

Latest edition of FAO's flagship publication on forests

State of the World's Forests 2007. 2007. Rome, FAO. ISBN 978-92-5-105586-1.

FAO's biennial *State of the World's Forests* series offers a global perspective on the forest sector, including its environmental, economic and social dimensions. The seventh edition examines progress towards sustainable forest management. It has a new structure and look – with many more graphics than in the past.

The analysis reveals that some countries and some regions are making more progress than others. Most countries in Europe and North America have succeeded in reversing centuries of deforestation and are now showing a net increase in forest area. Most developing countries, especially those in tropical areas, continue to experience high rates of deforestation and forest degradation. The countries that face the most serious challenges in achieving sustainable forest management are, by and large, the countries with the highest rates of poverty and civil conflict.

Part I reviews progress region by region. Each regional summary is structured according to the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management agreed by international fora as a framework for sustainable forest management: extent of forest resources; biological diversity; forest health and vitality; productive functions of forest resources; protective functions of forest resources; socio-economic functions; and legal, policy and institutional framework. The regional reports synthesize the most current information available, including data gathered by FAO for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005) (which was, in turn, based on country reports submitted to FAO and the contributions of over 800 people, including 172 national correspondents), the FAOSTAT online database (compiling economic information provided by countries) and recent FAO

regional forestry sector outlook studies, as well as input from FAO partners.

Part II presents selected issues in the forest sector. In a few pages each, FAO specialists present the state of knowledge or latest activities on 18 topics of interest to forestry – including climate change, forest landscape restoration, forest tenure, invasive species, wildlife management and wood energy, to name just a few.

State of the World's Forests 2007 will be a useful reference for policy-makers, foresters, academics and all readers concerned with the major issues affecting the forest sector today.

The publication is available online at: www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0773e/a0773e00.htm

Worldwide assessment of fire management

Fire management – global assessment 2006. 2007. FAO Forestry Paper No. 151.

Rome, FAO. ISBN 978-92-5-105666-0.

Fire management is an essential part of sustainable forest management. Fires in forests, woodlands and rangelands, and in the interfaces between agriculture and forestry and between wildland and residential or urban areas, are a major threat to human life, health and livelihoods, to economic development and to the environment. Evidence suggests that climate change and the increasing spread of urban development into rural areas could greatly increase this threat.

This publication complements the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005) as an in-depth thematic study on the incidence, impact and management of forest fires in all regions of the world. It was developed from 12 regional papers prepared within the framework of the Global Wildland Fire Network of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.



It comprises both regional summaries and a global analysis. It provides the best estimate of the global fire situation to date and gives a good indication of the scale of the impact of vegetation fires on society, the economy and the environment.

“Fire management” is defined as involving protection (early warning), preparedness, prevention, response and suppression, restoration/rehabilitation and monitoring. The report recognizes that not all fires are destructive. Indeed, some ecosystems require fire to induce regeneration and to maintain or enhance biodiversity, agricultural productivity and the carrying capacity of pastoral systems. The study also finds that people are the overwhelming cause of fires in every region, for a wide range of reasons.

The report estimates from satellite data that about 350 million hectares were affected by vegetation fires worldwide in 2000. Most of the area burned was in sub-Saharan Africa, much of it forest and woodland. However, the report notes that the lack of long-term, consistent data makes it impossible to identify trends in the global number of fires or the area burned. The study highlights the challenges of gathering reliable and current information on fire.

The report indicates that many countries expend considerable resources in fire detection and suppression, primarily through human resources on the ground, but increasingly through satellite systems and aerial firefighting. However, the use of expensive suppression measures may divert funds and personnel from preventive measures which can avert catastrophic fire outbreaks in the first place.

Thus much more must be done to help the general public and policy-makers understand the magnitude of this threat and take long-term preventive action. Collection of information at the country level is urgent in order to quantify the impact and scale of the problem, detect trends and raise awareness. Political

commitment is essential to prevent unplanned fires from continuing to have negative impacts on forests and livelihoods around the world.

This global assessment will be of interest not only to fire specialists, but also to policy-makers, forest managers and those involved in collecting reliable and current information on fire in different types of vegetation. It is an important contribution to FAO’s efforts to enhance international cooperation in fire management.

