

## Workshop “Forests: A Resource for Development”

May 11-13, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

The purpose of this **policy workshop** was (1) to disseminate the experiences of recent forest sector reforms from other countries in Latin America and the world to policy-makers, legislators, academics, non-governmental organizations, private companies, and rural forest producers and their associations; (2) to aid the implementation of the new forest policy framework embodied in the proposed forest legislation by presenting successful experiences and lessons from decentralization of forest sector responsibilities.

Community forestry experiences from Guatemala, Mexico, Bolivia, and China were presented along with the new market context for forestry globally and from China, Central America, and several countries engaged in decentralization. The Honduran experience was presented by Dr. Jose Flores Rodas, a renowned forest specialist, and complemented by the participants' experience. Forest Trends coordinated the selection, preparation, and presentation of case studies and lessons, and assisted the Rural Productivity and Forests Project (PBPR) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and AFE-COHDEFOR, the National Forest Agency, with PROFOR funds channeled through the World Bank.

There was a broad set of discussions around four key themes: (a) global market trends and implications, including new markets for ecosystem services; (b) community forestry enterprise experiences; (c) lessons from decentralization; and (d) designing more optimal policy and regulatory frameworks. The participants endorsed a decentralized approach to forestry which gave greater roles and responsibilities (and resources) to municipal and community levels while targeting the role of government more clearly in forests with limited population and in enabling activities. A strong interest in community initiatives supported by tenure rights and capacity-building resources emerged in a number of different working group discussions. The historical instability of policies in the forest sector was seen as an important limitation to forest development, particularly given the lack of tenure security. Promising opportunities for partnering between rural producers and communities and a more vertically integrated and efficient private sector were seen as desirable and feasible to advance forestry in Honduras. There was a recognition that both private and community actors need to become smarter in pursuing their market advantages and that regulations need to play a supportive, rather than command and control role for which the state does not have the incentives or capacity. Participants observed that Honduras had started as a leader in community forestry approaches in the 1970s but had lost this edge in the ensuing decades.

The proceedings are being posted in English and Spanish with the individual presentations and companion case studies on the project website and in the Forest Trends website. Government plans to use these materials in ongoing capacity building and training and more local dissemination of the findings is planned, in the context of this project.