

# CFA Newsletter



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### Around the World

#### CFA Newsletter

is the newsletter of the Commonwealth Forestry Association

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The views expressed are not necessarily those of the CFA.

## The importance and vulnerability of woody species and habitats in the UK Overseas Territories



*View across Montserrat's Centre Hills, towards their highest peak (Katy Hill); forest types grade from Mesic-Wet-Elfin with increasing elevation (Photograph: Colin Clubbe, RBG Kew).*

Part of the UK's sovereign territory, the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) are mostly small islands or island groups, widely dispersed around the world. Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands (BVI), the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI) are located in the Caribbean, with Bermuda nearby in the North Atlantic. Ascension Island, St Helena, Tristan da Cunha, the Falkland Islands, South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands and British Antarctic Territory are dispersed across the South Atlantic, from latitudes near the equator to those in the polar region. British Indian Ocean Territory (the Chagos Archipelago) is located in the Indian

Ocean, and the Pitcairn Islands in the Pacific. Gibraltar and the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, in Europe, complete the set of UKOTs. The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF), which exists to promote the conservation of biodiversity across the UKOTs, also works closely with the Crown Dependencies (the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark).

Collectively, the UKOTs support much more globally important biodiversity than the metropolitan UK, including substantial numbers of endemic species – at least 60 birds, 50 reptiles and amphibians, 200 plants and 500 invertebrates with this or similar status. The global importance of the UKOTs is

not restricted to endemic species. For example, huge numbers of seabirds (including about half the world's breeding albatrosses) depend on UKOTs in the South Atlantic, and the c.6 million km<sup>2</sup> of marine areas associated with the UKOTs include some of the most pristine coral reefs in the world.

As a result of their wide geographical distribution, and differences in local geology, climate and topography, the UKOTs support a very broad range of habitat and ecosystem types. Habitats dominated by large, woody plants are naturally absent or rare in some Territories. For example, their southerly location renders South Georgia and the Falklands climatically unsuitable for the development of natural tree cover. Even the native scrubland that occurs in the Falklands is limited in its extent, reflecting overgrazing as well as natural constraints on distribution, although invasive species like *Ulex europaeus* have gained an unwelcome foothold in some areas. Although much closer to the equator, Ascension (a relatively young volcanic island, where arid conditions prevail across the lowland plains) mostly comprises a naturally barren landscape, notwithstanding the introduced Mexican Thorn *Prosopis juliflora* that is now spreading across large areas. However, the upper slopes of Green Mountain, Ascension's one major peak, support a combination of dense forest and scrub, a mixture of native (including some endemic) ferns and introduced woody species.

Woody habitats would, however, have provided extensive land cover in many other UKOTs historically, even if the modern landscape does not reflect this (following years of over-exploitation, habitat destruction and the impacts of introduced invasive species). In a number of cases, woodland clearance would have been particularly intense in the years following the first arrival of European settlers, as the most desirable timber was extracted for various purposes and land was opened up for agriculture. In BIOT, specifically, native forests were felled on many islands to plant the Coconut Palm *Cocos nucifera*. The range of surviving habitats, trees and other woody species, their traditional uses, the threats they face and conservation measures being undertaken, is so broad that only a few examples can be described here, to provide a flavour of the diversity that exists across the UKOTs.

The southern part of Montserrat has been devastated by volcanic activity in recent years, but much of the Centre Hills area further north (although affected) has escaped the worst impacts. Although much is secondary growth, following historic timber extraction and clearance for agriculture, the forested habitat of the Centre Hills has been a particular focus of study and conservation efforts. It supports a wealth of biodiversity, including the endemic Montserrat Galliwasp *Diploglossus montisserrati* (a very elusive lizard), the highly threatened Mountain Chicken *Leptodactylus fallax* (a large frog, now found only on Montserrat and neighbouring Dominica), and the spectacular Montserrat Oriole *Icterus oberi* (a bird endemic to the island). As in the few other UKOTs where woody habitats provide a reasonable degree of cover on upland areas (notably St Helena, and Pitcairn also), the Centre Hills forest plays an important role in regulating the hydrology of this important watershed, effectively acting as the island's reservoir. Significant ecosystem services are provided by other types of woody habitats elsewhere in the UKOTs. For example, mangroves provide nursery grounds for economically important fishery species, as well as coastal protection against the impacts of hurricanes and storm surges. In the Caribbean UKOTs in particular, however, pressures of coastal development have resulted in the loss of much of this important habitat.

Another habitat which has been much reduced in extent across the lower-lying Caribbean UKOTs in particular is coastal tropical dry forest. This varies in form, according to local conditions and the degree of its slow recovery from clearance, from a dwarf shrub community to a habitat which supports much taller trees. Endemic woody plants occur within this habitat, such as *Acacia anegadensis* in BVI and *Rondeletia anguillensis* in Anguilla. Even where it is relatively low-growing (and often dismissed as "scrub") this xeric woodland provides the natural habitat for species such as the endemic Blue Iguana *Cyclura lewisii* on Grand Cayman. On the same island, the few surviving pockets of taller growth, including parts of the Mastic Reserve and, closer to George Town, the Ironwood Forest, are home to species including the endemic Ghost Orchid *Dendrophylax fawcettii*. Recently threatened by a proposed road development, protection of the Ironwood Forest became a *cause célèbre* amongst local residents, increasingly sensitive to the loss of their natural heritage. UKOTCF is currently engaged with partners in BVI, TCI and the Cayman Islands in an EU-funded project to enhance protection of these tropical dry forest habitats, through the implementation of integrated management plans (see front page story in *Forum News* 37, [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)). On the most elevated areas of BVI (Sage Mountain, on Tortola), the greater rainfall results in xeric woodland grading into moist forest containing many tree species including West Indian Mahogany *Swietenia mahogany* and Bulletwood *Manilkara bidentata*.

In addition to clearance of wooded habitats for development and agriculture, introduced insect pests have had a devastating impact in a number of cases. The following three examples all relate to the designated national tree in their respective UKOTs. The endemic Bermuda Cedar *Juniperus bermudiana* was once dominant across much of Bermuda's landscape, and provided an important source of timber for a range of uses – indeed, the demands of ship building reduced the Cedar population substantially before its recovery in the late nineteenth century. However, the accidental introduction of the scale insects *Carulaspis minima* and *Lepidosaphes newsteadii* in the 1940s resulted in losses of around 95%, and surviving mature trees are now very sparsely distributed. On St Helena, the accidentally introduced scale insect *Orthozia insignis* threatened the endemic



*The Blue Iguana Cyclura lewisii, endemic Grand Cayman; this individual has been colour tagged, as part of a very successful, locally based captive breeding programme (Photograph: Mike Pienkowski, UKOTCF).*





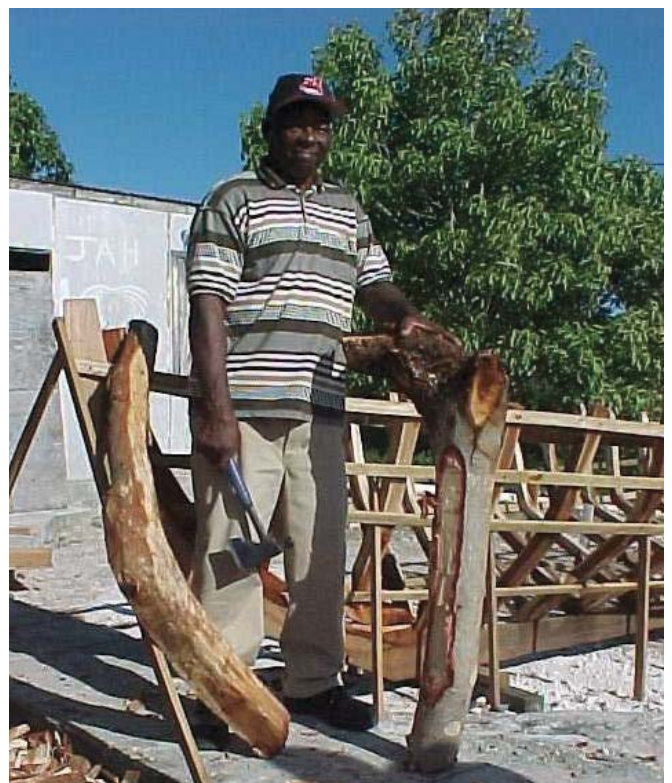
Part of the trail through the Mastic Reserve (Grand Cayman), which includes important pockets of tropical dry forest, the increasingly threatened and fragmented habitat of the Blue Iguana and other notable species (Photograph: Oliver Cheesman, UKOTCF)

Gumwood *Commidendrum robustum* with extinction in the 1990s, until the release of the ladybird *Hyperaspis pantherina* brought the pest under control. Extensive Gumwood restoration work is now underway, under the auspices of the St Helena National Trust's Millennium Forest project. More recently, the arrival in TCI of yet another scale insect, *Toumeyella parvicornis*, has devastated the local variety of the Caribbean Pine *Pinus caribaea* var. *bahamensis*, stands of which provide a distinctive type of woodland habitat, only found on islands of the Bahamas archipelago. It is suspected that this pest was introduced accidentally from the USA with commercially grown Christmas trees.

The perilous status of some of the UKOTs' indigenous tree species is exemplified by the situation on St Helena, which retains some reasonably extensive wooded areas, although these are much modified by historic habitat loss and incursions by introduced species. The St Helena Olive *Nesiota elliptica* (once common in parts of the island) had been thought extinct, until a single plant was rediscovered in the wild in 1977. Desperate attempts to propagate from this individual brought some success, but its death in 1994 was followed by the loss of the last progeny in cultivation (and hence the extinction of this endemic, single-species genus) in 2003. In 1982, a single individual of another tree thought to be long extinct, the Bastard Gumwood *Commidendrum rotundifolium*, was discovered on an inaccessible cliff. This individual died just four years later, but attempts to maintain and propagate from its progeny (currently

one mature plant) continue, and the recent discovery of another, single wild individual in a remote location has improved the outlook for this species. Several other species, once common, are highly vulnerable to extinction, with just a few individuals remaining, or (where propagation has been more successful) with a very narrow genetic base. These include the following, all members of endemic genera (and, in the first two cases, the only representative species): the He Cabbage *Pladaroxylon leucadendron* (severely threatened by competition from invasive plants); St Helena Boxwood *Melissia begoniifolia* (unknown for 100 years, until rediscovered in 1998); St Helena Ebony *Trochetiopsis ebenus* (once thought to have been grazed to extinction by introduced goats, until the rediscovery of two individuals on a remote undercliff). Whilst the "resurrection" of species thought lost is a cause for celebration, their continued survival relies on the considerable efforts of local conservationists, and collaborators from institutions such as the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, which has been particularly active in support of plant conservation across the UKOTs.