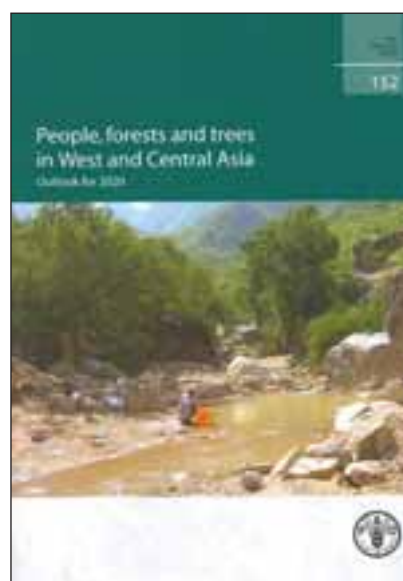
The report is available online at: www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0969e/a0969e00.htm

Future role of forests and trees in West and Central Asia

People, forests and trees in West and Central Asia – Outlook for 2020. 2007. FAO Forestry Paper No. 152. Rome, FAO. ISBN 978-92-5-105671-4.

Most countries in West and Central Asia are making substantial efforts to improve the management of their forest and tree resources, with governments, the private sector, communities, farmers and civil society organizations all playing a role. However, they face many challenges. This publication, the main report of the Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia (FOWECA), provides a long-term perspective of changes that can be expected in the forest sector. The study covered 23 countries in West Asia, Central Asia and the southern Caucasus and was implemented in partnership with them.

The report outlines the likely developments in and beyond the sector, including broader regional and global issues which need to be taken into account in developing national forest policies and programmes. It then discusses what needs to be done to enhance





Updated CD-ROM: *Unasyvla* 1947–2006

FAO produced the first CD-ROM containing the complete contents of *Unasyvla* in 2001; it covered issues through the year 2000. Owing to popular demand, it has been out of stock for some time. This updated CD-ROM package, published in celebration of the journal's sixtieth anniversary, contains the entire collection of *Unasyvla* from 1947 through 2006 on three CD-ROMs containing separate English, French and Spanish editions.

A sophisticated free-text search enables readers to seek information published through the years on any forest-related subject.

To request a copy, send an e-mail to: unasyvla@fao.org

the contribution of forests and trees to society. The report focuses particularly on probable development scenarios, their implications for society in terms of the availability of goods and services, and the priorities and strategies that may be pursued to improve the situation.

Unfavourable environmental conditions limit the ability of the region to produce wood to meet its growing demand. The report points out that imports of wood and wood products, valued at about US\$12.7 billion in 2005, are likely to double in the next 15 years if current trends in income and demographics persist. The report also notes the growing demand for woodfuel, especially charcoal, despite the availability of fossil fuels.

The study concludes that arresting desertification, protecting watersheds and improving vegetation, especially in urban centres, will remain the most important functions of forests and trees in the region. Because of low forest cover and a high state of degradation of vegetation, increased efforts to enhance the environmental services provided by forests and trees are required urgently. Rapid urbanization will necessitate significant investments in urban greening to improve the quality of life. Policies need to be updated and institutions strengthened. Stability

and peace are also critical; conflicts and instability are major factors adversely affecting conservation and management of forests and woodlands in the region.

The report emphasizes the need for intercountry collaboration to address many of the common issues, including watershed degradation, desertification, forest fires and pests and diseases.

FAO undertakes global and regional forest sector outlook studies at regular intervals to provide and analyse future scenarios. These studies help to improve the formulation and implementation of forest policy. This analysis will be of particular interest to planners, investors and decision-makers at the regional, subregional and national levels.

The report is also available in Arabic and Russian. The online version can be found at: www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0981e/a0981e00.htm

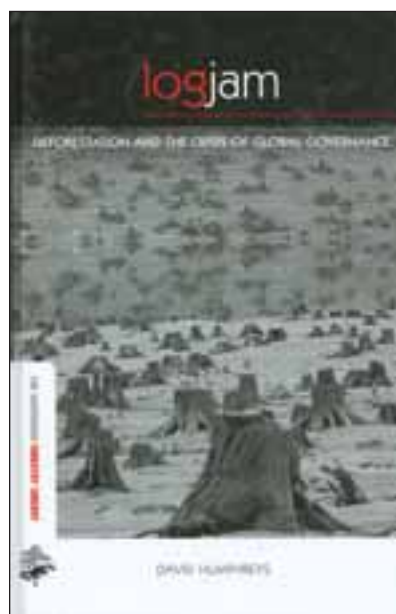
Neoliberalism and the failure to halt deforestation

Logjam: deforestation and the crisis of global governance. D. Humphreys. 2006.

