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CFA Newsletter

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The Congo Basin's forests and climate change



How will selective logging affect their local weather systems?

Due to their important role in the carbon cycle, forests are currently at the top of the agenda within the international climate regime. Forests represent a huge carbon reservoir, and deforestation is thought to account for as much as one fifth of global anthropogenic carbon emissions. Therefore, so-called "compensated reduction" schemes, under which countries would be paid for achieving or maintaining low levels of deforestation, have been proposed as a means of tackling climate change.

However, the role of forests in climate processes is much broader than this –

they also play a significant role in cycling other greenhouse gases, and influence atmospheric circulations through the exchange of water and energy.

This report¹ provides an overview of our current understanding of the contribution of tropical forests, and in particular, the forests of the Congo Basin², to local, regional and global climate processes. This is considered in relation to the ongoing discussions on forests within the climate change regime.

Forests and greenhouse gases

Forests play an important role in the

¹ This paper is based on a more extensive report prepared by the author for the Rainforest Foundation: 'Clouds on the Horizon: The Congo Basin's Forests and Climate Change.' This report is available for downloading at: <http://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org>

² The Congo Basin includes: Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo or Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.

cycling of greenhouse gases, and in particular carbon dioxide (CO₂), acting as a reservoir, a sink and a source of these gases. Tropical forests are of particular importance because of their high biomass – they are estimated to contain 50% more carbon per unit area than temperate forests, and as much as 20-50 times more carbon than cleared lands.

Of the total carbon pool found in the terrestrial biosphere, tropical forests account for an estimated 17% of the total – some 430 billion tonnes. Within Africa, most of the continent's terrestrial carbon pool (70%, or some 39 billion tonnes) is found within the forests of the Congo Basin, and over half of this in the Democratic Republic of Congo's forests. To put these figures in some perspective, 39 billion tonnes is equivalent to about 4 years of total global emissions of CO₂ based on current estimates.

Globally, deforestation and forest degradation are estimated to be releasing about 1.6 billion tonnes of carbon per year, compared to about 6.3 billion tonnes from fossil fuel emissions. The vast majority of emissions from land-use change are from tropical countries, where this is the primary source of carbon emissions. Within the tropics as a whole, about one third of total carbon emissions are from deforestation and forest degradation. For the Congo Basin these figures are even higher, 90% of emissions coming from these phenomena, which could be producing up to 0.44 billion tonnes per year. This is largely due to forest degradation rather than deforestation because of the prevalence of selective logging in the region.

There are considerable uncertainties in estimates of carbon emissions, due to the limited data on forest biomass and its distribution, and also the rates and scale of deforestation and forest degradation. However, it is clear that land-cover change will continue to play a large role in the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Until recently, the Congo Basin forests have contributed a relatively small amount to the total emissions from land-use change, in the 1980s accounting for just 4% of all such emissions from the tropics. However, this figure has undoubtedly grown since then and will continue to do so if current trends continue.

Forests and weather systems

Studies from many parts of the world show that forests affect cloud formation, rainfall and temperature, a result of their important role in the hydrological cycle and energy budget of

the atmosphere. These effects are not only manifested locally, but also on a global scale due to the influence of forests on atmospheric circulation processes.

On a local level, deforestation has been found to result in an increase in surface air temperatures and a decline in rainfall. Within Central Africa, these effects are thought to be particularly strong, because a large proportion of this region's rainfall comes from the recycling of moisture by the forest – perhaps as much as 75-95% – whereas in other monsoon regions most rainfall comes from water vapour accumulated from the oceans.

Deforestation within the tropics is of particular significance in relation to global climate processes, because this is where the major deep convection systems are located – through these systems, moisture is transferred to the atmosphere and redistributed to other tropical regions as well as to regions outside the tropics. The Congo Basin is the third largest region of deep convection, responsible for the majority of rainfall in tropical Africa and functioning as a major driving force of large-scale atmospheric circulation.

Modelling of the changes induced by deforestation in this region indicate that this would result in a decline in global rainfall and changes in rainfall distribution as well as an increase in the range of daily temperatures and in temperature variability

between years. There would also be more frequent extreme conditions. Such changes in the variability of the climate could have a significant impact ecologically and for agriculture, and an increased occurrence of extreme weather could have potentially devastating consequences for people.

Forests and climate change policy

Evidence is growing that the forests of the Congo Basin play a crucial role in maintaining the local, regional and global climate. This raises the stakes in terms of the need for forest conservation, and leads to the question of what policy measures could be used to reduce deforestation and thus limit the impact of land-use change on the global climate.

In recent years, this has been discussed within the context of the international climate regime, where the potential of using carbon financing mechanisms as an incentive to reduce deforestation is being discussed. A range of proposals for so-called 'compensated reduction' schemes are now under discussion within the framework of the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). These



Timber mining or SFM?

have been suggested as providing a relatively cheap means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while also generating substantial sources of funds for forest conservation.

However, there remain significant challenges that need to be addressed if such schemes are to be effective, feasible and equitable. These include methodological issues such as determining baselines and defining deforestation; evaluating and monitoring carbon emissions; and practical questions such as how to prevent leakage and ensure the permanence of forest conservation. These are particularly challenging in the context of the Congo Basin, where not only is there poor forest governance, but limited resources and capabilities for the necessary research and monitoring activities.

A further challenge is that such an approach risks reducing the role of forests to that of a carbon sink or reservoir. This overlooks their importance in other climate processes, as are outlined above, and ignoring these could result in land management decisions that do not produce the intended climatic results.

There is also a danger that giving primacy to the reduction of carbon emissions will result in all other forest values being neglected, including other environmental services, biodiversity and social and cultural values. There is particular concern as to whether any such mechanisms will be fair and equitable – especially for forest dependent communities. To date, most attention has been given to reducing carbon emissions through forest protection rather than taking a broader look at sustainable forest management, for example, through supporting sustainable forest use by communities. Particular care is needed that governments do not adopt heavy policing policies of forest areas, and cut off the livelihood options of such peoples.

There also remains the fundamental problem of how to reduce deforestation, which is the result of a complex of social, economic and political factors. In most Central African countries, industrial exploitation is a central element of forest policy, and indeed can play an important role in political

patronage and corruption. Therefore, there are serious doubts as to whether the long-term substitution of these timber 'rents' with carbon financing would be sufficient to discourage logging activities. Any such mechanism would have to be very carefully targeted, to ensure that the right decision-makers were reached.

Conclusions

The proposals for reducing deforestation as a climate change measure depend on the abilities of countries to control and manage their forest resources, and to monitor these resources and associated greenhouse gas emissions. The countries of the Congo Basin are a long way from being able to do this, due to the severe political and governance problems prevalent in the region.

However, although the challenges are huge, the costs of taking no action are also potentially huge – both in terms of the state of the world's forests and consequences for the global climate. While it is important not to overstate the role that carbon finance could play in reducing deforestation, it could be valuable in shifting the balance away from the mining of forest resources towards more sustainable forest management. There is an important proviso though – any efforts to reduce deforestation can only be implemented if issues of land tenure and resource rights are first resolved. Without such a basis, either forest conservation will fail or it will result in increased conflict over resources and further disadvantage forest-dependent communities. Fair and equitable land-use planning is therefore key.

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(Photo credits: Filip Verbelen and Kjell Kuhne respectively.)

Association News

The Queen's Award for Forestry 2007

The Queen's Award for Forestry is one of the most prestigious awards in the forestry world. The Award, which is given by the CFA every two years, and comprises a cash prize and a travel grant to the combined value of £2000, is both to recognise the achievements and support the future work of an outstanding mid-career

forester. The recipient will be the individual who the Selection Committee considers combines exceptional contributions to forestry with an innovative approach to his or her work.

Is there someone you know who you think should be nominated for the Queen's Award? If so, please contact cfa@cfa-international.org

A role for the Commonwealth Forestry Association in the 21st Century

One of the key roles for the CFA is to support international networking of forestry professionals. However, how is such networking best supported? Should the methods used in the past be continued into the future? Does the modern environment of internet and

electronic communications necessitate additional or alternative methods? Does the CFA have a competitive edge in supporting these methods, and if not, does the CFA need to adapt?

These are questions that I asked myself both as a long term member of the CFA and as a professional forester with

international experience. Considering some of the strategic issues that may affect the CFA suggests that the CFA needs to consider its options carefully. Here I share some of my thinking.

The Challenges of the Current Business Environment

The modern world for organisations and institutions rarely stays still. Changes driven by competition, technology, economic, social, environmental and political forces necessitate that successful operations have to be aware of their business environment and also be in a position to respond. The need to have a clear direction has to be coupled with a need to keep options open is important. The future can bring surprises, some of which cannot be predicted.

CFA track record

The CFA links traditional forestry organisations, typically government forestry departments and international organisations and their staff, through a newsletter, a journal and occasional meetings both domestically and internationally, including larger conferences. In recent years these activities have been supplemented by a website.

The market for these networking and informational services and products are largely focused on people that could be labelled as “forestry professionals” even though, in practice, a wider range of disciplines are involved (e.g. downstream processors and distributors).

The competition

Most of us will recognise the explosion in information and networking potential that has arrived with the internet, email and mobile communication devices. Many professionals in the developed world are complaining of information overload, but at the same time have limited time to read and digest what is readily available to them. Mechanisms for filtering excessive and unwanted information are highly desirable.

For example, email services such as CIFOR's POLEX have proved very worthwhile. This service both advertises the availability of current reports and larger documents, summarises their main messages and conclusions and then emails a self selected group of interested people. A useful and attractive service, especially when it is free!

Another example, is the uktc's interactive bulletin board (<http://lists.tree-care.info/>). This supports the UK's (and to a lesser extent, international) arboricultural community, allowing messages to be posted and for interested parties to respond. The messages can be emailed in a variety of formats and/or accessed via the internet. A membership of 500 is supported, and the culture is informal. The service is provided free, assisted by some limited advertising, and is dependent on a single keen, committed and talented individual who moderates the forum, sorts out the technical issues and receives advertising and finances.

The CFA's products and services therefore find themselves in an environment that is much more competitive than it was. Much information that was previously restricted is now readily available and free. There is no doubt that some countries have poor or very restricted internet access, exacerbated by intermittent power supplies. Cost and scope of access are also issues that limit the spread and exchange of information through electronic means. In addition, rural areas are less well served than capital cities and regional centres. However, in many countries mobile phone networks are developing fast,

and the internet may not be far behind. Whilst massive changes to information access have already occurred for many, those areas with significant forestry issues remain in an information dark age. Can the CFA do something about this?

However in a competitive environment, a network organisation and information provider such as the CFA has to provide something special if it is to succeed.

Why network?

Networking sounds great especially if it involves an international conference, a stay in a hotel in a nice location and a little tourism on the side...but is that what it's all about? Can everybody depend on such for a to obtain the knowledge and skills they need to face the issues of the 21st century? Using concepts derived from knowledge management helps identify how networking can be improved.

Networking can help to both share and create knowledge. However the sharing of knowledge will not happen automatically just because two people meet, or are in email contact. Communities of practice can be encouraged in which knowledge is more readily shared. For knowledge management creation, understanding that innovation comes much more readily from reusing existing knowledge rather than from research, supports the need for more structured and supported networking opportunities.

Electronic means of networking have dramatically reduced the costs of knowledge sharing and assisted in other ways. Many people would say this has increased productivity and been beneficial. The downside, as mentioned above, is an overload of information which may distract from priority activities.

CFA's markets

The CFA has to be clear who and where both its customers and its consumers are, understanding that they are not necessarily the same. It may seem a bizarre example but think of how pet food is sold and used: how many of you have ever bought pet food? I bet that most who have, have never bothered to find out what it tastes like! So pet food manufacturers have an interesting triangle – they promote themselves to a group of customers who have never consumed their product!

So let's apply this triangle to the CFA. The traditional model of a membership organisation is one where members pay an individual subscription and receive a variety of benefits. The customers and consumers are one and the same.

However, if the CFA is to make a difference it should be focused on people and institutions that have difficulty networking – those in the developing countries in which significant forestry issues arise and in which solutions are not readily apparent. In many of these countries, the availability of resources, financial, organisational and information, restricts options. This is especially true in offices outside of capital cities. Poor communications makes isolation the norm. Individual foresters cannot afford to pay the membership dues of the CFA, so the numbers of individual CFA members are likely to be rather small. Language differences may make an English language newsletter and journal of little use.

So should CFA consumers always be its customers? Does the CFA need to separate its customers from its consumers? If the forestry professionals are its consumers, can it find customers who are willing to support efforts to improve forestry practices but who may not be too interested in being consumers? With the interest that there is in forests including biodiversity, climate change and tourist markets, it may be

possible to seek funding external to members' funds to support forestry networking.

In a similar fashion, the CFA links and networks domestic organisations that represent individual foresters. These vary in size, strength and remit from country to country. Their needs are likely to differ from those of individual foresters, but some of the same principles apply.

Networking has the ability to break down barriers and make organisations more accountable. Forest management now involves a range of people who do not think of themselves as foresters – the soil scientist and ecologists have been joined by climate change specialists, real estate specialists, ecotourism developers, engineers to design and build aerial ropeways and others. The CFA is well positioned to support networks of people and organisations involved in forestry but will need resources beyond what is available from traditional members to take advantage of these opportunities.

Conclusion

To be successful and thrive, the CFA must understand the business environment in which it operates. The Commonwealth Forestry Association has a long track record of joining forestry professionals throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. However, changing times necessitates new approaches.

