

Tackling the Terai Forest Governance Impasse: Can District-level Multi-stakeholder Processes Help?¹

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Abstract: This paper discusses the role of multi-stakeholder forums in improving the forestry sector governance in Nepal, drawing on the experience of authors and case studies from two districts, in the Central and Western Development Regions of Nepal. It shows that the District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC) processes have augmented citizen participation in district-level forest-related decisions and enhanced the political acceptability and implementation effectiveness of such decisions. Evidence shows that DFCC processes have significantly improved forest governance in terms of key indicators such as transparency, accountability and effectiveness. Even during the conflict-hit environment of the recent past, the DFCC provided a deliberative forum for the stakeholders linked to various modalities of forest management, and hence serve as an institutional mechanism for deepening the process of democratisation at local level. From these findings, we argue that DFCCs have the potential to facilitate a learning process for sector-wide reform in forest governance.

Key words: DFCC, multi-stakeholder, governance, deliberative, Terai forestry

INTRODUCTION

While a study carried out by German Development Institute in 1997 concludes that Community Forestry (CF) could be a feasible and desirable strategy in the Terai region of Nepal (Chakraborty *et al.* 1997 cited in Bampton *et al.* 2004), successful implementation of the programme has been slow. This is largely attributed to the frequently changing directives of the Department of Forest (DoF) on whether or not to hand over the economically lucrative and biodiversity-rich Terai forests to local communities. This was also due to some level of resistance by some forestry stakeholders and limited success of existing Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) in the Terai. The process has further slowed due to a perceived conflict between the population from southern belt (sometimes called 'distant users') and other communities (indigenous people and in-migrants who live near forests) over the ownership of forest and the definition of its users. Advocates of CF also argue that the

government has provided little support in the Terai region for the communities to establish CFUGs.

Nepal's national policies outline different participatory modalities through which local people can participate in the management of state forests for meeting the twin goals of conservation and improving local livelihoods in Nepal. In view of the continued deforestation and encroachment of Terai forests on the one hand, and in response to the demand of previously excluded forest users (under the modality of community forestry) to be included in the management institutions, the government opted for an alternative management approach for the Terai. The alternative modality, known as Collaborative Forest Management (CFM), was conceived in the Nepal's Forestry Policy 2000, which was focussed on the Terai forests of Nepal. CFM was primarily designed for the larger blocks of national forests in the Terai and Inner Terai, through a strategy of partnership between local communities, local government and the national government (MFSC 2003). Policy

makers claim that CFM is designed to address the issue of “distance user dilemma”, creating adequate space for the participation of people living in the southern belt of the Terai, away from the forest areas.

Though CFM approach is still at pilot stage, it is under intense debate. This is partly attributed to the limited citizen-government deliberations during the formulation of the Forestry Policy 2000 (Ojha *et al.* 2007, Timsina *et al.* 2004). Since there has been a lack of consensus among key stakeholders on the approach to forest governance, forest management interventions in Terai have been less effective as compared to the hills where community forestry has taken a major headway. Indeed, the situation of Terai forestry has been projected as an impasse, posing a significant challenge to stakeholders on how best to adapt the governance mechanisms for management of the rich Terai forests (Ojha 2008). It is often observed that greater citizen-government negotiation can lead to more effective policy formulation and implementation (Ojha *et al.* 2007). In this context, a multi-stakeholder coordination and decision-making platform, called District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC), was envisioned by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC) to strengthen collaboration among a wide range of forestry stakeholders at district level (MFSC 2005). Such platforms are also supported by some donor-funded forestry programmes with an aim to contribute to the development of a deliberative governance system within the forestry sector (Bampton 2003, Khanal and Pokharel 2007). Two main programmes supporting DFCC processes in the Terai are: Livelihoods and Forestry Programme of DFID and Biodiversity Sector Programme for Siwaliks and Terai funded by SNV.

