



FAO

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

Mangroves and the tsunami

As would be expected, mangroves and other coastal forests and trees were adversely affected by the recent tsunami. The extent of the damage is still not clear and it may take some time before the final result is known, since the deposit of silt may clog the pores of the aerial roots of mangroves, and thus suffocate them.

It is too early to say to what extent mangroves contributed to saving lives and to what extent the conversion of mangroves to other land uses aggravated the impacts, as implied in several news articles. It is clear, however, that extensive areas of mangroves reduced the loss of life and damage caused in several countries.

Preliminary information also suggests that narrow strips of mangroves and other coastal forests have had a limited positive effect, in some cases even turning into negative effects, as broken trees have wreaked damage inland and, at least in one reported case, have damaged shallow coral reefs.

“Mangroves contribute directly to rural livelihoods by providing wood and non-wood forest products – including timber, poles, fuelwood and thatch for houses – and indirectly by providing spawning grounds and nutrients for fish and shellfish. Mangroves can also help protect coastal areas from future tidal waves,” said Mette Løyche Wilkie, an FAO expert on mangroves. (Source: FAO Press Release, 19 January 2005.)

Rehabilitation of degraded mangroves and other coastal forests is needed to help speed up the recovery process and restore the roles of mangroves as

spawning and feeding ground for fish and shellfish, provider of wood and non-wood products (including fuelwood and thatch for houses) and for coastal protection.

Large-scale planting of mangroves – as suggested in several articles – should be undertaken with caution, matching species to sites and avoiding turtle nesting grounds, sea grass beds and other valuable ecosystems. Any such efforts should be undertaken within a larger framework of integrated coastal area management.

Ongoing and planned FAO activities

In addition to the information gathered by the FAO missions to affected countries, we are in touch with a number of organizations and people of the countries affected – including the national correspondents to FRA 2005 – to obtain information on the damage to forests and trees and on assistance needed in rehabilitation. We are also gathering information on lessons learned as regards the role these forests played in mitigating/exacerbating the impacts of the tsunami.

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**The Netherlands pledges 20 million euros to partnership programme**

The Netherlands has pledged 20 million euros to support the work of the FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) over the next four years, FAO announced today.

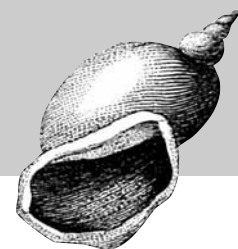
FNPP focuses on three key areas: forestry, food security and agricultural biodiversity. Within this framework, it supports FAO's work to build capacity in poor countries for development planning and policy-making. This assistance is targeted specifically to the poorest countries – those classified by the World Bank as eligible for International Development Association loans.

The programme was established in May 2001 as a new type of FAO initiative, in which donor support is not tied to particular projects or specific departments within the United Nations agency, but instead goes to support a broader range of activities sharing common objectives and carried out in close cooperation by diverse FAO units.

Activities undertaken by FAO with FNPP support in recent years range from the development of a coordinated forestry policy for the countries of central Africa, to technical assistance with poverty reduction programmes in India's poverty-stricken Orissa state, to studies in Ethiopia aimed at improving the efficiency of seed delivery systems.

Among the activities targeted for action by FAO under the agreement signed today are:

- improving developing countries' abilities to assess food security and nutrition needs during emergencies, in order to better mobilize their relief efforts;
- promoting the inclusion of food security and forestry concerns in national poverty reduction strategies;
- stimulating more widespread adaptation of national plans for helping small-scale farmers and rural communities cope with the increasingly globalized food economy;
- reducing poverty through more effective use of forest resources;



- encouraging better management of agricultural biodiversity at the local level, as well as the incorporation of agrobiodiversity concerns into national policies.

FNPP was the first such “strategic partnership” programme established by FAO. Similar partnerships have since been formed, or are under preparation, with Canada, Norway and Sweden.

Today’s pledge brings the total amount of FNPP funding granted to FAO by the Netherlands to around 35 million euros. This support comes in addition to the regular contribution made by the Netherlands to FAO’s operating budget.

