

# Preface

This *Bulletin* attempts to link two sets of pressing contemporary concerns. On the one hand, it addresses changing relationships between science, policy and society in the context of internationalisation and public challenges to formal expertise; concerns currently under hot debate in European settings as much as in developing countries. On the other hand, it engages with issues around rural landscape and livelihoods in low-income countries, particularly in West Africa and the Caribbean. Tropical forests provide a linking focus, strongly implicated as they are both in local livelihoods and struggles for resource control, and in scientific and policy debates extending from local settings to highly-charged global arenas – not least in the lead-up to the ‘Rio Plus 10’ Conference on Environment and Development in Johannesburg, 2002. The *Bulletin* reviews important advances in the science of forest dynamics, which in turn suggest ways that forest policies could become more ‘pro-poor’. At the same time, it analyses the science/policy processes and power/knowledge relations, which must be addressed if such changes are to come about. We hope that this *Bulletin* will be of interest not only to researchers, policy-makers and practitioners working in the forestry, environment and development fields, but also to those interested in science and policy more broadly, illustrating how issues often examined in ‘northern’, hi-tech industrial settings, could work out in very different contexts in the ‘south’.

The articles here are based on presentations at a workshop held at IDS on 26-27 March 2001: ‘Changing perspectives on forests: ecology, people and science/policy processes in West Africa and the Caribbean’. This workshop was funded by ESCOR (Economic and Social Committee on Research – now CSSR, Committee on Social Science Research) of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), as a culminating event within a 2.5 year research project on ‘Forest science and forest policy: knowledge, institutions and policy processes’ (see Leach, Amanor and Fairhead 2001; Fairhead and Leach forthcoming). Melissa Leach, James Fairhead, Kojo Amanor and Thackwray Driver were all senior researchers in this project and their *Bulletin* articles draw on fieldwork conducted as part of it. While many thanks are due to the funders, it should be emphasised that all

opinions represented in these articles, and in the *Bulletin* as a whole, are the authors' own and not attributable to ESCOR or DFID. Finally, we owe grateful thanks to Kate Hawkins for her superb organisation of the original workshop and tireless support in preparing the *Bulletin* articles for publication, as well as to Kate Gooding for her useful workshop notes.

## References

- Leach, M., Amanor, K. and Fairhead, J., 2001, 'Forest science and forest policy: knowledge, institutions and policy processes', *Final report to ESCOR of the Department for International Development*, Project No. R7211, unpublished
- Fairhead, J. and Leach, M., forthcoming, *Science and Society: an ethnographic approach*. Submitted to Cambridge University Press

