

Gender and forests in a changing landscape

# Understanding women's participation in forestry in Indonesia

Policy brief



Photo by Ahmad Dhialhaq

## Key messages

- Address the lack of clarity on the concept of gender mainstreaming among planners in the Ministry of Forestry (MoF) through capacity development opportunities and consultation meetings organized by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (MoWE).
- Invest in gender- and forestry-related research, including the collection of gender-disaggregated data, and use the findings to help raise awareness on the diversity of forest-dependent communities and the different needs and priorities of men and women.
- With the support and coordination of MoF, develop the capacity of gender working groups to increase their effectiveness in mainstreaming gender into policy planning.

## Background

As a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Government of Indonesia has undertaken initiatives at policy and institutional levels to promote gender equality across all sectors, including forestry. The National Medium-Term Development Plan 2010-2014 envisions gender mainstreaming as a development strategy to make policies and programmes more effective for achieving equality and inclusiveness (Kusumanto 2013).

The Presidential Instruction No. 9 (2000) mandates all government ministries and agencies to mainstream gender analysis in the planning, implementation and monitoring of development policies and programmes. In this context, the MoF adopted technical guidelines for the implementation of gender mainstreaming developed by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (MoWE); subsequently the MoF created a working group for gender mainstreaming within the ministry in 2003 (MoF 2010).

At the same time MoWE introduced the Gender Analysis Pathway (GAP) tool for incorporation of gender perspectives in development planning. The tool was developed collaboratively with the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS)<sup>1</sup> with technical support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Due to the joint efforts of MoWE, BAPPENAS and the MoF, financial policy instruments were also developed to strengthen gender accountability in government agencies (Kusumanto 2013).

However, forest governance and tenure systems in Indonesia give limited attention to the heterogeneity of communities, specifically regarding gender, class, ethnicity and other socio-cultural aspects. Most of the work on forest tenure and governance reform in Indonesia has focused on how to manage conflicts between customary community forest systems and forests under state control. While this thrust seeks to change both the legal framework and its implementation, as well as to address conflict management, gender equality principles are seldom considered. Thus, gender-based injustices in forest governance and tenure, mostly experienced by women, have yet to be addressed adequately (Siscwati and Mahaningtyas 2012).

This brief discusses how gender perspectives are integrated in Indonesia's forest policies and laws in terms of women's representation, participation, access to and decision-making in forest use and management. The brief also highlights the key challenges in mainstreaming gender aspects and outlines recommendations to promote gender mainstreaming further in the forestry sector.



<sup>1</sup> BAPPENAS is responsible for gender mainstreaming in national development plans; it has a mandate to support and monitor its implementation. BAPPENAS is also involved in the formulation and review of sectoral plans and budgets and thus plays a key role in ensuring that they are gender-responsive.

# Gender concerns in forest policies

The two key policy strategies for participatory forest management in Indonesia are related to social forestry and community forestry. Community forestry, as a policy strategy, began in 1995 with the objective of engaging communities in state forest areas that had not been allocated as concessions or had no utilization permits. Since 2007, all forestry schemes concerning local communities, whether inside or outside a forest estate, have been regulated by Government Regulation 6/2007, although the term 'social forestry' is not explicitly mentioned. Social and community forestry in Indonesia has aimed principally to rehabilitate degraded forests to enhance people's welfare.

These participatory policies presume communities to be homogenous social entities with common interests and priorities; they do not consider that they comprise different groups with disparate genders, ethnicities, social status, levels of power and access to resources. Likewise, policies related to forest industries and trade do not acknowledge gender rights and responsibilities, despite women's significant contributions to Indonesia's forest industries and small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) (Box 1), including the processing of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) (Nansereko 2011).

Despite the promulgation of Presidential Instruction No. 9 (2000), it has not been translated into specific forestry regulations or laws which would make it mandatory for government ministries and agencies to mainstream gender in the planning, implementation and monitoring of development policies and programmes. For example, the community forestry regulations and the regulations on issuance of permits for harvesting NWFPs do not incorporate gender considerations.

Hence, more efforts are required to address the following key challenges to mainstream gender issues further in Indonesia's forest policies and practices:

- Poor understanding and lack of clarity on the concepts of gender and gender mainstreaming have generated confusion among MoF officials.
- Members of the MoF's gender mainstreaming working group have insufficient capacity to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as they lack skills and expertise in gender mainstreaming.
- Due to meagre gender-relevant data for informing policy-makers, timely identification of needs and priorities, defining policy options, developing programme guides and monitoring policy implementation are difficult.

## Box 1. Women and forest enterprises

Over time, community-based timber production has gradually shifted from subsistence to market production and has become more integrated into domestic and export markets. Timber business activities underscore men's traditional roles as cash earners while those of women are relegated to merely meeting subsistence needs.

If this perspective continues within the changing context of subsistence-to-market production, women, who are the primary users and managers of NWFPs, will have limited opportunities to produce and sell products for the market. In NWFP-processing industries, men dominate furniture-making largely due to the socially- and culturally-shaped gender division of labour, even though women play significant roles in wood-based industries.

The Indonesian furniture sector comprises more than 3 500 companies, of which most are SMEs that are family-owned and in which women are often unpaid workers (Weidnitzer et al. 2009; Purnomo et al. 2011). The problem is further highlighted in a 2009 study by the International Labour Organization that concluded that the proportion of unpaid female workers in social and community forestry was 69 percent, which was substantially larger than unpaid male workers at 31 percent (ILO 2010).



# Moving forward

Indonesia has made progress in integrating women's issues into national programmes by introducing gender mainstreaming as a strategy for inclusivity in the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2010-2014. The following recommendations will help the government to address remaining challenges:

- Provide capacity development opportunities and consultation meetings (organized by the MoWE) for forestry officials on the concept of gender mainstreaming and its importance to sustainable forest management.
- Promote collaboration between the MoF, MoWE and BAPPENAS to support the incorporation of gender perspectives in research and human resource development planning by the MoF.
- Strengthen the capacities of the MoF's gender mainstreaming working group and improve its output through training on gender analysis and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation to backstop its roles and responsibilities.
- Hold dialogue and consultation meetings at national and subnational levels to promote understanding on the heterogeneity of forest communities and the inclusion of women's concerns in tenure rights and participatory forest policies and programmes.
- Develop a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system that includes collection, use and analysis of sector-wide gender statistics to inform forestry policies.

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