Wetlands Water and Livelihoods

Healthy Wetlands are essential to help make poverty history

Chris Baker
Wetlands ecosystems are important for biodiversity and they should be conserved on this basis alone.
Wetlands are poverty traps for the rural poor; their conservation and management is of little consequence in reducing hunger and providing freshwater and sanitation.
Sustainable wetland use and management must be an integral part of policies, strategies and actions to reduce poverty.
Wetland benefits and value

• “Wetlands deliver a wide range of ecosystem services that contribute to human well-being, such as fish and fiber, water supply, water purification, climate regulation, flood regulation, coastal protection, recreational opportunities, and, increasingly, tourism.”

_Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005._

Losses over 50% since 1970, greater than forests and marine (~30%)
Wetland Loss

“The primary direct drivers of degradation and loss include infrastructure development, land conversion, water withdrawal, eutrophication and pollution, overharvesting and overexploitation, and the introduction of invasive alien species”.

“… the total economic value of unconverted wetlands is often greater than that of converted wetlands.”

*Millennium Ecocsystem Assessment, 2005*
Session Purpose

• Show importance of wetlands for reducing poverty

• Show how to integrate wetland management and development objectives

• Review opportunities and threats to maintaining and realizing the potential of wetlands in reducing poverty