Whereas Nepal's forestry sector is undergoing reform in terms of devolution, deliberative governance has not made much headway in the Terai due to various factors. This paper discusses the processes of DFCCs as multi-stakeholder forums, with particular reference to improving forest sector governance. It also

outlines the functions of the DFCCs, which could be an innovative institutional mechanism that fosters deliberative and consultative processes in decision-making. It is shown that various deliberative processes adopted to implement reform agenda for forestry decentralisation at the district level have augmented citizen's participation and improved forest governance.

DELIBERATIVE GOVERNANCE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is based on the perspective of deliberative governance, which emphasises decision-making, construction of power relations and enactment of rules through informed participation of affected citizens (Habermas 1996 cited in Ojha *et al.* 2007, Timsina *et al.* 2004). Deliberation can be understood as a ‘careful consideration’ or ‘discussion of reasons for and against’ (Pimbert and Wakeford 2001) and therefore becomes an inherent component of decision-making processes in a democratic society. Democracy cannot be meaningful without deliberations and participation of the general people in state mechanisms. Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006) describe the five common reasons for public deliberation: a) Citizen participation in policy formulation and decision-making can reduce conflicts b) Deliberative citizen participation can lead to better, long-lasting and wiser policy choices; c) Citizen involvement in decision-making is something governments should facilitate; d) Deliberation builds citizen competence; and e) Citizen participation cultivates mutual understanding builds bonds of trust among citizens and decision-makers and can affect changes in political attitudes and behaviour.

These rationales of deliberation are based on the degree of participation in the decision-making process, which is directly related to governance. Deliberative governance can easily be related to the fact that policy-making in reality is a complex and non-linear process. As Shannon (2003) suggests, policy processes occur within policy communities composed of all stakeholders, including those who have

expertise in the area, or those who are affected by the decision, and those who are interested. Promoting deliberative governance is about engaging the policy community in policy processes in a meaningful way. In this paper, some key elements of deliberative governance are used to analyse the formation and functioning of the DFCCs (Box 1). Since the DFCCs have already been formed and are functioning, the paper is mainly centred on the DFCCs' functions based on three parameters: a) decision-making, b) empowerment, and c) ownership.

The process of decision-making can be studied to understand the degree of participation of stakeholders. Proponents of deliberative governance argue that the degree of deliberation in the decision-making process is linked to the empowerment of stakeholders in the participation and decision-making processes. The level of empowerment can help ensure the concerns and voices of the stakeholders being reflected in the decisions and thus create a sense of ownership over the decisions. Ownership thereby helps create not only legitimacy but also an environment for the effective implementation of the decisions.

Box 1: Key steps in deliberative governance

- Identifying key forest governance problems
- Organizing and operationalising stakeholders' forum
- Decision-making with the involvement of stakeholders
- Empowering the involved and concerned stakeholders
- Developing ownership of the stakeholders
- Communicating actions necessary for policy and programme planning and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Source: Shannon 2003

EMERGENCE OF DISTRICT FOREST COORDINATION COMMITTEE AS MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM

The concept of sectoral coordination platform within the forestry sector ranges from the project-level coordination mechanisms to a formal sector-wide DFCC at the district level. In 2002, the attention of some donors and INGOs were drawn by a group of forest officials at MFSC towards supporting the collaborative coordination and management approach, mainly for the Terai. The Biodiversity Sector Programme for Siwaliks and Terai (BISEP-ST)² and the Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP)³, started to support the establishment and operation of the DFCC in eleven Terai districts. The DFCCs are promoted to achieve the twin objectives of improving forestry sector governance and setting up an environment conducive to implementing sustainable

livelihoods programmes in the respective districts. According to the revised Forestry Policy 2000, the specific objectives of the DFCC are a) management of the district forest area in coordination with the stakeholders and formulation of a district plan for the conservation and management of forest resources through partnership and participation, and b) coordination and monitoring of the implementation of programmes including support to activities for poverty reduction and gender equality. In order to achieve these objectives, the government prepared a DFCC Establishment and Operational Guidelines 2005 that defines the framework and processes for multi-stakeholder participation. A key aspect of this is that DFCC is a structure not within the MFSC, but within the district level local government body called District Development Committee (DDC), which has been authorised to form a DFCC in each district with a maximum of twenty-seven

representatives from different stakeholder groups (MFSC 2005). The Guidelines further specify the DFCC structure, functions, fund allocation and mobilisation, and monitoring of programmes. Overall, the regulation designates DFCC as a facilitator and coordinator for the conservation, management and sustainable utilisation of forest resources in the district.

