

# Poverty, health, governance and ecosystems

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# Poverty, health, governance and ecosystems: ADB IUCN book

- 16 case studies from Asia
- Half of case studies cover GMS countries
- Four themes: livelihoods, health, biodiversity and response strategies
- Review of literature and gaps
- Synthesis of case study findings
- Publication to be completed by July 2006
- Still work in progress

# Poverty, livelihoods and ecosystems

- Poor depend on natural resources more than the non-poor (as % of income)
- But better off households typically consume a larger share (as % of resource)
- Natural resources especially important for women – distance and loads to collect water, fodder and fuelwood
- Minority groups especially resource dependent

# Poverty, health and ecosystems

- Natural resources important for diet and food nutrition (eg fish as protein)
- Link between ecosystem change and emerging diseases (eg avian flu, SARS)
  - diseases spread by human disruption of ecosystems (eg Nipah virus)
  - disease spread by people and livestock moving into wildlife contact (eg Avian flu)
  - Disease spread by trade in wild animals (eg SARs)

# Poverty and biodiversity

- Biodiversity conservation can both positively and negatively impact on poor people
- Positive examples include agrobiodiversity on marginal lands where traditional varieties more resilient
- Negative examples include costs imposed by protected areas from reduced access and wildlife damage

# Response strategies: political, institutional and policy challenges

- Poor people face political obstacles in managing ecosystems to reduce poverty
- These are broader governance issues, but environmental interventions can also stimulate governance changes
  - poor people learning to organise for change
  - legal redress to challenge the state
  - promoting gender equity
- There are coalitions of change for pro-poor environmental management
  - Action by poor themselves, alliances with civil society and donors and engaging government

# Conclusions

- Links between poverty, health, ecosystems and biodiversity are **complex and context specific**
- In some cases situation is improving so **positive** change is possible
- **Politics matters** and need to understand local power relationships
- External interventions need to **support local and national change agents** otherwise they can do more harm than good