Trees and other woody plants provide materials with a range of traditional uses in a number of UKOTs. For example, Caicos Islanders benefited for many years from trade with Haiti, using locally produced sloops. These were traditionally made from locally harvested West Indian Mahogany *Swietenia mahogani* (for the outer keel), Locust *Lysiloma latisiliquum* (the contorted limbs of which could be harvested to make the curved ribs, without the need to fell the tree), and lighter woods for the planking to cover the ribs. Being exceptionally hard and durable, Holy Lignum Vitae *Guaiaecum sanctum* was used for making pulleys and blocks, and was so prized that it was once exported to Jamaica on a significant scale. Smaller versions of these sloops are still made by a dwindling number of boat



Mr Headley Forbes, one of the few remaining boat builders on Middle Caicos (TCI), shaping locally harvested wood for a traditional design of sloop (Photograph: Neil Saxton).



builders in the Caicos Islands today, and (on an even smaller scale) model boats are carved, traditionally from Gum Elemi *Bursera simaruba*.

Certain tree species are associated with local crafts such as furniture making, including *Trochetopsis ebenus* on St Helena, and Yellow Wood *Zantboxylum flavum* on Bermuda (this species was nearly extirpated by early settlers, as its wood was so highly prized). On Pitcairn, a range of curios are carved, particularly from the wood of Miro *Thespesia populnea*, Toa *Cordia subcordata* and Man Fern *Cyathea medullaris*, and fruit trees provide an important local source of food. Elsewhere, species provide the traditional source of materials for a wide range of woven and plaited products, such as baskets, mats, ropes and hats (as well for thatch roofing). In TCI, these include White Top Palm *Sabal palmetto*, Silver Top Palm *Coccothrinax* spp and Buffalo Top Palm *Thrinax* spp, the fronds of which may be used in combination with the leaves of other plants such as Fanner Grass in the production of some items. In addition, folk medicine in a number of UKOTs draws on plants including local (native or introduced) trees and shrubs. On Middle Caicos, for example, the most commonly used medicinal plants include Lignum Vitae *Guaiacum officinale*, Berry Bush *Eugenia axillaris*, Pawpaw *Carica papaya* and Strongback *Bourreria ovata*.

As the above, extremely summarised account indicates, forestry (by its generally recognised meaning) is practiced in very few UKOTs, and on only a very small scale. However, the importance of woody habitats in a broad sense is considerable in many UKOTs, not least in terms of biodiversity value. This, in turn, underpins economic value, either through ecosystem services or as a basis for ecotourism – which provides a more sustainable model for development than has been embraced in the past, notably in the Caribbean region. In many cases, the maintenance (or realisation) of these values for wooded habitats relies on considerable conservation effort, directed at particular, highly vulnerable species, or through habitat restoration and protection measures. This, in itself, represents a particular challenge in the UKOTs, as their status excludes them from many international funding mechanisms, whilst resources for conservation provided by the UK Government are very limited. As it has responsibility for the UKOTs under international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, it would be good to see greater commitment from the UK Government – in this, the International Year of Forests – to protecting such valuable natural resources across all the Territories.

**Oliver D. Cheesman**

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

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## Association news

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### Queen's Award for Forestry winner announced

**W**e are pleased to announce that the winner of the CFA Queen's Award for Forestry is Professor Jolanda Roux. Jolanda is a native of South Africa and currently holds the position of Professor at the University of Pretoria in the DST/NRF Centre for Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) with the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute. She is also an honorary Professor of the Chinese Academy of Forestry. The focus of her work is tree pathology and mycology and the long-term survival of trees. She has published widely on tree health and successfully supervised PhD, MSc and honours students in Forest pathology and microbiology. She is also a field extension officer responsible for presenting field days to foresters, training them in disease and pest recognition and management aspects.

The Queen's Award carries a cash prize of £2000 which Jolanda plans to use for travel to Brazil and Uruguay later this year.



### Life Members support Young Forester Award

**T**he CFA Life Members have shown their support to the next generation of foresters by contributing £1 450 in donations to the Young Forester Award Appeal. This is a tremendous response to our appeal and will go towards the next Young Forester Award which will be launched

later this year. If you would like to send a donation to support this valuable training opportunity for young foresters then please contact us at [cfa@cfa-international.org](mailto:cfa@cfa-international.org). For more information on the YFA please visit [www.cfa-international.org/YFA.html](http://www.cfa-international.org/YFA.html)

## CFA Regional Award presented to Forestry Tasmania



*Adrian Kloeden (Chairman Forestry Tasmania), Bob Gordon (Managing Director Forestry Tasmania), Senator Joe Ludwig (Federal Forestry Minister), Tony Bartlett (member of CFA Governing Council).*

**A** CFA Regional Award was presented to Forestry Tasmania at a recent function in the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra. This was the first time a Regional Award in the SE Asia Pacific Region has been presented to a Corporation.

Over 300 guests gathered for a Gala Industry Dinner on 2011 World Forestry Day March 21 which was hosted by the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) and the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA). Among the guests were industry leaders, foresters, politicians, government representatives and foreign embassy officials. The occasion celebrated the UN International Year of Forests, and also marked the transition to a new Industry body, the Australian Forest Products Association, being formed from NAFI and Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council (A3P).

The Award was introduced by Tony Bartlett, member of CFA Governing Council and Forestry Manager for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, and presented by Federal Forestry Minister Senator Joe Ludwig. The Medal of Excellence and Certificate was received on behalf of Forestry Tasmania by the Managing Director Bob Gordon, together with Forestry Tasmania Chairman Adrian Kloeden. The Award acknowledges excellence in successful Eucalypt regeneration in Native Forest.

**Michael Bleby**

CFA Regional Coordinator  
SE Asia and Pacific Region

## CFA AGM 2011

**T**he 2011 AGM will be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August at 1600 UK time. As in recent years we will be holding it over the internet in order to provide access to as many of our members as possible. More details of the process will be sent to members via email and will also be posted on our website.

Being an international organisation it is not possible to hold a meeting at a time that is convenient to members in all countries and in this regard we realise that the AGM will be held at a rather unsociable time for members in SE Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. For this we apologise and hope that members in those areas will be able to attend with the help of a few cups of strong coffee!

## Pacific forestry professionals to work closer together

**D**elegates to the 7<sup>th</sup> ANZIF Conference agreed that forestry professionals in the Pacific region will work closer together on such matters as promotion and advocacy for the production and use of timber and other forest products, the sustainable management of forests and the need for greater professional forestry input into forest policies in the region.

ANZIF is the four-yearly joint conference between the New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) and the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA). The 2011 conference was supported by the Commonwealth Foundation and the CFA and attracted participation from forestry professionals from the wider Pacific region.

Over 300 forestry professionals from 20 countries assembled at Sky City, Auckland for the conference "Pacific Forestry – Growing a Forestry Future". During the conference, delegates



debated a wide range of issues facing forests, forestry and forestry professionals, before agreeing to a set of 20 items which have been referred to the NZIF, the IFA and the CFA for further action.

“Delegates were united in the need for greater recognition of the value of sustainably managed forests and for recognition that timber and other forest products are essential for society and have environmental benefits not found in many products used by modern society that are not derived from forests”, said Dr Andrew McEwen, President of the NZIF.

The conference also called for greater support for forestry professionals in smaller Pacific countries from the NZIF, IFA and CFA. “During the conference steps were taken to initiate a network of forestry professionals to increase engagement with our Pacific neighbours and to investigate ways in which the NZIF and IFA might facilitate exchanges of personnel and

experience and promote the use of professional standards including codes of ethics” said Dr McEwen. “This is certainly something I am keen to see happen and will work with my colleagues in NZIF and with the IFA and CFA to see what we can do to help.”

“It is also a concern that governments throughout the region, including Australia and New Zealand, have reduced the role of professional forestry advisers, despite the importance of forests in contributing to carbon capture and storage”, said Dr Peter Volker, President of the IFA. “Our Pacific neighbours are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts as a result of our domestic forest policies,” he added.

**Andrew McEwen**  
President, NZIF

## Experiences with SPGS in UGANDA

The first time I got wind of Commonwealth Forestry Association was in 2009 during an informal conversation with a close friend who happens to be an old member of the Association. I was informed that CFA promotes the professional development of the next generation foresters but more importantly, and of direct impact to me, was the fact that it sponsors young foresters below 35 years of age to acquire skills and knowledge in professional forestry by hosting short designated placements in a commonwealth country other than their country of citizenship. This information swept me off my feet and prompted my submission of application for membership and Young Forester Award.

Six months down the line after the application I had not received communication from CFA or an indication on the progress of the award. I kept on guessing what could be happening and especially given that along period of time had passed. Despite these thoughts I kept on focusing on the ultimate prize, three months of placement with a prestigious organization in a foreign country. It was not long before I was announced as one the winners of the Young forester award 2010/2011 and had secured placement with SPGS. Quickly, I began to prepare for departure by making sure that I acquire the necessary travel documents plus inquiry on general information about lifestyle in Uganda as this could enable me to understand how to relate with the natives.

Finally, the D-day of placement with SPGS became a reality on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011 when I landed at Entebbe International airport a few minutes to 11 pm. I received a warm welcome expressed by the hospitality and smiles I saw on the faces of those who came to pick us at the airport. I was later taken to a comfort zone next to the capital city, Kampala a place where neighbors can afford to say hi to a foreigner and embrace him as well.

After a few weeks of integration with SGS community which was made smooth by the leadership of two shrewd principals Paul, the Chief Technical Director and Alan, the Project Manager, life at SPGS was worth calling for more. The professionalism, office etiquette as well as the open and sincere communication between seniors and juniors was worth noting. Ms Celia, a senior plantation officer with SPGS who doubles as the CFA

Youth Officer was also instrumental in making sure that I had a comfortable stay in Uganda with SPGS.

I participated in most activities being undertaken by SPGS including trainings on basic plantation establishment skills, monitoring the performance of contracted clients as well as general routine office work. It was very exciting to be part of a team that as providing up to 50% reimbursement of plantation establishment costs and at the same time providing needed technical advice on what to plant, where to plant, how to plant, when to plant and what to plant for. This all round initiative has revolutionized the way Ugandans look at the private sector. They can now fully appreciate that empowering the private sector to engage in commercial forestry has had a huge impact on the social, economic and environmental status of Uganda by stimulating the creation of additional rural jobs, industrial growth as well as opportunities for further financing of the initiative from carbon markets. All these successes attest to the fact that the populace and especially the private sector in Uganda has received the message being passed to them by SPGS that money grows on trees. The results have been admirable, 20, 500 Ha of serious commercial plantations have been established by over 200 SPGS contracted clients. Cheer SPGS!!

Every activity has been a unique learning opportunity for me. One on one interaction with hardworking SPGS staff together with contracted clients and office visitors has taught me how provision of incentives can change people's perceptions towards commercial forestry. Thanks Charles Odeke, Senior Plantation Officer SPGS for constantly bombarding me with the lesson that it is possible to deliver needed results even under pressure with minimum supervision.

Throughout the placement I kept on reflecting about the applicability of lessons drawn from the success of SPGS in Kenya and the rest of Africa despite the fact that we are unique in aspects of geography, climate and infrastructure. Let me highlight for instance in Kenya, large scale commercial forest plantations are owned by the government and there is minimal involvement of the private sector. Land for forestry development on private lands is also limited due to the competing uses for land especially agriculture. The situation is further complicated by the rising population which stands at 38 Million people that



necessitates conversion of more land from forestry to agriculture. All has not been lost yet due to these challenges, replicating efforts such as SPGS community support in Kenya is one of the effective way of enticing the private sector into commercial forestry. Provision of a mix of incentives whether direct or indirect such as free seedling coupled with regular follow ups backed with technical advice has the potential of revolutionizing private sector involvement in commercial forestry in Kenya.