The new funding will support FAO’s FNPP work through 2007. (Source: FAO Press Release, 28 July 2004 [www.fao.org/newsroom/].)

Project backstopping of NWFP projects

The NWFP Programme is technically responsible for the implementation of the following three Technical Cooperation Programme Projects.

- “Marketing system development for non-wood forest products in Lao People’s Democratic Republic” (TCP/LAO/3002)
- “Eaglewood management project” (TCP/PNG/2901)
- “Sustainable use and management of non-wood forest products” (TCP/CMR/2905)

In addition, it is providing technical assistance to the German-funded regional project “Enhancing food security through non-wood forest products in Central Africa (GCP/RAF/398/GER) and the Norway-funded programme “Forests for sustainable livelihoods” (FNOP/INT/004/ NOR). [Please see below for more detailed information.]

Trade in non-wood forest products – options for poverty alleviation

The Norway Partnership Programme (NPP) “Forests for sustainable livelihoods” (FNOP/INT/004/NOR) complements and accelerates implementation of ongoing activities of FAO’s Programme “Promotion and Development of Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP)”. NPP aims at improving the sustainable use of NWFPs in order to contribute to the wise management of the world’s forests, to conserve their biodiversity and to improve income-generation and food security.

The overall objective of the programme is to analyse the impact of trade in NWFPs on poverty alleviation and on the sustainability of the resources. It will provide as main output a global status report on the role and contributions of NWFP trade and its related instruments to poverty alleviation of forest-dependent people and their impact on sustainable forest management. Furthermore, NPP component 3 is analysing the role of microcredits and microfinance as tools to support forest-based, small-scale enterprises and their trade in forest products, including NWFPs.

Key outputs for the period 2004–2005 are:

Suboutput 1. *Trade-related instruments influencing trade in NWFPs are identified and described.*

The impact of trade on the sustainable use of NWFPs and on the benefits created for stakeholders involved in the production of and trade in NWFPs is multiple and includes both positive and negative effects. Various policy instruments have been developed in order to promote the contribution of trade to the sustainable use of forest products and to people’s livelihood by enhancing positive and reducing negative effects.

The NPP component 3 “Trade in NWFPs – options for poverty alleviation” analyses i) the impact of trade in NWFPs on local livelihoods and on the sustainable use of NWFPs, and ii) the

applicability of relevant trade-related instruments as adequate policy tools to promote and develop NWFPs on a sustainable basis and including the adequate share of benefits among stakeholders concerned. These trade-related instruments include:

- national public policies (e.g. national forest programmes, harvesting restrictions/bans);
- international and intergovernmental processes (e.g. multilateral environmental agreements such as CITES);
- market-based instruments (e.g. certification, supply-chain management).

TRAFFIC International has been contracted as the main collaborating organization to carry out global analysis of this issue. The global analysis is being complemented with three national case studies, which analyse the impact of trade-related instruments for selected NWFPs in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The case studies complement FAO’s field activities in Cameroon (TCP/CMR/2905, contracted partner: CIFOR) and Papua New Guinea (TCP/PNG/2901, proposed partner: FPCD, Foundation for People and Community Development) and normative activities in Bolivia (contracted partner: Holzindustrieberatung, HIB, Latin America).

Suboutput 2. *Certification and labelling schemes in the field of NWFPs are documented and analysed.*

A draft report on “Standards and certification of non-wood forest products” has been compiled. It analyses the impact of certification on the sustainable use of NWFPs and identifies opportunities and challenges of NWFP certification based on three case studies on devil’s claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*), shea (*Vitellaria paradoxa*) and Brazil nuts (*Bertholletia excelsa*) and an exhaustive literature review. Lessons learned and potential implication for FAO field activities (e.g. in Africa-Niger/gum arabic, Cameroon and Papua New Guinea/agarwood) are being identified.