A CFA dependent on a traditional membership structure, based on paying individuals, is likely to have limited options as to how it can support forest management in the poorest countries. Seeking external funding, either on a project basis or on a longer more sustainable basis, is an option that seriously needs to be considered.

Jon Heuch

Australian tree breeder receives Regional Award of Excellence

On the occasion of the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) Conference Dinner held in the Commonwealth Club, Canberra, on 21st March 2007, the 2007 Regional Award of Excellence for South East Asia and the Pacific Region, was awarded to Dr. Colin Matheson, Fellow and Research Scientist with CSIRO, Ensis and The Australian National University.

Dr Matheson has played an exceptional role in the field Forest Genetics as a research scientist. His endeavours have encompassed many areas of genetics, including the improvement of *Pinus radiata* plantations, in particular, the improvement of wood properties, traits that lead to improved profitability and their heritability. In the field of genetics and disease resistance, he has played a key role in international cooperation between *Pinus radiata* growing countries and associated quarantine protocols. His work has extended to include genetic conservation, remnant stands, conifer hybrids for commercial environmental forestry, and inbreeding studies.

Apart from his work in Australia, he has been widely involved in consultancies, contributing to the design and analysis of field trials, breeding strategies for forest species, and as an invited international specialist in projects in the



CFA Regional Award being presented to Colin Matheson (from left - CFA Vice President, Bob Newman; Federal Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, Hon. Senator Eric Abetz; Regional Award winner, Dr. Colin Matheson; CFA Regional Coordinator SE Asia & Pacific, Michael Bleby)

UK, Zimbabwe, China, and through parts of SE Asia. His research work has been extensively published, and this award is to recognise his contribution and leadership in this field.

He continues his work as a post-retirement Fellow in tree breeding at CSIRO - Ensis and as a Visiting Fellow at The Australian National University.

The Commonwealth Forestry Association congratulates Dr. Colin Matheson on this award, in the knowledge that his work and career in genetic research has made an outstanding contribution to Forestry in the Region.

There were over 100 guests present including several Members of the

Federal Parliament, and the Federal Minister for Forestry kindly agreed to present the Medal and Certificate. Dr Matheson responded by saying he felt very honoured to be receiving the award and thanked the CFA for their consideration. In his acceptance speech he related some of his experiences as a researcher, and paid tribute to his colleagues.

Michael Bleby

CFA Regional Coordinator
South-East Asia and Pacific

Forest Scenes

UNFF-7: The Way Forward

The seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-7) met in New York from 16 to 27 April 2007. Representing the highest level of discussion that exists today on global forest policy, UNFF-7 had a full agenda, with negotiations to be completed on both a Non-Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI) on forests and a Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) to guide UNFF sessions until 2015.

UNFF-7 represents a benchmark in the development of global forest policy since the failure of international community to produce a global forest treaty at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. The compromise reached at UNCED was a “Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation, and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests” (the Forest Principles). Now, fifteen years later, another non-binding instrument represents the closest consensus yet reached on forests. What, if anything, has UNFF-7 added to the global forest regime?

Certainly the world is no closer to consensus for a global forest convention. The negotiations for an NLBI that took place at UNFF-7 followed on from a 2006 ECOSOC decision negotiated at UNFF-5 and UNFF-6 and represent a compromise between pro-convention and anti-convention forces. The negotiations were at times difficult, and, just as in Rio, ultimately resulted in a document that in some ways reflects more disagreement than agreement. As often happens, the most contentious issue—financing—was left to be worked out later, but even with agreement to postpone that discussion, it took delegates until 6:30 am on the morning after UNFF-7 was supposed to end to work out the language that would reflect the agreement to postpone in the NLBI itself. The final text was ultimately moved to the draft resolution for ECOSOC adoption that conveys the NLBI to the General Assembly for adoption, and states that ECOSOC decides to ‘develop and consider with a view for adoption at UNFF-8 a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework.’

The fact that the name of the financing item to be considered at UNFF-8 is ‘tripartite’ reflects disagreement, mainly between some developed and some developing countries, on how financing should be approached. The call for a ‘portfolio approach’ was based on a presentation by the World Bank during UNFF-7 which many delegates felt had unfortunately come too late to be considered at this session. An *ad hoc* expert group will be convened to develop proposals for financing before UNFF-8.

A number of elements that had been offered by way of strengthening the IAF—the general aim of most countries present—were ultimately dropped from the final text in the absence of compromise. The EU, the strongest supporter of negotiation of an NLBI as a possible stepping stone to a future legally binding instrument (LBI—see *Commonwealth Forestry News* No. 32, March 2006, p. 11), saw much of the language that might have advanced this aim be ultimately eliminated from the final text. Deleted elements included references to the UNFF as ‘the intergovernmental forum’ for implementation of the instrument; to the UNFF Secretariat as ‘the secretariat’

for the instrument, a ‘subscription’ process for countries to indicate their acceptance of the instrument, and, as expected, quantitative timebound targets. Perhaps most significantly, the EU was unable to persuade objecting countries to make its proposal for a ‘facilitative process’ part of a package deal along with language on targets and financing. This proposal, which would establish a committee of experts to facilitate dialogue and cooperation, had been envisioned as a way to bolster implementation. It was modified during UNFF-7 to specify that the process should be voluntary, demand-driven and based on assessments of existing processes, but was eventually withdrawn altogether at a late hour after meeting firm resistance from some countries such as Brazil.

What added value, then, does the NLBI bring to the global forest regime? First, although some delegates would have preferred a more precise definition, the NLBI makes reference for the first time to ‘sustainable forest management (SFM), as a dynamic and evolving concept, aiming to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations.’ This language was hard fought, but the fact that the UNFF community has reached some level of global consensus on SFM as a norm to be followed can be seen as a step forward. On the other hand, delegates did not reach agreement on whether achieving SFM should be the purpose of the instrument. Ultimately a compromise was reached to encompass as its purpose the notion of SFM, the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, as well as four ‘global objectives’ agreed as early as UNFF-5: to reverse the loss of forest cover, enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, increase significantly the area of protected forests and sustainably managed forests, and reverse the decline in official development assistance and mobilize new financial resources for SFM. These are all worthy goals; the real question is how far they will be achieved and whether the agreed NLBI itself will further progress toward that end.

Meanwhile, countries that are dissatisfied with UNFF-7’s achievements regarding the NLBI are still pondering whether to follow the Canadian lead to negotiate their own legally binding agreement, an effort pushed outside the UN by Canada since UNFF-6. A group of thirty ‘like-minded countries’ met by invitation only over the weekend during UNFF-7 to consider a Canadian draft for a legally binding instrument. There was no effort during UNFF-7 to conduct any negotiations as such on this document, as countries were keen to await the results of UNFF-7 before considering this alternative seriously. However, the failure to achieve a strong NLBI may add fuel to the flame of this independent initiative.

Parallel to the NLBI discussions, negotiations within the working group on the UNFF’s new MYPOW were productive in setting the stage for the UNFF’s work over the four biennial sessions of the UNFF between 2009 and 2015. Delegates agreed on a thematic focus for each of the sessions, as well a continuation of negotiations on finance at UNFF-8, a progress report at UNFF-9 in 2011, and an overall review of the effectiveness of the IAF and the NLBI at UNFF-11 in 2015. Most importantly for some governments concerned with the

way time is used at each UNFF session, the MYPOW makes it explicit that each session will provide interactive panels offering a 'platform for dialogue' among UNFF members and representatives of stakeholder groups and regional forest-related processes, among others. Dialogues are to focus on exchanging information on national and regional experiences, activities, best practices, and lessons learned, and on identifying constraints and challenges to implementation of the UNFF's goals.

The biggest achievement of UNFF-7 was that it managed to

complete the work of negotiating two agreements, a task set for it at UNFF-6 that many considered unrealistic a year ago. It also answered the question on the lips of many at UNFF-5 and beyond about whether the Forum has a future. It does indeed, at least until 2015, but it remains to be seen how effective the UNFF will be; that will in the end be up to the countries that participate.

Deborah S. Davenport, Ph.D.

The Great 'Illegal' Logging Swindle¹

The campaign by environmentalist non-government organizations (NGOs) against "illegal" forestry in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific is attracting support from governments of OECD countries, notably USA, UK, and Australia. However these governments appear more concerned to protect their own timber industries from competition from producers in countries like Indonesia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) than in what differentiates an illegal from a legal timber resource, and this is what constitutes a fraud against the people of mainly S.E. Asian and African developing countries, whereby the cited OECD countries have co-opted the NGOs' attacks on commercial logging in developing countries to support their own timber interests.

Australia's Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation (Eric Abetz), states (in his *Bringing Down the Axe on Illegal Logging*, 2006), that there are "significant volumes of illegally sourced timber and timber products that continue to be imported into this country [worth] an estimated A\$400 million", citing the Jaakko Pöyry (JPC) report (*Overview of Illegal logging*, 2005) commissioned by his Department to support his stated objective of helping the Australian timber industry avoid competition from such imports.

Similarly a report partly funded by the British government (*Bulldozing progress: human rights abuses and corruption in Papua New Guinea's logging industry*, Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), 2006) made use of the JPC report. Governments with their own interest in protecting their domestic timber industries from competition with forest products derived from countries like Indonesia and Papua New Guinea find it attractive to require countries like Indonesia and Papua New Guinea to undertake costly certification programmes (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), a timber export certification arrangement between the World Bank and WWF, and similar requirements under the World Bank and EU Forest Law and Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) programmes) that would reduce the competitiveness of the latter's timber products relative to their own intrinsically higher cost domestic industry (because of higher wage levels and lower timber yields).

This link between attacks on the "legality" of logging in tropical countries and its impact on domestic timber products in other countries is explicit in a report by the American Forest Product Association (AFPA, 2004), *Illegal Logging and Global Wood Markets*, which claims that if all "illegal" timber exports were blocked, the price of roundwood would increase by 19%; lumber by 7%; and wood panel by 16%, and that eliminating

"suspicious" timber from world trade would enable the USA to increase its own sawnwood, wood panel and roundwood exports by over US\$460 million p.a. This year the US government, EU Commission and Australian government have announced programs to help Indonesia combat "illegal" logging².

This impression that it is not the legality of forest products in countries like Indonesia and Papua New Guinea that is of concern is enhanced when inspection of the JPC Report and of similar reports by various NGOs reveals that they provide no evidence that any of Australia's or Britain's timber imports have an "illegal" provenance.

JPC define "illegal logging" in a number of ways, including harvesting without authority in national parks or conservation reserves, and avoiding full payment of royalty, taxes, or charges, but fail to identify any violations of its criteria. Comprehensive audits of the PNG timber industry sponsored by the World Bank in 2000-2004 found full compliance with the country's Forestry Act 1991, which itself was largely dictated by the World Bank (including defining a sustainable logging cycle for PNG at 35 years, see *Logging, legality, and livelihoods in Papua New Guinea*, Forest Trends, 2006).

Instead of doing fieldwork to prove illegality, JPC contented itself with ranking the source countries of Australia's timber product imports, first by Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (TICPI), and then by JPC's own assessment of their governance and management capacity (GMC). When TICPI gives a white OECD country a low rating, implying low corruption, then JPC gives that country a high GMC rating. If imports are from a country with the latter, then its exports of timber products to Australia are legal. But if non-European countries like Malaysia and Singapore are rated to have good (i.e. low) corruption by TICPI, they are invariably deemed by JPC to have medium or worse GMC ratings implying high probability that their exports are "suspicious" or "illegal" (see JPC's Table 3.1 below). Then JPC considers that their total timber exports to Australia can safely be deemed illegal or at best "suspicious", and so Singapore's plywood exports are deemed to contribute to Australia's A\$400 million of "illegal" imports.

With this useful criterion, JPC had no difficulty in concluding that 8% of Australia's sawnwood imports have been sourced illegally, including ALL imports from the three countries with its lowest GMC ranking, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands. No matter that all PNG's sawnwood and woodchip exports derive from companies based in Japan or Malaysia that enjoy low TICPI, and for most of us except

¹This Note is a summary of the author's paper "What constitutes illegal logging?" *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 22.1, 2007: 125-134.

²Yet JPC as well as working for the Australian government was also in 2005 promoting a timber investment in the north-west of the UK to produce at least two million m³ a year (equivalent to PNG's average log exports in the 1990s), with a projected value of timber products of over £500 million and creation of over 6,000 jobs. Robert Wilson, *Adding value in Forestry*, Jaakko Pöyry, 2005

JPC, high GMC. The World Bank's Forestry Review found that Sumitomo's PNG Open Bay project is exemplary in terms of sustainable forestry, with 80 per cent of its output plantation-based, but this is not good enough for JPC, as all timber products imported into Australia from Papua New Guinea are illegal, even when as in the case of plywood, they derive entirely from a company (PNGFP) originally established in 1954 by the Australian government itself (and still part-owned by the "low GMC" PNG government), and are certified by the Plywood Association of Australia. The plywood is sourced from pine plantations established 50 years ago by the presumably illegal government of Australia, as JPC considers PNG's plywood exports illegal whatever their provenance.

