

Third Annual Reports: Web Updates

GTF 255 - International Union for Conservation of Nature

The purpose of the 'Improving Natural Resource Governance for Rural Poverty Reduction' programme is to improve livelihood security in selected countries. This is by way of better environmental governance, including fair and equitable access to natural resources, new benefit sharing arrangements, and more participative and transparent decision making.



This year the programme had a number of positive impacts. In Bangladesh, multi-stakeholder platforms have brought together community members and local government officials. This has provided poor and excluded sectors of society with a real voice in local decision-making. As a result, government officials have become more accountable and responsive. Examples of the achievements are: (i) the exploitative leasing system in *haor* (perennial wetland system) areas controlled by powerful elites is gradually being replaced by 'co-management'; and (ii) communities in the Chandpur district have been able to obtain an increase in the compensation that poor fishermen receive during the lean season –time when fishing is banned- from 500 to 5,000 Bangladeshi taka per person (approximately from 5 to 50 GBP).



In Nepal, the programme addressed the community governance of a watershed and helped advocate for the integration of environmental rights and benefit-sharing mechanisms into the new constitution. A watershed conservation plan for Sardu watershed was developed and a functioning multi-stakeholder platform for the watershed was set up. These actions have helped solve conflicts between upstream and downstream communities and increased access to clean drinking water for approximately 11,800 people in Dharan municipality as well as neighbouring communities. On the other hand, recognition of access and benefit sharing, environmental rights and natural resources governance have been inserted in the draft version of the new constitution, as a result of training, advocacy and awareness raising activities addressed to the national Constituent Assembly members. For the Nepal's approximately 20 million rural inhabitants who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, these changes in the Constitution will increase their access to these resources, promote sustainable development and foster new income opportunities.



In post conflict Sri Lanka, three multi-stakeholder platforms have enabled thousands of poor people to have voice in policy making processes that affect their lives. An example of the important policy changes generated is the recognition and gazetting of the Puttalam Lagoon Fisheries Management Area under the Fisheries Management Act, which entails regulations that support community management. Community based fisheries organizations

of Periyakalpuwa have been legally recognized as management agents.



In Lebanon, actions by our partner led to community based traditional natural resources governance systems known as *himas* being legally approved in three villages in Upper Akkar/Hermel region. To support sustainable development and safeguard extraordinary biodiversity including that of Karm Chbat National Reserve, the Draft Master Plan for Upper Akkar/Hermel was prepared with active participation of local people. In response to local demands, this plan includes a focus on ecotourism - a sustainable alternative for increasing income for Bedouin families in this

extremely poor area of Lebanon. The plan also aims to help turn Karm Chbat National Reserve from a paper park that excluded local people into a community managed area rooted in the *hima* approach.

Over the next year, IUCN will continue to work with partners in Kenya, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to strengthen natural resource governance and rights, to support poor people's access to natural resources and to help secure more equitable livelihoods.

Please see our [annual report](#) for the period April 2010-March 2011.