Khanal and Pokharel (2007) have analysed the stakeholder composition of DFCC as per provision of the DFCC guideline. The largest proportion of representation on the DFCC is 30 percent from government line agencies including District Forest Office (DFO), followed by 22 percent from local government (DDC, Municipality and VDC associations), 29 percent from civil society (NGOs, Community Based Organisations and user groups), 15 percent from political parties (nationally recognised political parties at district level), and 4 percent from the private sector (business federations and forest-based industries).

The DFCC is being supported as a multi-stakeholder forum, which is seen by policy makers as an instrument for good forest governance. Theoretically speaking, if DFCC enhances deliberative and participative processes, it may strengthen local decision-making, leading to empowerment, ownership and commitment to sustainable forest management. Such experiences on multi-stakeholder process in the Terai could be assessed in the light of learning for deliberative governance promotion in the sector. Currently, under BISEP-ST and the Terai component of the LFP, the MFSC is promoting management of forests and conservation of biodiversity in the Terai and Siwaliks, where any of the forest management modalities among CF and CFM are selected based on the strategic forestry sector plan prepared by the respective DFCCs.

METHODOLOGY

To generate evidence for this paper, an appreciative inquiry approach was followed

with an aim to promote positive learning in the forestry reform process. The citizen voices referred to in this text mostly include the voices of leaders of political parties, local civil society, NGOs and forest users' federations. The paper draws information from the following three different, but related sources.

Case studies: A case study each from Chitwan and Kapilvastu districts was undertaken to get a picture of the processes adopted, outputs delivered and outcomes achieved by DFCC. These districts fall under BISEP-ST and the LFP areas respectively, where the DFCCs have been supported at least for three years. The DFCC in Kapilvastu has longer experience as it was formed before the issuance of DFCC Guidelines, whereas DFCC in Chitwan was formed after the issuance of the Guidelines and is more recent. These districts also differ in demographic and resource features, as Chitwan is an Inner Terai district with by and large even distribution of forests and settlements throughout the Terai parts of the district, whereas Kapilvastu has most of its forest areas located in the north and a large proportion of population living away in the south.

Review of study reports: Various papers about forestry and governance were reviewed to conceptualise learning from DFCC in relation to deliberative governance perspectives. Previous study reports related to the multi-stakeholder processes particularly DFCC processes in eleven Terai districts were also reviewed.

Experiences of the authors: The authors, through their professional affiliations to BISEP-ST and LFP, had several years of direct working experience with the DFCCs. The authors were not just passive observers but active facilitators and promoters of DFCC. This experience has helped authors to gain deeper insights into the working of the DFCCs in various districts they worked. Furthermore, the findings of the field experience were discussed with some key professionals involved in promoting the DFCCs at both district and national levels.

CASE STUDIES: DISTRICT FOREST COORDINATION COMMITTEES IN TERAI

District Forest Coordination Committee in Kapilvastu District

In 2001/02, LFP initiated discussions with the DDC and the District Forestry Officer (DFO) to explore the potential of establishing DFCC in Kapilvastu. It was agreed that the DFCC was required, and the potential members were short-listed in a participatory manner. A district-level workshop was organised with the participation of CFUGs and the the concept of DFCC was shared. The workshop selected CFUG representatives for the DFCC. It was then followed by several awareness-building activities, including workshops, leaflet distribution and meetings on the need to form a multi-stakeholder forum at district level targeted to diverse forestry stakeholders. In a meeting of multiple stakeholders, a thirty-one-member DFCC was formed under the leadership of the DDC chairperson according to the provision of the Local Self-Governance Act 1999. It was then endorsed by the DDC Council in 2002. After the MFSC approved the DFCC guidelines in 2005, the structure of the DFCC was amended to include members from political parties, private sector, line agencies and the civil society/NGOs.

