



## FOREST AND FARM FACILITY

Local voices speaking together for global change



Small forest and farm producers manage a third of the world's forests. Together, these smallholder families, indigenous people and local communities are the world's largest investors in forests. They are key to sustainable forest and farm management and have a critical role to play in the success of global concerns such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), climate change adaptation and green growth. Yet all too often their voices go unheard.

Through its support to national, regional and global forest and farm producer organizations, the **Forest and Farm Facility (FFF)** works to ensure the needs and concerns of small forest and farm producers are heard and recognized at global levels. In 2015, the FFF brought together representatives of forest and farm producer organizations from across the world to speak out at the largest forestry event of the decade, the XIV World Forestry Congress in Durban, South Africa.

### One farmer's voice in Viet Nam

**“ We know the forest, and the forest knows us. It's time to listen to indigenous peoples, local communities and family smallholders, who manage a third of the world's forests and, together, are the world's largest investors in forests ”**

**With support of the FFF, the voices of farmers like Dinh Viet Muoi in Viet Nam find their way from villages to the World Forestry Congress and beyond.**

(US\$ 179) per month. Muoi was elected chairperson of the Yen Do Farmers' Union, where he is working to improve marketing skills and organize timber growers to process and sell their acacia together.

Dinh Viet Muoi (above left) lives in Yen Do, a commune in the mountains of north Viet Nam, where he and farmers like him produce timber from acacia trees as well as tea, bamboo and honey. Tired of not having proper roads for his work in the forests and noticing that lack of cooperation among his fellow farmers was generating small-scale and fragmented production, in 2006 Muoi mobilized his neighbours and established a farmer group composed of 15 members.

The group now works together at every step of production, from nursery planting to timber processing, and protects 195 hectares of forest. They have also created jobs for 95 rural labourers who each earn around 4 million VND

### From local to national and beyond

Thanks to his reputation and community focus, Muoi was invited to participate in a national consultation organized by the Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU) with support from the FFF. Muoi and other local farmers' union members explained their most pressing challenges and how the government could help solve them. These included the need to motivate farmers to join cooperatives and provide support to develop their skills, good loan policies for reforestation and forest development with reduced interest rates, and vocational training for young farmers to help them diversify their income through skills such as furniture making.

The priorities outlined by Muoi and forest and farm producers in Viet Nam were presented alongside recommendations from nine other Asian countries, including Myanmar and Nepal, at a regional meeting organized by an FFF partner, the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA). To improve the situation of forest and farm producers in Asia, the dialogue called for four key policy interventions, which included promoting sustainable forest and farm management, and increasing the market power of small-scale producers through fair markets and farmer-managed enterprises. The dialogue also called for governments to develop forest and farm producer organizations, just as Muoi had asked.

With support from the FFF, other regional and global forest and farm producer organizations including the International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA), the Global Alliance for Community Forestry (GACF), the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB), and the International Alliance

of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest (IAITPTF) organized similar processes in 2014 and 2015 around the world. Groups in Africa, South America and Asia held local, national and regional consultations to build a policy agenda to defend the rights of forest and farm producers. Despite their diversity, all regional declarations had expectations in common: secure tenure and the upholding of fundamental human rights, access to markets and services, and respect and recognition for the importance of indigenous peoples, local communities and family smallholders in sustainable land and forest management.

At the XIV World Forestry Congress in 2015, forest and farm producers issued a common declaration representing the views of Muoi and millions of others like him. The declaration called on governments and other major actors to recognize the enormous potential of community-based forestry, to engage with indigenous peoples, local communities, family smallholders and their umbrella organizations through equitable partnerships, and to remove obstacles faced by forest and farm producers in accessing markets.



**“ We are indigenous peoples, local communities and family smallholders – women and men, young and old. Without us it will be impossible to achieve food security and nutrition, respond to climate change, conserve biodiversity, and reduce poverty.**

**Engage with us as equal partners. Support us. Invest in us. We have the numbers. We have the knowledge. We are a big part of the answer. ”**

Common declaration of the indigenous peoples, local communities and family smallholders.

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[www.fao.org/partnerships/forest-farm-facility](http://www.fao.org/partnerships/forest-farm-facility)

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