Suboutput 3. *The role of microcredits and microfinance as tools to support forest-based small-scale enterprises and trade is assessed and main opportunities and challenges are identified.*

In the context of the International Year of Microcredit 2005, NPP assesses the role of microfinance institutions and service providers in the forestry sector and their impact on local livelihoods. It documents and analyses the status and developments of microcredits and microfinancing for small-scale entrepreneurs in the forestry sector.

The lack of financial inputs to local producers has been identified as a bottleneck for many forest projects, in particular when dealing with forest-based small-scale enterprises. Therefore, the NPP programme activity "Microfinance for small-scale tree and forest product enterprises" identifies, documents and analyses opportunities and challenges, which can enhance the identification of solutions for the existing financial need of local entrepreneurs depending on forest products (wood products, NWFPs and forest services) for their livelihoods.

An overview study has been compiled, in order to assess the status of microfinance services for forest-based, small-scale enterprises and trade in developing countries, including the related policy support. This global study is complemented by four case studies, which are being carried out in Peru/Bolivia/Guatemala (by CATIE, Center for Competitiveness of Ecoenterprises), Nepal (by Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio-resources [ANSAB]) and the Sudan (by Dr Abubakr Ibrahim Hussein) in order to analyse the possibilities and constraints of microfinance for different forest-based (NWFPs, wood-based products, forest services) small-scale enterprises.

The programme activity is carried out jointly with NPP component 1, "Small-scale tree and forest enterprise development", led by FAO's Forestry Policy and Institutions Service.

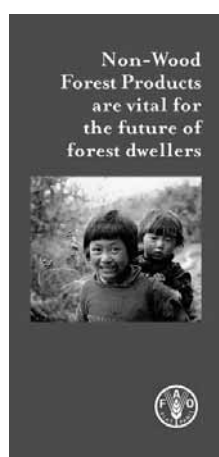
Closely linked to the above suboutputs, the following FAO normative and field activities with a focus on NWFP trade and

poverty alleviation have been carried out with the support of NPP and its programme component 3:

- Publication of a study, *Wild edible fungi – A global overview of their importance to people* (NWFP Series 17, available at: www.fao.org);
- Technical backstopping of FAO field activities on NWFP trade and sustainable forest management in Cameroon (TCP/CMR/2905), Lao People's Democratic Republic (TCP/LAO/3002) and Papua New Guinea (TCP/PNG/2901);
- Analysis of the impacts and interactions between trade and sustainable forest management (as follow-up to the Global Project: Impact assessment of forest products trade in the promotion of sustainable forest management, GCP/INT/775/JPN).

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EDUCATIONAL FLYER



"Non-wood forest products are vital for the future of forest dwellers" is a beautifully illustrated flyer that has been produced to raise awareness of the multiplicity of NWFPs and their uses. It includes obvious uses, such as for food (e.g. fruits, honey and mushrooms), as well as less obvious ones, such as insect galls (for inks and dyes) and bark (for cosmetics). (Please contact non-wood-news@fao.org for copies.)

Forestry Sector Outlook Studies

During the last six years, FAO has produced forestry sector outlook studies or projection studies at the global level and for Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. In the more distant past, FAO has also produced studies for Europe and North America (with the UNECE).

A pre-publication draft of a new study for Europe – the European Forestry Sector Outlook Study (EFSOS) – is now available on the UNECE Web site (www.unece.org/trade/timber/Welcome.html) or (www.unece.org/trade/timber/efsos/welcome.htm).

The Latin American Forestry Sector Outlook Study will be ready by March 2005.

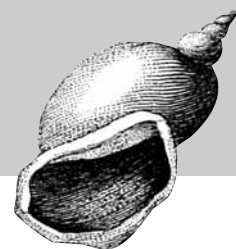
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 or visit the Outlook Studies Web site at:
www.fao.org/forestry/site/5606/en
 [Please see under News and Notes for more information on outlook studies.]