London, UK & Sterling, Virginia, USA, Earthscan. ISBN 978-1-84407-301-6.

On one level, *Logjam* is a comprehensive overview of the major international processes that are attempting to address the problem of tropical deforestation. The author, David Humphreys, a British professor, starts with a tour through the international forest dialogue and notes its failure to address deforestation on a global scale. Regarding the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), he concludes, "The UNFF has developed a peculiar type of disconnected politics. The various pieces do not connect to yield a coherent whole."

Humphreys devotes chapters to various initiatives in what he





calls “the international forests regime” – i.e. certification, policies to counter illegal logging, and the World Bank’s forests strategy. As a historical chronicle, *Logjam* provides a useful overview of processes that at times seem to have little in common except their apparent inability to halt tropical deforestation.

It is on the second level that the book is more likely to elicit debate. The overarching intellectual theme of *Logjam* is the failure of “neoliberalism” as a political or economic system. Neoliberalism, Humphreys notes, “emphasizes the primacy of the individual, and holds that the collective common good will be maximized if people and firms are free to pursue their own interests in the marketplace”. According to Humphreys, “Neoliberal policies have failed to halt deforestation as they have both failed to address its root causes and, by supporting the expansion of global capital, have promoted further deforestation”.

The author claims that deforestation is the result of the crises of global capitalism and the “globalization of corporate power”. Certification schemes have little impact because they are based on neoliberal premises. Privatization is a ruse for corporate exploitation. Voluntary corporate social responsibility is a “contradiction in terms” because corporations by definition have no social responsibility.

The solution proposed by Humphreys is a “democratic post-neoliberal politics” where civil society has more power than private corporations. “To accept the values and agenda of a neoliberal capitalist order, knowing that this system has driven deforestation and other environmental and social problems ... would be both an abrogation of responsibility and a failure of imagination.”

The most noticeable omission of *Logjam* is the failure to note that deforestation has essentially been halted in countries where private forest ownership is highest, where private corporations and neoliberal institutions are the most developed, and where neoliberal policies are the most dominant.

Nor does the author recognize that much of the deforestation in the world’s poorest countries is caused not by multinational companies, but rather by poor rural people seeking fuelwood and farmland. There is scant mention of the obvious but perhaps inconvenient linkages between economic development and the ability of a nation to effectively halt deforestation.

Despite these oversights, *Logjam* is an important contribution to the growing literature about forest governance. The Earthscan Forestry Library series, edited by Jeffrey Sayer, continues to play an important role in this regard.



FRA 2005 CD-ROM

The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005), the most comprehensive in FAO’s series of such assessments to date, covered 229 countries and areas for the period 1990 to 2005. The main report was published in early 2006 as FAO Forestry Paper No. 147, *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 – Progress towards sustainable forest management* (see “Books” section of Unasylva No. 223). It evaluated the status, trends and information availability for more than 40 variables and analysed progress towards sustainable forest management.

FAO has recently released a multilingual CD-ROM containing not only the main report in six languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian), but also a flyer with the key findings, the 229 country reports, global result tables in Excel format, maps, graphs and a PowerPoint presentation.

Copies can be requested by sending an e-mail to: fra@fao.org

How to implement forest landscape restoration

The forest landscape restoration handbook. J. Rietbergen-McCracken, S. Maginnis & A. Sarre, eds. 2007. London, UK & Sterling, Virginia, USA, Earthscan. ISBN 978-1-84407-369-6.

When ecosystem services are disabled through forest loss and degradation, planting trees is not enough; a landscape approach is essential. Forest landscape restoration is defined as “a process that aims to regain ecological integrity and enhance human well being in deforested or degraded forest landscapes”. This concept, developed in 2001 through collaboration among a range of international forestry institutions, differs from earlier restoration concepts in that:

- it takes a landscape view;
- it demands both improved ecological integrity and enhanced human well-being (the “double filter” condition);
- it is a collaborative process;
- it does not insist on returning forest landscapes to their original state;
- it can be applied to secondary forests and agricultural lands, not only to primary forests.

