

# Voices from the forest



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THE PHILIPPINES

## reviving the tingkep



More than a basket, the *tingkep* is a reflection of the life and culture of the Pala'wan, an indigenous community of the Philippines. This handicraft combines the artwork of humans and their forest. Now that there are threats to the forests of Palawan island, the Pala'wan people are also threatened by the potential loss of their homes and their traditions. See a short news bit on the launching of **The Tingkep and other Crafts of Palawan** on page 3.

{This photo is among those taken in the documentation published through the NTFP-Task Force. For details on ordering a copy, please visit the publications section of [www.ntfp.org](http://www.ntfp.org)}



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## Celebrating a decade of friendships for forest peoples

The NTFP-EP 10th Year Anniversary gathered colleagues and friends, and old and new supporters for an evening of celebration last 1 April at Conspiracy Garden Café, Quezon City, Philippines. The event was made colorful by a video message from Dr. Mary Stockdale and family from Canada, inspirational messages from Dr. Phung Huu Chinh of the Bee Research and Development Center, Vietnam and Dr. Patricia Shanley of the Center for International Research in Forestry, Indonesia; as well as special numbers by John Arcilla (CMCC celebrity endorser) and music and dances from partners and friends of the network. (Peachy Ongleo-Magbanua)



ANNIE PALERACIO

A special number by (L-R) Joanna de Rozario, Snehlata Nath, Madhu Ramnath, Jenne de Beer and Pandurang Hegde



NABAGHAN OHJA

Deseeding of amla fruit, an important NTFP for adivasis

## India's Forest Rights Act for whom?

A workshop on The Forest Rights Act (2006) for Scheduled Tribes and Traditional Forest Dwellers meeting was held in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh last 28-29 July. In attendance were NGOs working among tribal people in the Eastern and Western Ghats of India. Some local government officials from the Forest Department also participated.

The workshop focused on the elucidation of the FRA – as some of the issues concerning zones within National Parks, the required period of residency to make a land claim, and the roles of the various peoples institutions – remain unclear. The participants also shared how the Act was already being implemented in their states without much concern that the local adivasi communities understand their rights. The workshop aimed to clarify the doubts of the partners working with tribal communities, and to help them strengthen local peoples participation in the implementation of the Act.

As a future strategy, the focus of the EP partners in India include:

- ▶ Taking up one or two model villages in our areas of work to see how the FRA is being understood and implemented. This would enable the NGOs to document how this is being done as well as to suggest ways of better peoples participation
- ▶ View the various Acts (PESA, FRA) notified until now with regard to the tribal peoples rights over forests and especially NTFPs
- ▶ With the increasing global focus on biofuels to develop EP-India's stance over the bio-fuel issue, especially a) the impact on land use, b) nutrition and c) the need to keep abreast with the news on biofuel programmes among the partners
- ▶ To arrive at a common policy agenda (from individual agendas) with regard to the FRA
- ▶ To publish simplified versions of the various laws and acts dealing with forests and tribal people as simplified articles that would be accessible to a wider audience. (Madhu Ramnath)



ARNIE OCAMPO

A workshop during the recently-concluded enterprise training in the Philippines

The entire training was hands-on and let the participants assess their own enterprises, prepare broad strategic intervention strategies, and prepare a simple business plan.

Resource persons included Arlynn Aquino, Rene Guarin of UMFI, Mathew John of Keystone and Irfansyah of Swiss Contact. In the long-term, NTFP-EP hopes to provide primary enterprise mentoring to

NGOs and community partners through this start-up group.

## First enterprise training for partners held

With the relative success of NTFP-based enterprises of NTFP-EP partners such as Keystone in India, the CustomMade Crafts Center in the Philippines and the JMHI honey network in Indonesia, there are many models of community-based enterprises to draw lessons from.

With requests for partners for training, strategy support, mentoring and coaching for enterprise initiatives, the NTFP-EP held its first enterprise training for partners last 4-8 August in Rizal, Philippines.

## Participatory Guarantee Systems hold promise for small-holders & NTFP collectors

In a forum last 6 August at the NTFP-EP Manila office, Mathew John of Keystone Foundation shared Keystone's experiences on developing Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) in India to an audience of Philippine NGOs.

PGS is a way bringing in a large number of farmers and NTFP collectors into the organic fold who have not been able to access the third party systems of being certified organic. It is a response to the bureaucratic and expensive systems that exist. Today, thousands of farmers around the world have devised systems that are simple, transparent and adhere to the basic principles of organic agriculture.

Mathew John has been working on the marketing of green products from rural and indigenous producers for over 15 years, and is part of the International Task Force of IFOAM on PGS.