Overall, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Commonwealth Forestry Association, Commonwealth Foundation and Sawlog production Grant Scheme for their unwavering support during 13 weeks of placement. You have immensely

contributed to my career development. You have just sparked of my full participation in development of forestry. I envisage transforming the existing community forest associations in to vibrant institutions with the full capacity for petitioning the government to provide incentives for development of commercial forestry in Kenya.

**Chisika Sylvester**

**CFA/YFA winner 2010/11**

*(The report from Chidiebere Ofoegbu, the second YFA winner, will appear in September's CFA Newsletter)*

## Julian Evans elected ICF Vice-President

**W**e are pleased to announce that Julian Evans has been elected Vice-president of the Institute of UK Chartered Foresters (ICF). Julian is a Vice-President of



the CFA and through his appointment we look forward to strengthening our working relationship with the ICF. For more information on the work of the ICF please visit their website at [www.charteredforesters.org](http://www.charteredforesters.org)

## Happy Birthday to us!

**T**hanks to the efforts of our many members throughout the years the CFA has reached a landmark of 90 years

since its inception. We look forward to celebrating our Centenary in 2021!

## New website

**T**hose of you with internet access will have noticed that our website has changed. After 10 years we thought that a new look was due and we hope that you like the results. Please let us know what you think, good

or bad! It's your website and we want to make sure that it works for you.

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# Forest Scenes

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## The African Forest Forum

**T**he forests of Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) are varied, rich in biological diversity and supply a variety of products and services for rural and urban communities. However, in the last several decades much has been lost to deforestation and degradation. In order to contain this numerous policy, legislative and institutional reforms as well as initiatives, programmes and projects have been initiated. Effective management and use of Africa's forests is a priority to public as well as private actors but there has been limited

success in analysing lessons in a systematic and unbiased way to support these efforts.

The African Forest Forum (AFF) which 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 the socio-economic wellbeing of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment, was conceived to address, among other things, this need. The purpose of AFF is to provide a platform for information

sharing and expertise 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, promote economic and social development and protect the environment.

The Forum was established on January 26, 2007 and was registered in Kenya as an international NGO on December 06, 2007. In 2008 it was registered in Tanzania and Niger.

By March 2011, there were over 600 members, who make their time and knowledge available to achieve AFF's mission. Members come from 44 countries of Africa as well as 13 countries from outside. Forum members are active professionals from public institutions, the private sector, NGOs, the academia, civil society as well as from development partners.

AFF has a vision to be the leading forum that links and unites stakeholders in African forestry within and outside the continent. To achieve this mission the AFF is guided by three strategic objectives:

1. To build and strengthen **networking** among the many and varied stakeholders in forestry in Africa with the purpose of sharing relevant information.
2. To develop, solicit funding for, and **implement specific programmes**, projects and activities that address the priority issues and opportunities in African forestry; and,
3. To raise the profile of forestry, highlight threats to forest resources and the environment, and champion better management of African forests through **advocacy work**.

The current (2008-2011) activities of AFF are in seven areas:

1. Information generation, sharing and uptake,
2. Good forest governance,
3. Effects of, and mitigation and adaptation to, climate change,
4. Forest-water relations and management,
5. Strengthening Africa in international and regional dialogues on forestry and related areas,
6. Rehabilitation of public forest plantations in eastern Africa, and

7. The potential for collaboration between African and Swedish forest institutions.

The activities are expected to expand considerably from 2012. Some of the key areas to be taken up include the food-fibre-fuel nexus, trans-boundary forestry related issues, forest certification, national forest programs (nfps), rehabilitation of degraded forests and lands, capacity building in various areas, conservation agriculture with trees, agroforestry practices, and activities related to the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative of the African Union Commission.

AFF works through its members and the Secretariat. Networking through electronic media is 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. In executing its projects, programmes and activities, AFF employs one or more of the following approaches:

- Constitutes task forces, think tanks and committees to analyse and give advice on specific issues, problems and potentials,
- Commissions experts and institutions to carry out studies and research tasks to generate knowledge,
- Organises workshops, seminars and conferences,
- Initiates and implements pilot projects with African and/or other partner institutions,
- Issues reports, publications and other relevant material emanating from its work,
- Provides a systematic information base on forests and trees in Africa, and
- Participates at relevant international and regional meetings on forests.

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**Prof. Godwin Kowero**  
Executive Secretary  
African Forest Forum

## Conservation through Cultivation and Analog Forestry as forest management Tools in Cameroon

**T**he Centre for Nursery Development and Eru Propagation, CENDEP, is a grassroots organization based in Limbe in the South West Region of Cameroon. CENDEP promotes sustainable management of natural resources by empowering her target group with tested and successful natural resource management technologies. Our target group consists of small scale farmers and forest resource users who are extremely vulnerable to climate change because of their high dependence on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, and their low adaptive capacity. During the last 10 years our focus has been on the cultivation and sustainable management of *Gnetum spp* known locally as "eru". It is a forest vegetable with high

economic and social importance in the forest regions of Cameroon and the Central African sub region. It now faces serious threat from over exploitation and habitat loss. Eru management activities are carried out in the lowland forest regions of Cameroon. In 2008 CENDEP also started introducing analog forestry in the North West Region of Cameroon. Through the Analog Forestry program we are assisting 10 communities to establish permanent forests to buffer extreme weather events and also to act as potential carbon sinks. The interest and participation of the local population is driven by their assurance on the water supply services of permanent forests.





*A remnant forest in the Bafut Fandom*

We also promote ‘assisted natural regeneration’ of degraded forest areas through enrichment planting, using appropriate tree species of socio-economic and ecological importance. Invasive species, such as eucalyptus, are eradicated from degraded forests and water catchment areas. Fire tracing done to protect the remnant forests. We contribute in strengthening local institutions for sustainable natural resource management.

Achievements so far attained achieved include:

**Analog Forestry:** This is a new concept in Cameroon and our first task was to sensitize all the stakeholders and especially get government support for the initiative. Through sensitization we were able to get approval and involvement of government and local administrative authorities in project activities like tree planting and participation in monitoring & and evaluation (M&E) meetings. Both administrations gave a go ahead for agriculture in water catchment areas, permitting the agricultural phase of analogue forestry. Education authorities welcomed outdoor nature activities in schools. One local NGO adopted Analogue Forestry in her area of operation and three additional communities were included in the project. Seven natural resource management committees were trained on tree nursery establishment and this resulted in the establishment of 7 community nurseries. 11000 tree seedlings were produced and part out-planted in 31 ha of degraded forest land during three planting seasons (3 years). Six trained farmers produced and sold tree seedlings to the project and community. 210 farmers were trained on sustainable farming practices.

Over 20 different tree species were produced in the 7 community tree nurseries and used for reforestation activities. Some of the species were sorts species that were disappearing from the community. The 210 farmers acquired training in different soil fertility improvement and conservation techniques, allowing them to increase farm production. 41 ha of farmland were released to marginalized farmers and one of them remarked:

“Since the death of my husband, all our family land was seized by my in-laws and I was left without any farmland. Growing crops and providing food for my household was a constant challenge but thanks to CENDEP and its analogue forestry project I am now able to grow food crops again on allocated communal land with substantial increases that feeds my children throughout the year”.

We restructured some village forest management institutions permitting women to play an active role in forest management activities. We promoted forest based income generating activities like bee keeping and linked over 500 bee farmers to buyers, enabling them to market over 5 tons of honey. Approximately 37,000 people shall benefit from the ensuing ecosystem services of the regenerated/created/protected forests such as water, biodiversity, and ecotourism.

The local people are trained on technical issues of analog forestry such as farm design, seed collection, seed treatment, nursery establishment and management, conducting a physiognomic study etc. Physiognomic studies are essential because they allow the local people to identify keystone species necessary for the establishment of an analog forest. A Keystone species can be described as a tree species that acts as an indicator of faunal activity within the forest ecosystem (habitat, feeding, resting nests.) etc) Their presence or absence may determine the abundance of wildlife (mammals, rodents, birds etc) to the casual observer. In analog forestry it is important to identify these species especially as we are interested in bringing back lost plants and animals to the area. Keystone species can be identified through observation or interviews with community members such as hunters and early settlers. The local people usually assist in the identification of these and other species by naming them in their dialect. Community capacity building in the description of forest structure and function is an on-going process undertaken by CENDEP. This is essential in guiding them to select tree species to use in replicating a forest with the same structure and function as the remnant one. The local people are not only interested in restoring the degraded watershed but also in sighting more wildlife in their community.

Funding for our analog forestry program was provided by the Netherlands Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, IUCN NL through the Ecosystem Grants Program. We are currently replicating analog forestry in three other communities in the Bafut Fandom in the North West Region of Cameroon. Funding for this is reached through a start up grant from the Rufford Small Grant Foundation. You can read more about our analog forestry program on the nature and poverty portal ([http://www.natureandpoverty.net/nc/find/my-documents/docshow/analogue\\_forestry\\_documentationpdf/](http://www.natureandpoverty.net/nc/find/my-documents/docshow/analogue_forestry_documentationpdf/)) or on our website [www.cendep.org](http://www.cendep.org).



*Local people undertaking a physiognomic study*

**Cultivation and sustainable management of *Gnetum* spp:**

We trained over 255 farmers on how to grow Eru and organized them into ten (10) farmer organizations comprising 145 members. The purpose of the project is to assist the trainees to contribute to forest conservation and improve their livelihoods by diversifying their production through the introduction of a high value NTFP, non wood forest product into their farming system. Nine Eru seedling multiplication farms were established to cater for the seed needs of the trained farmers and over 500 farmers who showed interest in Eru domestication. Two members of the field staff provided technical assistance (seed multiplication techniques, nursery management, farm establishment and management, harvesting techniques, monitoring, etc.) to the trained farmers enabling them to overcome technical problems encountered in raising Eru seedlings. This resulted in the production of 6630 Eru seedlings in the nine group

nurseries. These seedlings were distributed amongst the 145 group members and/or used for the establishment of group farms. In terms of conserving the vegetable there has been success, especially in ex-situ conservation through the establishment of nurseries and pilot farms that now serve as sources of seed materials for seedling production.

Funding for this program is provided by the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (IICO). You can get details on this program on ([http://www.natureandpoverty.net/nc/find/my-documents/docshow/cultivation\\_sustainable\\_management\\_of\\_eru\\_pdf/](http://www.natureandpoverty.net/nc/find/my-documents/docshow/cultivation_sustainable_management_of_eru_pdf/)).

**Wirsiy Eric** – Knowledge Management Officer, CENDEP  
*with contributions from*

## Development of a workable LVS in Guyana

I am writing these notes in early May, just a few days after the conclusion of the long process for development of a Voluntary Partnership Agreement between Indonesia and the European Union<sup>1</sup>, an agreement which may take another nine months to be ratified to prevent illegally harvested timber being exported to the EU. I mention this because if progress seems slow and hesitant in Guyana it may be slow also in larger and more developed countries.