The main endeavour is not to re-establish pristine forest, but



to make the landscape more resilient, thereby keeping future management options open while at the same time supporting communities as they continue to derive benefits from the land.

The forest landscape restoration handbook, authored and edited by world authorities in the field from institutions such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), is the first practical hands-on guide to the approach. Its aim is to help forest restoration practitioners understand the forest landscape restoration concept, appreciate its benefits and implement it.

The book includes a detailed description of the approach, numerous practical strategies and case studies, a helpful glossary and references for further reading.

A key message stated by the authors is that forest landscape restoration can be initiated through many entry points at various levels of planning and resource allocation. However, there is no fixed recipe for success; there needs to be a perfect balance of planning, resource allocation and implementation.

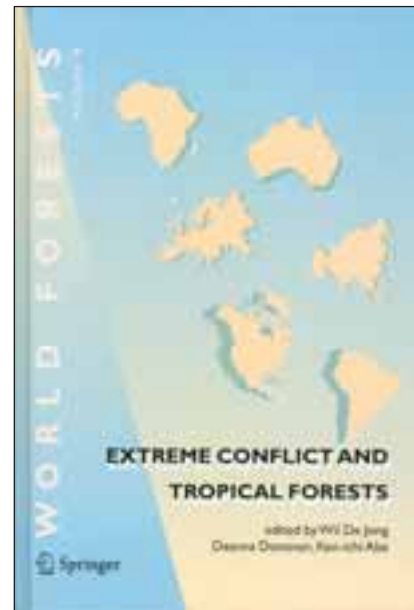
This easy-to-read handbook, another useful addition to the Earthscan Forestry Library (see above), provides insightful reading for policy-makers, forest managers, students, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and government planning officers involved in forest management.

Human and environmental security in forest areas

Extreme conflict and tropical forests. W. De Jong, D. Donovan & K. Abe, eds. 2007.

World Forests Vol. 5. Dordrecht, the Netherlands, Springer. ISBN 978-1-4020-5461-7.

In recent years the international community has been devoting significant attention to the role of governance issues in global



environmental decline. This collection of essays, authored by both natural and social scientists, provides a timely insight into a related subject: the relationships between extreme conflict, international trade in forest products and the social, economic and environmental condition of tropical forests and their human communities.

Extreme conflict and tropical forests explores causes and consequences of conflict in tropical forest areas. Some chapters focus more on why forested areas are often particularly prone to violence. Others investigate the environmental and social impacts of extreme conflict.

Case studies describe consequences of conflict in Cambodia, West Africa, Nicaragua and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. One chapter addresses the environmental damage resulting from the cultivation of illegal drug crops in Colombia. Another examines the environmental and public health consequences of the decade-long defoliation campaign carried out during the Viet Nam war. Particular attention is focused on "conflict timber" – the financing of violent conflict through the exploitation of natural resources, specifically through trading or taxing of wood by armed groups at some point in the chain of custody.

The final chapter, by Jeffrey McNeely, examines the potential of peace parks – protected areas along national borders – as a possible solution for improving human security and biodiversity conservation in conflict areas.

With implications for specific aspects of security, environment, development, forest policy and international relations, this book will be of interest to policy-makers, researchers, students and development cooperation experts, and will also provide useful background for forestry practitioners.



How public libraries can support development

Biblioteca pública y desarrollo económico. V. Ferreira dos Santos. 2007. Buenos Aires, Argentina, Alfagrama Ediciones. ISBN 978-987-1305-22-3.

In recent years, debate has arisen over the place of the library in the modern knowledge and information society, and the need for a new model. This book, based on the author's doctoral research, proposes that the public library can have an important role in local economic development by serving as an information centre not only for citizens, but also for small companies, entrepreneurs and community organizations.

It evaluates the possibility of establishing such information services in public libraries in Brazil and Spain, with reference to other libraries that already provide them. The libraries are analysed in terms of financial, human and technological resources, infrastructure, products and services offered to users.

Libraries certainly play a key role in "weaving knowledge into development". This book will be of interest to librarians, information managers and development workers in both developing and developed countries. The author is Librarian of the Forestry Library at FAO headquarters in Rome.