

Completion of the Natural Resources Conflict Management 5 Phased Training Course

Jakarta, August 2008 - Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade (RAFT), a program developed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID RDMA), has successfully conducted the 5 phased training course focused on Natural Resources. The training course started in mid March 2008 and finished at the end of August 2008 bringing 25 participants from RAFT six target countries – Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam.

Conflict over the allocation and use of forest resources is one of the most common causes of illegal logging and poor forest management in the Asia-Pacific Region. Any effort that leads to lasting improvements in forest management needs to focus on enhancing the capacity of key forest stakeholder for socially legitimate and sustainable conflict resolution to take place.

In response to that, RAFT program in cooperation with the Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC) based in Bangkok, Thailand and Indonesian Centre for Environmental Law (ICEL) conducted a series of trainings that consist of five training phases which aimed to increase participants' skills in handling conflict in natural resources management including mediation strategies. Participants included government, private sector and non government organization from each country which brought different perspective to the material.



Group discussion guided by Martine Miller, RECOFTC



Mediation play role

The final workshop training was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 26 to 29 August 2008. At the last session on 29 August 2008 participants, divided by country group, presented what they have learned and how they utilized the skills gained to assist in conflict resolution in their area of work. Participants acknowledged the positive impact of the training for their organization as quoted in one of the presentations, *"It has made our organizations more aware of the key parties, stakeholders and processes at play in the conflict; and it helped set up an action plan and through conflict management process and allowed experts in conflict mediation to provide input into the process thereby enhancing the outcomes"*. The session attended by representatives from USAID RDMA,

RECOFTC, IUCN and PeunPa, a Thailand non government organization focusing on protecting the wildlife. Mr. Apichai Thirathon from USAID RDMA handed the certificates to all participants at the end of the session.



All participants at the closing ceremony

The Phase 1 of the training started in Balikpapan, Indonesia on March 2008. It was the first training workshop in this series of training focused on the conflict analysis that provided participants with the skill to better understand the conflict and how to respond on that. The Phase 2 was practical conflict analysis period which aimed to fully analyse the work-related conflict using knowledge and skills gained in phase 1. The second training workshop conducted in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia on June 2008 as a Phase 3 focusing on the Conflict Mediation Strategies which increased participants' knowledge and skills in mediation processes and techniques. This phase followed by the next phase, Phase 4, which was the practical mediation period with mentoring support. The mentoring support was conducted in each country which enhanced the opportunity for participants to make a positive contribution to the conflicts that they are working on. The third training workshop held in Bangkok, Thailand from 26-29 August 2008 was the Phase 5 of the whole training course which aimed to review the entire training program and make recommendations for further development in conflict management and mediation particularly in South East Asia.

This conflict management training program will serve as the basis for the development of the Conflict Management Learning Network. The strong collaboration between participants that has been built since the first training is a solid foundation to establish the network. This strong relationship between participants has actually brought major contribution to some of them in establishing working cooperation between two countries.