

Forests often represent an important source of employment for women (Asia - Pacific).

women gather buffer foods which would not be consumed under circumstances of less duress but can be crucial to family survival during a crisis. Beyond the immediate benefits of food and medicinal plants that are consumed by the family or sold on the market, easy access to forest products, particularly fuelwood, gives women time for other activities.

Women contribute to forestry in many significant ways. They play a key role in agroforestry, a farming system that incorporates trees, crops and livestock production. **They are active in watershed management** where actions to reduce soil erosion, such as maintaining forest cover, lessen the hazard of floods and the silting of reservoirs and waterways. Women also contribute to tree improvement and propagation to ensure the proliferation of useful tree species, and to forest protection and conservation. This, in turn, protects the many animal and plant varieties that depend on forests for their survival and improves the overall health and maintenance of forest ecosystems.

Forests often represent an important source of employment for women. From nurseries to plantations and from logging to wood processing, women make up a significant proportion of the labour force in forest industries throughout the developing world. Although rural women contribute substantially to forest harvesting indus-

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN



From Words to Action...

- Prepare a programme for the promotion of equal employment opportunities in wood-based industries.
- Develop gender-sensitive guidelines on the processing of non-wood forest products for income generation, on the measures to reduce fuelwood consumption, and on marketing forest products for grassroots-level operators.
- Prepare guidelines to improve the use of wood for cooking and heating at the household level and to improve living conditions with regard to indoor air quality and wood fuel consumption patterns.
- Prepare a case study that illustrates successful examples of forest harvesting methods that reduce women's workloads and increase work safety.
- Produce analytical papers and case studies on the roles of women in agroforestry, watershed management, dryland forestry, wildlife and conservation area management, forest genetics and tree improvement, forest protection and

tries and marketing, their roles are not fully recognized and documented, their wages are not equal to those of men, and their working conditions tend to be poor.

In many countries, large areas of communal forest land have been privatized and set aside for agriculture and commercial forestry resulting in widespread deforestation and a decline in access to woodland resources. As a result, women must spend more time collecting fuelwood and other forest products. In addition, as more and more men find employment in the towns and cities, women must take on the work previously done by them. This additional burden leaves little time for the lengthy tasks of collecting and processing forest products which are important to the family economy.

The sustainable utilization of forest resources requires the participation of all rural inhabitants, including women. Although women's needs often differ from those of men, many programmes tend to overlook their needs regarding the forest. Women have unequal access to forestry information, training, education and research. Policy-makers and planners lack adequate data, information and methodologies to respond to women's specific needs. As a result, national capacity for the development, conservation, management and protection of forests and forest ecosystems is constrained.

[FISHERIES]

Women's contribution to fisheries is substantial. In some regions women are engaged directly in fish production, fishing from the shore, small boats or canoes, or serving as crews on boats. In many communities, women also play a major role in making and/or mending fishing gear. Where aquaculture is practiced, women's contribution in feeding and harvesting fish is immense.

In most fishing communities women predominate in the handling, preservation and processing of fish products. During post-harvest activities they assist in unloading boats and nets. During the processing activities they work at sun-drying, salting, smoking and preparing fish paste and cakes. The tasks related to these procedures, such as collecting water and salt, or fuel for the smoking ovens, are time-consuming and physically exhausting. Post-harvest losses are often very high due to inefficient technologies, ineffective methods, and inadequate storage facilities. **Improvements in equipment and methods can make a significant difference in the quantity of fish available** for home consumption

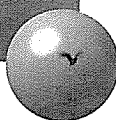
STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

management, and on women's roles in informal and formal forestry research, education and extension.

- Develop guidelines to assist extension planners and designers meet the needs of women more effectively, and incorporate gender into forestry curricula in educational and training organizations.
- Develop methodologies to increase women's access to more appropriate technical, marketing and other types of forestry information and advice.

Fisheries

- Establish an Internet-accessible electronic bulletin board/discussion group on gender issues and activities in the fisheries sector.
- Screen all fisheries project documents to ensure that, where relevant, gender considerations are taken into account. This will be done by the Core Group on Women in Fisheries.
- Prepare case studies that highlight and publicize "success stories" of women in fisheries.



In 1986 the Core Group on Women in Fisheries was established to serve as a focal point for women in fisheries within the Organization. The Core Group serves as an important catalyst in ensuring that fisheries professionals at all levels appreciate the significant and continuing contributions of women in the fisheries sector.

It provides these professionals with the managerial and developmental tools and methodologies needed to enhance women's involvement in the sector.

and for sale, even without an increase in the size of the catch.

In many regions women have the primary and often exclusive responsibility for marketing fish products. Since the income from the sale of fresh or processed fish often represents an important contribution to a family's overall income, **effective marketing is critical in determining the family's standard of nutrition and living.** This is especially true where women control this income—they are more likely than men to spend money on

alternative sources of food and other basic household necessities.

The role of women in fisheries tends to be small-scale and home-based, however, in some countries they work as wage labourers in large-scale processing operations. In a few regions of the developing world, women are important fisheries entrepreneurs, earning, handling and controlling significant amounts of money and financing a variety of fisheries enterprises.

Development efforts over the last few decades have made it clear that sustained improvements in productivity and the sustainable utilization of fisheries resources can be obtained upon recognition of the crucial role of women. Yet, women in fisheries often lack access to physical and capital resources, to decision-making and leadership positions, and to training and formal education. Access to these would improve the efficiency, profitability and sustainability of their activities. Although large-scale fisheries development projects, mechanization, and improved technology may increase productive capacities, they can also increase the post-harvest work of women. This increased workload is often per-

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