HIV/AIDS-Forestry e-Forum and Listserv
 FAO's Forestry Department is developing a series of responses that address the interface between HIV/AIDS and forestry. This interface involves a variety of issues ranging from the effects of forest policies and programmes on vulnerability to HIV infection, to the impacts of HIV/AIDS on forestry institutions, to the role of forests in the coping strategies of AIDS-afflicted households. In this context, the Forestry Department seeks to ensure the viability of woodlands as economic safety nets, increase the resilience of farming systems and rural livelihoods, reduce the labour burden of afflicted households, and reinforce formal and informal institutions responsible for the management of forest resources.

The overall goal of this e-forum is to facilitate and develop the forestry sector's responses to HIV/AIDS through dialogue and the exchange of information. It is primarily intended for communication of

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practical experiences and needs from community-based, non-governmental and faith-based organizations specifically targeting HIV/AIDS populations, and forestry offices working in heavily impacted regions.

Participation is open and invited from people living with HIV/AIDS, field practitioners, researchers and policy-makers. To participate, please visit: www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/forestry2/index.jsp?siteId=3561&siteTreeId=23667&langId=1&geoid=0; to join the accompanying e-mail discussion group, please send an e-mail to: marc.barany@fao.org, with "subscribe HIV/AIDS-forestry listserv" in the subject header.

[Please also see page 24.]

FAO IN THE FIELD

Regional project "Enhancing food security through non-wood forest products in Central Africa" (GCP/RAF/398/GER)

The project "Enhancing food security through non-wood forest products in Central Africa" will contribute to facilitating actions by governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in six Central African countries, i.e. the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Gabon, the Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea. It aims to enhance food security in the region through the sustainable use of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) from moist dense forests and other tree-based systems. The project will contribute to improved conservation of forest resources through the active involvement of forest-dependent people by improving their knowledge for a more sustainable use and socially equitable benefit sharing from a wide range of forest products.

The three-year project (2005–2008) is funded by the Government of Germany and will supplement and accelerate the Regular Programme of FAO's Forest Products Service (FOPP) to enhance the contribution of NWFPs to food security,

for improved income generation and more sustainable forest management in Central Africa. It is fully integrated into the action strategy of FAO's Forestry Department "Forests in the Congo Basin", and has three main strategic priorities to support the sustainable management of forests in the Congo Basin:

- to improve livelihoods of the poorest segments of the population;
- to strengthen subregional collaboration;
- to enhance and organize data collection and management to harmonize forest and other sectoral policies.

The project will operate under the framework set by the Conference of Ministers of Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC) and the Conference on Central African Moist Forest Ecosystems (CEFDHAC). It will build upon the findings of earlier forestry projects, such as those from the FAO/EU Partnership Programme for Africa and will closely liaise with ongoing normative work carried out by FAO and projects in the region from agencies such as the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the African Timber Organization (ATO), the International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Cooperation Centre on Agrarian Research for Development (CIRAD), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and local non-governmental organizations.

After the initial institutional set-up, a series of technical studies will be launched to review the potential of forest foods to enhance food security in Central Africa. Proposals, partners and sites for the field testing of the most appropriate ways for their production and commercialization are discussed and identified at a technical workshop in the region. Field testing-cum-training is scheduled during the second year of the project. In the consolidation phase of year three, all project findings are validated at a regional workshop and follow-up actions are formulated. The project contributes to institutional

strengthening in the region, to enhancing knowledge of forest resources and agroforestry production systems, and to ensuring better coordination among all actors of government, donors and other stakeholders related to food security and forest conservation.

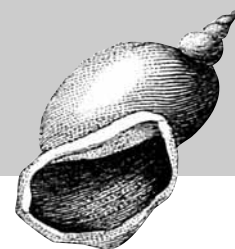
Immediate beneficiaries are the government agencies and extension services responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of forests and for the assurance of rural food security in Central Africa. The project will assist these agencies in developing and implementing appropriate policies to enhance food security through the use of NWFPs. Indirect beneficiaries are the local populations, who currently neither have access to adequate food, nor the means or knowledge to improve the gathering of forest products.