In these notes I discuss some of the ups and downs in the development of a national Legality Assurance System, the term preferred by the Government of Guyana for what is more generally called a legality verification system (LVS). After the work funded by USAID and ITTO described in the last issue of the CFA Newsletter, the continued absence of the legally required annual reports and audited accounts from the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) makes it difficult to assess whether there is any political commitment or practical action to restrain illegal logging. The Norway-Guyana Memorandum of Understanding on avoided deforestation of November 2009<sup>2</sup> required Guyana to 'enter a formal dialogue with the European Union with the intent of joining its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) processes'. The associated Joint Concept Note associated with the MoU was revised on 31 March 2011<sup>3</sup> and requires progress on the REDD+ Governance Development Plan including 'The Government of Guyana and the European Commission will, by September 2011, initiate negotiations on a Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement, in a manner that is consistent with the outcomes of this [national-level] consultation where applicable.'

The Rainforest Alliance verification of progress on the MoU<sup>4</sup> noted that there had been a FLEGT team visit (from the European Forest Institute) in March 2010 and a well-attended workshop in September. However, these events appeared not to lead to government decisions. The Guyana National Bureau of Standards was given the task of developing a national LVS. An undated draft of 16 pages was probably prepared in March 2010 and issued with only minor typing corrections in February 2011 as a formal standard (GYS 496 : 2010, still undated). Compared with the multi-volume LVS prepared in Ghana and Indonesia, the Guyana LVS is sparse. It details some responsibilities for holders of logging concessions: long-term and large-scale Timber Sales Agreements, medium-term and medium-size Wood Cutting Leases, short-term (2-year) and small-scale (<8000 ha) State Forest Permissions, loggers operating on the titled lands of indigenous Amerindian villages, and loggers operating on agricultural and mining leases. The standard also covers briefly the chain of custody. In contrast to the detailed prescriptions in Ghana and Indonesia, the Guyanese standard says nothing at all about the responsibilities of the relevant government agencies, nor how they should coordinate between themselves and with the private sector.

A consequence of the lack of attention to detail was the discovery a month later, in mid-March 2011, by Jamaican Customs of 122 kg of cocaine in bags thrown on top of 130 logs of apparently illegally harvested and illegally exported logs from Guyana. A Chinese trader had been using the documents of an association of small-scale loggers to acquire logs of wamara (*Swartzia leiocalycina*), a hard dark heavy timber which makes strong and easily polished industrial flooring, for export to processors in China<sup>5</sup>. The GFC claimed that it had graded 180 logs a month before for this association/trader, but there was no proof that the 130 logs discovered in Jamaica were from the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.indonesianrainforest.org/irf-news/416-eu-and-indonesia-ink-ambitious-sustainable-logging-deal.html>

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway regarding Cooperation on Issues related to the Fight against Climate Change, the Protection of Biodiversity and the Enhancement of Sustainable Development; with associated Joint Concept Note. Pp.23. <http://www.lcds.gov.gy/images/stories/Documents/MOU.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lcds.gov.gy/images/stories/Documents/JCN%20March%2031%2c%202011.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.lcds.gov.gy/images/stories/Documents/REDD%2b%20Enabling%20Activities%20Verification%20Report%20-%20Rainforest%20Alliance.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Stabroek News news item, Monday 28 March 2011. 'Cocaine in logs shipment may have been destined for China', <http://www.stabroeknews.com/2011/news/stories/03/28/cocaine-in-logs-shipment-may-have-been-destined-for-china/>



same batch. The GFC had clearly not implemented the Ministerial promise from December 2006 that 100 per cent of all shipments would be inspected. The Trade and Customs Department of the Guyana Revenue Authority likewise had failed to inspect the shipment before the container was sealed. Somehow, instead of going to China, the sealed container with the cocaine was switched to a different ship and was found in Jamaica. This event showed non-compliance with both forest and Customs laws<sup>6</sup>. It appears from the Government attempts to quash news

<sup>6</sup> Stabroek News Letter to the Editor, Tuesday March 22, 2011. Systems failures making possible cocaine in timber exports could be easily closed if government would learn from other countries. <http://www.stabroeknews.com/2011/opinion/letters/03/22/systems-failures-making-possible-cocaine-in-timber-exports-could-be-easily-closed-if-government-would-learn-from-other-countries/>

of this shipment that someone connected to very high levels of the government is involved<sup>7</sup>.

It is not obvious why the Government of Guyana felt that a weak LVS would satisfy the Norway-Guyana JCN. We are presently anticipating publication of the report on the LVS by the Efeca consultancy for USAID.

**Janette Bulkan**  
CFA Governing Council

<sup>7</sup> Stabroek News editorial, Tuesday 03 May 2011. 'The Vega Azurit cocaine incident and the Stabroek News "agenda"', <http://www.stabroeknews.com/2011/opinion/editorial/05/03/the-vega-azurit-cocaine-incident-and-the-stabroek-news-'agenda'/>

## Global Witness releases second annual transparency report

**G**lobal Witness published its second unique comparative study of transparency in the forest sector in June 2011. The web-based report shows improvements in governments' willingness to engage with civil society in each country, but sounds an overall warning to the international community that access to information on forest management remains hugely insufficient.

Research for the Forest Sector Annual Transparency Report for 2010 was conducted in five countries – Cameroon, Ecuador, Ghana, Liberia and Peru – between July and December 2010 by independent national NGOs and local partners. It represents the first time that grassroots data on community involvement in forest policy has been compared and contrasted across several countries.

Under the programme '*Making the Forest Sector Transparent*' a red-amber-green traffic light system was developed and first piloted in 2009 to measure access to information and to decision-making. Data from each country against a common set of 78 transparency indicators has been published on the programme website: [www.foresttransparency.info](http://www.foresttransparency.info). For each indicator, full source details and the relevant websites are provided for each law, regulation, or other document assessed.

### Key findings

Forest sector transparency is increasingly recognised as an issue and discussed openly. The rhetoric of forest authorities and other government agencies is positive about access to information and consultation processes. The most significant positive change is in access to decision-making by ordinary citizens (and less so in active dissemination of specific documents). The dynamics are of course different in different countries but in all cases there is a difference in how communities are increasingly at the core of decisions about their forests, from grass-roots empowerment right up to national-level policy-making:

- In Cameroon, a number of consultation events have been held to discuss revisions to the forest law in order to meet the requirements of a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with Europe.
- In Ecuador, programme partner Grupo FARO succeeded in expanding the space for consultation on the definitive national REDD+ strategy, the National Programme Document.
- In Ghana, the programme has enabled nearly 10,000 people to engage directly with local officials in local meetings. These interactions – happening as they do at the level forest-dependent people operate – are key to long-term change in the inter-relationships between people and forestry.
- The legal establishment of, and good governance within, Community Forestry Development Committees in Liberia is an important milestone in progressing community rights. These committees represent community interests in relations with the state and logging companies, and are set to oversee significant public expenditure.
- In Peru, after many failed previous attempts, and in 2009 loss of life, a draft bill for free prior informed consultation of ordinary citizens, including indigenous peoples as been agreed. When passed this will ensure the government consults civil society on any new legislation. The draft law is a critical point awaiting adoption by the Executive.

### Year-on-year change

For four countries, direct comparisons can be made between 2009 and 2010. Over the 78 indicators, the assessment shows little change between 2009 and 2010, and forest sector transparency remains generally poor. Eight clear instances of improvement, and four steps backwards were recorded.

Nine key indicators for 2010		Cameroon	Ecuador	Ghana	Liberia	Peru
1	Is there a Freedom of Information Act?					
2	Is the codified forest law available?					
3	Are ownership and forest land use maps available?					
4	Are the final permit / contract documents made public?					
5	Is information on permitted logging volumes (quotas) public?					
6	Is there a strategic process to assess priorities between development options?					
7	Is there a stakeholder consultation process regarding the use of community funds?					
8	Is there a national forest forum?					
9	Are figures for collection and distribution published?					

Where positive change has occurred over the past year this seems to be due to two drivers:

- International policy levers: The Trade Promotion Agreement between Peru and the USA, the UN-REDD programme in Ecuador, and the VPA processes in Liberia, Ghana, and Cameroon, have all provided opportunities to further transparency and civil society engagement.
- National policy change: Revisions of legislation affecting the forest sector have tended to include a step change towards transparency and greater recognition of the role of civil society in holding duty-bearers to account. The Freedom of Information Act in Liberia, and the draft consultation law in Peru, provide examples.

Positive change between 2009 and 2010		
→	Cameroon	The first ever National Forest Forum was held
→	Ghana	A Freedom of Information bill was tabled in parliament
→	Liberia	A forest forum process was initiated
→	Liberia	A Freedom of Information Act was passed
→	Peru	The forest authority website was relaunched
→	Peru	A range of discussion forums have been instituted
→	Peru	Generalised maps of forest permits have become available
→	Peru	An economic ecological zoning protocol has been written
Steps backwards		
→	Cameroon	Non-transparent allocation of small permit areas increased
→	Ghana	Inappropriate use of salvage permits increased
→	Liberia	Lack of transparency over development of REDD+ policies
→	Peru	Repeal of controversial law also withdrew some progressive elements



There are some major areas where lack of disclosure is persistent and undermines governance and accountability. Often this is at a basic level, such as concession contracts, forest management plans, and the relationship between goods and services provided, and revenues generated and redistributed. Whilst forest sector transparency is increasingly recognised as an issue and discussed openly, the regulatory frameworks for 'carbon concessions' or land deals remain almost non-existent, and a dangerous policy vacuum prevails. There is a real risk in this situation that governments and their people will be locked in to unfavourable contracts.

### Next steps

The *Making the Forest Sector Transparent* programme has two more years to refine the methodology and introduce the tool to new countries. NGOs in Guatemala and DRC, recently joined the programme, and the Livelihoods and Forestry Programme in Nepal is the first initiative outside the programme to adopt the report card for its own purposes.

There are plans to revise the scope and methodology so that can be applied more consistently and evolve into a stand-alone tool for wider application. Such revision is likely to generate report cards targeted at specific other frameworks, for example a freedom of information legal framework, VPA, or a transparency checklist alongside evolving environmental services or forest carbon schemes.

David Young is the Team Leader for *Making the Forest Sector Transparent*. For those interested in adopting or adapting the report card tool he can be contacted on [dyoung@globalwitness.org](mailto:dyoung@globalwitness.org). In addition to the website, a print version of the annual transparency report, country-specific reports, and a full set of indicators, are downloadable from <http://www.foresttransparency.info/report-card/downloads/>. Full contact details of the seven programme partners is also available from the project website [www.foresttransparency.info/about-us/partners/](http://www.foresttransparency.info/about-us/partners/).

