

# CONSERVATION, LIVELIHOODS AND GOVERNANCE

## FFI's position and approach

October 2013

### Preamble<sup>1</sup>

FFI recognises that biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource use are inextricably linked to people's rights to secure their livelihoods and live in dignity.

We believe that the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services can contribute positively to the realisation of many human rights. At the same time, secure rights – e.g. land tenure and participation in decision-making – can enable more effective environmental stewardship. However, conservation activities can also have negative impacts on local people.

### Position statement

FFI will endeavour to ensure that its conservation activities do not disadvantage or undermine poor, vulnerable or marginalised people who are dependent upon or live adjacent to natural resources, and wherever possible will seek to conserve biodiversity in ways that enhance local well-being and social equity.<sup>2</sup>

We are committed to respecting human rights, promoting their protection and realisation within our conservation programmes, and supporting the governance systems that can secure those rights.

### FFI's approach

FFI promotes the use of a sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA)<sup>3</sup> to working with communities to achieve biodiversity outcomes. SLA seeks to use participatory, holistic methods to understand the reality and complexity of people's lives and livelihoods. It comprises a theoretical framework and a set of principles.

The framework illustrates the links between the different assets (or resources) that women and men need for an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable livelihood. It seeks to understand the influence of policies, institutions and processes (governance, markets & social norms), and the impact of shocks, trends and seasonality, on access to and use of these assets.

Crucial to the success of using a sustainable livelihoods approach to biodiversity conservation is the understanding that people's livelihoods goals are not only to achieve increased income. Often of equal, or even higher, priority are basic food security and broader social well-being, including having a say in the decisions that affect their lives, and the fulfilment of socio-cultural and spiritual values.

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<sup>1</sup> This text is taken from the [Conservation and Human Rights framework](#) which was widely consulted upon within FFI and approved by FFI Council in 2010. The full framework and further information on the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights is available here: <https://community.iucn.org/cihr/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> FFI's position statement on livelihoods and governance resulted from organisation-wide consultation and was approved by FFI Council in 2005.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief introduction to Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches see: <http://www.ifad.org/sla/>