



EPILOGUE OF SFM

STATUS OF (TROPICAL) SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (SFM)

Some time ago Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia surveyed its Policy Experts (POLEX) recipients to find out which publications they thought had influenced forest policies the most. Number two in the list was Poore *et al.*'s 1989 report “**No Timber Without Trees**”, commissioned by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). That study had shown only a tiny share of tropical forests used for timber was managed on a sustainable basis.



Now ITTO's new report called "**Status of Tropical Forest Management 2005**" looks at what has been achieved since the 1989 Poore *et al.* report (survey done in 1988) published almost two decades ago.

It found major progress, but not as much as one might hope. Back then Poore *et al.* had trouble finding even one million hectares of natural forests that were managed on a sustainable basis to produce timber.

In contrast, the new report identified at least 5 million hectares that fit the bill. India and Malaysia alone account for 40% of that. Most of the rest is in Bolivia, Brazil, Congo, Gabon, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea, which each have between one and three of the 25 million hectares.

By 2006 Malaysia, Bolivia, Gabon, Brazil, and Guatemala have about 10 million hectares that have been independently certified by certifiers such as SGS, SCS, Rainforest Alliance, and UK Soil Association, accredited by FSC.

By March 2007 Malaysia alone had 9 FMUs certified via the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) Certification Scheme, 4 FMUs (forest concessions) via the FSC Certification Scheme, involving more than 4.6 million hectares of natural and plantation forests (including rubber plantations) and had exported about 130,881 cubic meter of certified processed timber to EU countries.

EPILOGUE OF SFM....cont.



Things have also advanced on other fronts. There is greater consensus these days about which criteria and indicators should be used to assess if a forest is managed on a sustainable manner and more information is available about forests in general.

Many more forests have management plans and there are a lot more plantations and protected areas. Still, according to the ITTO new report, only about 7% of the 352 million hectares of the natural forests that tropical countries have slated to produce timber on a sustainable basis are truly being used that way.

Many FMUs with management plans don't actually follow them and much of the tropical timber on the market comes from illegal sources.

EPILOGUE OF SFM....cont.



Now, already 7 years into the new millennium we are still nowhere near achieving the ITTO's 1990 target of having all tropical timber exports coming from well managed forests by the year 2000.

However, it can be said that the ITTO's commitment to install the process of sustainable forest management (ITTO Objective Year 2000) is successful to a greater extent. What is more important and needed is that timber producer countries are seriously embarked on the path or process of sustainable forest management with tangible results visible, based on some of the newly adopted criteria and indicators for sustainable management of natural tropical forests. More so with a new dimension of much debated issue - the climate change scenario.

SUMMARY OF CHANGE



ITTO (2006) in its summary report “**Status of Tropical Forest Management 2005**” summarizes the present status of SFM compared to that in 1988:

1. uneven progress has been made in the identification, demarcation and protection of Permanent Forest Estates (PFEs) or Permanent Forest Reserves (PFRs). In many countries there still exists considerable uncertainty about the concept;
2. there is greater government commitment to SFM, as demonstrated by improved legislation, administrative arrangements and consultative processes;
3. forest tenure is still in a state of flux in many countries but is increasingly directed towards communities;
4. there is an increase in the area of PFE that is managed sustainably, but progress is uneven within and across countries and regions;

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5. forest law enforcement is often weak due to the inadequate staffing and support of enforcement agencies, the remoteness of the resources, and confusion created by sometimes-conflicting legislation and by decentralization and other political processes;
6. the resources allocated by governments and development assistance agencies to forest management are often seriously inadequate, reflected in chronic shortages of vehicles, equipment and trained and motivated staff; and
7. there is more and better information about SFM than in the past, but it is still far from adequate for the comprehensive monitoring, assessment and reporting of SFM in either production or protection PFEs.



