Linking levels of governance: From international forest related agreements to benefits for the people

Jörg Albrecht
Andreas Obser

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Jörg Albrecht1
Andreas Obser2

SUMMARY

Multi-level governance has emerged as an important analytical framework and linking strategy in the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). Focusing on the National Forest Program (nfp) approach, the paper will analyze the current allocation of forest policy functions across multiple levels of governance, including an increasing number of international arrangements such as the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and various global environmental conventions. Decentralization, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and concerns on rural livelihoods in many countries including Indonesia has further accentuated the shift to more multi-leveled governance logic of nfp's. Thus far, the often ad hoc and incremental process through which forest policy tasks are dispersed across different levels of governance has created a confusing pattern of overlapping responsibilities. The authors argue that nfp should serve as transmission belts in multi-level arrangements. A double-edged strategy is introduced that integrates international and local level policy strategies. Practical experience derives from respective bilateral German development cooperation, and from concrete lessons learned of projects in Asia and particularly in Indonesia. An attempt is made to demonstrate the influence of international forest related policies on local policies and how they (can) result in benefit for the local people.

1 GTZ, Strengthening the Management Capacities in the Ministry of Forestry Project (SMCP), Manggala Wanabakti, Block VII, 6th Floor, Jakarta 10270, Indonesia. Tel.: +62 (21) 572 0214. Fax: +62 (21) 572 0193. E-mail: smcpja@cbn.net.id

2 University of Potsdam, Department of International Politics, Postfach 90 03 27, D-14439 Potsdam, Germany. Tel.: +49 (331) 977 3418. Fax: +49 (331) 977 3429. E-mail: aobser@rz.uni-potsdam.de.de. Website:www.uni-potsdam.de/u/ls_intpolitik/index.htm