



AFRICA'S DRY FORESTS

The dry forests of sub-Saharan Africa cover over 40 percent of the continent and are home to more than 230 million people. Many of the poorest people on Earth live in and around the forests and depend on them for their survival and their meagre incomes. Over much of Africa, dry forests are suffering from overuse and severe degradation, and this makes it even harder for rural communities to lift themselves out of poverty. During the past three years, CIFOR's Dry Forests Project has sought to stimulate dialogue among a wide range of stakeholders. Besides alerting policy-makers, resource managers and the international community to the importance of dry forests, the project has been strengthening research capacity within Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in order to promote sustainable forest management and enhance local livelihoods.

According to forester Daniel Tiveau, CIFOR's regional coordinator for West Africa, it is high time we paid more attention to Africa's dry forests. "Over the past decade, world attention has tended to concentrate on the destruction of tropical rain forests, even though worldwide degradation and conversion of dry forests is far more advanced than that of wet forests," he says. "They provide construction material for farms and homes, dry-season fodder for Africa's vast livestock populations, as well as wood fuel, medicinal plants and many other products."

The role that dry forests play in supporting hundreds of millions of people is described in a Forest Livelihoods Brief – *The wealth of the dry forests* – published by CIFOR in 2006. Among many other outputs,



three reports focused on particular aspects of dry-forests management and husbandry in Zambia, Burkino Faso and Malawi.

(Source: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) Annual Report 2006, *Building on success*. www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/ARReports/AR2006.pdf)



AMAZON RAIN FOREST AT RISK FROM INITIATIVE TO CONNECT SOUTH AMERICAN ECONOMIES

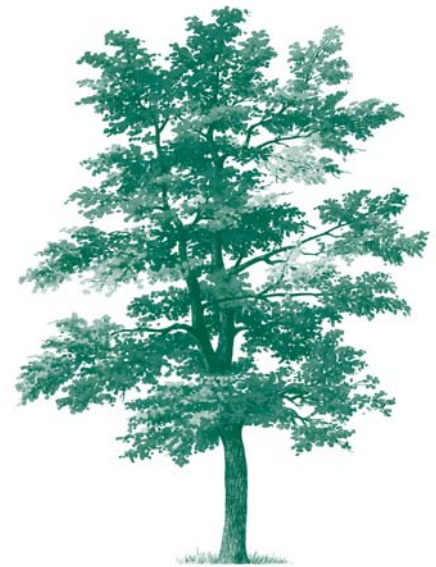
An unprecedented development plan to link South America's economies through new transportation, energy and telecommunications projects could destroy much of the Amazon rain forest in coming decades, according to a new study by Conservation International (CI) scientist Tim Killeen. However, Killeen reports that such a disastrous outcome could be avoided if steps are taken now to reconcile the legitimate desires for development with the globally important need to conserve the Amazon ecosystem.

His 98-page report, entitled "A perfect storm in the Amazon wilderness: development and conservation in the context of the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA)", offers pragmatic approaches for resolving the enduring paradox between economic development and environmental protection. (Source: ENN News, 2 October 2007.)



COALITION FOR RAINFOREST NATIONS

The Coalition for Rainforest Nations was formed after a call by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare, in May 2005 and operates as an intergovernmental organization. The participants within the coalition seek responsible stewardship of the world's last great rain forests through innovative strategies that integrate social, economic and scientific rationales to achieve environmental sustainability. The Coalition's mission seeks to underpin lasting environmental sustainability and economic advancement with strengthened technical capacity and international market reform designed to enhance tropical forest stewardship, biodiversity conservation and global climate stability.



The coalition endeavours to move from unsustainable to sustainable use of forests and, in the process, members will be able to:

- manage tropical rain forest areas in support of climate stability, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and poverty alleviation;
- improve the living standards of people living in forest areas;
- guarantee the long-term security of their living standards; and
- set a precedent for other similarly forested countries.

The coalition seeks to achieve environmental sustainability by developing viable economic alternatives for tropical forest resource owners through:

- utilizing selective logging practices;
- harnessing and remunerating the carbon sequestration and absorption capabilities of the rain forest;
- valuing biodiversity;
- facilitating ecofriendly community businesses; and
- avoiding deforestation and the associated pulsed releases of carbon.

Such innovation is necessary in order to reduce the destruction of the tropical rain forest while creating sustainable social and economic development.

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ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION AND ITS ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF AMAZONIA

In addition to being one form of preservation, environmental certification in community forests is also a primary factor for sustainable economic growth in these areas, providing market credibility to production, political organization to communities and control over prices. This is the conclusion of the doctoral thesis "Certificação Ambiental – Uma estratégia para a conservação da Floresta Amazônica" (Environmental certification – a conservation strategy for the Amazon rain forest), by researcher Raimundo Maciel, which was recently defended at Campinas State University.

