Abstract
This seminar discusses a research study on non-forest timber products that aimed to identify those that could be developed into a wider industry to improve the incomes and livelihoods of farmers and agribusiness in the East Nusa Tenggara (ENT), eastern Indonesia. The study was the outcome of an ACIAR scoping study undertaken through CDU with Indonesian partner organizations.

Trade in wild-harvested plant resources from ENT is not new. Several products from local tree species have been part of a global trade for centuries, including sandalwood, once the major export from Timor, and gaharu (Aquilaria) resin, which has a long history of trade to the Arabian Peninsula, China and Japan, where it is prized as incense. Various introduced species – such as tamarind - have also contributed to successful local production systems.

The seminar has three aims. First, to uncover the ‘hidden economy’ of informal-sector producers and traders. Unrecognised in official statistics, the informal sector is a significant source of income to millions of rural households. Second, to examine the diversity of plant products in trade. Many of these plants—and particularly the deep-rooted local tree species—thrive in places where ‘standard’ crops would not survive due to the effects of droughts, long dry seasons, fire or browsing by livestock. Third, to not only provide insight into the diversity of plant products in trade, but also the fortitude, resilience and local knowledge of the people who process or sell them.

Biosketch
A B (Tony) Cunningham’s special interest is in the conservation and sustainable use of wild plant resources and in biodiversity conservation at the landscape level taking local land-users into account, linking between applied ecology and the knowledge of local and indigenous people. Originally training in botany and entomology, he did his PhD (Botany) through the University of Cape Town (1985), followed by a Masters in Social Science (1993) through the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban). Over the past 31 years he has worked widely in Africa and Asia. Since 2005 he has taught an annual course on natural resource-based enterprises and local livelihoods at Charles Darwin University, Australia. He joined CIFOR’s Forests and Livelihoods Programme on 1 December 2011.