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Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

Discussion Paper by Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group

Summary

Large parts of the world forests are governed by forest owners and community forestry. Most of the properties and managed areas are small or medium sized. Family forestry and community forestry work to secure sustainable forest development. The organisation of the forest owners and community forestry is vital in enabling the small and medium sized properties to be economic viable, carefully managed and give essential contributes to local livelihood. The importance of forest owners' organisation and the economic cooperation among family and community foresters need to be recognised and supported. Together with secure property and land tenure rights, organisations controlled by the active foresters themselves are a prerequisite for sustainable management in a changing environment taking care of forests and bio diversity. The foresters must be enabled to organise themselves and not "being organised" by others. The reciprocal cooperation with industry, state forest and governments is however vital and of mutual interest.

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I Introduction

1. Large parts of the world's forest is managed by family forestry, personal forest owners, and community forestry. We do not know the exact numbers, but in many parts of the world 60 percent or more of the area and forest volume is governed by small owners and communities. Family forest owners share the same values and visions, the long term commitment and the combination of utilising the resources and maintaining the diverse functions of the forest. The economic, ecologic and social consideration is inherited in the generation bridging forestry and the local dependence of the forests economic and protective functions. This is the true sustainable forestry.
2. The people being responsible for the daily activities in the forests need to be taken into account and directly involved in the international forest policy discussions. Very often international processes are dominated by those who talk about forests, not those who do the forestry. The active foresters need to be "talked with" and not only "talked to" or "talked about".
3. The only way of sustainably managing the vast majority of small properties goes through organising their interest, organising their practical and economic activity and securing those organisations a global voice. The organisations must be able to secure effective economic activity, supporting the foresters, securing education and knowledge transfer and advocating their interests in local and international arenas.
4. Local network and communities are strong forces when they are able to form the foundation of their own organisations. The prerequisite is however that these organisations are controlled by the foresters themselves and not some outside forces "organising" the forest owners. The economic cooperation with industry and the cooperation with state forest and governments is however very important in forming, developing and maintaining the organisations. The building of strong organisations for forest owners and community forestry will be in the best interest of industry, state forest and governments. This is the only way to secure sustainable forest management and efficient and considerate forestry on large areas of small holdings.
5. In international contexts it is also important to recognise the different conditions for forestry all over the world. As we in some parts of the world have serious threats of deforestation, we have in Europe and in North America the problem of under utilisation of forest as a renewable resource. As we in some parts of the world lack forest owners' organisations, we have well built organisations and economic cooperatives in other parts. An important challenge for the international discussion is to recognise the variety and build on the mix of contributions from all types of forest owners' organisations. We know that the strongest forest owners' organisations are those with members of different sizes, small and medium sized forest owners together in common cooperation of mutual economic and political strength.

II. Forests in a changing environment

6. Sustainable forest management is the best way of securing robust forests in a changing environment. The importance is to remember the three components of sustainable forestry; economic, ecologic and social considerations must be achieved and balanced at the same time. The main forces that will contribute to sustainable development will also make the forest prepared for changes and will

activate forces that may fight against negative development, adapt to the actual situation and utilise the possibilities of change. This is only possible under a well organised forestry.

7. An important part of achieving sustainable forest management is forest certification. Through well organised small and medium sized forest owners, cost effective and affordable group certification will be available connected to forest owners' and community forest organisations. This has proven very effective in some countries already.

A. Forests and climate change

8. The effects of climate change are very important and the forest must be regarded as not only part of the problem, but an important part of the solution. The long term positive effects of active forestry, the growth of renewable and the use of environmentally friendly forest products must be stimulated. This must include the support and recognition of the important roles of forest organisations in the climate change mitigation. The substitution effect of forest products and the promotion of wood could also be channelled through the organisations.

B. Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation and combating desertification

9. The problems of loss of forest cover and the prevention of forest degradation is often caused by poverty and forces outside the forest sector. There may be found short term solutions in buying off the "symptoms" of forest loss and degradation. The long term solution is however to build sustainable forest management and base the forest management on local people, building up the capacity of family and community forestry by securing property rights, land tenure rights and the long term viable forestry. The formation and development of forest organisations is again a key instrument in achieving the goals. Without proper organisations, the support for local forestry is not possible in the long term.

C. Forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas

10. Forest and bio diversity conservation is an important part of sustainable forest management. While promoting sustainable management, family forestry and community forestry are taking care of the forest and bio diversity conservation at the same time. Some part of this consideration may include protected areas. The protection of areas must, however, take into consideration the elements of viable economy, local livelihood and social considerations. The restrictions and the compensations must be discussed in an equal way with the family forestry and community forestry organisations

III. Means of implementation for sustainable forest management

11. The role and benefits of forest owner associations and cooperatives in instrumental in building capacity and enabling the local communities and also the small and medium sized forest owners to fulfil the goals of securing sustainable forest management. The means of implementation must build on existing organisations and local networks and communities. The existing organisations and economic cooperation in parts of the world where they are strong today must be brought into a dialogue in order to share knowledge and experience. The local knowledge and experience is also vital to utilise in combination with scientific knowledge and modern principles of organisation and technology.

12. Industry must be given a role and responsibility of supporting forest owners' organisations in the management and effective collection of harvest from small holding areas. State forest must be obliged to support private forestry and their organisations in the mutual benefit of securing sustainable management in larger areas. The industry must behave in a way of supporting small, medium and large land owners to join the same organisations, and prefer the wood procurement through such organisations who in the medium term will deliver the most cost effective and stable wood supply build on sustainable management of larger areas than today.

13. The central, regional and local governments must take on the responsibility of supporting the foresters own formation of organisations and enable them to grow, council their members and build up educational capacity.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

14. The support of sustainable forest management is the key to secure the forest in a changing environment. Sustainable forest management will represent lasting solutions.

15. The key to sustainable forest management in areas with small and medium sized forest holdings is to support the formation and development of forest owners and community forest organisations. Industry, state forest and governments have special roles and responsibilities.

16. Forest certification connected to effective group certification in forest owners' and community forest organisations should be supported as a tool in securing and documenting sustainable forest management.

17. The international society must bring the forest owners' existing organisations into a true dialogue. The intergovernmental organisations must recognise to "talk with" and not "talk to" or "talk about" the real actors in today's forestry. In international consultations the representatives of active forestry must be given more weight than international organisations given advice from a non-responsible and non-active situation.