**David Young**

Team leader, Forest Sector Transparency  
Global Witness

## Greenhouse gas? Put a cork in it!

I was forcibly reminded by an article in Italy's *La Repubblica* of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 that carbon dioxide, one of the main greenhouse gases, is produced in large amounts through wine-making. Evidently my favourite tippie is responsible for 120 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> produced by the fermentation of grapes yearly in Italy alone, or 23% of the national target under the Kyoto Protocol. According to the article 1.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent are emitted for each bottle produced! But before renouncing wine for ever I read on, and was reassured to learn that Italian winemakers, who produce the most wine of any in the world, have taken note and are not only promoting the environmental and greenhouse-gas-ameliorating benefits of cork but are also responsible for the planting of new Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*) plantations.

Cork Oak not only absorbs carbon by photosynthesis throughout its 200 year life but the manufacture of corks emits much less CO<sub>2</sub> than the alternatives of aluminium screw-tops or plastic stoppers. Cork forests, over 80% of which are located in Spain and Portugal, are also home to the some endangered

species such as the Iberian lynx and the Imperial eagle. The first harvest is done at about 25 years of age, and then on a nine to ten year cycle. About 300,000 tonnes of cork are produced annually in Europe, employing about 30,000 people and with a value of around €1.5 billion. Harvesting cork has, however, proved impossible to mechanise; it is skilled but physically hard work, and in Italy at least many of the trained workers are now reaching pensionable age and retiring from the job without young recruits to replace them.

Nevertheless, seventeen of the major Italian wine producers have come together in an alliance to establish 4,000 cork oak trees in Sardinia, a gesture which is not only symbolic of their commitment to cork as a closure for wine bottles but will in due course offset, to some extent, the greenhouse gasses emitted through the making of wine.

**Jim Ball**

President, CFA

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## Meetings

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### The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust Evening at the Royal Geographical Society, London

To celebrate the International Year of Forestry this year we shall be pleased to welcome for the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust Evening at the Royal Geographical Society, London on Tuesday 08 November as our lecturer Professor Jeffery Burley CBE, and CFA Vice President, whose subject will be "The Evolving Role of Forestry".

Jeff Burley is an eminent forester of world repute. With an honours degree in forestry from Oxford and a PhD from Yale, in the late 1960's, Jeff headed the Forest Genetics Research Laboratory of the Agricultural Research Council of Central Africa, living in Zambia and working also in Malawi and Zimbabwe. A distinguished research career followed culminating in Jeff

becoming Director of the Oxford Forestry Institute within the Plant Sciences Department of the University. Jeff is currently Senior Partner in C-Questor LLP, which specializes in carbon sequestration.

Jeff's lecture will consider the evolving role of forestry in conservation; in particular, how forestry policy and management has changed over the last 50 years. Where once the emphasis was on plantation forestry, in more recent times there has been increased recognition of the importance of

natural forests and their role at both national and community level. The Nyika National Park provides a prime example of how these policies and management strategies have evolved.

An Application Form for tickets (£18 per person, the same as last year) can be downloaded from [www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org](http://www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org) (click on the "Events/RGS Evening 2011" button) or obtained from Harry Foot at Stowford Farm, Harford, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0JD. Email [stowfoots@southdevon.org](mailto:stowfoots@southdevon.org). Tel: 01752-892632.

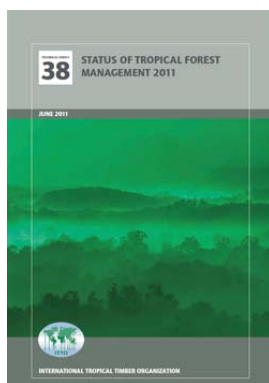
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## Publications

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### ITTO Status of Tropical Forest Management

**I** TTO launched its Status of Tropical Forest Management 2011 report (Technical Series #38) on June 7 in Bern, Switzerland. This report, two years in the making, provides a comprehensive assessment of progress being made towards SFM in each ITTO producer member country and identifies the challenges remaining. Key findings include that the area deemed to

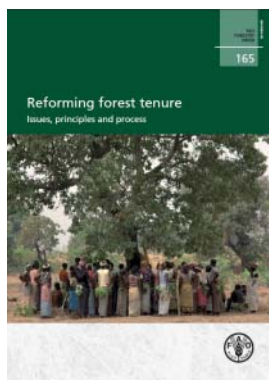


be under sustainable management has grown by 50% over the past 5 years but that several countries continue to struggle to make the transition to sustainability in their tropical forests.

Download from [www.itto.int/news\\_releases/id=2663](http://www.itto.int/news_releases/id=2663)

### Reforming forest tenure – Issues, principles and process

**S** ecure tenure is an important prerequisite for sustainable forest management. More diversified tenure systems could provide a basis for improving forest management and local livelihoods, particularly where the State has insufficient capacity to manage forests. In the past decade many countries have initiated efforts



to reform their tenure arrangements for forests and forest land, devolving some degree of access and management from the State to others, mainly households, private companies and communities. This publication provides practical guidance for policy-makers and others concerned with addressing forest tenure reform.

### Roots for Future Growth: A strategy for Scotland's Forest and Timber Industries 2011-14

**T** he Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies Advisory Group has announced the publication of its new industry strategy which aims to significantly increase the contribution that the sector makes to Scotland. The strategy, Roots for Future Growth, aims to grow the forest and timber sector through investment



and innovation in sustainable resources, processing capacity and products, markets and people. It will also focus on the opportunities that are available in the transition to a low carbon economy. The document can be downloaded at <http://www.forestryscotland.com/forestry/strategy>



# Roots in the Water: Legal Frameworks for Mangrove PES in Vietnam

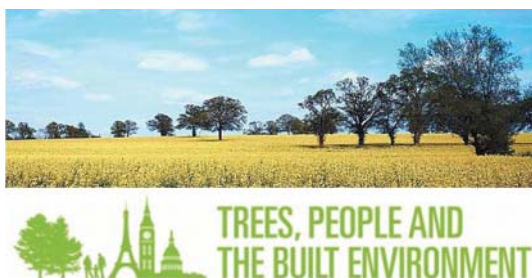
Vietnam's threatened mangrove ecosystems are vital carbon sinks and potential sources of future carbon emissions. With the help of local experts, the Katoomba Group's Legal Initiative completed an in-depth study in 2010 into whether existing Vietnamese legal and regulatory structures support the inclusion of mangrove forests in



project-based approaches to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and increase forest carbon stocks. A just-published issue brief summarizes the results. Amongst, other things, it provides at-a-glance insight into opportunities, challenges, and policy needs for mangrove carbon in Vietnam.

## Trees, People and the Built Environment

The speaker presentation slides from the Trees, People and the Built Environment conference, held on 13-14 April in Birmingham, UK, are now available to download as PDF files from the Institute of Chartered Foresters' website: [www.charteredforesters.org/conference/](http://www.charteredforesters.org/conference/)



The full conference proceedings, which are being produced on behalf of the Conference Partners by the Forestry Commission, will be available later this year.

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## Around the world

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### Australia warns climate change threatens Kakadu park

Australia warned that its World Heritage-listed outback Kakadu wetland, made famous in the "Crocodile Dundee" films, was at severe risk from climate change, as the government faced a growing battle to introduce a carbon tax. Prime Minister Julia Gillard's one-seat majority government is embroiled in an increasingly acrimonious climate policy debate, pitching mining magnates against environment activists including Oscar winning Australian actress Cate Blanchett.

Gillard, struggling to sell her plan to cut greenhouse emissions through a carbon tax and emissions trading, said without global action one of Australia's major tourist areas, Kakadu, would eventually be devastated by rising seas. "Salt water will get into the fresh water in Kakadu, changing the ecology, being a real risk for the native animals that live there, being a real risk for the indigenous communities that still rely on this ecosystem for their bush tucker," Gillard said, referring to native foods.

Gillard's Labor plans to introduce a carbon tax on 1,000 of the country's biggest polluters in 2012, transitioning to emissions

trading three to five years after that. But Gillard needs to convince a handful of Green and independent MPs, who hold the balance of power, to back the scheme, and has yet to convince voters to support the policy. Opinion polls say some 60 percent of voters oppose a carbon tax, with only 30 percent in favor. Mining firms warned this week that the planned carbon pollution cutting scheme would slash investment, output and jobs, demanding the minority government enter talks to recast its ideas. Without strong world climate action Australia, the driest inhabited continent, would suffer some of the worst consequences from rising global temperatures, Gillard said.

The Kakadu Park, a crocodile-infested area near the Alligator Rivers Region of the Northern Territory, covers an area half the size of Switzerland and is one of very few places World Heritage listed for both cultural and natural values. A government-commissioned report modeled the impacts of sea level rise on Kakadu's South Alligator River system for 2030 and 2070, and found rising sea and storm tide levels would carry the sea into fragile freshwater habitats. "The landscapes and native wildlife

we know and love will inevitably change. Our challenge is to minimize the dangers, the impacts and the risks,” Gillard said.

The report was released as a key committee of lawmakers, including Greens and independents backing Gillard’s Labor against a conservative opposition hoping to force fresh elections, try to agree on carbon price details. The committee was looking at a price of between A\$18 and A\$23 (\$19.10-\$24.40) per tonne, the Australian newspaper said on Thursday, without naming sources. A carbon price of A\$18 to A\$23 a tonne would collect between A\$8 billion and A\$10bn a year and would be between the A\$26 recommendation by the government’s main

climate policy adviser and calls by the mining industry for a price of A\$10 per tonne.

The government, wary of its precarious support and recent polls putting conservatives ahead, has promised compensation for households, as well as trade-exposed industries, and said it would unveil full details of its plans in July. The conservatives opposition says it would repeal a carbon tax if elected, as well as any income tax cuts linked to the scheme.

reuters.com

## Bangladesh: Forest cover dips to 10%

**T**he country’s forest cover has shrunk to less than 10 percent of land mass with only 0.02 hectares of per capita forest land, one of the lowest in the world. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Department of Forest, a total of 2.52 million hectares area – nearly 17.4 percent of the land mass – are forests, of which 1.52 million hectares are under direct control of the department.

Recently, satellite image analysis under National Forest Assessment project in association with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that forest areas in Bangladesh are not more than 1.44 million hectares. A population pressure of 1,075 people a square kilometre and lack of environmental planning have led to the country’s forest depletion, which is fastest in South Asia, experts say. Statistics show, the annual deforestation rate in entire South Asia is 0.6 percent and 3.3 percent in Bangladesh.

A country should have at least 25 percent forest coverage to meet the global standards while in Bangladesh it is less than 10 percent including all natural forest and the planted woods.

A joint report of forest department and FAO says 78 percent of forest areas in Bangladesh are disturbed. In the country, the total forest cover in 1990 was 1,491 thousand hectares, 1,468 thousand hectares in 2000, 1,455 in 2005 and in 2010 it was 1,442 thousand hectares, the report adds.