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FAO Technical Cooperation Programme project "Marketing system development for non-wood forest products in the Lao People's Democratic Republic" (TCP/LAO/3002)

Upon the request of the Lao Government, FAO assists the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute in its efforts to reduce rural poverty in the country and to promote the sustainable use and management of forest resources through the development of appropriate non-wood



forest product (NWFP) marketing systems. The project is being implemented in partnership with the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV).

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, NWFPs such as rattan and bamboo bring 50 to 55 percent of cash income to rural villages, where 80 percent of the Lao population lives. At the national level, domestic use of NWFPs accounts for 20 to 30 percent of the gross national product, while NWFPs bring 2 to 4 percent of the annual revenue to the government through exports. Despite their economic importance, marketing and marketing support systems for NWFPs are weak and considered as the main constraint for the development of the NWFP sector. The lack of reliable information on prices, demand and supply leads to inadequate economic benefits for local producers, who sell products at unreasonably low prices and at unsustainable harvesting rates in order to gain short-term profits. In addition, local producers miss opportunities to produce and sell most promising and profitable commodities.

The NWFP Marketing Project aims to strengthen capacities in the Lao People's Democratic Republic on NWFP marketing at the national and local levels using the market analysis and development (MA&D) approach, codeveloped by FAO. Based on a thorough analysis of the national NWFP sector, the project will develop models for sound NWFP marketing in order to assist the Lao Government in its efforts to reduce rural poverty in the country and to promote sustainable forest management through the environmentally friendly, socially equitable and economically viable use of NWFPs.

The project's expected outputs are:

- The national NWFP sector in the Lao People's Democratic Republic is assessed.
- Promising priority NWFPs and their markets and marketing opportunities are analysed.

- A model approach for NWFP market development is elaborated and pilot marketing activities are conducted at the village level to verify the NWFP marketing model.
- Linkages among national and international organizations and the private sector are established.
- Training for local communities and other key actors is provided to strengthen their capacity in MA&D and the sustainable use and management of the NWFP resources.

As a result, the project will contribute to the promotion of income generation for rural farmers through the sustainable management, use and marketing of NWFPs.

The first activities of the project were the organization of a Project Inception Workshop (PIW) and Project Steering Committee meeting.

The PIW, held on 4 November 2004, was well attended by some 65 participants representing national governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as international organizations and projects. Discussions emphasized the challenges of supporting (NWFP) marketing systems in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Many existing constraints have been identified and shared by the participants (e.g. quota system, tax system, property system, land allocation programme, lack of information at all levels, access to markets and capital). However, participants also stressed the existing opportunities to promote NWFP marketing in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (e.g. traditional knowledge, resource availability, market demand). An introductory session on the MA&D approach was led by the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC) and was well received by the participants. The first meeting of the Project Steering Committee, held on 5 November 2004, discussed and clarified administrative and technical issues of project implementation.

Subsequent to these introductory meetings, field activities were started

with a rapid NWFP assessment in three provinces: Savannakhet, Luang Prabang and Champasack.

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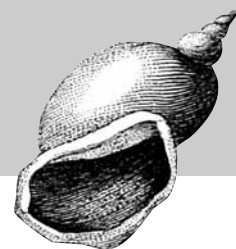


FAO Technical Cooperation Programme "Eaglewood management project" (TCP/PNG/2901(A))

Upon the request of the Government of Papua New Guinea, FAO assists the Papua New Guinea Forest Authority in the sustainable management and commercialization of eaglewood (also known as agarwood, aloeswood or gaharu).

Eaglewood is a valuable non-wood forest product that has been commercially exploited in Papua New Guinea for approximately ten years. High external demand combined with low national capacities with regard to eaglewood production and commercialization has resulted in uncontrolled exploitation and inappropriate trade structures which marginalize local producers. Rough estimates indicate that if unsustainable harvest and trade continue, eaglewood resources in certain areas will be totally depleted by 2005, not only threatening

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the tree species but also leading to substantial economic losses.

