

# Preface

The articles in this *Bulletin* were especially commissioned for an international workshop on 'Institutions and Uncertainty' held at IDS in November 2000. The workshop – made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation – brought together leading scholars, Ford Foundation staff and Ford Foundation grantees to discuss how natural resource governance might be better attuned to the uncertain realities confronting poor people.

In 1999, the Ford Foundation supported the writing of an exploratory 'think piece' that reviewed existing and potentially useful approaches to conceptualise 'institutions and uncertainty' in natural resource management (Mehta *et al.* 1999). The November 2000 workshop provided the opportunity for scholars and practitioners to take this work forward by reflecting on the theoretical and practical challenges confronting the future of environmental governance and community-based natural resource management. The discussions and commentaries at the workshop were rich and stimulating, and this *Bulletin* has tried to capture some, if not all of them. We hope that the ideas presented will be useful to researchers, policymakers and practitioners trying to make sense of varying institutional configurations and increasing complexity and uncertainty in environmental governance and the processes of power and politics in shaping natural resource outcomes.

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