The rapid deforestation has put the country’s biodiversity and wildlife at stake. Over the last 100 years, Bangladesh has lost about 10 percent of its mammalian fauna, three percent avifauna and four percent reptile, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) found in 2004. Another 201 species of the country’s wildlife are threatened with extinction, the local chapter of IUCN says. The country has lost one-horned rhinoceros, Javan rhinoceros, Asiatic two-horned rhinoceros, wild buffalo, nilgai, swamp deer, hog deer, wolf, pink-headed duck, common peafowl and marsh crocodile, says the forest department website.

thedailystar.net

## Brazil: After a long battle, approves an Amazon dam

**B**razil’s environmental agency gave final approval for a giant hydroelectric power plant in the Amazon rain forest that has been at the center of a protracted battle between the government and environmentalists over the fate of indigenous people. After three decades of planning, the environmental agency, Ibama, granted a license to the North Energy consortium for the dam, which will be the world’s third largest, capable of producing 11,200 megawatts of electricity.

Opponents said they would not give up the fight against the Belo Monte dam, which they said would flood a large part of the Xingu River basin, affecting local fishing and forcing tens of thousands of indigenous people from their native lands. “We will not cede an inch,” said Antônia Melo, the coordinator of Xingu Vivo Para Sempre, a group based in Altamira, a city that will be partly flooded. “Our indignation and our strength to fight only increases with every mistake and every lie of this government.”

Belo Monte became a priority for the previous government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who contended that the plant was

critical to Brazil’s future energy needs. His successor, President Dilma Rousseff, has remained committed to the project. The license was granted by the environmental agency after “robust technical analysis,” the government said in a news release. The North Energy consortium will pay \$1.9 billion for “social-environmental measures,” to help people affected by the dam’s construction and to offset environmental effects, an agency spokeswoman said. The government itself has committed \$314 million, she said.

Conservationists have become increasingly critical of Brazil’s efforts to protect the Amazon rain forest. Brazil’s deforestation numbers increased sharply over the past nine months, and the lower house of Congress last week approved a revision of the Forest Code that would open up protected areas to deforestation while granting amnesty to agribusiness developers for previous forest-clearing. The Senate has yet to vote on the measure.

The \$17 billion dam, which is expected to start producing electricity in 2015, would divert the Xingu River along a 62-mile stretch in Pará State. Environmental groups say it will flood more

than 120,000 acres of rain forest and settlements, displacing 20,000 to 40,000 people and releasing large quantities of methane. The Ibama spokeswoman put the number of displaced people at 20,000 but insisted that no indigenous people would be removed from their lands. "This is a tragic day for the Amazon," said Atossa Soltani, executive director of Amazon

Watch. "Despite all the promises the dam builders are making around mitigation and compensation, this dam is going to spell disaster for the local people."

[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

## Brazil: Bow makers unite behind a precious tree

As the earth's forests and other natural resources face growing peril, humans are affected in many unexpected ways. In recent years, musicians have found themselves organizing to save the pernambuco, a medium-size tropical tree native to Brazil and known for its unique red wood. Discovered by French bow makers 250 years ago, it provides the primary – indeed only – wood for making high-end bows for professional musicians. (The tree is also known as the pau-brasil.)

"No comparable substitute is known to bow makers or musicians," the International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative, a charity created by bow makers around the world to finance replanting initiatives in Brazil, says at its Web site. "The rigidity, flexibility, density, and beauty of this wood, combined with its ability to hold a fixed curve, makes pernambuco a unique material that is essential to the craft of bow making and to the musicians who use these bows."

But the tree, which grows primarily in Brazil's Atlantic forest, has been so depleted by logging and agricultural and urban development that it is listed there as endangered. So to aid the institute's replanting efforts, bow and violin makers have crossed a once-inviolable line and are giving up some closely held secrets of their specialized artisanry.

Tom Wilder, a violin maker, restorer and historian of stringed instruments from Montreal, has put together a three-volume, 1,600-page set of books called *The Conservation, Restoration, and Repair of Stringed Instruments and Their Bows*, that reveals the best techniques.

Profits from the book, available at a list price of \$1,395, will go to the I.P.C.I.

[green.blogs.nytimes.com](http://green.blogs.nytimes.com)

## Cameroon: National Assembly – Government tables bills on forestry, IMF

The Government has tabled two bills at the National Assembly for approval which would allow the President of the Republic to ratify a law on forest governance and amendments to the articles of agreement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Bill No. 888/PJL/AN, scrutinised by the Foreign Affairs Committee on June 8 in the ongoing second ordinary session for the 2011 8th legislative period, authorises the President of the Republic to ratify the amendments to the articles of agreement of the International Monetary Fund on improving the representation and participation of member States within it and the expansion of its power with respect to investment and the reform of its executive board. The bill enables Cameroon, member of the group of 24 African countries represented on the IMF executive board, to participate actively in the process of entry into force of the various reforms undertaken since 2008. The ratification of the amendments by the President of the Republic should, at the end of the process, enable Cameroon to hold 276 million Special Drawing Rights instead of the current 185.7 million and 0.103 per cent of voting rights. On government's bench was the Minister Delegate in the Ministry of Finance, Pierre Titti.

The other bill, Bill No. 887/PJL/AN, authorises the President of the Republic to ratify the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between Cameroon and the European Union on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and its by-products with the European Union (FLEGT VPA). The agreement, signed in Brussels, Belgium, on October 6, 2010, aims to improve governance in the forest sector and to ensure that timber exported to the European Union meets all the legal requirements in the country. It also seeks to promote trade in timber and its by-products, promote the development of forest industries and enhance the sector's competitiveness as well as check illegal forest exploitation. Experts say the agreement equally sets out the legal framework and procedures for controlling the legality of timber and its by-products, enhance stakeholders' capacities in the forest sector and encourage investment to ensure sustainable forest management. The Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Prof. Elvis Ngolle provided answers to questions emanating from the bill.

[allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)



## Congo to plant a million hectares of trees by 2020

**T**he Republic of Congo will plant 1 million hectares of trees by 2020 to restore degraded forest and provide wood for paper and fuel. President Denis Sassou N'Guesso made the announcement on the final day of a weeklong summit in the Congolese capital, aimed at tackling deforestation in the Amazon, Congo and Borneo-Mekong forest basins, the three largest in the world.

The Three Forest Basins Summit, organized by N'Guesso, aims to reduce forest destruction and thereby ease climate change. "To reduce the pressure placed on our natural forests by logging and exploitation for wood fuel, the government has decided to put in place a plantation program on an area of one million hectares between now and 2020," N'Guesso said.

The program is likely to cost hundreds of millions of dollars according to Lambert Imbalo, the director of the government's National Reforestation Service and would be funded by public private partnerships. He did not specify an amount. "We already have the backing of the World Bank and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the first tree will be planted

in November," he said. The reforestation program, which will be carried out in various sites across the country, would provide wood for fuel, industrial logging for paper and also restore degraded forest, Imbalo said.

The Amazon, Congo and Borneo-Mekong regions make up 80 percent of the world's equatorial forests, are home to two thirds of the world's land based biodiversity and are seen as crucial in the fight against climate change. However they are also home to some 300 million people, many of whom live in poverty and rely on forests to survive, according to a new report released by the FAO this week.

Deforestation rates across the three regions have slowed by 25 percent in the last decade but 5.4 million hectares are still being cut down each year, mainly to make way for farming, the FAO report said. Guyana warned on Friday that developing nations could abandon their efforts to protect forests if Western countries do not provide promised conservation funding.

reuters.com

## Ghana: Journalists call for strong forest policies

**T**he Environmental Journalists Association (EJA) of Ghana has called on the government and other stakeholders, particularly the Forestry Commission, to develop and implement strong policies that would promote sustainable use of the forests.

According to the Association, private companies and civil society have a very important role to play by independently monitoring all parties involved, raising awareness on forests as well as supporting grassroots initiatives.

"We also want to challenge the Forestry Commission to be up and doing to ensure that its responsibility of protecting our forests is properly discharged," it stated.

These were contained in a statement signed in Accra and copied to Public Agenda by the programmes coordinator of EJA, George Erskine, on the occasion of the World Environment Day 2011.

This year's celebration focused on the forests hence the theme: "Forests: nature at your service".

The association observed that "a careful study of Ghana's forest reserves shows that we are losing most of our reserves. This situation requires attention from government and all stakeholders interested in protecting the environment. It seems many Ghanaians do not understand the importance of the forests but they play multiple roles, providing livelihood, refuge for many species, and clean air for all."

The statement again encouraged the government to put in place policies that would control activities that are likely to destroy the forests.

"Some of these activities include--commercial logging,--unplanned bush fires, and--gathering wood for fuel. We are likely to lose a lot, if our forests are not protected from dangerous human activities since they provide many important natural resources, such as timber, fuel, rubber, paper and medicinal plants."

It further emphasized that Forests help sustain the quality and availability of freshwater supplies. It also explained that more than three quarters of the World's accessible freshwater comes from forested catchments. Water quality declines with decreases in forest condition and cover, and natural hazards such as floods, landslides, and soil erosion have larger impacts.

"Forests play major roles in our battle against climate change; storing carbon and sucking in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, it added.

According to the United Nations (UN), deforestation and forest degradation account for nearly 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions, which forests would absorb if carefully managed. It also said many of the World's most threatened and endangered animals live in these forests, making them crucial to sustaining ecosystems. Not only animals live in the forests, as they also provide a home to more than 300 million people worldwide. Surprisingly, some 36 million acres of natural forest are lost each year.

allafrica.com

## Global: Species spellchecker fixes plant glitches

**B**rian Enquist and his collaborators were delighted with their freshly compiled data set of 22.5 million records on the distribution and traits of plants in the Americas. But their delight turned to horror when they realized that the data set contained 611,728 names: nearly twice as many as there are thought to be plant species on Earth. Completed in December 2010, the records were intended to help Enquist and his colleagues to discern trends in how forest trees in a wide variety of environments respond to climate change. But the data were clearly full of bogus names, making it impossible to count the species in a particular area, or their relative abundance. “I started to question our ability even to compare something as basic as species diversity at two sites,” says Enquist, a plant ecologist at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

This month, Enquist’s team will unveil a solution that could help botanists and ecologists worldwide. The Taxonomic Names Resolution Service (TNRS) aims to find and fix the incorrect plant names that plague scientists’ records. “It looks really good,” says Gabriela Lopez-Gonzalez, a plant ecologist at the University of Leeds, UK, who curates a database of forest plots. Fixing species lists by hand is arduous, she says. “This should save us a lot of time”.

She and others agree that the problem is widespread in botanical databases. “Digitization has made the problem worse,” says TNRS co-leader, botanist Brad Boyle, also at the University of Arizona. Boyle explains that as more data are added to digital records, the chance of introducing errors also increases. Even in herbarium specimens, which ought to be the gold standard for plant identification, about 15% of the names are misspelt, he says. Many of the errors seem to arise because biologists are not as careful as they should be when entering data into digital records. The TNRS team estimates that about one-third of the names entered into online repositories – such as GenBank, the US National Institutes of Health collection of DNA-sequence data, or the

Ecological Society of America’s VegBank database of plant-plot data – are incorrect. The other problem is that names change. Old names can be abolished when experts reclassify plants as ideas about evolutionary relationships change, or when they realize the species already had a name – an occurrence almost as old as taxonomy itself. The result is that the same plant can have many names, and not everyone knows which one to use. Such synonyms are a particular problem in the study of medicinal plants, says Alan Paton, a plant taxonomist and bioinformatician at Kew Gardens in London.