Since its formation, major decisions regarding forest management in the district have been made through the DFCC, away from the earlier practice of either DFO making the decisions. A five-year forest management plan of the district was recently approved by the DFCC, and the strategic framework was discussed for preparing a long-term sectoral plan. The DFCC members monitor the implementation of the plan and provide suggestions to improve in the next year. The DFCC approved a number of operational guidelines on how the programmes need to operate during the conflict period and on how to implement LFP's social mobilisation programmes.

The DFCC decision-making processes were consultative and therefore provided opportunities for knowledge-sharing and open discussion. Several DFCC members who were previously unconcerned to forestry sector, such as the members of political parties, also benefitted in the process and are now oriented towards forestry sector development. Almost all DFCC members are now constantly giving attention to making it a strategic forum for shaping the direction of forestry sector in the district. Moreover, they have largely realised the importance of such a multi-stakeholder forum in the district.

So far more than 90 percent of the DFCC decisions were found to be implemented in Kapilvastu and the DFCC members were actively engaged in coordinating the decisions in their respective areas and/or organisations. In the contested Terai forestry context, this fairly good rate of implementation could be mainly due to the sense of ownership amongst the DFCC members representing diverse groups of people concerned with forestry in the district. The other reason for this was because DFCC included the representatives from both categories of people, viz. the members of existing CFUGs and those others – distant users - who were not included in the CFUGs.

In a consultation in 2008, officials of Kapilvastu DDC and the LFP shared the view that the current DFCC could become sustainable in the long run if it gets further support from the concerned authorities, especially from the higher levels of MFSC and the Ministry of Local Development. They were of the view that the current DFCC could be further institutionalised within the DDC. However, the lack of elected DDC for the past several years has posed a serious problem. Moreover, there is a need to develop local funding mechanism within the framework of Local Development Fund to support DFCC processes away from the bilateral project support such as the one being provided by LFP or BISPE-ST.

District Forest Coordination Committee in Chitwan District

In 2004, BISEP-ST initiated awareness activities for a DFCC in Chitwan through the local media, conservation education, workshops, and exposure visits even before the introduction of the DFCC Guidelines. After the Guidelines were issued, a DFCC was formed in Chitwan in 2005 under the leadership of the DDC chairperson. The DFCC is composed of, among others, the representatives of government line agencies, including Chitwan National Park authority, political parties, and the private sector. Currently, BISEP-ST has supported the DFCC by providing a secretariat. The secretariat facilitates the implementation of the DFCC decisions and keeps track of BISEP-ST programme plan and progress in the district.

The DFCC has made a number of decisions such as the approval of the district forest sector plan, and the review and extension of BISEP-ST annual programme and coverage. Through these decisions, DFCC members, mainly political party representatives, have become more knowledgeable about the forestry sector, with increased interests and involvement in the forestry related decisions. This has helped to develop a common understanding of the forestry sector strategy and management outcomes, while also improving relations amongst the major stakeholders.

About 80 percent of the DFCC decisions were implemented in Chitwan, and the DFCC members are found to be cooperating with one another in the implementation process. This

shows a high degree of legitimacy of the decisions, in which local communities also have a significant say through their representatives. The practice of joint monitoring, led by the DDC chairperson, has also contributed to creating a common understanding over the problems and strategies of the forestry sector, including the standards and procedures of transparency of the programmes.