The objectives of the two-year project, which started in October 2003, are: i) to strengthen institutional capacities of technical staff from governmental and non-governmental organizations at the national level and the management capacities of local resource owners and producers at the grassroots level; and ii) to assist the concerned governmental organizations in the elaboration of a national eaglewood conservation and management strategy. This strategy will be based on the assessment of the ecological and socio-economic impact of eaglewood production and the identification of appropriate processing and harvesting technologies, including inoculation techniques to promote oleoresin production. Collaboration among all concerned stakeholders will be enhanced.

The project's expected outputs are:

- Sustainable management strategies, guidelines and policy measures on eaglewood as part of the ecoforestry policy are formulated.
- The extension and regulatory capacity of governmental and non-governmental organizations is strengthened.
- Effective training and awareness campaigns on eaglewood management at the grassroots level are carried out.
- Workable community-based eaglewood management models on customary land in three selected areas are designed and undertaken.
- Promising extraction methods are tested.
- Cost-effective fungal inoculation techniques adapted to Papua New Guinea conditions are developed.

As a result, it is expected that the assistance will contribute to sustaining the management of eaglewood resources and the livelihood of people using eaglewood resources.

Project activities started in 2003 with participation in the first International Agarwood Conference "Wood of the Gods" (see www.agarwood.org.vn). The

conference was held from 10 to 15 November in Viet Nam (Ho Chi Minh City and An Giang Province) and coorganized by the Tropical Rainforest Project (TRP) Foundation, the National University of Ho Chi Minh City, the An Giang University and the University of Minnesota [see *Non-Wood News 11 for further information*].

In 2004, the project coorganized several meetings of the Project Steering Committee and Inter-Agency Committee. These meetings have been important and successful in bringing together all stakeholders involved in the eaglewood sector in order to discuss eaglewood and project-related issues.

Studies on the environmental and socio-economic impact of eaglewood utilization, the international eaglewood market and best practices on appropriate nursery and distillation techniques have been initiated in collaboration with organizations such as the Papua New Guinea Forest Research Institute, Partners with Melanesians and the WWF South Pacific Programme.

A study on international regulations on endangered species with focus on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has been carried out in order to provide recommendations to the Papua New Guinea Government on the legal implications of eaglewood utilization and trade. This issue is of particular interest since the 13th Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES which was held in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2004. During this conference, the two agarwood-producing genera *Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops* were included in Appendix II of the Convention. This means that a special export permit will be required, in order to ensure that the level and/or volume of trade of wild populations will not have any negative environmental impact. (For further information on CITES CoP 13, see www.iisd.ca/cites/cop13/)

Field-related project activities carried out in 2004 included the identification/establishment of four pilot areas (Amau/Central Province, Kapiri/Gulf Province, Maramuni/Elem and Pukapuki/East Sepik), training and

awareness raising of some 1 000 villagers on eaglewood-related issues and the establishment and inventory of pilot plots, which have been selected as experimental plots to test inducement techniques. Staff of the National Forest Service have been trained in resource management and grading aspects.

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or

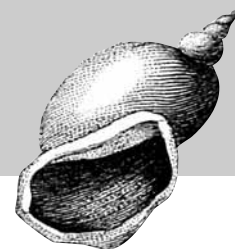
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FAO Technical Cooperation Programme project "Institutional support to promote the sustainable use and management of non-wood forest products in Cameroon" (TCP/CMR/2905[A])

Many households in Cameroon depend on NWFPs as a source of food, construction material, medicines and income. Fruits (e.g. from *Irvingia gabonensis*), leaves (e.g. *Gnetum* spp.) and spices (e.g. *Ricinodendron heudelotii*) are among the most relevant edible NWFPs. Other important NWFPs include medicinal plants (e.g. *Prunus africana*) and rattan (e.g. *Laccosperma secundiflorum*). Despite the actual and potential benefits of using NWFPs for both subsistence and trade, various legal and institutional constraints hinder the sustainable use of NWFPs, including the inappropriate management of resources providing NWFPs and unclear tenure systems.