The World Bank's Reviews had "found that forest resources were being managed according to four main elements of the statutory framework, including supervision of all large-scale logging operations by the statutory Forest Authority, broad conformity with the National Forest Plan, and licensing of all large-scale operations in accordance with the relevant legislation" (Forest Trends, 2006). Those disappointing findings impelled the environmental NGOs including Forest Trends to establish their own definitions of illegality, whereby even legally sanctioned logging operations are nonetheless illegal if they are not being conducted "sustainably". Their arbitrary definition of sustainability is a logging cycle of not less than 40 years or even as long as 75 years, even though it was the World Bank that imposed the 35 year cycle in both Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. None of the NGOs provide independent authority for determining that tropical forests require at least 40 years to regenerate. While tropical timber specialists working in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands have demonstrated that shorter logging cycles are perfectly sustainable (Webb et al 1980), Forest Trends (2006 2:61) endorses claims that a resource volume of 44 m³ per ha. is "unrealistically" high – this for a tropical forest, while in drought stricken Australia, volumes for eucalyptus that never reach 50 dbh - the minimum acceptable level for PNG's log exports to China - reach 180 m³/ha (West 2004:97-98). Alder (1995:93) reports resource levels of 241 m³/ha in Ghana; for a 35 year logging cycle, this implies an annual yield of 6.89 m³/ha when logging begins. PNG's only plywood operation in 2006 achieved an average yield of 5.6 m³/ha from

its plantation resource of 9,000 ha. (130 m³ from the clear felled 35-year old coupe of 277 ha. and 36 m³ from thinnings from coupes of 292 ha.) – but that is "unsustainable" even after 50 years of continuous harvesting, according to the NGOs.

The other main basis for deeming that all logging in Papua New Guinea is illegal is the claimed lack of informed landowner consent. However there is no documented landownership of any of Papua New Guinea's forest areas (Curtin and Lea 2006). Its customary land tenure system is based on individual usufruct rights to one's own home and cultivated gardens. In the primary forest there is no cultivation, and no usufruct. Instead the forest is a commons in which all living therein have rights of access for hunting and gathering, but there are no rights of any one individual or family to exclude others. Excludability is the main criterion for determining land ownership. Ignoring this it is too easy for NGOs to find disaffected putative "landowners" in the vicinity of a timber permit area eager to claim that they knew nothing of the project before its inception, gave no consent, and have gained no benefit in the form of royalties paid by the logging contractor. Yet the World Bank's Review reported that even at the alleged illegal Wawoi-Guavi project, the operator was compliant with the requirement to effect payments to identified de facto landowners, to the tune of no less than US\$11.6 million between 1997 and 2003.

Forestry is the largest single natural and renewable resource of countries like Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Their resource endowment is such that they will hardly be able to produce - let alone compete with - temperate countries' production of beef, wool, lamb, wheat, bananas, and sugar. Thus if they are not allowed to export their forest products to Australia or the UK without undergoing costly certification tests, then however much financial "aid" the latter provide, these and other timber producing developing countries will never achieve the income growth that their resources justify.

Tim Curtin

Emeritus Faculty
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Source: Jaakko Poyry, Canberra (DAFF), 2005.

Land use change and forestry: negative perceptions and causes for optimism according to a young forester

I have often wondered why the impacts of land use change associated with forestry tend to be portrayed in a negative light. As a forester I consider myself to advocate for the sustainable management of Australia's forests, yet often my scientific interpretation of a forestry situation or issue can greatly differ from the general perceptions of a member of the public. How then does this difference in perception arise? Can an individual's background, livelihood and ethics be used to explain this discrepancy and give hope for greater alignment between reality and perception? Is there really any cause for optimism for engaging the community in better

forest management?

Perception is "the process of acquiring, interpreting, selecting and organising sensory information"¹. According to one theory there is a close link between perceptions and the environmental circumstances under which humans evolved. Specifically, the social activities (work, leisure or science) an individual undertakes can define how they value a landscape. Education also plays a part in perception of forest practice². Individuals have been found to favour less fragmented landscapes (or larger clear fall operations), especially when provided with information that suggested this method of

¹ Wikipedia (2007) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perception>, last modified 2 April

² Meitner, M. Gandy, R. D'eon, R. (2005) Human perceptions of forest fragmentation: Implications for natural disturbance management, *Forestry Chronicle* 81 (2), pp1-9

harvest was more ecologically beneficial.

The media also continues to contribute to the formation of perceptions relating to forestry. Often it is the negative impacts of widespread deforestation that are most widely publicised; soil erosion, habitat loss, increased run off and contribution to climate change to mention a few. High profile species or issues such as old growth harvesting and the majesty of tall trees, are commonly used to capture the imagination. In reality the thousands of poorly studied invertebrates or an unattractive but threatened shrub within a forested landscape may warrant greater conservation measures. With headlines such as “Illegal logging threatens survival of Orangutans³” and “Dry city counts the costs of logging⁴” it is no wonder that perceptions of what is currently happening in the bush are slightly skewed. Of the articles relating to forestry published in major Australian papers over the last 6 months, less than 40% presented a balanced or pro-forestry view.

As a young forester working for both government and a private plantation manager I have been exposed to a range of initiatives to address differences in the perceptions held by the community, the forest owner or the forest regulator. In the Strzelecki Ranges of Victoria, Australia, large sections of the range were replanted with *Eucalyptus regnans* by the government after agricultural failure or the influence of fires. Over time the understorey has regenerated so that at first glance there is little difference between a planted forest and the remaining, undisturbed native vegetation. Over the last three years areas of potentially higher biodiversity have been identified for conservation in the “Cores and Links” project (with the “Cores” representing the high value, more-sensitive areas, and the “Links” the lower value areas that provide for connectivity). After much discussion and planning, to allow the forest owner to meet current contractual wood supply arrangements, a deal to limit harvesting in some of these more sensitive areas was brokered. This solution has allowed the company a social license to operate.

Forestry is also perceived in a negative light when compared to agriculture. In particular the conversion from pasture to forest plantation has met with some resistance in south-eastern Australia and Western Australia. Often the forest industry is blamed for degradation of community and services, but commonly these communities were already in decline, with limited alternative industries and hope for dealing with land use change⁵. In the case of barely viable agriculture, is it not better to move from a poorly regulated industry to a well regulated, sustainable forest industry? Minimum buffer widths along drainage lines are employed where previously the farmer did not have any implementation requirements,

and ongoing auditing by external bodies help to maintain land management standards. Volunteer certification schemes such as the Forest Stewardship Council or Australian Forestry Standard also provide a formal method of measurement for forestry companies.

There seems to be a set of double standards relating to forestry that are rarely mentioned, but commonly applied. Often individual or community forest ethics support conservation, yet we cannot escape an ongoing need for forest products. If society wishes to continue to use wood, paper and non timber forest products the supply must be addressed from other sources. Rather than externalising our environmental impacts and obtaining this wood from cheap, possibly illegal logging operations in developing countries, it is preferable to support well-managed, certified forest industries within our own country.

On a recent trip to Sabah, Malaysia I observed the effect of land use change on wildlife and native vegetation along the Kinabatangan River. Once a contiguous forested area, there remains only a narrow corridor of vegetation to provide habitat for orang-utans, proboscis monkeys, asian elephants, birds and other primates I had never before seen in the wild. Expansion of oil palm plantations and construction of illegal canals to the river for drainage continues to decrease the total reserve area, homogenising the landscape and interrupting natural forest cover. Timber harvesting since the 1950's has also adversely affected some of the remaining patches. In the absence of strong regulation this land use change has restricted numerous high-profile species to a narrow band of forest where they are more exposed to predators and long term survival is affected. Despite this biological bottleneck, the value of this area as a reserve is increasingly recognised, and a number of agencies are working towards improved forest management and reserve expansion.

Despite negative perceptions of the forestry industry, I have discussed only positive examples here because I believe there is cause for optimism. I have been heartened to observe ongoing research, lobbying of government and community development projects. Forestry continues to be an easy target for blame, perhaps undeservedly at times, for the widespread changes in areas where land use change was already imminent. I remain optimistic about forestry – it can be well regulated; standards can be certifiable and there are examples of social, economic and environmental balance.

Courtney Johnson
CFA Youth Officer

Forestry in Nigeria today: challenges to the forestry and wildlife sector

General Background

Nigeria's land area covers about 91 million hectares of which roughly 14 million hectares are forests (FAO 2003). Forests thus cover approximately 15% of the land area, and other wooded land covers a

further 10%. Forests in Nigeria are distributed across several ecological zones (Table 1 and Figure 1).

The major focus of forest management has been on wood production thereby creating an imbalance in the development of non-timber forest products and services. Despite the fact that there is an anticipated continuous increase in the demand

³ The Australian, Feb 2007

⁴ The Sunday Age, Jan 2007

⁵ Schirmer, J. (2005) Socio-Economic Impacts of Land Use Change to Plantation Forestry: A Review of Current Knowledge and Case Studies of Australian Experience, http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/forest/feop/Agenda2006/iufro_plantations/proceedings/G01m-Schirmer.pdf

Vegetation type	Area (km ²)	% of total land area	Area of forest reserve (km ²)	% of land covered by forest reserve
Sahel savanna	31,463	3.2	2,571	0.3
Sudan savanna	342,158	34.8	31,247	3.2
Guinea savanna	400,168	40.7	28,271	3.9
Derived savanna	75,707	7.7	3,208	0.3
Lowland rainforest	95,563	9.7	19,986	2.0
Fresh water swamp	25,563	2.6	256	0.03
Mangrove	12,783	1.3	522	0.05
Total	983,213	100	96,061	9.78

TABLE 1 *Forest type and area in Nigeria*
Source: Adedoyin, 1995

for forest resources as the population increases, effective management tools which will optimize benefits from forests in the different ecological zones have not been developed adequately. It was reported that the land area occupied by rain forest in Nigeria decreased by 11, 254 km² between 1976 and 1995 while the land under savanna decreased by 90, 593 km² during the same period (FORMECU 1999). The over exploitation of forest resources and subsequent reduction in forest cover resulted in a deficit in the supply of wood raw materials to forest industries in the country and consequently leading to the importation of some wood products. A report by the Forestry Management Evaluation and Coordinating Unit (FORMECU 1999) showed that non-timber forest products constitute a substantial part of forestry contribution to the economy. It was also noted that there has been no deliberate policy to manage non-timber forest products and services on a sustainable basis even though the importance of these NTFPs as source of food, medicine and industrial raw material has generated interest in their conservation and propagation.

Forest administration in Nigeria started in 1887, and by 1970, about 10% of the total land area had been constituted as forest reserves both for production and for the preservation of forest fauna and flora including wildlife. The National Forest Policy (1988) provides for an increase of this figure to 20%. Nigeria has 693,000 ha of forest plantations yet ironically, the highest rate of deforestation in Africa at 2.6% per annum. Nigeria is gradually becoming a wood-deficient country because of urban and rural population growth, which has greatly increased the demand for wood and wood products. With the present rate of urbanization being about 50 percent of the total population, there is increased consumption for

forest resources in response to the demands of the advanced modern lifestyles.

The trend

Forestry development depends largely on three major sets of factors, the first are natural factors which include climate, geology and soils. Secondly, are the social factors, which comprise the ways of life of people, their immediate needs and

tradition (including land tenure systems). The third group is made up from economic and political factors since the moral justification for the existence of any government is the improvement in the standard of living and the welfare of the citizens as well as conservation of the biophysical environment in which socio-economic activities of the people are performed. All these factors are, however, intricately linked with the importance of social factors to forestry development in Nigeria today.

Trends in forestry development and the problems encountered are not peculiar to Nigeria, but are enhanced in Nigeria

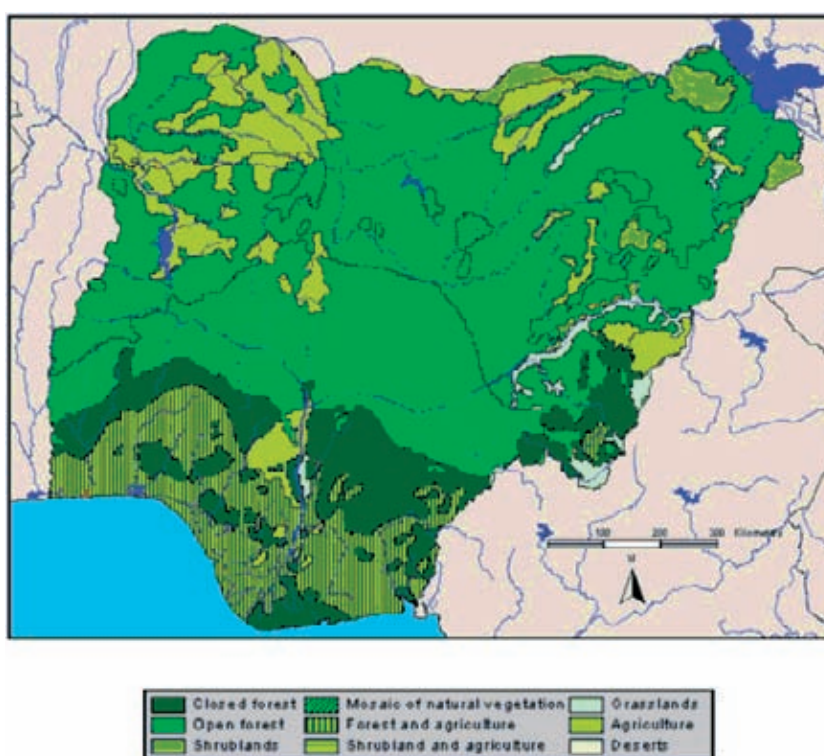


FIGURE 1 *Nigerian forest types*

because it has the highest population of any country south of the Sahara, and has had an enormous stimulus to the economy from oil. Characteristically, farming in this part of the world is based on shifting cultivation system. The attributes and the shortcomings of this system are well known, particularly because of negative impact on forests and indeed on the environment as a result of the slash and burn component (Bada and Popoola 2005). Forestry is practiced mostly in rural settings where farmers form the core of the communities. Until recently, land was not a limiting factor in most of the rural areas of Nigeria. The only probable constraint in land-use was the land tenure system which embraced man's control over

rural and agricultural land-use. With increasing tendency to urbanization and sophisticated living standards in Nigeria, competition for uses of land has intensified. Popoola (1990) opined that this has resulted in the degradation of forest resources, leaving areas of dereliction in parts of the country. The sources of dereliction, among others, are

- i. Coal / Open-cast mining and pit-heaps
- ii. Land reclamation with fuel ash
- iii. Quarries
- iv. Flooding
- v. Commercial logging and intensive wood-cutting
- vi. Oil prospecting
- vii. Over-grazing.
- viii. Unchecked conversion of forest lands for farming practices

These operations have resulted in the unprecedented destruction of soil surfaces and indeed forest and wildlife resources in most states of the country.