In 2008, in a consultation, officials from the DFCC office expressed the opinion that the current DFCC could become sustainable in Chitwan district with additional institutional development support from the concerned authorities. For this, the idea and modality for a sustainable institution should be designed by the DDC Council, along with a commitment to take the institution forward. A local funding mechanism also needs to be developed, while programmes such as BISEP-ST could provide a matching fund. Some duplication efforts, like the DFCC for leasehold forestry, need to be brought under the umbrella of single DFCC, and all the forestry sector plans and activities in the district should be routed through that multi-stakeholder mechanism.

Analysis of District Forest Coordination Committee Performance in Kapilvastu and Chitwan Districts

The performances of the two DFCCs that we studied are further analysed and summarised in Table 1 below. The analysis is based on three key elements of deliberative governance, i.e. decision-making process, empowerment and resulting ownership.

Table 1: Performance of Kapilvastu and Chitwan District Forest Coordination Committees

Assessment parameter	Findings in Kapilvastu and Chitwan districts	Interpretations
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DFCC engages citizens' representatives such as political parties, local bodies, interest groups, NGOs and private sector in forestry decision-making in the district • Decisions are made through intensive deliberations and consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DFCC has provided an opportunity for wide range of stakeholders to voice their concerns and to negotiate common ground by listening to the views of one another • Decision-making with a deliberative process could be time-consuming but has significant positive outcomes through increased legitimacy and acceptance at implementation level
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local representatives of political parties are most empowered to engage in forestry sector discussions • Representatives of sub-district clusters and thematic interests are empowered considerably in discussing the issue of rights over forest resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowered local stakeholders are better placed in addressing the grassroots issues through stakeholders' coordination • Holistic planning and wider coordination helps build common understanding of forestry sector outcomes, a stepping stone for good governance
Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the DFCC decisions (over 80 percent) implemented • Stakeholders with strong forest sector links and the political parties are keen to articulate their ownership • DFCC members have expressed commitment to carry forward this multi-stakeholder forum, and have shown interest for its self-sustainability through self-funding and greater ownership by DDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rate of implementing DFCC decisions, even in a politically complex Terai region, indicates that the decisions of this multi-stakeholder forum are better owned by the stakeholders • The ownership of the DFCCs within and outside has remained an enigma as institutionalisation based on the principles of decentralisation and devolution has been lingering. Better institutional positioning within local government body and local funding mechanism could enhance its sustainability in the long run

In both the case studies, the multi-stakeholder processes through DFCC have enhanced the participation of a wider range of stakeholders in forestry sector decisions. This has increased local citizens' ownership of the decisions and programmes. Thus, the forestry sector outcomes are better owned at district level. In addition, the DFCC members are foreseeing better institutional arrangements to sustain the multi-stakeholder processes, as they gain more experience.

DISTRICT FOREST COORDINATION COMMITTEES AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

This section describes the findings from the past reviews of the performances of the DFCCs in the BISEP-ST and the LFP Terai districts in relation to good governance.

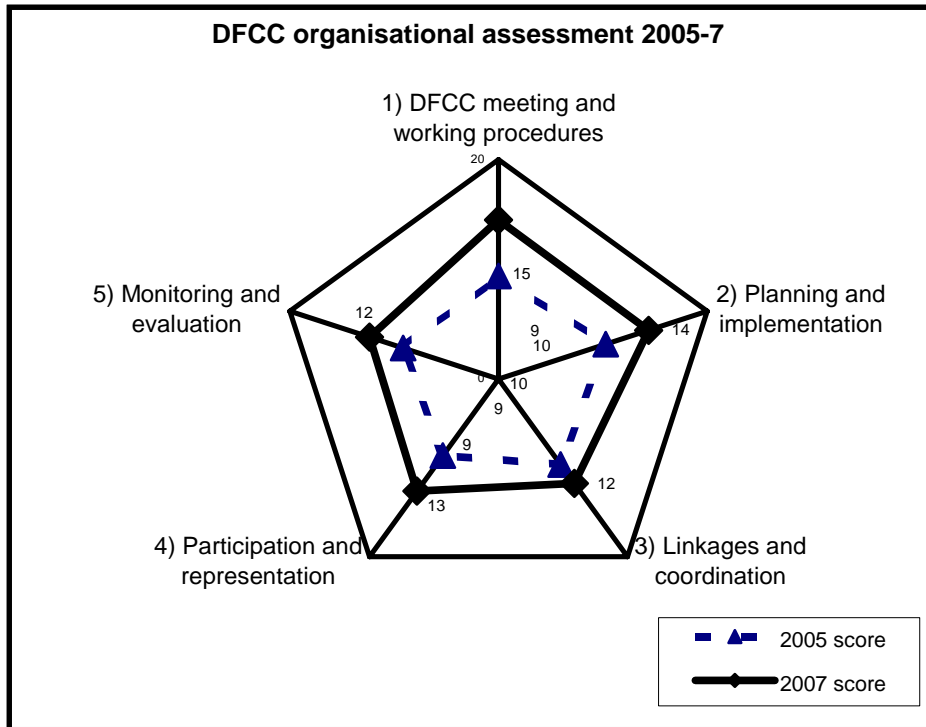
District Forest Coordination Committees Self-assessment in BISEP-ST Districts

