

Social forestry creates lush landscapes in place of barren land in Indonesia

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Indonesia's social forestry programme, adopted in 2016, has ushered local communities into a new era of forest management. The programme is designed to strengthen land access rights, empower communities and support forest conservation practices. The government is aiming to reallocate a total of 12.7 million hectares of state forest, equivalent to the size of Indonesia's main island of Java, to local communities, enabling them to manage their forests for decades at a time.

As of today, the programme has granted land titles for 5.6 million hectares of state forest to 1 million households. Granting long-term land management rights to local communities has produced remarkable benefits; a resurgence of vegetation has taken the place of bald, unproductive terrain.

Harmoniously mixing forestry and agriculture

FAO and UNEP launched the UN-REDD initiative in the region to support the farmers. Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the UN-REDD initiative is implemented jointly by FAO and UNEP, in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat, Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) and other partners.

Unlocking the potential of social forestry

In Indonesia and elsewhere, UN-REDD is working to get social forestry better recognized as mitigation and adaptation actions in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is also important to help break the link between agriculture and deforestation, says Serena Fortuna, FAO Team Leader for UN-REDD.

The initiative is further providing local communities better access to finance and markets, which is a critical factor in unlocking the full potential of social forestry in Indonesia, says Alexis Corblin, Senior Technical Advisor on climate and

forests in UNEP. "This approach offers a way to promote positive environmental outcomes while creating opportunities for entrepreneurship and livelihood development."