Democratising forest business: investing in successful locally controlled forest business models

Monday 12:45 – 14:15: Hall 2AB  

Panellists and agenda:
12.45 Introduction;
12.50 Oscar Simanto (presenting AFECONET– Kenya);
13.00 Shoana Humphries (presenting Coomflona – Brazil);
13.10 Femy Pinto (presenting CBHE - Cambodia);
13.20 Juan Jose Ochaeta (presenting Chachaklum - Guatemala)
13.30 Duncan Macqueen (Launching compendium of case studies)
13.40 Plenary discussion.

Book launch
This multi-institutional event will launch a compendium describing democratic, locally controlled forest business models that are emerging in many countries to reduce deforestation and improve livelihoods. It will explore what factors underlie their success and how to scale-up. Oscar Simanto will introduce from a Government perspective why such business models are important and a new African network to support them. Shoana Humphries, Femy Pinto and Juan Jose Ochaeta will then illustrate three successful business models from Brazil, Cambodia and Guatemala. These cases form part of, and precede the launch of the compendium of 19 case studies from across the world by Duncan Macqueen. Finally, there will be a panel discussion led by Forest Connect alliance members (an alliance in support of locally controlled forest farm enterprises that embraces more than 1000 members from 94 countries). Panellists and audience will be encouraged to debate whether such models can be scaled up – and if so how?

The event is important because it is only through the full involvement of the 1.3 billion forest right-holders who inhabit or live adjacent to forest resources – that we will simultaneously be able to satisfy demand for local goods (e.g. food, fuel, clean water, construction materials, medicinal and cosmetic products) alongside demand for global public goods (e.g. climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, water and nutrient cycles). The predominant business model is failing both local and global public. It fails because it surrenders the breadth of democratic concerns over social and environmental issues to the pursuit of capital, and the democratic control over business decision-making to the increasingly select few who monopolize that capital. Rising global inequality and discontent are inevitable unless the vast majority of forest farm producers are re-empowered. Re-empowered, not only to secure forest and farm resource tenure, but to collectively own and manage the businesses that are based on it, and reinvest their profits democratically in line with the multiple interests of their businesses, communities and members.