To assess the District Forest Coordination Committees' performance according to its goal,

objectives, roles and responsibilities, BISEP-ST has developed a DFCC self-assessment tool and using this tool, eight DFCCs assessed their own performance in 2007 (BISEP-ST 2007). The tool covers five major areas of the DFCC functions: a) DFCC meeting and working procedures, b) Planning and implementation, c) Linkages and coordination, d) Participation and

representation, and e) Monitoring and evaluation. While these aspects do not directly correspond to the key elements of deliberative governance we laid out in the beginning of the paper, we see that there is a similarity in broad sense. A comparison of self-assessed scores of eight DFCCs from 2005 to 2007 is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Results of organisational assessment in eight district forest coordination committees



Source: BISEP-ST 2007

In the spider diagram (Figure 1), outermost solid-line shows an ideal situation with the designated score of 20, while the inner dotted line and the middle solid-line show the status of the DFCCs for 2005 and 2007 respectively. It shows that the DFCC's organisational capacity has increased from score 9 to 13, at least in the eyes of the DFCC members themselves. It is an increase of 40 percent when compared to 2005, and is 65 percent of an ideal situation. Thus, it may be inferred that the DFCCs have improved considerably on various aspects of governance,

as assessed from the five criteria. It also indicates the overall improvement in the governance of the entire forestry sector in those districts.

District Forest Coordination Committees Review in Livelihoods and Forestry Programme Terai Districts

The District Forest Coordination Committees capacity building is supported by the LFP in the western Terai districts, including the case study district of Kapilvastu. Meeting and workshop

reports (LFP 2004) show that the DFCCs have improved capacity for coordination, planning and monitoring. The district forestry sector plans are being developed under the DFCCs with the participation of stakeholders from grassroots to district level. The joint monitoring practice has helped to enhance transparency of forestry sector activities, improve coordination by initiation of a joint learning culture and ensure effectiveness of the programme being implemented (Maskey 2008).

Reflection from the District Forest Coordination Committees Risk Assessment Study

A recent study in some Terai districts found that the introduction of the DFCC was appreciated by the DDCs as its objective was to increase decentralisation and improve people's participation in decision-making (SNV 2007). According to the study, the consulted-stakeholders appreciated the concept of sectoral approach underlying the DFCCs and the district forestry sector fund. This study has also made some concrete recommendations for improving the sustainability of the decentralised multi-stakeholder forum. The major recommendations include widening of policies to frame the DFCC into the Local Self Governance Act 1999, increasing the representation of marginalised communities in the DFCC and making provision for a District Forestry Development Fund.

