
Global Caucus on Community-Based Forest Management

In May 2002, a number of people attending the 4th Preparatory Meeting for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), decided to group themselves under a common banner in order to influence government delegates on the need for the global community to recognize community-based and indigenous forest management as a viable tool for alleviating poverty and sustaining the Earth's environment. After just a few days of organizing --and despite warnings that they were beginning their efforts too late-- they were successful in securing this recognition in text being negotiated by the delegates. The Global Caucus on Community-Based Forest Management was thus born.

The Caucus, which currently includes more than 200 members from over 30 countries held again a number of meetings and carried out numerous activities some months later at the Johannesburg Summit. Rumours about the Caucus' effectiveness spread, and it was invited to facilitate an open forum on forests, the results of which was formally transmitted to the UN. The Caucus also spent time strategizing for the future, exploring goals such as:

1) Encourage national governments and international agencies to:

- Strengthen local and community governance
- Increase efforts to legalise and protect land tenure
- Strengthen community participation in policy development and implementation
- Expand market opportunities for forest communities and small forest operations
- Increase research into community-based forest management and expand its dissemination
- Discontinue and avoid programs that limit local peoples' access to forests
- Increase forest monitoring and indicator systems that permit the evaluation of deforestation and degradation

2) Achieve recognition for community-based and indigenous forestry as a viable tool for achieving sustainable development, both at home and internationally.

3) Monitor, ensure, and evaluate the implementation of international commitments to community-based and indigenous forestry.

4) Secure political, monetary, and technical support --and respect-- from international agencies and organizations, and home governments.

5) Enable practitioners of community-based forest management to share knowledge and experiences, and provide them with a meaningful voice in international discussions, for example by improving civil society participation in United Nations Forum on Forests and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

6) Serve as a resource for governments, organizations, and people interested in supporting community-based forestry.

7) Support people and organisations working on related issues, including (but not limited to) land rights, environmental justice, and sustainable agriculture and fisheries.

8) Work closely with other forest groups, such as Global Forest Coalition and World Rainforest Movement, and support colleagues working in related areas, including (but not limited to) land rights, environmental justice, and sustainable agriculture and fisheries.

At the last meeting, the Caucus agreed to establish the following provisional regional nodes for the next 6-8 months:

ASIA/PACIFIC

- RECOFTC (Karen Edwards, e-mail: okaren@ku.ac.th)

AFRICA

- Forest Action Network (Dominic Walubengo, e-mail: dwalubengo@fanworld.org)

AMERICAS

- ACICAFOC (Alberto Chinchilla, e-mail: oficinaregional@acicafoc.org)

- National Network of Forest Practitioners (Thomas Brendler, e-mail: thomas@nnfp.org)

EUROPE (provisional)

- Global Forest Coalition (Miguel Lovera, e-mail: lovera2@conexion.com.py)

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

- World Rainforest Movement (Ricardo Carrere, e-mail: wrm@wrm.org.uy)

In the coming months and years, Caucus members look forward to joining forces to support community-based and indigenous forestry worldwide, through such activities as sharing knowledge and skills, collaborating on the ground, and providing a meaningful voice for forest peoples in policy development. Some Caucus members have already begun working together on community-based monitoring projects, the challenges of protected areas, and organizing events for the World Forestry Congress in Quebec City next September.

To join the Caucus, just send a blank e-mail to globalcbfm-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Once you're on, send a quick note introducing yourself to the group.