The Government of Cameroon recognizes the important role of NWFPs in poverty alleviation, particularly in rural areas. In order to promote the sustainable use of NWFPs, in 1998 the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MINEF) created a Subdivision for the Promotion and Processing of NWFPs (Sous-direction de la promotion et de la transformation des produits forestiers non-ligneux [SDNL]).

In November 2001, the University of Yaoundé and FAO coorganized a seminar on "NWFPs in Cameroon: potentials, constraints and perspectives" which was followed by workshops organized by MINEF (January 2002) and the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, November 2003). These workshops analysed the NWFP sector and identified key challenges faced by NWFP producers, consumers and traders. Furthermore, the workshops acknowledged the efforts made by governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote the sustainable use of NWFPs.

This Technical Cooperation Programme project was started in October 2003 to build on these efforts and to support the Government of Cameroon in promoting the sustainable use of NWFPs.

The main project activities include: the analysis of the national NWFP sector; elaboration of recommendations for the sustainable management, consumption and commercialization of two selected NWFPs (covering both humid and arid ecosystems); and support of MINEF in its efforts to elaborate a national strategy and action plan for NWFPs.

During the first project phase, national experts analysed the NWFP sector in Cameroon by taking into account socio-economic, ecological and legal aspects. This assessment led to the identification of two priority NWFPs, for which the project will elaborate strategies for the sustainable production and commercialization: *Gnetum* spp., an edible leaf, which is intensively collected in the humid zone, and gum arabic (*Acacia senegal*, *A. seyal*), produced and traded in the arid zones located in the northern parts of Cameroon.

Furthermore, the project will elaborate recommendations for an appropriate legal and institutional framework supporting the sound development of the NWFP sector in Cameroon.

The information collected and analysed by the project will help the Government of Cameroon to develop a national strategy and action plan for the sustainable use of NWFPs.

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Alternative livelihoods developed to protect World Heritage Site

Small enterprises have been created in communities around the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda to generate income while conserving the park, named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

Thanks to an FAO project, funded by the United Nations Foundation and the Government of Norway, communities that used to live off the park's forest resources have developed small-scale enterprises and now earn income from a wide variety of products, such as handicrafts, honey and mushrooms, while conserving the park. "This pilot project shows that it is possible for communities living around high biodiversity or protected sites to create alternative sources of income using the natural resources in a sustainable way," said Sophie Grouwels, an FAO expert in participatory forestry.

Park conservation versus people's livelihoods

Bwindi Park is home to half of the world's mountain gorillas and 12 other animal species threatened with global extinction. To protect the mountain forest's rich biodiversity, the Ugandan Government declared it a national park in 1991.

This, however, threatened communities that depended on the park's forest resources to make a living. Forty percent of the population living around the park lack sufficient land to meet basic needs and 16 percent of the population are landless. They relied on the forest for weaving materials, medicinal plants, hunting, honey collection, fruit gathering and building poles.

When Bwindi was named a national park, the people were barred from removing forest products, some of which played a crucial role in their livelihood. The inaccessibility of the park to those living around it fuelled conflicts between the communities and the park.

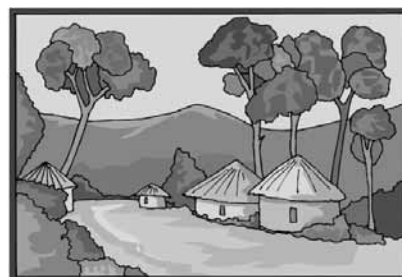
Environmentally friendly community-based enterprises

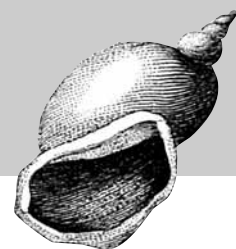
The FAO project, launched in 2001, has enabled more than 300 small-scale natural resource-based enterprises to be set up around the park, with community members running them independently and earning income. Activities range from food production to tourist tours.

