



# Overview of Forest Conflict and USAID's Work on the Issue

Jim Schweithelm, PhD  
ARD, Inc.

Views expressed are those of the presenter and do not  
reflect USAID Policy

# Significance of Forest Conflict

- Drives Violence at Various Scales
- Cause/Effect of Weak Governance & Fragility
- Causes Human Rights Abuses
- Increases Poverty
- Accelerates Environmental Degradation

# Topics Covered

- Types and Dimensions of Forest Conflict
- Causes
- Effects
- USAID's Work on This Issue
- What Can be Done?

# Broad Categories of Forest Conflict

- Revenue Source to Fund Armed Conflict – Burma & Cambodia
- Object of Competition – Indonesia & Nepal

# Dimensions of Conflict

- Who Is Involved?
- What is the Conflict Over?
- How Valuable is the Resource?
- What is the End Use?
- How Severe is the Conflict?
- Is it Legal? Is it Just?
- Relationship of Legality to Conflict

# Macro Causes of Conflict

- Armed Conflict – Revenue and Refuge
- Post-Conflict and Fragile States
- Weak Governance
- Unaccountable Security Forces
- Poorly Conceived Economic Development

# Direct Causes

- Timber Concessions
- Plantations
- Roads
- Illegal Logging (Cause/Effect)
- Management/Enforcement Weak
- Migrants
- Elite Capture
- Biodiversity Conservation

# Human Effects

- Death and Intimidation
- Displacement
- Livelihood Loss/Impoverishment –  
Transfer of Wealth from Poor to Rich
- Social/Political Marginalization
- Loss of Human Rights

# Governance, Economic, Environmental Effects

- Weakens Governance Legitimacy
- Fuels Corruption
- Drives Violence
- Wastes Resources/Reduces Revenue
- Makes the Poorest Poorer
- Biodiversity Lost
- Environmental Services Diminished

# USAID Conflict Timber Project

- Asia and Africa 2001-2003
- OTI/ANE with ARD
- Macro Focus in 15 Countries
- Connection to Poor Governance
- Involvement of Security Forces
- Loose Financial Regulations
- Weak Land and Resource Tenure

# Managing Conflict in Asian Forest Communities

- 2003-2006 – ANE with ARD
- Community Level Focus
- Assessments: Cambodia; Sri Lanka; Nepal
- Workshops: Philippines; Cambodia
- Community Empowerment in Cambodia
- Communications and Outreach
- Influenced USAID Programming in Target Countries

# Actions: Governance

- Legal Framework Strengthened
- Fight Corruption
- Uphold Human Rights
- Control Military
- Rationalize Decentralization Process
- Participatory Resource Allocation
- Protect Forest Use Rights and Land Tenure

# Action: Empower Communities

- Educate About Legal Rights
- Facilitate Dialogue with Government and Private Sector
- Teach Conflict Management Tools

# Action: Use the Market

- Urge Consumers and the Forest Products Industry to Demand Conflict-Free Products
- Develop/Adopt Systems to Insure Legality of Supplies
- Encourage Full Economic Valuation of Resources Including Environmental Services