Current structure

The mandate for forestry and wildlife in Nigeria is currently held in the Federal Ministry of Environment. The forestry sector has about 510 professionals and more than 4000 personnel in the technical and sub-technical cadre. At the Federal level, the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN) has the mandate for research in all aspects of forestry, wildlife and forest products utilization. Forestry development is in the public sector domain with individual state governments being the principal owners and financiers of their forest estates. Each of the 36 states has its own forestry department which is under the jurisdiction of the state Ministry of Agriculture. The budgetary allocations to the forestry sub-sector over the years have been generally poor (FDF, 2003). Before the recent excision of the Federal department of Forestry from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to the Federal Ministry of Environment, less than 4 percent of the annual budget had been allocated to agriculture of which forestry had a paltry equivalent of 2 per cent (Ajakaiye 2001). The state governments which control the exploitation of the resources have not done better. Some of their inadequacies include:

1. Inadequate supply of research support and facilities to forestry institutions
2. Lack of promotion of inter-sectoral linkages, e.g between forest and industry
3. Weak planning process and bureaucratic management procedures.
4. Insufficient provision for state level protection of forest
5. Inadequate funding for administration processes
6. Lack of clarification of the ownership of Public forests vis-à-vis government versus communities.
7. Illegal and corrupt practices such that government officials who are saddled with the responsibility of managing forest estates connive with timber

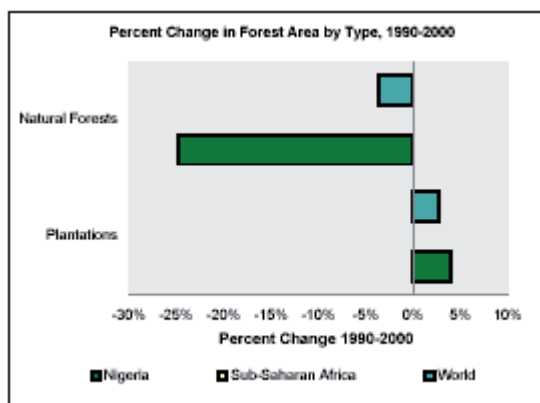


FIGURE 2 Percentage change in forest area by type.

Source: *Earthtrends*

contractors to exploit forests far beyond the legally approved limits, and above the allowable cut by collecting bribes from the contractors.

The Federal government produces policies although it has no forest of its own and can therefore not enforce these policies (Bada 1996). Furthermore, the National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for the management of National parks, which are not delegated to the states (FAO 2004). Different aspects of sustainable management, exploitation and renewal of the national forests and plantations

as well as utilization, marketing and increasing demand for forest produce continue to pose serious challenges to forestry development in Nigeria. These challenges are compounded by several other problems, ranging from a shrinking forest estate through to de-reservation and deforestation, to declining yield and endangering/threatening of wildlife species, poor forest management, resulting from institutional and technical constraints, as well as poor public attitude.

Challenges facing the sector

The challenges buffeting the forestry and wildlife sector in Nigeria are multi-faceted and they stem from the three previously mentioned factors on which forest management depends. However, taking a broad view of the issues that have constantly undermined the development of the sector, some key points are highlighted below

1. **Increasing demand for forest resources:** Increasing population growth in Nigeria has a doubly negative effect on forestry. Population increase which usually brings about urban expansion and increasing demand for land towards food production and infrastructural development eventually culminate in drastic reduction of land available for forestry development. At the same time, the teeming population looks on to forestry and its wildlife components to meet their increasingly diverse need through the exploitation of the dwindling forest resources.
2. **Low private investment in plantation development:** Private investments in forestry has been at an all time low level partly because of lack of macroeconomic policy incentives such as tax-relief and low interest on long term loan, provision of credits, as well as facilitation of acquisition of land. This has kept the burden of forest management solely on the government and has invariably increased the demand pressure on the natural forests which serves as the natural habitats of wildlife.
3. **Inadequate data base:** The efficient management of any stock of wealth is dependent upon concise information of the measure or extent of the wealth. Inadequate data is one of the monsters that have bedeviled forest and wildlife resource management in Nigeria. Hence, there is no adequate reliable data on which to base planning for sustainable development.

4. **Other Institutional, Technical and governmental factors include:**

- Conversion efficiency in most of the sawmills is below 40 percent which produces a lot of waste and encourages a higher frequency of encroachment into the reserved areas.
- Undervaluation of forestry's contribution to the national economy.
- Lack of recognition of the industry potential of the country.
- Inefficiency of the State forest services in managing the forest resource
- Lack of participation of the local people in the decision making process as it relates to forest management and forestry administration.
- Formation of ambiguous laws and policies which are not implementable within the framework of the social structure.

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Adewopo Julius

Sub-regional coordinator of International Forestry Students' Association, North Africa

Successful COFO debates state of the world's forests

The eighteenth session of Committee on Forestry (COFO18) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 12-16 March 2007. The meeting attracted almost 600 participants from governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, including the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, and a number of ministers.

Delegates addressed issues relating to the 2007 State of the World's Forests, forest and energy, forest protection, putting forestry to work at the local level, progressing towards sustainable forest management (SFM), shaping an action programme for FAO in forestry, decisions and recommendations of FAO bodies, and the XIII World Forestry Congress.

COFO18 was also the stage for side events, information sessions and in-seminar sessions, which covered a range of topics, including national forest programmes (NFPs) and

poverty alleviation, fire management, forest health, forest tenure, small- and medium-scale forest enterprises, voluntary guidelines and forestry tools that contribute to sustainable development, a new generation of watershed management programmes, the interface between forestry and agriculture, and reducing carbon dioxide emissions from deforestation. There were also meetings of the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFC) Bureau and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

COFO18 adopted a final report, in which COFO requested and recommended FAO to undertake numerous activities related to the issues debated during the meeting, including forests and energy, forest protection, putting forests to work at the local level, progressing towards SFM and shaping an action programme for FAO in forestry. (See <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/cofo/en/>).

New Publication: New Zealand Forestry Companies in Britain and Europe during the Second World War 1939-1944

Compiled by David Field 2006

This is a new publication, possibly of interest to other foresters around the Commonwealth, who were involved or had family or associates active in the provision of wood and wood products during World

War II.

When Germany cut off traditional timber supply from Europe to Britain in 1939, the British Government sought assistance from Commonwealth countries to harvest and mill

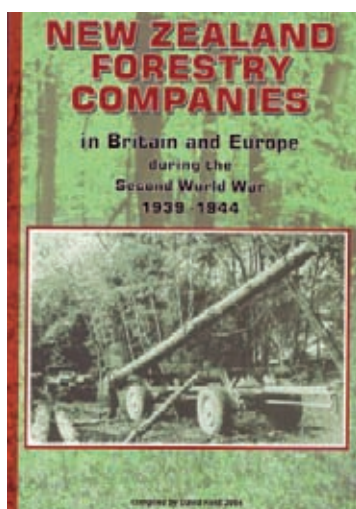
domestic forests in Britain. New Zealand foresters, bushmen and sawmillers responded quickly to a call from the NZ Government in January 1940 to form a Forestry Company for service in the Armed Services overseas. Some 600 replies were received, men selected and trained, as the 11th Forestry Company. The main company of 163 men joined Railway Survey and Construction Companies on RMS Andes and sailed as the 2nd Echelon, 2 NZ Expeditionary Force, via Australia and South Africa, landing in Gourock Scotland on 19 June. German occupation prevented the foresters setting up their sawmills in France, and 11 Company set up logging and milling operations in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire instead. Subsequent reinforcements from New Zealand led to the creation of 14th and 15th Companies too.

The New Zealanders set up circular and band saw mills, cutting oak, beech, larch and other species, with some of the timber being used in aircraft manufacture. A reconstituted 15 Company moved to North Africa and Italy in 1943 to work

on timber supply for the occupying Allied forces and the domestic market. Production of timber by the New Zealand Companies was consistently higher than forestry companies from Canada, Australia and Britain.

David Field, a retired Forester himself is the son of 11th Forestry Company's Quartermaster Sergeant. He has extracted the history of the Forestry Companies from the official NZ War History record, added some reports from members of the companies, and included lists of company members plus some correspondence relevant to forest operations in Cirencester and the estate of the Earl Bathurst.

The 163 page, A5, book is available from David Field, 44 Dalbeth Road, RD2, Rotorua, New Zealand. (e-mail dmfield@xtra.co.nz) for NZD5.00 plus postage.



Peter Berg

CFA Governing Council

The African Forest Forum: a platform for stakeholders in african forestry

What is the African Forest Forum?

The African Forestry Forum (AFF) is an association of individuals who share the quest for and commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for socio-economic wellbeing of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment.

Why the Forum?

The purpose of the Forum is to provide a platform and create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to achieving sustainable management, use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty and promote economic and social development.

What is its goal?

The goal of the Forum is to galvanise the African voice and opinion, and mobilise resources on forestry and related issues that cut across countries and regions with a view of enhancing the relevance and contribution of forestry to the people of Africa and their environment.

How will it achieve its goal?

The Forum will facilitate:

1. Networking among the many and varied stakeholders in forestry in Africa.
2. Development of specific programmes, projects and activities that address priority issues and opportunities and facilitate their funding.
3. Advocacy activities that have a potential to raise the profile of forestry, highlight threats to forest

resources and the environment, and champion better management of African forests.

For whom is the Forum?

The potential beneficiaries of the activities of the Forum are national, regional and international policy- and decision-makers, farmers and rural communities, the private industry and trade sector, the research and education community, consumers of forest/tree-derived products, government institutions, NGOs with forest, environment, social and other foci of work, individuals, and others.

Who are members of the Forum?

The members of the AFF are individuals with a commitment to the purpose and goal of the Forum. The Forum will also have observers from key organisations.

How will the Forum work?

The Forum will work through its members and Secretariat. Networking through electronic media will be the main mechanism for exchanging information, ideas and views. The Members Forum, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee, and the Secretariat are the key organs of the Forum. Once fully established, the Forum shall organise itself into sub-regional and/or sectoral "chapters", and establish regular mechanisms for information exchange, decision-making and interactions. The Governing Council shall hold electronic and virtual meetings as the situation and agenda may require.

What will the Forum do?

The Forum will, among other activities, :

1. Constitute permanent and *ad hoc* task forces, think

tanks and committees from among its membership to analyse and give advice on specific issues, problems and potentials.

2. Commission experts and institutions to carry out studies and research tasks to generate knowledge in general or for specific institutions and organizations on request.
3. Organise workshops, seminars and conferences as and when appropriate.
4. Be represented at relevant international and regional meetings on forests.
5. Initiate and implement pilot projects, normally in collaboration with African and/or other partner institutions.
6. Issue reports, publications and other relevant material emanating from its work.
7. Provide a systematic information base on forests and trees in Africa, and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for developments relevant to these resources.

Partners of the Forum

The Forum will work with a variety of partnerships, formal and informal, within and outside the continent, and with forestry and non-forestry bodies. It is highly desirable that the Forum partners with, inter alia:

- African Development Bank (ADB),
- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO),
- African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC),
- African Forest Research Network (AFORNET) at the

African Academy of Sciences (AAS),

- United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF),
- African Union (AU),
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
- World Conservation Union (IUCN)-Eastern Africa Regional Office,
- Forest Stewardship Council-African Regional Office,
- Conférence des Ministres en charge des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC),
- African forestry research, education and development institutions and networks; and others, who are presently partners to the Sustainable Forest Management in Africa (SFMII)

Project, which has taken the initiative to establish and nurture the Forum, in its formative phase, until it is formally launched and with a home.

The Founder Members established the Forum on January 26, 2007.

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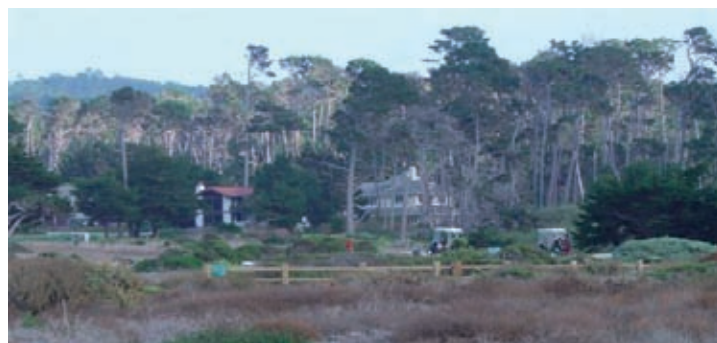
REMARKABLE PINE PILGRIMAGE

Looking at the map I could see that a trip to the Monterey peninsular was achievable in a day from San Francisco. My wife and I were planning the final days of a 6 week trip to the United States which we took in October 2006. The main purpose of the journey from our home town Millicent, in the South East of South Australia, was to visit our son and his wife in North Carolina, combined with some sightseeing in both the East and the West of the country.

