Food security, environmental protection and poverty reduction in the mountainous region of South-east Asia

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Key characteristics of uplands of SE Asia

- Large and important domain
- High diversity
- Important for post MFG-agenda
- Concentration of poverty and food insecurity
- Ethnic minority are now the “majority” of the poor
- Environmental degradation
A vicious cycle

- Low food productivity
- Food insecurity
- Limited cash-oriented agric
- Unsustainable land use practices
- Low income
- Land degradation

A cycle involving land degradation leading to low food productivity, which contributes to low income, thus resulting in limited cash-oriented agriculture, which in turn leads to unsustainable land use practices, further degrading the land and creating a vicious cycle.
Encourage market-oriented agriculture
Raise income
Encourage sustainable land use
Improve food security

Virtuous cycle

Protect environment

Raise food productivity (Land & labor)

Encourage market-oriented agriculture
Major entry points for poverty reduction

Increased food productivity → Farm income
Non-farm income → Poverty
Educ → Non-farm income
Farm income
Driving Forces in Uplands

- Rapid growth in population
- Increasing access to markets
- Increased commercialization of agriculture
- Changes in land policies
- Increased investments in uplands
Uplands in Transition

Type 1: Traditional slash/burn
- Lao PDR

Type 2: Permanent rice-based
- Nepal
- India

Type 3: Extensive perennial-based
- Vietnam

Type 4: Intensive cash-based
- Yunnan

Nations:
- Nepal
- India
- Philippines
- Thailand
- Vietnam
- Lao PDR
- Indonesia
- Yunnan
Some key experiences in SE Asia

- Yunnan
- Thailand
- Vietnam/Laos
Outcome of Changes in Yunnan

• Higher-yielding upland rice systems
• Food secure households
• Diversified systems with cash components
• Less-intensive use of fragile sloping lands
Thailand

- Horticulture-led changes
- Food production important for ethnic minorities
- Resource use conflicts
- Rising environmental concerns
Rice landscapes in Northern Vietnam
Key Interventions within Agriculture

- Improved technologies for productivity gain
- Improved access to technology and information
- Strengthening of value chains
Key Interventions Outside Agriculture

- Security of land tenure
- Rural roads/marketing infrastructures
- Education
- Health and nutrition
- Management of commons/FTFP
- Social safety nets
Concluding Remarks

- Agriculture: a key entry point
- Multi-sector interventions
- Targeted approach while recognizing diversity
- Safety nets and empowerment of minorities
- Broader reforms/strengthening local institutions