The Buhoma Village Walk is a guided tour offered mainly to tourists visiting the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park for gorilla watching. This initiative provides members of the local community with an alternative source of income directly linked to conservation.

Trained community guides lead tourists to a number of interesting natural and cultural sites, ranging from rural homesteads to visiting the local traditional medicine healer. The initiative has been quite successful, with the number of visitors jumping from 94 in July 2003 to 148 in July 2004.

Apiaries have been established and beehives populated so that people can





produce and sell honey and beeswax, using traditional knowledge and appropriate technology. Those who used to keep hives made from logs found in the park now have their own improved hives made of woven grasses, which increase yields and the quality of the honey. The expected income from the improved hives is about US\$30 to \$40 per household per year.

Raw materials for traditional handicrafts are now mainly grown in home gardens, rather than in the park. The crafts are sold in the local tourist market and also exported, generating an average of US\$17 in additional monthly income per household.

The cultivation and sale of oyster mushrooms has reduced the illegal harvest from the park. The producers make an average of US\$10 in additional income a month per household from this activity.

All these activities have generated employment and created additional income. Requiring less space than other agricultural activities, they also exert less impact on the land and make best use of existing local knowledge and resources.

Community members' involvement

"The involvement of the community members themselves from the outset – that is, from the selection of products, development of business plans, to the operation of the enterprises – has been key to the success of the project," Grouwels said.

To increase the capacity of community members to plan, develop and run their enterprises independently, workshops were held in the villages, interest groups were created around promising products and capable local entrepreneurs with leadership qualities were identified.

"We will use the lessons learned and share best practices from the project at other high biodiversity sites," Grouwels said. "It shows it is possible to conserve valuable natural resources while also protecting the surrounding people's livelihoods." (Source: FAO Newsroom, 3 December 2004.)

MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP

Mountains store a wealth of non-wood forest products – food crops, medicinal plants and animal species – found nowhere else. Yet, despite these rich resources, mountain people are among the poorest and hungriest in the world.

What prevents mountain people reaping the benefits of these valuable non-wood forest products? The reasons are various and include: weak communication infrastructures in many mountain areas; lack of information, training and expertise in new agricultural technologies; a dearth of registration, certification and labelling to protect products; inadequate marketing skills and lack of wider market access; high transport costs; and unfair trade.

Tapping the potential of these non-wood forest products and transforming them into quality products can make a real difference to the well-being, lives and livelihoods of mountain people. Action is under way. Around the world, countries, intergovernmental organizations and major groups are now working with mountain people to protect and promote mountain products in a fair and equitable manner. They are doing this within the framework of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, or the Mountain Partnership, a voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments worldwide.

Launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, the Mountain Partnership taps the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge and expertise of its members to support positive change in mountain areas. As of January 2005, 43 countries, 14 intergovernmental organizations and 55 major groups have become members of the Mountain Partnership and the numbers are growing. A Partnership Secretariat, with financial support from the governments of Italy and Switzerland, is hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

in Rome and has the direct involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) too. The secretariat and the Mountain Forum – an electronic worldwide network – work together in a collaborative alliance to support the members of the Mountain Partnership.

The dynamic core of the Mountain Partnership is Partnership Initiatives – activities, programmes and projects on the ground jointly promoted by its members. In 2004, a first set of 12 initiatives was identified, based on members' needs, priorities and concerns. Six initiatives focus on mountain regions (Andes, Central America and the Caribbean, Central Asia, East Africa, Europe and Hindu Kush Himalaya), while seven initiatives focus on mountain themes such as education, gender, policy and law, research, sustainable agriculture and rural development in mountain regions (SARD-M), sustainable livelihoods and watershed management.

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Members of the Mountain Partnership, with support from the secretariat, are actively building the initiatives through consultation, communication and collaborative action. A core activity within the Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative, for example, is a project on protecting and promoting mountain products. This particular initiative will provide new opportunities to explore the vast potential of non-wood forest products to improve the lives of mountain people.

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