Why would I want to visit Monterey in particular? There is a good reason why a plantation Forester especially from Australia or New Zealand might want to go there and that is, to see some important plantation forest species, namely *Pinus radiata*, and *Cupressus*



P. radiata cones



P. radiata near Spyglass Hill golf course, Monterey peninsular

macrocarpa growing in its native habitat. We in the southern hemisphere have inherited the Remarkable species, originally named *Pinus insignis* (latin - remarkable), and Monterey is the principal mainland site where this important timber tree evolved.

My involvement in nursery management has resulted in familiarity with aspects of the genetics and tree breeding of *Pinus radiata* (nowadays its botanical and trade name). The fact that the original trees, which led to the large plantation estates on several continents, came from this area, has always been a professional fascination and so here was an opportunity make a visit to see this remarkable species in its native habitat.

The naturally occurring mainland remnants (Ano

Nuevo, Monterey, and Cambria) plus the remaining stands on the offshore islands further to the south (Guadalupe and Cedros) are very small in comparison to the now some 4 million ha planted in the southern hemisphere countries of Australia, New Zealand, Chile, and South Africa.

As world timber production becomes increasingly characterised by plantation forestry, the importance of this species with its long history of plantation management, will continue.

Not only does it have the largest area of any other plantation species, but its intensive management and its high yields of logs and pulpwood, provide an economic source of softwood, which is now of international commercial importance. It is also claimed to be one of the most documented forest tree species in the world.

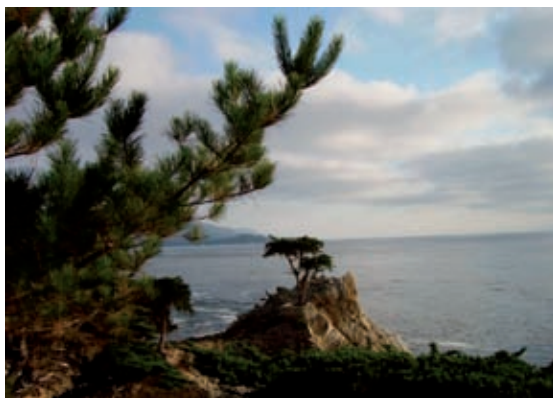
After a visit to the town of Monterey (and its fabulous aquarium) we headed south along the coast, and the views of the remnant stands are certainly accessible. It is easy to understand the relationship of the tree with the coastal climate and the characteristic fog of the area.

The trees I could see were instantly recognisable, but in other ways were a far cry from the trees I am familiar with in the South Australian plantation environment. This species has great versatility in service and is capable of amazing growth rates as a forest species. It is very responsive to weed control at establishment, has an ability to respond to various silvicultural treatments and achieve full site occupancy, however on the down side, it is very sensitive to wildfire, and fire protection of the resource is a significant management component.

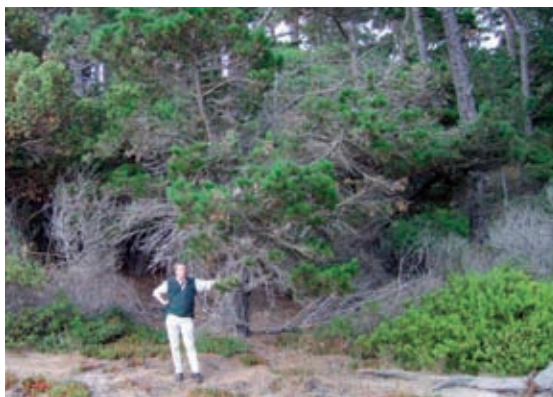
Among the stands along this short stretch of the California coast are dotted houses, mansions of celebrities and golf courses frequented holiday makers and many visitors. When we stopped at probably one of the most photographed scenes in the area, the famous Lone Cypress, other visitors looked on in surprise at the couple who were taking a picture in the opposite direction, to capture a shot of some *P. radiata* across the road. As I viewed these stands and specimens, a mix of stories and personal recollections



P. radiata near Spanish Bay Monterey peninsular



Lone Cypress with P. radiata in foreground Monterey peninsular



P. radiata opposite Lone Cypress Monterey peninsular



Feature P. radiata Pebble Beach golf club Lodge Monterey peninsular

came to mind.

Folk law has it, and it is quite likely, that some Radiata pine first came to Australia as seeds in the pockets of Californians who came for the gold rush in the 1850's. I wondered who they were and where they might have collected seeds.

I recalled a forester who became a personal friend in his retirement, Charles Pawsey, a keen practitioner of Forest Science who knew and understood the growth habits and genetics of the species and its breeding. His contribution to the productive uniform stands of *P. radiata* we have in Australia today, was foundational.

I could picture the avenue of Radiata pine lining the driveway to the District Forester's house at Mt. Burr in South Australia, where I lived for many years. Planted in 1886, they are still some of the oldest living specimens in the country, but are now well over mature and been in decline for some time.

The stands at Monterey have been described as the primary remaining reservoir of native genetic diversity upon which the long term success of the commercial plantations may ultimately depend. They certainly have an aesthetic and ecological role, in a location where there are pressures of housing and recreation activity, along with the burden of pitch canker disease which is causing decline. The stewardship required for the in situ conservation of these remnants of the species is clearly a challenge in this environment, which contains a mix of commercial and private interests.

To my delight, there was a fine open grown *P. rad* specimen in all its glory, in a dominant position, near the entrance to the "Lodge" at the famous Pebble Beach Golf Club. It was nicely decorated with a covering of fairy lights to welcome the rich and famous (and others). This seemed yet another fitting purpose for this versatile tree that continues to prove itself in a myriad of situations and uses.

Michael Bleby

Member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia
Registered Professional Forester
Commonwealth Forestry Association, Regional Coordinator, SE Asia/ Pacific

A Park or Park it: are these solutions to climate change?

Recently various advocacy groups have promoted the idea that converting Canada's boreal forest into a large park will lock up carbon. By extension some believe that creating more parkland will relieve our need to reduce our use of fossil fuels. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this solution worked! Let's take a look at it more carefully.

Forests are stores of carbon. Half of a tree is carbon; carbon is also stored in the soil as leaf litter and other forms of partially decomposed organic matter. Forests also have flows of carbon into and out of the forest. Areas of a forest that have been newly disturbed by logging, fire, wind storms, etc. have higher rates of decomposition of this store of carbon than is captured by the re-growing plants, i.e. the forest is releasing carbon into the atmosphere. As trees occupy the open area and grow the area becomes a better carbon sponge, these areas of fast growing trees lock up more carbon than is released into the atmosphere. As the trees age their rate of growth slows and the rate of decomposition and respiration may be fairly close to the rate that carbon is being locked as wood by tree growth.

Let us assume that we lock up large areas as parks and stop fires in these areas as is suggested by some. While these areas may initially have large stores of carbon this carbon is not locked up. There will be net out flows of carbon as windstorms, ice storms, diseases and insects kill trees and warm the soil. There will also be other unintended consequences. There could be large outbreaks of diseases or insects due to the build up of organic matter. This has happened in the historic past when human activity in Canada's forests was very low and is happening today. For example, today we have a massive outbreak of mountain pine beetle in the forests of western Canada and the US. Left to natural processes, as would be required in a park, the stores of carbon in these beetle killed forests are quickly released into the atmosphere.

Since there are processes that moves carbon in and out at different rates in different forests at different times and are affected by random events it is highly unlikely that simply making much of Canada's forest into a park and preventing

fires in them will help to ameliorate climate change. Not to mention the fact that preventing all large fires is impossible even if we thought it was a good idea.

We know, though a few may not believe, that the burning of fossil fuels is the most significant cause of climate change. Every year, you and I and the rest of the 6 billion people on this great planet release as much carbon as would be released if we incinerated half of Canada's forest. Can our forests play a role in reducing our carbon emissions? Yes, but developing a strategy that will lock in the carbon for a couple of millennia, a time frame that is necessary if we want to ameliorate climate change, is a little bit more complicated than some may want to suggest. To have an impact each of us must reduce our carbon emissions, so park that car and start applying the variety of energy saving strategies others suggest today. For forests to play a role we need to develop the will, technology and infrastructure to use forest biomass as a replacement to fossil fuels, chemical feedstock, and energy intensive construction material. We also need to find effective and efficient ways to convert biomass waste into carbon that can be rendered inert and stable, such as into charcoal, and stored for millennia.

Developing a carbon strategy that involves our public forests is complicated. Forest professionals are people that understand some of the complexity of forest ecosystems. They together with other highly trained people are best able to help craft strategies that must then be understood and accepted by us, the citizens of this forested nation if we are to truly reduce our carbon emissions.

Fred Pinto, R.P.F.

1st Vice President

Canadian Institute of Forestry

North Bay ON

Doug Stables, R.P.F.

President

Canadian Institute of Forestry

Victoria, BC

African forestry journals available electronically

CA members may be interested to note that a number of African forestry journals are now available online free of charge at the "Africa Journals Online" (AJOL) website: <http://www.ajol.info>. AJOL is a database of journals published in Africa, covering the full range of academic disciplines with the objective of giving greater visibility to the participating journals and to the research they convey.

AJOL provides information on each participating journal, including aims and scope, contact details and general information. It also provides tables of contents and abstracts (where available) for all articles published within these journals and some full text articles. The contents of journals can be searched and email alerts can be used to alert researchers to newly-published issues from their selected titles. Document delivery can be provided if the full text of articles is required and if they are not available on the web.

The following forestry journals are included on AJOL: East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal; Ghana Journal

of Forestry; Journal of Agriculture, Forestry and the Social Sciences (Nigeria); and Southern African Forestry Journal. AJOL would be interested to hear from other publishers of forestry journals in Africa that would like to be included in the service.

FAO has also recently launched an electronic version of their "Nature and Faune" magazine. Nature and Faune is an international bilingual (English and French) publication of the FAO Regional Office for Africa. The magazine was established in 1985 at the request of members of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission to provide possibilities for authors to exchange information and scientific knowledge and experiences on wildlife and protected area management and the sustainable utilization and conservation of natural resources in Africa.

The magazine is an information source for a broad audience in Africa, containing articles, papers and news items from policy makers, researchers, wildlife authorities, students

etc. The aim of the magazine is to disseminate information (scientific and technical knowledge) and promote the exchange of experiences on wildlife, protected area management and the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources in Africa. The magazine will be published two times a year and anyone who would like to be put on the mailing list can ask

by sending an email to: nature-faune@fao.org.

Adrian Whiteman
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Carl Linnaeus

All of us know that the letter 'L' after the scientific name of a plant species stands for Linnaeus, the Swede who was responsible for describing it and who introduced the binomial system of plant nomenclature. But how many of us know that this year we celebrate the 300th anniversary of his birth in May 1707? And how many of us appreciate the importance of his discovery that supplanted the chaotic system of nomenclature that had gone before? Previously a botanical name included a description of the species' habitat, leaf shape and calyx, based on the 17th century system of John Ray. For example, Weymouth Pine, known to us as *Pinus strobus*, had been called *Pinus Americana quinis ex uno folliculo setis longis tenuibus triquetris ad unum anulum per totam longitudinem minutissimis crenis asperatis* according to Ray's system.

Linnaeus had studied medicine as a young man in the Netherlands and visited England and France. He returned to his native land in 1738 and three years later was appointed Professor of Medicine and Director of the botanic gardens at Uppsala. A compulsive taxonomist and cataloguer he seems to have been loved or loathed - the first by his students for his teaching, the second by many of his contemporaries for his self-glorification and arrogance. *God Himself led me with His*

own almighty hand he said, and he considered that he had *brought the natural sciences to their highest peak*.

And he was loathed too for his 'sexual system' of plant taxonomy and for his salacious descriptions of flower parts - the pistils were called wives and the stamens were called *husbands*, while the flower head was called the *bridal bed*. The wives of the tulip tree for example *enjoyed 20 males or more in the same marriage*. No wonder that the Vatican added his books to its 'forbidden' list!

But while his taxonomic system did not survive, his binomial system of nomenclature has most certainly done so. You can find out more on the website of the Linnean Society www.linnean.org and details of the events in many countries to celebrate the tercentenary of his birth at <http://www.linnaeus2007.se/>

Jim Ball
CFA Chair

(Drawing heavily on an article in the May 2007 issue of the *Garden*, the journal of the Royal Horticultural Society www.rhs.org.uk/publications)

Trees, poverty and targets: Forests and the Millennium Development Goals

The International Institute for Environment and Development has published a short guide to ways forestry can contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

"Human wellbeing depends on ecosystem services such as those provide by forests," writes the head of IIED's Natural Resources Group, James Mayers. "These services are the foundation for the Millennium Development Goals - but they are not treated as such."

The six-page report highlights forestry projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America that are contributing to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals. Mayers writes that such evidence points to the need for greater recognition of the value of sustainably managed forests.

The guide shows that there are plenty of good news stories about forestry in developing nations but that there are many recycled assumptions and missing facts about the importance of forests to human wellbeing.

