**EXERCISE 1A. WHY ARE NATURAL RESOURCES IMPORTANT**

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| *OBJECTIVE*  **After this exercise the participants will be able to:**   * Determine what natural resources are important for their livelihoods * Create awareness about the importance of managing natural resources, and generating interest in this work. | |
| *EQUIPMENT NEEDED*   * Flip chart and markers | *EXPECTED OUTPUTS*   * List of natural resources, their characteristics and problems associated with them |
| *TIME*  1 hour | *PREPARATION*   * Prepare a list of questions beforehand |

*SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:*

1. Divide the participants into two groups: one of men and one of women. (If the participants consist only of men or women, just divide the group in half. Differences in opinion will emerge and will serve as useful discussion points.) Give each group a flipchart sheet and marker pens.
2. Ask the participants to make a list of the **natural resources** they use (Table 1). This should include:
   1. Different land types or areas (cropland, grazing land, forest, hillsides, valley bottoms, marshes, etc.)
   2. Water sources (springs, rivers, ponds, ground- water)
   3. Trees (forest, hedgerows, woodlots)
   4. Plants (crop types, medicinal plants, wild plants)
   5. Animals (livestock, insects, wild animals and birds, fish).
3. For each resource, ask them to note how they **use** it. For example, they may say that they use certain leaves for local medicines or teas; they collect fruit to sell; they use reeds to make mats; they cut trees for firewood; they fetch water for drinking and bathing; etc.
4. Ask the participants why each of the resources is **necessary** for them. What would they do without them?
5. Ask the participants if they see any **trends** in the amount or quality of the resources? Are they more, or less available today than they were one year ago or five years ago? Which ones are declining? How quickly? How do these trends affect people? What will happen if the trends continue?
6. Ask each group to **rank the key natural resources and the associated problems** in order of importance.
7. Bring the two groups back together. Compare and discuss their lists of priority resources and associated problems. Highlight the similarities and key differences between the two.
8. Explore the participants’ interest in learning more about natural resources and solving the problems they have identified.
9. Summarize the discussion by recapping the most important natural resources, the trends each one experiences, and the top priority issues.
10. Plan a regular schedule of meetings. Make sure the details are agreed upon: one day per week? what time? where?

*TABLE 1 FORM FOR ASSESSING NATURAL RESOURCES*