CONSTRAINTS TO SFM

Various constraints to SFM, which until today still exist:

1. probably the most important, and the most generally applicable, is that sustainable natural forest management for the production of timber is less profitable to various parties involved - such as government, concessionaires and local communities – than other possible ways of using the land. Intensive management of natural forests is not a new idea at all but its implementation needs a big investment. Several researchers (e.g., Leslie 1987, Keto et al. 1990) have argued that investment in natural forest management does not pay. Many tropical countries neglect natural forest management in favor of plantations for financial reasons, especially if grant aid is available for plantation establishment. Plantations also are more visible, and look like “development”;
2. many of the FMUs in which SFM (and particularly, in some countries, certification) has been established have benefited from external financial and technical support from development assistance agencies and NGOs. The economic viability of SFM within these FMUs will be tested once such support is withdrawn;



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3. the governments and companies that have been striving to improve forest management, even when they have not yet been wholly successful, merit the long-term support of markets, development assistance agencies, NGOs and the general public;
4. there have been advances in many countries in committing forest for either production or protection and in establishing a PFE, but without long term land tenureship, SFM is unlikely to succeed;
5. illegal logging and the illegal trade of timber are significant problems that have been increasingly exercised the international forest-policy and community in recent years. Hence, improved laws and forest law enforcement are ultimatum in minimizing the problems, which in many cases will require increased support from governments in both producer and consumer countries;

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6. Wiens (1992) stated that there is enough blame to go around for the failure to practice sustained yield forestry and implement forest policies:

politicians for putting pressure on forest departments to keep the annual allowable cuts high, royalties low, and the implementation of logging regulations tardy;

forest departments for pretending the residual forests are in good shape and regenerating, logging regulations are being enforced, protected areas protected and gazetted areas are forested;

NGOs for pursuing narrow objectives, annoying tactics, and one-sided arguments;



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7. Wan Razali (1992) argued that sustainably forest management is technically feasible but technological constraints limit its successes:

the diversity of tree species has limited the success of management practices developed under low biodiversity environments of European forests. Uniform management systems are out of place: for example, the Malayan Uniform System (MUS) developed for regenerating dipterocarps in the rich lowlands of Peninsular Malaysia cannot be applied to hill forests, which comprise the bulk of production forests now;

incomplete data on the value – realized and intangible – of natural forests can lead to poor landuse classification and often conversion to plantation crops, and other uses;

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much of the growth data presently available come from small plots, often not representative of the forest, and measured for a limited time (frequently, less than half of the cutting cycle);

moreover, the early growth rates, usually high as a result of forest opening, can decline after the first few years led to cutting cycles that were far too short;

improper planning, controls, and execution of tree harvesting – which lead to excessive damage to the residuals – constitute another set of limitation;

exacerbating the damage problem is the excessive use of heavy equipment and wrong type of timber extraction methods, particularly on steep slopes, and usually ended in severe soil compaction and erosion and other ecological and environmental problems;

CONSTRAINTS TO SFM

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controls over harvest volumes, extraction practices, and adherence to sustainable logging guidelines need to be strictly enforced; and

premature harvesting of regenerating forests, or over harvesting, needs to be avoided to prevent damage to the forest.



CONDITIONS TO SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT:

Poore (1988) in his report to ITTO identified seven conditions for promoting sustainable forest management in tropical forests:

1. the establishment of an adequate natural forest land as PFEs with a guaranteed long-term tenure, as a part of an overall national land use policy. The PFEs may be categorized as production forest: systematically managed to ensure long-term viability, productivity, and sustainability of the resources; and protection forest: to provide sound climatic and physical conditions of the country, to safeguard water supplies, soil fertility, environmental quality, to conserve plant genetic resources, and to protect wildlife;
2. secured conditions for the managers of the forest, whoever they may be – government agency, private corporation, local community and others;
3. determination of limits for annual allowable cut and cutting cycles that is compatible with the concept of sustained yield management, setting of harvest regulations and techniques, and safeguarding the environment;



CONDITIONS TO SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT:

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4. treatment of forests after harvesting in order to ensure growth in productivity of future crops;
5. economic and financial policies which do not require more from the forests than they can yield sustainably; this requires: a market; a government policy that treats forest as a resources to be managed not mined; and a reasonable distribution of revenues and profits among the various parties involved that no one party shall reap the *windfall profit*,
6. environmental policies which will satisfy a public who is becoming increasingly conscious of environmental problems; and
7. enough information, technical or otherwise, for the effective operation of all the above conditions.



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