You can download it here: <http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=17004IIED>

Also last month, Mayers and colleagues published a progress report from a pioneering initiative that is working to improve forest governance in ten nations by connecting the people who control forest resources with those who depend on them. You can read more here: <http://www.iied.org/mediaroom/releases/070404FGLGupdate.html>

UK timber's green credentials

The green credentials of timber harvested from the UK's woodlands have been given a major boost in the findings of a new study. The independent report undertaken on behalf of all sectors of the UK forest industry has revealed that 80% of timber harvested here is certified as coming from sustainably managed sources. The

results of the study, undertaken by *timbertrends*, place the UK forest industry at the forefront of sustainable forest management worldwide.

The research focused on industry activity undertaken in 2005 when it was estimated that 8.26 million tonnes of softwood roundwood (conifer) were harvested from UK

forests and delivered to saw mills, pulp mills, panel mills and other users. Of the 8.26 million tonnes harvested just over 6.6 million tonnes met the requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UK WAS) and was certified under the Forest Stewardship Council scheme.

The research confirms the sustainable management culture that exists within the UK industry which less than ten years ago had no certification programme in place.

Stuart Goodall, Executive Director, Policy and Research at ConFor, the body representing the UK's private sector forestry industry, commented: "These findings underline the sound, sustainable practices adopted by the vast majority of those responsible for managing Britain's forests. We are alive to the sensitive role the woodlands under our control play in mitigating the effects of climate change, sustaining the biodiversity of our environment and creating areas of enjoyment for everyone."

"The comprehensive management requirements of meeting certification standards also demonstrate quite clearly that wood is a truly renewable, carbon lean product capable of sustainable production that can combat climate change."

He added: "Customers increasingly want reassurance that wood is from sustainable sources. The challenge facing the industry and its partners such as the RSPB and the Woodlands Trust is to make the process of certification more accessible to owners of uncertified wood."

The report also makes the point that the uncertified wood

comes from forests felled and replanted in accordance with strict Government legislation and management standards. For the owners of small private woods which are well managed, the time and cost involved in the certification process can prove a barrier.

Woodland owners seeking certification against the UK WAS criteria have to meet the requirements of the eight sections of the standard each of which addresses a specific aspect of management.

The sections are:

- Compliance with the law and conformance with the requirements of the certification standard
- Management planning
- Woodland design: creation, felling and replanting
- Forest management activities
- Protection and maintenance
- Conservation and enhancement of biodiversity
- The community
- Forestry workforce

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Around the world

Africa losing forest faster than any other continent

Africa lost over nine per cent of its trees between 1990 and 2005, according to a UN survey of the world's forests. This represents over half of global forest loss, despite the fact that the continent accounts for just 16 per cent of global forests. The report was released in March by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

The highest losses occurred in countries with high forest cover: Angola, Cameroon, DRC, Nigeria, Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Although forests are obtaining greater political support and commitment in Africa, the report says "implementation and law enforcement remain weak in most countries". In Latin America and the Caribbean, home to around a quarter of the world's forest cover, 0.5 per cent of forest was lost every year between 2000 and 2005 - up from a rate of 0.46 per cent in the 1990s. The conversion of forest to agriculture was the leading cause of deforestation.

Costa Rica, however, has turned around its forest decline in the 1990s to see a growth of almost one per cent of forest area expansion per year. But the extent to which this is related to reductions in agricultural land or innovative policies is not

clear, warns the report.

The survey highlighted positive action in Latin American countries. This includes a large increase in forest area designated for biodiversity conservation, indicating that countries are taking steps to prevent loss of primary forests - those undisturbed by human activities.

According to the report, the region is "among the world leaders in innovative approaches to international cooperation on forest issues". Methods used include forming networks to fight fires and improve the management of protected areas.

The Amazon Treaty Cooperation Organization - whose member countries comprise Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela - and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development are among those cited in the report.

Forested area increased in Asia between 2000 and 2005 - largely due to China's investment in tree plantations, which offset high rates of forest clearing in other regions.

www.scidev.net

Ghana: illegal chain-saw operators depleting Bekwai forest reserves

The Bekwai District Forest Manager, Mr. Augustine Gyedu has expressed concern at the rate at which illegal chain-saw operators were taking over Forest Reserves in the area. Mr. Gyedu who mentioned the Oda River and Fum headwater Forest Reserves as the most attacked Reserves, therefore, appealed to the people in the area to assist his office by providing information that would lead to the arrest of those illegal chainsaw operators.

Expressing the concern in an interview with The Chronicle, the District Forest Manager noted, “illegal chain-saw activities are on the ascendancy in most of the forest reserves we have in the Bekwai forest district and if care is not taken, these illegal operators will destroy all our forest”.

He gave Watereso, Numereso, Gyaemetanhunu, Aboabo, Hiayeya, Pipiiso, Tebeso, Mensakrom and Koolkyekrom as some of the communities where the activities were common. He added that, though his men have been embarking on night patrols as part of measures to arrest the situation, they would still need the support of the communities.

He described as worrying, the situation where people in communities where the operations were common, team up with the illegal chain saw operators to attack his men who go on operations. He reminded the various District Assemblies that constitute the Bekwai Forest District namely, Amansie Central, Amansie East, Amansie West, Adansi North, Adansi South and Obuasi Municipal Assembly that they also have a role to play in the fight against the menace.

“It is necessary that the Assemblies come to our aid in the fight against the chain-saw operators because the resources are theirs”, he noted adding that the Assemblies would be the first losers should the forest be depleted.

Mr. Gyedu, who assumed office about four months ago, added that his biggest challenge was how to deal with the illegal chain saw operators and hoped that with the support of his entire staff and the general public, he was going to be successful.

allafrica.com

Biofuel production may raise price of food

The emerging biofuels industry risks raising the price of food, the United Nations has warned. UN-Energy released its guidelines on the rapidly growing bioenergy industry, entitled *Sustainable Energy: A Framework for Decision Makers*, on 8 May. According to the report, biofuel production already appears to have driven up the price of maize in 2006 and 2007.

Biofuels could have a dual effect on food supplies, the report says. On the one hand, such crops could divert land, water and other resources away from food production. On the other hand, by making energy more widely and cheaply available, biofuels may also increase the availability of food.

“Unless new policies are enacted to protect threatened lands, secure socially acceptable land use, and steer bioenergy development in a sustainable direction overall, the environmental and social damage could in some cases outweigh the benefits,” the report says.

The report recommends that crops that require high fossil

energy inputs – such as conventional fertilisers – and valuable farm land should be avoided.

Gustavo Best, senior energy coordinator at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, says the new guidelines were needed because the industry “is so fast, so disorganised, and so misinformed”. Global production of biofuels has doubled in the past five years and is likely to double again in the next four years, according to UN figures.

The report also warns that sustainable energy crops could have a negative impact if these replace primary forests, “resulting in large releases of carbon from the soil and forest biomass that negate any benefits of biofuels for decades”.

It calls for the creation of an international bioenergy certification scheme, including greenhouse gas certification, to ensure that products meet environmental standards “all the way from the fields to the fuel tanks”.

www.newscientist.com

World Bank challenged to fund the energy revolution and halt forest destruction

Greenpeace International recently accused the World Bank of hypocrisy and challenged the Bank at its spring meeting to put their money where its mouth is and stop funding projects that exacerbate climate change. Despite acknowledgment from the World Bank's President, Paul Wolfowitz, that climate change is a serious issue, the Bank continues to fund fossil fuel projects and fails to prevent forest destruction - the very causes of the problem.

The World Bank's current spending on fossil fuels continues to dwarf its comparatively miniscule investments

in sustainable renewable energy - a mere USD153 million in 2006. In its recently published report, “Energy [R]evolution”, Greenpeace proves that with proper investment – equivalent to current fossil fuel subsidies of around USD 300 billion a year - renewable energy along with energy efficiency would deliver the 50% reduction of global emissions by 2050 needed to avert the potentially apocalyptic scenarios presented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last week.

Greenpeace also launched a new report ‘Carving up the Congo’ on the logging sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) this week. The report calls for the Bank, the

largest funder of the DRC Government, to urgently act to stop the expansion of the logging industry in the country, as logging is a key driver of deforestation, which causes climate change.

Wolfowitz recently stated that climate change needs action and pledged that the Bank would “climate-proof” its own projects. Wolfowitz also warned, that climate change will hit the poorest hardest, stating that “if you are living on the edge, climate change can push you over”.

Daniel Mittler, a Greenpeace International political advisor on the World Bank comments: “The World Bank talks the talk on climate change, but continues to fund fossil fuels that bind developing countries into a climate-damaging future – in effect, the World Bank is pushing poor people over the edge! If the Bank is serious about climate change, it must fund an energy revolution based on the massive expansion of renewable energies. The time for fossil fuel projects is over.”

Greenpeace also stressed the importance of Congo forests in regulating the global climate. Filip Verbelen, Greenpeace International's Africa forest campaigner said: “Tropical forests

are a first line of defense against climate change. Yet in the DRC, millions of hectares of rainforest are being sold off to the logging industry under the illusion that industrial logging will alleviate poverty. If the World Bank is serious about tackling climate change, it must act to contain the logging industry in DRC and to initiate large scale protection of the country's rainforests”.

Greenpeace asked those Governments supporting the World Bank's energy portfolio not to provide any further funds until the Bank agrees to support an energy revolution. “Donor governments such as Britain and Germany claim to be leaders on climate change. If that is more than empty rhetoric, they must ensure that the Bank invests their taxpayers' money wisely – in renewable energies and energy efficiency, in the energy revolution we need to avoid dangerous climate change”, Mittler concluded.

www.dominicantoday.com

Biofuel production may raise price of food

The world's second largest forest – one of the oldest on Earth – is being traded for bars of soap and bottles of beer, a Greenpeace report has revealed. A moratorium on logging in the Congo forest was agreed with the World Bank and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in May 2002. But the new report reveals that, between then and October 2005, the government issued large numbers of concessions giving logging companies access to the forest. Together, the concessions amount to 15 million hectares – an area five times the area of Belgium.

“Forty million Congolese depend in one way or another for their survival on the Congo forest,” says Stephan Van Praet of Greenpeace, who coordinated the research for the report, entitled *Carving up the Congo*. “I can assure you they know the value of their forest. If you cut the sapele trees you take away the caterpillars they rely on as a source of protein.”

Not one dollar

In the 2002 deal, the World Bank agreed to provide \$90 million of development aid to DRC with the proviso that the government did not issue any new concessions granting logging companies rights to exploit the forest. The deal also prohibited the renewal of existing concessions. Under the agreement, remaining legal concessions would be taxed and 40% of the taxes paid to communities local to the logged areas. In this way, the World Bank hoped that limited legal logging could be used as a way to help local communities develop.

But Greenpeace says that “not one dollar of the tax that has actually been collected between 2003 and 2006 has been redistributed to local authorities”. “Most people recognise that large scale concessions are not terribly efficient way of supporting development,” agrees Duncan MacQueen, senior researcher in forest policy at the International Institute for Environment and Development in the UK. Not only did the DRC's government fail to redistribute the taxes to local communities, it also granted 15 million hectares in new concessions to international logging companies, in breach of the World Bank's moratorium.

“Gift packages”

Greenpeace researchers visiting the local communities that were supposed to benefit from the legal logging activities found that the communities have been offered goods worth \$100 in exchange for granting access to wood worth many thousands of dollars. The “gift package” offered by one logging company, Sodefor, generally comprises two sacks of salt, 18 bars of soap, four packets of coffee, 24 bottles of beer and two bags of sugar, Greenpeace reported. “Sometimes people say they do not even have a piece of timber to bury their dead,” says Van Praet.

Greenpeace is calling on the World Bank to “think outside the box” and use the forest's potential in the battle against climate change. It says that 8% of the Earth's forest-based carbon is stored in the DRC's forests. Predictions for future deforestation estimate that by 2050 activities in the DRC will release roughly the same amount of carbon dioxide as the UK has emitted over the last 60 years.

Avoided deforestation

In its current form, the Kyoto protocol does not reward so-called “avoided deforestation” – initiatives that protect forest from being cut down. But many climate scientists and policymakers hope that negotiations for Kyoto's successor will include such measures. If this were the case, there could be a financial incentive for protecting forests.

“We know it will take some years, but there has to be political will and if the World Bank put themselves behind it – well, they are the major deciders,” Van Praet told New Scientist. MacQueen is less optimistic. “I know a lot of countries think that makes a lot of sense. The Stern report even calculated the economic cost of avoided deforestation,” he says, “but it's difficult to know what payment for avoided deforestation would mean in practice.”

Whose forest?

For MacQueen, the main problem is the tricky question of who owns the forest. In most developing countries it is accepted

that the state owns the forest, not the local communities who depend on it for their livelihoods. This means there is no guarantee the communities will reap the benefit of avoided deforestation. "Often, the only way of showing you own a piece of forest is to show you are doing something on it, like cutting trees down," MacQueen explains. Under these conditions of uncertain ownership, it can be more lucrative for local people to chop down trees and plant crops than to protect the forest.

"I have no doubt whatsoever that if you have poverty

eradication in mind, community-owned forestry is the way to go," says MacQueen. Papua New Guinea, Mexico and Guatemala have all successfully granted forested land to associations of local communities who are certified to exploit the forest sustainably.

The DRC's current government, inaugurated in January 2007, has stated that it will honour the moratorium, and is now investigating the legality of concessions issued since 2002.

www.newscientist.com

Seeds of change: rebuilding a Brazilian rainforest

Brazil's Atlantic rainforest once spanned a million square kilometres — it barely covers seven per cent of that today. The deforestation has left farmers and wildlife with failing springs, receding groundwater and destroyed habitats.