The TNRS was built with financial and technical support from iPlant, a project run by the US National Science Foundation to fund cyberinfrastructure for plant science. It corrects names by comparing lists that users feed into it with the 1.2 million names in the Missouri Botanical Garden’s Tropicos database, one of the most authoritative botanical databases. If the TNRS cannot find a name in Tropicos, it uses a fuzzy-matching algorithm, similar to a word-processor’s spellchecker, to find and correct misspellings. It also hunts through Tropicos’s lists of alternative names and supplies the one that is most up to date. When Enquist ran the 611,728 names through the system, just 202,252 came back, showing that two-thirds of them were invalid.

**Because Tropicos is less comprehensive for plants outside the Americas**, the team hopes to link the TNRS with The Plant List ([www.theplantlist.org](http://www.theplantlist.org)), a collaborative compilation of databases from Kew and other sources. Launched online in December 2010, it aims to become a global record of plants. The scientists are also working on a tool to correct geographical data – one that knows, for example, that Brazil, Brasil and Brésil are the same place, and can recognize when someone has muddled up longitude and latitude.

[www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com)

## Global: Higher density means world’s forests are capturing more carbon

**F**orests in many regions are becoming larger carbon sinks thanks to higher density, US and European researchers say in a new report. In Europe and North America, increased density significantly raised carbon storage despite little or no expansion of forest area, according to the study, led by Aapo Rautiainen of the University of Helsinki, Finland, and published by the online, open-access journal **PLoS One**. Even in the South American nations studied, more density helped maintain regional carbon levels in the face of deforestation.

The researchers analyzed information from 68 nations, which together account for 72% of the world’s forested land and 68% of reported carbon mass. They conclude that managing forests

for timber growth and density offers a way to increase stored carbon, even with little or no expansion of forest area.

“In 2004 emissions and removals of carbon dioxide from land use, land-use change and forestry comprised about one fifth of total emissions. Tempering the fifth by slowing or reversing the loss of carbon in forests would be a worthwhile mitigation.

The great role of density means that not only conservation of forest area but also managing denser, healthier forests can mitigate carbon emission,” says Mr. Rautiainen.

Co-author Paul E. Waggoner, a forestry expert with Connecticut’s Agricultural Experiment Station, says remote sensing by satellites of the world’s forest area brings access

to remote places and a uniform method. "However, to speak of carbon, we must look beyond measurements of area and apply forestry methods traditionally used to measure timber volumes."

Says co-author Iddo Wernick of The Rockefeller University's Program for the Human Environment: "Forests are like cities – they can grow both by spreading and by becoming denser." The authors say most regions and almost all

temperate nations have stopped losing forest and the study's findings constitute a new signal of what co-author Jesse Ausubel of Rockefeller calls "The Great Reversal" underway in global forests after centuries of loss and decline. "Opportunities to absorb carbon and restore the world's forests can come through increasing density or area or both."

**Press release**

## **Guyana: New Norwegian Ambassador wants forest MOU accelerated**

**N**ewly accredited non-resident Norwegian Ambassador to Guyana, Turid Rodrigues Eusebio, is eager to learn about Guyana and wants to see the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two countries advance into operation mode. She was speaking after a meeting with President Bharrat Jagdeo at State House, where she had earlier presented her letters of credence. "I took over the responsibility from January 1, 2011, and this is the first time I am in the country, so for the time being, I am trying to form an opinion about the country and about the possibilities, the obstacles, get to know the country better, so I am still in that process," she explained.

Asked about the forestry agreement between Guyana and Norway, she said, "I am listening to His Excellency the President here. I have also had conversations with the Norwegian Government about this. I understand that there are ongoing discussions and I really hope that whatever

obstacles are left they would be solved soon, so that the programme would get into operation," she said.

Eusebio said one of the priority areas for the relationship between the two countries is to get up and running the forestry initiative agreement between Norway and Guyana. "I think when this programme [gets going] it will have a major impact in Guyana and we are talking about big money. I was informed that the contribution could be up to ten percent of the budget," she said. "I think the relationship [between Guyana and Norway] is excellent. I don't see any obstacle that cannot be solved. I can assure you that on the Norwegian side Minister [of the Environment Erik] Solheim is also very eager to get results on the table and get things moving," she said.

[www.guyanachronicleonline.com](http://www.guyanachronicleonline.com)

## **India: Government to enact separate law to protect mangroves**

**T**he state's environment department plans to enact a separate law to protect mangroves because existing laws have been unsuccessful in curbing large-scale destruction of these protected forest areas. The department will soon form a core committee of legal experts, environmentalists and officials to draft the proposed state legislation. "We need a separate legislation because there is no clarity in the existing laws about enforcement. The existing penalty of Rs1 lakh is also not a sufficient deterrent for culprits," said Valsa Nair Singh, environment secretary.

Singh added that the department gets over 20 complaints monthly about cases of hacking of mangroves, dumping of debris or other such transgressions. The city has a total area of 4,865 hectares of mangroves out of which 4,117 hectares is protected forests. HT had reported on Thursday that in the last two decades, 40% of Mumbai's mangrove cover has been lost to

construction and encroachments. There is confusion over the enforcing of existing laws (Environment Protection Act, Forest Conservation Act, Bombay Police Act). For instance, the police do not take action if mangrove hacking occurs on protected forests. Forest officials take cognisance under the forest conservation act, a tedious procedure, only if such complaints are on notified forests.

The proposed legislation will enable the police to take action against the destruction of mangroves across the state irrespective of which land it falls under. It will also make offenders pay through compulsory afforestation, by restoring twice the number of mangroves destroyed. The penalty for the offence will also be substantially hiked.

[www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com)



# Indonesia aims to overhaul forest mess with moratorium

Indonesia's moratorium on clearing rainforests has not lived up to high expectations but is still a chance to fix the country's poor forestry management to spur projects to gain emissions credits, said the official in charge of the scheme. Indonesia's president in May finally signed the two-year moratorium as part of a \$1 billion climate deal with Norway, after a five-month delay, revealing a long-list of exemptions that disappointed environmentalists but were a boost to the hard-lobbying plantation industry. Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, the head of a taskforce on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), had proposed including secondary forest as well as untouched primary forest in the moratorium. But the final wording was closer to another draft pitched by the forestry ministry – which makes billions of dollars each year from handing out permits to firms to clear forest.

"This is not what I imagined it would be," said Mangkusubroto in an interview for the Reuters Energy and Climate Summit. "We know that the practices that have caused the face of our forests to be in their current state is the product of past management...That's what we want to fix," said Mangkusubroto, also head of the president's delivery unit. Mangkusubroto said his taskforce's version of the moratorium had stated how to do this, but the version signed into law was unclear and left the forestry ministry in charge.

The dispute showed how difficult it will be for Indonesia to reach a target of reducing emissions by at least 26 percent by 2020 from projected levels, while still spurring economic growth to achieve its aim of becoming a world top-10 economy by 2025. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono says the country can achieve both. The moratorium deal, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, was still praised by Norway, and its implementation will be a test of how nations can achieve bilateral deals in the absence of agreement on a broader U.N. global climate pact following years of talks.

"Change for the better always faces rejection from the establishment, from those who are in a comfort zone and refuse to change," said Mangkusubroto. He said the moratorium could be used as an entry point to reform the forestry sector. Currently many forests are included under land marked for development while areas meant to be protected forest have already been illegally logged.

The government will map tropical forests across the archipelago and update this every six months, though some in the mining industry have criticized this saying it increases future uncertainty over what will be included in the ban. "If the map is to be uploaded to a website then everyone can see whether what's on the map truly reflects the situation on the ground, and there can be a step towards fixing it," said Mangkusubroto. "This is an extraordinary step because those maps were inaccessible for the public before," said Mangkusubroto. Data on forest cover from the forestry ministry currently differs to data from the presidential advisory team for climate change led by Agus Purnomo, he said.

The forestry ministry said the area subjected to the moratorium is 55 million hectares (137.5 million acres) of primary forests and 17 million hectares of carbon-rich peatlands, while the presidential advisor said it is 64 million hectares of primary forests and 20 million hectares of peatlands. "This is a mess. Who would not be confused by this? Even I am confused," said Mangkusubroto, who has a "Gone Surfing" door hanger in his office and tries to stay relaxed despite trying to fix the country's notorious bureaucracy.

Mangkusubroto said once forest data was sorted out and mapped in greater detail, Indonesia could offer degraded land to businesses in return for forested land they hold permits to clear. The forestry ministry estimates there are 35 million hectares of degraded land. He also plans to launch a national strategy next month on an expanded form of REDD, which includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The strategy would also include regulations and monitoring to verify what areas were eligible to receive cash for trapping carbon.

REDD uses carbon offsets to reward projects that protect forests under threat of clearing. Each credit represents a tonne of carbon locked away. Indonesia has 44 REDD projects and the programme could contribute towards a multi-billion dollar global market in forest carbon credits if nations agree on a new climate pact. The moratorium is good for investors trying to save carbon-rich forests, but only if the ban is enforced and progress is made in using the market to save the environment.

[www.trust.org](http://www.trust.org)

## Kenya: Agency seeks pay for Forest Conservers

The government should consider rewarding those conserving forests to secure the country's future. And as Kenya joined the world in marking World Environment Day on Monday, local leaders were challenged to encourage citizens to develop keen interest in taking care of the environment.

United Nations Environmental Programme executive director Achim Steiner cited Asia, the Caribbean and Europe where the forest cover has increased in the last two decades.

"The World Environment Day is set aside for everyone to act in support of forests and to nurture these green shoots of a Green Economy as the world looks towards how to accelerate

and implement these transitions," Mr Steiner said in a statement.

The UN agency urged countries to also mobilise the private and public sectors to support the Payment for Ecosystem Services.

This is a scheme of voluntary transactions to compensate land owners for providing ecosystem services to society, such as carbon storage, watershed protection or biodiversity conservation.

Mr Steiner said the programme was successful in Ecuador, where the local government in the town of Pimampiro pays Sh480 to Sh960 per hectare per year to a small group of

farmers to conserve forests and natural grassland in the area surrounding the town's water source.

This year's theme – Forests: Nature at Your Service – highlighted the benefits that forests provide to humanity, hence the need to protect them. The forests were described as “Lungs of the Earth”.

At the weekend Prime Minister Raila Odinga launched a tree planting campaign with a target of 7.6 billion trees in the next 10 years.

**allafrica.com**

## Nigeria: Urgent measures needed to curb forest depletion

**T**he threats facing Nigeria's forests are extensive and urgent measures are needed if the country is to meet its aspiration of a smooth transition into a sustainable green economy.

United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator in Nigeria and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, Daouda Toure, who made the submission, attributed species extinctions and human greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to tropical deforestation.