DISCUSSION

Though the DFCC process has progressed in the Terai districts even in the absence of an elected local government, it has significantly augmented the citizen voices. It has further increased political legitimacy and practical applicability of the decisions. This is judged by the high rate of successful implementation of the DFCC decisions, which has enhanced the effectiveness of the forestry sector programmes in the district. Such implementation facilitates active management of forests for maximising the benefits to the poor, marginalised and socially excluded communities. Even in the politically

turbulent times under Maoist insurgency, the DFCC has provided a deliberative forum in the districts to build up democracy from below. To this end, the DFCCs adopted a number of tools, such as annual planning and joint monitoring.

The DFCC experiences in Nepal Terai show that multi-stakeholder forums can evolve as dynamic platform for negotiation and collaborative action, and as such can become an instrument for decentralised institutional mechanisms to deepen the process of democratisation at local level. These forums are also found to facilitate learning for sector-wide reforms in forestry governance. The learning from the DFCC can contribute to the forestry sectoral reform process at various levels. A clear implication is that the actual process of democratising forest governance starts when multiple stakeholders are invited to deliberate over the local modalities of governance that fit their negotiated interests, which is even more required for addressing broader issues and emerging opportunities such as payment for environmental services.

Essentially, the DFCCs provide an anchoring space for the consultative processes and the institutionalisation of learning that form the heart of good forest governance. It may be noted here that multi-stakeholder processes aim to bring together the key stakeholders under an effective forum of communication and decision-making on forest governance issues. The underlying democratic principles which DFCCs have adopted are based on the recognition of participation, equity and accountability in communication, thus allowing equitable and inclusive representation of stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the multi-stakeholder processes have the ultimate aim of augmenting the support for and acceptance of social change processes in order to contribute effectively to the poverty alleviation and socio-economic equity. Inherent to these processes is the involvement of different stakeholders including government, civil society and business sectors

and more informed and dialogic engagement of citizens in the decision-making processes. It should be noted that the multi-stakeholder processes are not a tool for solving all forestry sector problems but a basis for decision-making and democratising governance structures and processes in a ways whereby conflicting demands on forest goods and services are mediated and legitimate and common understandings developed on what needs to be done and how to bring about the change.

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that DFCCs as multi-stakeholder forums are emerging in Nepal's Terai as a promising district level platform for multiple forestry stakeholders to articulate their interests and voice in the governance of forests. Despite turbulent political situation and the lack of elected local governments, DFCCs to a large extent have been able to forge collaboration, joint learning and negotiation among diverse stakeholders who often have conflicting claims over forest resources. The DFCCs provide an anchoring space for the consultative processes and the institutionalisation of collective learning processes that form the heart of good forest governance. Evidence clearly demonstrates that the DFCC processes have led to significant improvements in good governance. The participation of the civil society, proximate and distant forest users, private sector and political actors in the process all have enhanced the sense of ownership of the forestry sector activities at local level.

A clear implication of this finding is that the actual process of democratising forest governance starts when multiple stakeholders are invited to deliberate over the local modalities of governance. This enables conflicting stakeholders to recognise the difference and explore common grounds. The role of DFCC or any other variants of multi-stakeholder mechanisms that bring diverse stakeholders in a table should be promoted to implement different participatory forest management regimes like CF and CFM. This is specially so in the context of the present-day

political tension in the Terai, and in a situation where contested claims exist over forest resources. The DFCC could be sustained more effectively if it could be brought more under the umbrella of local government with required improvements (such as provision of a local sustainable fund mechanism, and greater representation of disadvantaged communities). The idea behind the DFCC, - the practice of multi-stakeholder engagement - should be ensured at all levels—from village to national—for addressing policy and regulatory issues and for facilitating structural reform of the forestry sector. The lessons that have been learnt at district level DFCC can inform similar processes at both lower and higher levels of governance, and such multi-scale approach is critical especially in the context of the ongoing state restructuring process.

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² The Dutch government-supported forestry sector programme is implemented in eight districts, viz. Chitwan, Makwanpur, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Mahottari, Sarlahi and Dhanusha.

³ DFID supported Livelihoods and Forestry Programme is implemented in fifteen districts, with three districts in the Western Terai, viz. Nawalparasi, Rupandehi and Kapilvastu.