But an ambitious project in Brazil's most crowded state, São Paulo, aims to bring the rainforest and its ecosystem back.

In a recent article in *Science*, Bernice Wuethrich reveals how the Riparian Forest Restoration Project aims to restore a million hectares of rainforest through experiments with different restoration methods in five pilot projects.

Some emphasise replanting trees alone, while others aim to return a variety of plants and animals simultaneously. Their

tactics include moving squares of topsoil from intact forest to deliver soil microbes, earthworms and fungi, and planting groundcover to attract butterflies.

Species diversity is seen as key to success, along with participation from locals. Farmers, for instance, volunteer land for replanting, while their children may work as environmental monitors.

The São Paulo government, looking to set up a fund for ecosystem services, says the project could become a model for all Brazil.

www.scidev.net

UN warns on impacts of biofuels

A UN report warns that a hasty switch to biofuels could have major impacts on livelihoods and the environment. Produced by a cross-agency body, UN Energy, the report says that biofuels can bring real benefits. But there can be serious consequences if forests are razed for plantations, if food prices rise and if communities are excluded from ownership, it says. And it concludes that biofuels are more effective when used for heat and power rather than in transport.

"Current research concludes that using biomass for combined heat and power (CHP), rather than for transport fuels or other uses, is the best option for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the next decade - and also one of the cheapest," it says.

The European Union and the US have recently set major targets for the expansion of biofuels in road vehicles, for which ethanol and biodiesel are seen as the only currently viable alternative to petroleum fuels.

The UN report, Sustainable Bioenergy: A Framework for Decision Makers, suggests that biofuels can be a force for good if they are planned well, but can bring adverse consequences if not. "The development of new bioenergy industries could provide clean energy services to millions of people who currently lack them," it concludes, "while generating income and creating jobs in poorer areas of the world."

But the prices of food, land and agricultural commodities could be driven up, it warns, with major impacts in poorer

countries where people spend a much greater share of their incomes on food than in developed nations.

On the environmental side, it notes that demand for biofuels has accelerated the clearing of primary forest for palm plantations, particularly in southeast Asia. This destruction of ecosystems which remove carbon from the atmosphere can lead to a net increase in emissions.

The report warns too of the impacts on nature: "Use of large-scale mono-cropping could lead to significant biodiversity loss, soil erosion and nutrient leaching." This has been avoided, the report says, in the Brazilian state of São Paulo where sugar cane farmers are obliged to leave a percentage of their land as natural reserves.

Water is also a concern. The expanding world population and the on-going switch towards consumption of meat and dairy produce as incomes rise are already putting pressure on freshwater supplies, which increased growing of biofuel crops could exacerbate. In conclusion, UN Energy suggests policymakers should take a holistic look before embarking on drives to boost biofuel use.

"Only through a convergence of biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and water-use policies can bioenergy find its proper environmental context and agricultural scale," the report concludes.

news.bbc.co.uk

Mali: forests in decline

The figures tell the story. In 1990, forests in Mali extended over more than 14 million hectares. But by 2000 they covered 13,117,643 hectares, according to a national report on the state of the environment made public in 2005. This marked a reduction of about seven percent in the West African country's forests, in just a decade.

"Forested areas are today giving way to the savannah in Mali," says Sory Haïdara, head of the Project for Sustainable Management of Forests (Projet de gestion durable des forêts).

Widespread reliance on wood to meet energy needs is partly to blame. The 2005 report showed that about 500,000 hectares of land are deforested every year for this purpose. At the same time, woodlands are being encroached on by farmers: the amount of land under cultivation in Mali is increasing by 4.7 percent annually, at the expense of forests. The situation in Faya forest, a protected area north of the capital -- Bamako -- is a case in point.

"Faya is today the object of uncontrolled exploitation by communities. It is under great pressure from farmers; then, bush fires sometimes ravage what people and animals have not destroyed," says Haïdara, noting that some 300 families now live in the forest.

In Morilabougou forest, a protected area in southern Mali, matters are scarcely better. "Big wild animals like lions and deer used to inhabit this forest. Numerous species of birds and small game also lived there," recalls Amadou Bagayogo, a hunter from the area. Now, farmers are taking their place.

"Cotton farming, practiced extensively in the Sikasso Circle, is a leading factor in the deterioration of the forest," says

Mamadou Diakité, a forestry official in the Sikasso Circle. This region contains more than half of Mali's forests, and includes five protected areas. Diakité believes local authorities have become complicit in the occupation and destruction of wooded areas by providing certain resources needed for agriculture to farmers living in the heart of the forest. According to statistics from regional nature conservation services in Sikasso, the amount of land being farmed in Morilabougou forest is some 582 hectares -- or 4.5 percent of its surface area.

In a bid to put an end to the destruction of the Morilabougou forest, residents of the Kignan community have drafted a local convention for forest management. The document aims to ensure controlled exploitation of the forest; implementation of the convention will be a collective responsibility. Previously, nature conservation officials signed contracts that allowed communities to manage forests themselves. Although this local involvement helped prevent widespread logging, the contracts were ultimately terminated.

The Kignan initiative has been welcomed by Environment Minister Nancouma Kéita, who nonetheless noted the role of his office in protecting forests: "The restoration of the forest heritage is a responsibility of the state, and we are working hard at it." Some have accused officials of poor forest supervision. But, Kéita has promised that in the course of 2007, authorities will put in place a code of conduct concerning forests, to promote good conservation of woodlands for future generations.

allafrica.com

International agencies furthering Aceh deforestation: Greenomics

Post-tsunami reconstruction works in Aceh are contributing to deforestation as reconstruction agencies use timber from illegal logging activities, an environmental organization has alleged. Local environmental group Greenomics Indonesia accused the government-backed Aceh-Nias Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (BRR) and international agencies of using illegal logs.

Greenomics based its accusation on a field survey conducted in April which found reconstruction works in Aceh had used some 850,000 cubic meters of illegal logs. International agencies have used 48 percent of Aceh's illegal logs, while BRR has used 42 percent. "The remaining 10 percent have been used by disaster victims to repair their damaged houses," Greenomics coordinator Vanda Meutia told The Jakarta Post on Wednesday.

Vanda added that the survey also found that 85 percent of logs found in Aceh's markets were suspected of being illegally logged in forests in northern Sumatra, especially from the provinces of North Sumatra and Riau. "The survey shows international agencies, in the name of reconstruction, have occupied the highest rank in the use of illegal logs in Aceh.

"Greenpeace should also submit reports on the international agencies' 'performance' to the Guinness Book of World Records," she said.

In reaction to global warming and climate change, Greenpeace has successfully applied to the Guinness Book of World Records to have Indonesia included as having the world's highest annual rate of deforestation between 2000-2005. This citation will be included in the 2008 edition of the book to be published in September.

Vanda criticized Greenpeace for its move, saying international agencies that have been intensively campaigning for global reforestation and sustainable development were also involved in deforestation in tropical countries such as Indonesia.

She also said industrialized countries should be held responsible for global warming and climate changes because they were greenhouse emitters.

"The high demand for logs in their markets has indirectly contributed to rampant illegal logging in Indonesia," she added.

Meanwhile, BRR spokesperson Mirza Keumala denied the agency was using illegal logs for construction works both in Aceh and in Nias, insisting BRR was committed to forest preservation in Aceh.

"The Aceh provincial administration should take account of the illegal logging," he said.

"If the reconstruction work is using illegal logs, it must be (the fault of) contractors, which are BRR's partners in the

reconstruction project. BRR has never tolerated any use of illegal logs in reconstruction works.”

Mirza called on local authorities, especially the local police and forestry offices, to enhance their supervision of Aceh’s

forests to eliminate illegal logging activities there.

www.illegal-logging.info

Australia: PM’s forest plan ‘hypocritical’

A plan to spend \$200 million to help reduce deforestation in South East Asia was hypocritical, given Australia continued to log and burn its own forests, Greens Senator Bob Brown said in April. Senator Brown said he welcomed the announcement, but that it would address just a small percentage of the deforestation occurring around the world.

“It is rank hypocrisy from the Prime Minister to have personally signed off Regional Forest Agreements in Australia promoting the aerial fire-bombing of logged ancient forests in Australia, injecting millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.”

Prime Minister John Howard announced that Australia is committing \$200 million over five years to a global fund to address deforestation, targeting neighbours such as Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. AusAID will manage the program. Mr Howard said his plan would do more to cut greenhouse gas emissions than signing the Kyoto

Protocol would.

Senator Brown said Labor was no better, backing the Regional Forest Agreements process. Labor Environment spokesman Peter Garrett said the Government should focus on committing to Kyoto, setting emission reduction targets and reducing emissions. Deputy Labor Leader Julia Gillard said the Howard Government was full of climate change sceptics and could not deliver solutions.

Democrats Senator Lyn Allison said the \$200 million would be better spent in Australia “reinstating sacked environmental scientists and supporting our farmers”. The \$200 million proposal was not the bold or comprehensive response that was required.

Australia Institute director Clive Hamilton said the announcement by Mr Howard was “yet another attempt to shift the blame for climate change”.

www.theaustralian.news.com.au

Chad: a solution to deforestation that some also view as a problem

It’s affordable, and central to stopping deforestation in Chad. But, butane gas has a long way to go before it becomes a household staple in this Sahelian country: many Chadians have a fixed belief that gas is simply too dangerous to use.

“I have forbidden the use of gas in my home because it causes accidents that are often fatal,” says Narcisse Laldjim, a journalist and member of the Chadian Environmental Journalists Network (Réseau des journalistes Tchadiens pour l’environnement). He points to the death of Maurice Laoukoura, the owner of a bar in Benoye, southern Chad, who was incinerated in July 1999 while trying to light a gas stove. “I acknowledge that gas can be a solution to the destruction of forests, but it is too dangerous and I have small children at home,” observes Laldjim.

There are no official statistics on the number of gas-related accidents to have occurred in Chad. But, this hasn’t stopped Marcelline Nodjilembaye, an assistant accountant at the office of the United Nations Development Programme in Chad’s capital, N’Djamena, from changing to another energy source for her cooking.

“Since the death of that business woman from Moundou, I no longer want to use gas,” she says, in reference to the demise in 2000 of Bibiane Koumando, a business woman who died in a gas explosion. Koumando suffered third degree burns in her kitchen, also while attempting to light a gas stove. “It will be difficult to make Chadians accept gas, after everything that has happened,” notes Nodjilembaye.

Statistics from the local office of the World Bank bear out this assertion. According to these figures, only four percent

of Chadian households use gas at present; the rest rely on charcoal or firewood. This means that about 730,000 tonnes of wood are needed each year in N’Djamena alone, which has more than a million residents, something that is leading to steady deforestation.

Still, there are some who are swimming against the tide. Amina Klingar, a computer specialist in N’Djamena, is one of them. “I have always used gas because it saves me time and money,” she says. A 12 kilogramme cylinder of gas, which costs 24 dollars at government-subsidised prices in N’Djamena -- or even 18 dollars across the border in Kousseri, Cameroon -- lasts for upwards of four months, observes Klingar. This compares favourably to the cost of charcoal. A four-month supply of this energy source would cost Klingar between 72 and 96 dollars, depending on the season.

Jérémie Odering Goulaye, Chad’s environment minister for the past decade, has tried to compel citizens to use gas, even having road blocks set up at all entrances to the capital at one point to prevent charcoal makers and woodcutters from selling their goods in the city. Officials seized the firewood and charcoal loads that were discovered. However, unscrupulous representatives from the water and forestry department later sold the confiscated wood and charcoal on the black market, which undermined the effectiveness of the operation to a great extent.

For Mouimou Djekoré, a lecturer and researcher at the Regional Centre for Training in the Environment and Combating Desertification (Centre régional de formation en environnement et lutte contre la désertification) in Sarh, southern Chad, putting a halt to demand is more effective

than blocking supply. "If Chadians start using gas, the sellers of charcoal and firewood will stop trading by themselves, and the county will thus be saved from desertification," he notes.

Government has also started the National Gas Programme (Programme national gaz, PNG) to convince people to make the switch to gas.

Use of gas isn't inherently dangerous, and most accidents

are caused by inadequate safety measures. Often, the valve of a gas stove is not closed properly, causing a leakage that then catches alight.

allafrica.com

EU governments failing the forests

European governments are dragging their heels on a key EU initiative designed to tackle illegal logging, according to a new assessment released by WWF. *The Illegal Logging Government Barometer* shows that the UK and Austria are doing the most and Ireland and the Czech Republic the least to prevent unsustainable timber coming into the EU.

The Barometer assesses the efforts of European governments to implement the EU's Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement Governance & Trade (FLEGT), which encourages voluntary partnerships between EU countries and timber producing countries to reduce illegal logging. Each EU government has also committed to devise a national action plan to eliminate the trade in illegal and unsustainable timber and wood products.

Four years after the Action Plan was approved, the assessment shows that 19 of 27 European governments included in the survey – or 70 per cent – are failing to take any real action to implement it successfully. Eight countries are taking limited action and only one country, Austria, has implemented a time-bound plan with the explicit aim of eliminating illegal logging and corruption from domestic wood production as well as timber and wood product imports.

Beatrix Richards, Head of Forests at WWF-UK, said: "Four years ago the EU introduced a flagship Action Plan designed to tackle the growing problem of illegal logging. Today, very little progress has been made and this is down to individual governments who have dragged their heels on this issue.