Toure, who spoke last week in Abuja at a forum organised by the National Parks Service to commemorate the World Environment Day (WED) 2011, noted that the theme, “Forests: Nature at Your Service,” highlights the crucial environmental, economic and social roles played by the world's forests. “It draws our attention to the alarming rate of global deforestation; and the urgency to protect our forests, as a part of the strategic response towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), conserving biodiversity and tackling the negative impacts of climate change,” he said, adding that forests cover one-third of the earth's land mass performing vital functions across the world especially in Africa. Toure added, “They are the most culturally-rich and biologically-diverse ecosystems on land and home to all kinds of terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects. However, as a result of the growing global pollution levels forests have come to be referred to as the ‘lungs of the earth’. “This is particularly because deforestation and forest degradation account for nearly 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, which forests would absorb if carefully managed. Beyond supporting the natural habitat, forests sustain economic growth. In 2004 trade in forest products were estimated at \$327 billion. This goes to show that continued and uncontrolled deforestation would not only have devastating consequences for the environment, the wildlife and communities, but would have greater adverse effect for the economies around the world.”

The UN chief described deforestation as “a big problem in Sub-Saharan Africa and especially in Nigeria.” Nigeria's forests and woodlands, he stated, cover approximately 9.6 million hectares (ha), adding that its rich Gulf of Guinea forests are recognised as a global biodiversity hotspot. Between 1976 and 1995, Nigeria's forest and woodland cover decreased considerably from 23 million hectares to 15 million hectares. While since 1990, the country has lost close to 6.1 million ha or 35.7 percent of its forest cover and, worse still, Nigeria's most bio-diverse ecosystems are also disappearing, as a result of increased conversion of land for agriculture, forest degradation: commercial logging, fires, and gathering of wood for fuel. He disclosed that the United Nations Systems in Nigeria has been working in partnership with the government on arresting the situation by influencing the process of making Nigeria a Reducing Emissions

from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) country. “I must say with a deep sense of pride and achievement that through this ongoing partnership, Nigeria has been able to prepare its National Readiness Plan, which has now been submitted for approval of the UN REDD Policy Board.” He went on: “The REDD mechanism represents an example of climate finance through which a range of other development objectives can be achieved simultaneously, as it not only results in the reduction of GHG emissions, but could also ensure better forest governance, protection of biodiversity while generating social benefits and poverty reduction.

“It is important to add that in consonance with the need for strong safeguards to achieve the goals of REDD, we are committed to having the intervention on environmental and social safeguards for REDD initiatives in Nigeria meet the expectations set out in the Cancun Agreements; such as developing a recourse mechanism for forest stakeholders involved in REDD, ensuring accountability and human rights, as well as the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent.

“In addition to the foregoing; we are also in the process of commencing the implementation of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded “Conservation of biodiversity in the Niger Delta and b) currently providing support local communities, community based associations (CBOs) through the GEF Small Grants Programme.

“This year's theme is that great opportunity to think about our forests, on how we can save them and also reflect on its importance – as nature's gift to the wellbeing of all species, including humanity which points out the need to stop deforestation and expand the land area being covered by forests. At this stage, I wish to use this medium to keep encouraging everyone to be part of the great cause of afforestation, that is planting of new trees and reforestation (replanting of deforested areas) of non-forested lands, and urge everyone of us to take up the challenge of greening our lifestyles through personal commitment. Let us all work together to build a sustainable and healthy environment for the economic transformation of the country. UNDP we will continue to provide the much needed technical assistance needed to both establish the programme establish in earnest and making it a successful one.”

In his speech, UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, stated that much has changed – geopolitically and environmentally – in the past two decades from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development scheduled for June 2012.

**www.independentngonline.com**

## Uganda: Rapid population growth threatens forests

Uganda commemorated the World Environment Day (WED) over the weekend with a warning that the country's rapid population growth threatens to wipe out forests in the East African country. The commemorations were held at Bulucheke Sub County in the eastern Ugandan district of Bududa under the theme "Plant a tree, save a life."

With 7.1 births per woman, the country has the second highest fertility rates in the world, ranking behind Niger which has 7.9 births per woman. United Nations statistics show that by 2050, the Uganda's population will have soared to 130 million people, almost five times the current population. This means feeding, housing, creating employment and income for so many people will eat into the forests. Demographers say that the high population is due to ignorance about family planning methods such as use of contraceptives. According to Isiah Mbuga, the national program officer at the country's Population Secretariat, 750,000 children out of the 1, 200,000 children produced annually arise out of unplanned pregnancies.

Coupled with the high school dropout rate, Mbuga said those who fail to stay at school return home to destroy forests and the natural environment. "As such, it's these children arising out of these unplanned pregnancies that tend to exert pressure on the natural resources such as forests and wetlands. "Most of them encroach on the wetlands to makes burnt bricks and mine sand," he said. "These activities are detrimental to the environment. The worst part is that 53 percent of the girls in Uganda produce before reaching 20 years," he added.

Deforestation in Uganda is mainly attributed to the high population growth and poverty. National Forestry Authority (NFA), the country's forestry regulatory body statistics show that since 1990, the forest cover in Uganda has dropped from 24 percent to 17 percent. NFA statistics also show that the country has one of the fastest rates of deforestation in Eastern Africa, losing over 80, 000 hectares of forest cover every year.

Some 30 percent of Uganda's forests are protected while the 70 percent are not because they are on private land. The 70 percent are at the mercy of private land owners who contemplate between saving them or going for lucrative logging and opening up the land for farming. Illegal timber logging and trade continues despite stringent regulatory measures. Encroachers fiercely resist any attempts by NFA to evict them. They either

call on politicians to come to their rescue or beat up the forest rangers.

"Our biggest challenge to forest conservation is the high population growth rate. About 98 percent of Ugandans depend on wood for fuel and timber. That has translated in to the massive cutting of trees across the country for firewood and charcoal," Gershom Onyango, the Director NFA told hundreds of people who had turned up at Bulucheke Sub County to commemorate WED.

Uganda has started paying for the massive deforestation. The northeastern part of the country experiences persistent drought and has until recently depended on humanitarian food aid. Because of deforestation, other parts of the country have also started experiencing climatic changes leading to intermittent rains which most times lead to poor crop production. One of the worst experiences the country has had partly due to deforestation was on March 1, 2010 when a whole village of about 300 people was buried in a mudslide here.

Despite the challenges, NFA has embarked on a nationwide exercise of encouraging the public to engage in tree planting. According to Onyango, the government has secured 10 million U.S. dollars from the European Union to steer the national campaign on tree planting that runs until 2013. "Much as we have the issue of population growth at hand, communities need to be educated on the relevance of planting trees," Onyango said. National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the country's environmental watchdog has also embarked on a program of encouraging communities especially in mountainous areas and semi arid areas in the country to practice better farming methods. Most landslides in the mountainous areas in the country have been blamed on deforestation.

The government is also in the process of setting up an Environmental Police Force that will ensure compliance with environmental and other conservation laws. According to NEMA part of the force will be dedicated to forestry management, while the rest will manage wetlands. Experts warn that although government has taken several measures to address deforestation, the challenge of rapid population growth has to be addressed because it is the driver of deforestation.

[www.coastweek.com](http://www.coastweek.com)

## U.S.A.: Killing one owl species to save another

Spotted owls are on the decline despite two decades of work to bring them back. So, later this month, wildlife officials are releasing a new plan to protect the owls, and it includes a controversial new approach: eliminating their cousins. In a dense forest near Muir Woods, just north of San Francisco, National Park Service ecologist Bill Merkle plays a recording of a spotted owl in hopes of hearing from a real one. "I think they're just probably 50 or 60 feet up there," he says.

Northern spotted owls became famous in the 1990s, when the federal government set aside millions of acres of forest to

protect them. That stoked an epic battle between loggers and wildlife groups over their habitat. Since then, spotted owls haven't come back. Biologists believe that's due to an invasion of barred owls. Barred owls take over spotted owl territory and in some cases even attack them. They have an advantage because they eat a wider variety of prey. In places like western Washington, the spotted owl population has been cut in half since the barred owl showed up.

"It's a troubling picture for the spotted owls," Merkle says. Originally from the eastern U.S., barred owls invaded spotted owl territory in Washington state decades ago and, Merkle says,



they've moved down the coast ever since. "The barred owl is a little larger," he says. "It's a little more aggressive."

The Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to deal with this by "permanent removal," says Robin Bown, a biologist with the agency. "We're going to look at all potential opportunities, but the most humane way to do it is to shoot them." Bown says the agency plans to eliminate barred owls from a few study areas to see if the spotted owls there do better. And yes, she says, shooting the barred owls will raise a few eyebrows. "It's a difficult concept, to say I'm going to kill one species to try to save another species," she says. "But it's also something that, in some cases, we need to do."

Eric Forsman, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, says shooting owls isn't a long-term solution. "To try to control barred owls across a large region would be incredibly expensive, and you'd have to keep doing it forever because if you ever stopped, they would begin to come back into those areas," he says. That's why, Forsman says, it's looking pretty dismal for the spotted owl. "I think all we can really do is try our best to provide [a] habitat for spotted owls and in the long run, we're just going to have to let the two species work it out," he says.

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## Vietnam: New road now path to forest destruction

A road completed four years ago has lured farmers who have cleared hundreds of hectares of evergreen forest in the Central Highlands province of Lam Dong's Lac Duong District. The road provides a shortcut between the coastal city of Nha Trang to the Highlands city of Da Lat, facilitating a shuttle between these two popular tourist destinations. However, part of the road runs across pine forests at the source of Da Nhim River, which has increased the demand for land on both sides of the road.

"The district has favorable climate and land conditions, so farmers tend to clear the forest to cultivate crops," said Pham Trieu, deputy chairman of People's Committee of Lac Duong District. "Farming needs have pushed up prices of land along the road, and deforestation has escalated as a result," he added.

Fertile land in the district has also attracted farmers from Da Lat City, who came to procure plots of cleared land to grow vegetables. According to district officials, more than 1,100 incidents of deforestation have been reported in the last six years, involving an area of 165 ha. Law enforcement officials have discovered the individual participants in the deforestation incidents in only 78 of the cases.

Sights of pine forest with some parts missing here and there and trees felled down on the sides of the road can be easily seen just dozens of kilometres to the north of Da Lat in the district's Da Sar and Da Nhim communes. Some of the felled pine trees

are dozens of years old and measure more than 50 cm in diameter. Beds of lush vegetables are now grown where pine forests once stood. Several ha of pine forests were lost after they were allocated to private businesses to carry out tourism, agriculture, forestry or fishing projects, all of which wanted to capitalise on the benefits of the new road.

In the last four years, Lam Dong Province has licensed projects for more than 60 businesses, involving an area of more than 9,000 hectares of forest. However, many of the businesses have failed to keep their commitments to protect the forest. Their lax management combined with delays in carrying out their projects has led to infringement on tracts of pine forests with which they were entrusted. An inspection by district officials in April found that more than 36ha and 160 cubic metres of wood have been lost to farmers hungry for land in areas managed by 19 projects. On the hectares allocated to Thanh Van Company to develop high-tech agriculture, more than 400 pine trees were felled in just one year, Sai Gon Giai Phong (Liberated Sai Gon) reports. In addition, Duy Ha Company, which rented more than 50ha of forest in Da Sar Commune for agricultural purposes, illegally zoned some pieces of land to sell to local farmers. The companies have also been asked to pay VND1.8 billion (\$88,000) in compensation for lost forests.

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