

# Preface

The papers presented in this volume are based on lectures given to the Nordic researcher course on Improved Natural Resource Management - The Role of Formal Organisations and Informal Networks and Institutions, held at Hotel "Søfryd", Jyllinge, Denmark 23 - 26 October 1995. The researcher course was an integrated component of the Ph. D. programme on "Political and Cultural Institutions in Development" under International Development Studies at Roskilde University.

The researcher course was organised by International Development Studies, in cooperation with network partners in Denmark and the other Nordic countries, including Jeremy Gould, Helsinki; Christer Gunnarsson, Lund; Trond Vedeld, NORAGRIC, Aas; Gisli Palson, Reykjavik; and Anders Hjort a v Ornäs, Linköping.

The theme of the course focused on institutions, formal as well as informal, and their role in improved natural resource management systems. This choice of theme recognised the growing importance which institutions are ascribed in natural resource management systems, as either facilitating or constraining factors. At the same time, the theme was addressing the difficult issue of state - society relations, and gave rise to intense discussions and indications of a need for further research.

The researcher course had a total of 25 participants, the majority being Ph.D. students from the Nordic countries. During the course, the participants had the opportunity to present their individual Ph.D. research projects and get responses from the invited guest lecturers from abroad. The participants active participation in discussions and during presentations, as well as the interventions by the invited guest speakers, made this researcher course quite successful - as also indicated in the evaluation of the course.

The Ph.D. researcher course was made possibly by a grant from NorFa, the Nordic Academy for Advanced Study, for which we are grateful.

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