



## Factsheet of Shortlisted Policies

### **Bhutan: The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, especially Article 5 (Environment) (2008) and forest related policies**

Article 5 of Bhutan's Constitution states, "Every Bhutanese is a trustee of the Kingdom's natural resources and environment for the benefit of present and future generations." Bhutan has adopted a constitutional provision stipulating that a minimum of sixty percent of the country's land is to be maintained under forest cover at all times and that ecologically balanced sustainable development shall be secured. With its national goal of living in harmony with nature, Bhutan has the highest proportion of forest cover (69%) and protected areas and biological corridors (51.44%) of any Asian nation, allowing indigenous people to live freely in these areas. Bhutan has shown great foresight by including provisions on forests in its constitution.

### **The Gambia: Community Forest Policy, initiated in 1995**

The Gambian model of community forest management is an innovative success. It aims to achieve sustainable forest management and poverty alleviation by handing control of forests to the communities that use them. Despite being one of the world's poorest countries with a rapidly growing population, Gambia has managed to buck a strong deforestation trend in the Western and Central African region by showing a net increase in forest cover of 8.5% over the last two decades. Using a phased approach, the policy includes a far reaching tenure transition of forest land from state ownership to permanent ownership by communities (which currently stands at 12% of forest lands). The policy has also achieved a reduction in illegal logging and the incidence of forest fires in community forest areas as well as contributing to the development of new markets for branch wood and other forest products which benefit women and rural populations economically.

### **USA: The Lacey Act with its amendment of 2008**

Illegal logging and the international trade in illegal timber has been recognised as a major global problem causing environmental damage, costing producer countries billions of dollars in lost revenue, promoting corruption, undermining the rule of law and good governance and funding armed conflict. The United States have become the first country in the world to place an outright, criminally enforceable ban on the import of illegally harvested timber. The issue is addressed both nationally and internationally from the demand side by requiring that importers of wood products and subsequent handlers in the supply chain exercise due care to ensure that wood in their possession is of legal origin. The Lacey Act amendments have forced importers to take responsibility for their wood products and have already produced positive results in increasing due diligence assessments and demand for certified wood products. The Act also has the potential to significantly reduce illegal logging by withdrawing the huge rewards received by illegal loggers from the international market.

### **Nepal: Community Forestry Programme, initiated in 1993**

Nepal's community forestry programme has evolved towards a broad-based strategy for sustainable forest use that empowers local communities to manage forests for livelihoods while also improving forest conservation. While the government still owns the forests, decisions about income-generating activities, methods of wildlife protection and rules about forest use are made by community forest user groups which are autonomous, self-governing local institutions comprised of village residents using common forests. The forestry programme has produced a range of positive impacts, improving forest coverage and conditions in community managed areas, nurturing democracy at the grassroots level, improving employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for forest-dependent people and providing promising examples of biodiversity protection. By 2009 about 1.6 million households or 32% of the country's population took part in the Community Forestry Programme, directly managing more than 25% of the country's forest area and providing significant income streams to rural communities.



**Rwanda: National Forest Policy, initiated in 2004 and Law N° 57/2008 relating to the prohibition of the manufacture, import, use and sale of polythene bags in Rwanda**

Rwanda's environment suffered tremendous pressure after the genocide and breakdown of law and order in 1994 due to sky-rocketing demand for wood to reconstruct the country. But despite continuing population and land pressures, Rwanda is one of only three countries in Central and Western Africa to achieve a major reversal in the trend of declining forest cover. A new National Forest Policy, aiming to make forestry one of the bedrocks of the economy and of the national ecological balance, was implemented in 2004 and Law N° 57/2008 introduced a ban on plastic bags. Massive reforestation and planting activities that promoted indigenous species and involved the local population were undertaken, and new measures such as agro-forestry and education about forest management were implemented with a variety of ecological, social and economic benefits. As a result Rwanda is on course to reach its goal of increasing forest cover to 30% of total land area by 2020.

**Switzerland: Federal Act on Forests (1991) and Swiss National Forest Programme 2004-2015**

The objectives of the Swiss forest policy are to promote the multi-functionality of all types of forests, guarantee sustainable forest management and by conserving forests ensure that they continue to provide benefits and services to society well into the future. The law integrates a wide-ranging set of political instruments and prohibitions, including a ban on deforestation and clear-cutting, environmentally hazardous products and the genetic modification of trees. The civil society is closely involved in forest planning and conflict resolution at different levels. Since the late 19th century the forest area has grown by about 45% and continues to expand (by 5% from 1985 to 2006) with total forest cover at 30% (56% of which is certified). There have also been beneficial impacts on green jobs, with 4.3% of those employed by the primary sector working in forestry. Through the programme the Swiss government also provides financial incentives for defence against natural hazards and the enhancement of protective forests and forest biodiversity.