

SESSION 2: EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS ON PARTICIPATION

Chair : Prof. Makoto Inoue (The University of Tokyo)

Rapporteurs: Herman Hidayat (LIPI) & Masatoshi Sasaoka (The University of Tokyo)

1. To begin the session, the chair provided a short explanation of participatory forest management strategy. The strategy comprises two components: analysis of internal constraints and analysis of external constraints to local participation in forest management. This session discussed the latter based on the research and experiences in five Southeast Asian Countries: Indonesia, Lao P.D.R., Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.
2. Five presentations identified numerous constraints on local people's participation. These are state authorities, centralized management decision-making, government's attitude toward people and perceptions about forests, inappropriate land tenure systems, lack of agreement on land use demarcation, insufficient incentives for joint management, lack of legal support for local participation, etc.
3. After the presentations, Dr. Inoue, proposed to narrow the discussion down to three topics: (1) differences in constraints on local participation between capitalistic countries and socialistic countries, (2) centralized management system as a fundamental constraint, (3) constraints on carrying out "community forestry".
4. As for topic (1), Dr. Wang Xi from China asserted that there was no difference between capitalistic and socialistic countries, because most of the forest lands were owned by the government in both countries. The chairperson partially agreed with the argument, but put the effect of collective farm management on forestry in question.
5. As for topic (2), the chairperson pointed out that centralized management systems resulted in paternalistic attitudes of the government toward the local people, and resulted in top-down decision making in demarcation of protected areas and reforestation activities. Dr. Alexander Sheingauz from Russia said that decentralization might be harmful for sustainable forest management, and it was necessary to educate local people so that they could acknowledge the existence of bio-diversity, ecosystems, the role of forests for improvement of the quality of their lives.
6. As for topic (3), the chairperson induced the floor to discuss land ownership, right to use, profit sharing, sharing of authority, and the role of NGOs. But time limits did not permit a discussion of the issues. Dr. Bishnu Bhandari, a senior researcher of IGES, argued that forest conservation should be done within an overall community development framework.
7. It is necessary to pay attention to policy reform in developing countries. A tentative move towards decentralization in forest management should be supported on the assumption that the forests can be managed sustainably. This must ensure local people's rights to land and access to the forests, strengthen the bargaining power of the people, and promote community-based forest management and community forestry.