution of national forest programmes; balancing demands between forests and agriculture; best practices in forestry; and leadership in the international forest dialogue.

Next, in a stimulating article adapted from a keynote speech at an expert consultation on forest policy networking, N. Byron discusses the challenges involved in defining, implementing and renewing forest policies. He examines various factors – implementation failures, changes in social priorities, new opportunities – that can motivate governments to change their policies. He then analyses how public organizations modify their structure, functions or principles to deliver change. The fundamental message is that it is essential to be clear about the reasons for policy reform and to ascertain that it is in the best long-term interest for the whole society. Countries can – and must – learn from one another to avoid repeating past mistakes.

The next article presents a workable approach for preventing livestock production from damaging the environment. M. Ba Diao describes the Project for Integrated Ecosystem Management in Senegal (PGIES), which is encouraging community involvement in natural resource management in and around protected areas. PGIES promotes intensification and diversification of production, based on the premise that if properly managed, livestock can have a beneficial effect on the environment. The author also addresses necessary conditions for sustainable natural resource management such as legal access to land, appropriate policy choices, adequate institutions, capacity building and the establishment of new markets.

In recent decades, decentralized, community-based management has been increasingly recognized as a promising way to increase incentives to manage forests in a sustainable way. Yet the transition from centralized to decentralized schemes is not always smooth, as local organizations may not be prepared for the challenges. E. Raufflet and P. Moctezuma

Barragan examine the local processes involved in decentralizing natural resource management, based on a case study in central Mexico. The article examines how a farmers' cooperative (*ejido*) in a forested municipality has begun to organize management in the context of recent decentralization. The study evaluates the *ejido*'s organizational capacity by examining its process, structure and culture – three general components of any organization. The *ejido*'s behaviour provides interesting insights for researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.

In the past decade, Kuala Lumpur has planted hundreds of thousands of trees as part of a campaign to make Malaysia a "Garden Nation" by 2005. Indeed, despite a historical emphasis on horticulture and landscaping, tree planting has always been a priority in Malaysia's cities, and arboricultural practices have continued to improve. M. Sreetheran and co-authors present the history of tree planting in the greening of urban Malaysia and outline some challenges and prospects for its continued development.

L. Christersson and K. Verma then commend short-rotation forestry as a means of providing raw material for forest industries and fuel for people while conserving natural forests. A range of examples from both developed and developing countries demonstrate the merits and uses of high-density forestry in which the full growth potential of trees is realized by optimizing water and nutrient conditions, eliminating competition by herbaceous plants and other tree species, and preventing biotic and abiotic damage. Short-rotation plantations can be grown on agricultural land that is no longer needed for agriculture, on clear-cut forest land in tropical and temperate areas and on degraded land, especially in many developing countries.

Finally, a short piece presents the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration, an initiative launched in 2003 by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Forestry Commission of Great Britain. Forest landscape restoration is a practical approach for restoring the balance of environmental, social and economic benefits of forests and trees within a mosaic of land uses. The global partnership is a network of more than two dozen governments and organizations working together with practitioners, communities and businesses to develop and strengthen forest landscape restoration efforts.