"Illegal logging is a huge environmental, social and economic problem which often deprives local communities who rely on forests for their livelihoods. The EU, as a massive consumer of timber, has a key role to play in tackling the illegal element of the trade."

The UK is currently the only government which says it can demonstrate - through a partnership with Indonesia - to have reduced levels of illegal logging in a wood-producing country. However, this partnership agreement pre-dates the EU illegal logging initiative. The failure of Ireland and the Czech Republic to do anything proactively on illegal logging, and a lack of awareness about the EU Action Plan, has landed them at the bottom of the table.

Austria, which is ranked second, has improved its efforts on illegal timber more than any other government over the last year. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, which all have high forest cover, appear to have given low priority to global deforestation issues and have subsequently achieved some of the lowest scores. This is at odds with other EU Member States with high forest cover such as Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, who have all achieved much higher scores.

To close critical loopholes in the current legislation, WWF is calling for new legislation to be developed to outlaw the import of illegal timber and wood products into the EU.

www.panda.org

Western consumption 'causes forest shrinkage'

Western consumption, and not China's timber trade, is to blame for the depletion of the world's tropical forest resources, according to a recent report. *Rethink China's Outward Investment Flows*, compiled by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), said most of the natural resources imported to China are re-exported in the form of value-added inputs or final products. More than 70 percent of imported timber is processed into furniture and exported to the United States and European Union countries.

When searching for reasons behind shrinking forests, "We should be careful and we should always look at the final destination", said Dennis Pamlin, a global policy advisor of WWF Sweden, who is co-author of the report. "Or it gives an incomplete picture and can contribute to a situation where China is seen as the problem, when the main problem is Western consumption patterns," Pamlin said yesterday.

A recent report in the UK's Sunday Times said as the world's largest importer of both soft and hard wood, China has pushed up prices of wooden commodities in Britain. Zhu Guangqian, director of the China Timber Distribution Association, said it

is wrong and unfair to blame China for timber shortages on the world market.

China is the largest supplier of timber products globally. "About a third of our timber product exports go to the United States, and a significant percentage to European countries," he said.

Last year, China's timber exports totalled \$14.5 billion, more than double the imports of around \$6.5 billion. About 60 percent of Chinese imports, mostly softwood, are from Russia where 200 million cubic meters were felled last year compared with 600 to 700 million cubic meters of new trees. China imported 6 to 7 million cubic meters of hardwood last year, or 1 to 2 per cent of the overall felling in tropical forests around the world.

Besides, Zhu said about 80 to 90 percent of forest diminution in Africa, South America and Southeast Asia is a result of conversion of rain forests into farmland. "It is a matter of management of rainforests. These countries should strengthen efforts to encourage tree-planting and protection."

www.illegal-logging.info

Warning issued over NI forest fires

Parents in Northern Ireland must exercise greater control over their children, Democratic Unionist leader the Rev Ian Paisley said today. Following claims that young people started a forest fire recently in Co Down and were involved in sectarian street clashes in west Belfast on Wednesday, Dr Paisley appealed to families to ensure their children were not involved in any criminal behaviour.

The North Antrim MP, who became Stormont First Minister on May 8th, said young people needed to realise they had a responsibility to the communities in which they lived. "Respect is a much used phrase by young people but it cuts both ways," the DUP leader said. "Young people need to be shown respect.

But they also need to respect the communities in which they live, particularly the most vulnerable living there. Parents need to know where their children are and what they are doing."

Children were accused of deliberately starting fires in Rourkes Park, near Annalong in Co Down. Two youngsters in their early teens were spotted starting five separate fires in the area. It was the latest in a series of blazes in the Mountains of Mourne over the Easter holiday that the fire service said were started deliberately.

www.ireland.com

UK government procurement

On 5 March 2007, the UK government presented its Sustainable Procurement Action Plan. Along with the aim of achieving a saving of 1 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions by 2020, the Action Plan announced a change in timber procurement policy to be implemented by 2009. 'From 1 April 2009 only timber and timber products originating either from independently verified legal and sustainable sources or from a licensed Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) partner will be demanded for use on the Government estate – appropriate documentation will be required to prove it. From 1 April 2015, only legal and sustainable timber would be demanded'.

This is a tightening of the existing policy that requires legal timber but only prefers sustainable timber, and will bring UK policy in line with Dutch policy, which require the sole use of sustainable timber by 2010.

The implementation of the existing UK policy has recently caused controversy, as UK NGOs claim that the certification schemes accepted by the government as providing an assurance of sustainable forest management are in fact schemes that contribute to forest destruction. Unless this problem is resolved swiftly, the policy might well aggravate the situation.

www.fern.org

Madagascan forests regenerate against expectations

Sacred rites protecting "taboo" forest and unofficial land ownership agreements are helping regenerate large areas of tropical forest in southern Madagascar, say researchers. Thomas Elmqvist at Stockholm University in Sweden and colleagues studied satellite images of 5500 square kilometres of tropical dry forest in southern Madagascar, taken between 1984 and 2000. Overall, the researchers found that the forest declined by 7% over this time. But focusing on the more recent years, they were surprised to find that the forest appears to be recovering – total forest cover increased by 4% between 1993 and 2000.

"The Madagascar dry forest is listed as one of the 200 most important ecological regions in the world," says Elmqvist. Around 95% of plant species found here are endemic to the area, meaning they originate from it. Yet it is also one of the least protected forests in the island state, which is also home to wet and moist forest.

Ownership is key

To find out what was driving the forest's regeneration, in May 2002 and January 2004, Elmqvist's team went to the area studied using satellite images. "We were surprised to find that areas that were suffering most from deforestation had the lowest population density and were far from markets," says Elmqvist. Areas with stable forest cover, meanwhile, were heavily populated. This goes against conventional wisdom that deforestation tends to happen around human settlements.

Elmqvist explains that although most of the land in

Madagascar is theoretically owned by the government, in practice, villages control how the land is used. "If an outsider wants to use the forest, the only way to get permission is to marry into the clan," he says. Interviews and inventories of these clan-owned parcels of land revealed that deforestation was primarily occurring in areas with insecure property rights.

Staking claims

For instance, areas once occupied by a clan that had emigrated, because of drought or famine, are taken over in "grab and take" policies. This means neighbouring clans seeking to take over the parcels stake them out by cutting down the largest trees and planting a cactus – the local way of sign-posting property rights.

"One prediction from climate change research is that we will see more and more migration because of changing ecosystems. If governments do not prepare, we will see large scale deforestation," warns Elmqvist. "It is really important for governments to have some system for setting up land ownership immediately when migration happens."

Elmqvist also feels governments need to do more to take into account informal social agreements about land use and ownership when formulating policies to save forests. "Forest regeneration is strongly linked to social structures, it's not just a question of how seeds disperse and the quality of the soil," he told New Scientist.

Untouchable forests

Incorporating sacred or taboo forests in conservation policies could prove a cheap way of ensuring the forest's future, Elmqvist adds. Taboo forests are protected by unspoken rules, which even defend them from people wishing to gather medicinal plants. "If someone violates these rules, they have to pay one cow, which is very expensive for an ordinary Malagasy," says Elmqvist, noting that in the area that his team studied there were hundreds of taboo forests.

James Mayers, director of forestry research at the International Institute for Environment and Development in London, UK, agrees in principle, and says that governments in poor countries are increasingly handing forest management over to local communities. However, he fears that asking these governments to prepare ways of dividing up the forest between climate-change migrants would be expecting too much forward-thinking at this stage

www.newscientist.com

Final Harry Potter book on FSC paper

The seventh and final book in the Harry Potter series will be printed on FSC paper. With a total of £22 million, this is the largest purchase of FSC certified paper in a single book printing to date. The FSC accredited Certification Body Rainforest Alliance/ SmartWood Program worked with the publisher, Scholastic Inc., to develop its plan to buy FSC-certified paper.

For the initial printing of 12 million copies of 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows' in the United States, Scholastic

committed to ensuring that 65% of the 16,700 tons of paper used is FSC-certified. This means that this paper will come from forests that are managed in a socially and environmentally responsible way. Moreover, all the paper used in the printing will contain at least 30% post-consumer waste fiber, with much of that verified by FSC standards as well.

fscnews@fsc.org

Forestry industry seeks higher education so it can branch out

Australia's \$20 billion forestry industry needs a renewed emphasis on education and skills training to ensure its future, according to a report. The study recommends a wood science and technology undergraduate degree that would complement undergraduate courses in forest science.

Australian National University academic Raymond Roberts wrote the report for the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation, funded by the Government and industry. Dr Roberts said there was a shortage of skilled labour and the lack of a relevant course made the situation worse, particularly as technology became more sophisticated. "The situation is exacerbated by the negative public image of forestry," he said. "The industry is also primarily located in regional areas where traditionally it has been difficult to attract professionals."

FWPRDC executive director Glenn Kile said forestry was competing in a static or shrinking talent pool. The ageing workforce also meant there would be a big loss of industry skills over the next decade, he said.

The report emphasises the economic importance of forestry. The wood processing sector has a turnover of \$20

billion, directly employs more than 45,000 people and, with harvesting, is the second-largest manufacturing activity in Australia.

The study recommends the degree should be integrated into an existing university program. It would be tailored to the Australian processing industry and modelled on a Canadian program. Dr Roberts said the Canadian experience showed it was possible to attract students to a wood products course by having a dedicated recruiting program. This included scholarships, paid industry placements and industry involvement.

The study also recommended a four-year engineering program incorporating wood science and technology courses, plus science and management units.

The Federal Government last month announced \$350,000 for an industry skills communication strategy. The strategy will be the responsibility of the National Association of Forest Industries and A3P (Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council).

www.fwprdc.org.au

www.theage.com.au

Indonesia deforestation fastest in world

Indonesia had the fastest pace of deforestation in the world between 2000-2005, with an area of forest equivalent to 300 soccer pitches destroyed every hour, Greenpeace said recently. "The next generation of Indonesians will not see any forest if no action is taken by the government to deal with the problem," Greenpeace Indonesia forest campaigner Bustar Maitar told a news conference.

The Guinness World Records had approved a proposal by

Greenpeace that Indonesia's forest destruction be included in its 2008 record book to be published in September this year, said Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigner Hapsoro. Displaying a replica of the certificate from the global authority of records, he said the citation from the publication would read: "Of the 44 countries which collectively account for 90 percent of the world's forests, the country which pursues the highest annual rate of deforestation is Indonesia with 1.8

million hectares (4.4 million acres) of forest destroyed each year between 2000-2005.”

Indonesia has lost 72 percent of its intact ancient forests and half of what remains is threatened by commercial logging, forest fires and clearances for palm oil plantations, Greenpeace said.

The group urged the Indonesian government to impose a temporary ban on commercial logging in natural forests nationwide, accusing authorities of failing to control lawlessness and corruption in the forestry sector.

International demand for timber and paper as well as commodities such as palm oil was driving the destruction of the country's forest, currently covering 120.3 million hectares (297.3 million acres), it said.

Indonesia is the second second-largest palm oil producer

after Malaysia and is poised to be the world's biggest producer of the commodity with more than 16 million metric tons this year. Greenpeace said while Indonesia was destroying its forests at a faster pace than any other country, Brazil destroyed a larger area of forest every year.

The group said Indonesia's rate of forest destruction also made the country the third-largest greenhouse polluter after the United States and China. Experts say up to 25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions comes from tropical forest clearance.

Indonesia wants rich countries to pay developing nations to preserve their forests and plans to push this proposal at a U.N. conference in Bali on climate change in December.

www.sciam.com

UN adopts proposal to fight illicit timber trade

International cooperation in combating the illegal timber trade has received a significant boost following the adoption of an anti-timber trafficking resolution at the meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) in Vienna, April 23-27, 2007.

Put forward by the UNESCO subsidiary body, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), the resolution is entitled 'International cooperation in preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources'.

The resolution was developed by Indonesia in partnership with fellow members of the CCPCJ, Australia, the USA, Thailand and the Philippines. It was first presented for adoption in 2006, but failed to win the support of the Government of Brazil. However, following 12 months of liaison between Indonesia and Brazil on the issue, the resolution was adopted on April 25, 2007 at the meeting in Vienna.

Indonesia has been a strong proponent of greater international efforts to tackle illegal logging for several years. It was the first country in the world to amend its anti-money laundering laws to include crimes against the environment, including illegal logging. The changes in recent years in Indonesia's anti-money laundering legislation involved considerable research input and advice from CIFOR's monetary and financial policy expert, Bambang Setiono.

The past few years have also seen Australia become more

engaged with the issue of fighting illegal timber trafficking. Senior trade officials from the Australian Embassy visited CIFOR in 2006 to discuss the question of illegal timber exports with CIFOR's Director of Forests and Governance, Doris Capistrano.

Also, the Australian Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, visited CIFOR in April 2007 as part of the launch of the 'Global Initiative on Forests and Climate'. This is a new international endeavour to combat deforestation and its impact on climate. Launched by Australia with a contribution of \$200 million (US\$167 million), the initiative aims to reduce deforestation by addressing a range of issues, including illegal logging.

Indonesia's efforts to combat illegal logging through bilateral agreements, and its targeting of the business side of illicit trafficking, are reflected in the resolution's call for members to share information and experience in handling forest-related corruption and trans-national crime. This would be part of an expert working group that would look at other issues as well, such as identifying ways to improve national capabilities in dealing with trafficking.

Indonesia, with its unique and successful experience in these areas, is in an excellent position to play a lead role in the expert group and may well be encouraged to do so by the UN Member States.

www.cifor.cgiar.org



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