The study was based on Brazil nuts produced and exported by the Chico Mendes extractivist reserve and concluded that "environmental certification in community forests provides forest producers with fair prices, precisely because they effectively participate in the management and find niches in markets for sustainable products".

Maciel, who is also coordinator of the project, Economic Analysis of Basic Rural Family Production Systems in the Acre Valley (ASPF) of the Federal University of Acre, also pointed out that certifications need to be conducted on three levels: forestry, organic production and socially. "Triple certification [of Brazil nuts] was decisive in enabling producer cooperatives in the study region [...] to sell to the demanding European market, in particular the fair trade market niches, currently in rapid expansion", the study reports.

Even though reserves, a set of public policies and local associations would ensure sustainability of forest products, attention should not only be focused on the market. "A balance must be found between production capacity and market demand. Production does not necessarily have to be determined by the market, on the contrary, the market must adapt to natural resource products, even renewable ones", Maciel points out.

He also concluded that communities naturally concern themselves with economic use of the forest, as these practices directly impact their habitat.

The idea of forming certified extractivist reserves is basically a form to achieve local economic development. In his research, Maciel also addresses economic

organization and migration of forest peoples to urban areas and highlights: "Remaining forest populations have been driven to urban areas as if they were being freed from the poverty and hardships of the forest, when historically the inverse is true, people living on urban outskirts are becoming increasingly poor and unviable." (Source: Amazonia.org.br, 5 September 2007.)



MINING AND DEFORESTATION

Increased mining activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is not only fuelling violent conflict but is also contributing to deforestation and loss of wildlife in valuable rain forest regions. One driving force behind excessive mining in Africa is the growing consumer demand for electronic devices such as cell phones, computers and hand-held technological instruments.

Columbo-tantalite, or coltan, is at the root of electronics-related deforestation. Coltan is refined into tantalum, which is efficient in holding high electric charges. For this reason, coltan is in high demand in a growing age of electronic gadgetry.

The DRC holds 64 percent of the global coltan supply. Two-thirds of the Congo rain forests are within the DRC. An estimated 40 million people depend upon NWFPs from these forests for survival – both hunting and gathering food – and have done so for thousands of years. Kahuzi Biega National Park is one endangered region. Large numbers of people moved to the region and built mining camps as they flocked to set up house and work the mines. Deforestation and wildlife loss are already problems; clearing land for camps and killing animals for food have exacerbated the situation.



Recycling electronic products and researching the manufacturers can help minimize the environmental mining damage in the DRC and around the globe.

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PICKING BERRIES PROTECTS RAIN FORESTS BEST, STUDY SHOWS

According to a recent study, small community projects for picking fruits and nuts are the best way to alleviate poverty and protect the Amazon and other tropical forests, but are largely ignored by governments. Communities harvesting natural products generate more long-term income than many national parks or big timber companies, said a report by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) released at a forestry conference in northeastern Brazil. "Someone depending on a forest for income and habitat will look after it," said Andy White, one of the report's authors. "We need people in forests."

The 200-page report is based on 20 case studies on three continents, ranging from raising bees in Africa to making bamboo chopsticks in China.

The ITTO, an intergovernmental group promoting the conservation and trade of tropical timber, says communities living in the forest have a "longer time horizon for resource management" than big timber companies. For example, in Nepal, the extraction of juice from the Bel tree by local communities is rejuvenating degraded forests and helping prevent unsustainable timber extraction, the report said.

Community forest management has increased in recent years with political decentralization and the recognition of historic land tenure rights in several countries. But such efforts must overcome red tape, competition from big business and government indifference, the study said.

In Brazil, local forest communities are often displaced by loggers, farmers and miners, and many lack the infrastructure to bring products to the market.

"If the government dedicated only a fraction of its farm aid to forestry management, you would see a

conservation revolution in the Amazon," ITTO Executive-Director Manoel Sobral Filho said. [Source: ENN Daily News, 18 July 2007.]

PUTTING A MONETARY VALUE ON BIODIVERSITY

Placing monetary value on biodiversity is no easy task, say experts from the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM). But this is what they want to do. They are working to come up with a predictive model that will help calculate the opportunity cost of logging forest areas by placing a quantitative value on the biodiversity.

As such, flora and fauna will be calculated in terms of *ringgit* and *sen* to enable a comparison between the cost of timber produce and the cost of non-timber produce at a specific jungle site. To calculate the value of bats, one could use the cost of durian trees as the basis, since bats were the main pollinators of durians, said project director Dr Shamsudin Ibrahim. "No bats, no durians," he said, adding that monetary value for bats could equal the current cost of durians.

The US\$5.67 million (RM19.6 million) project, the first of its kind in the world, was aimed at helping those involved, especially contractors, make more "informed decisions" about cutting down forests, he said.

Shamsudin added that the success of the "Conservation of Biological Diversity through Improved Forest Planning Tools in Operation" project would showcase Malaysia as a leader in sustainable tropical forest management. "Should we succeed in coming up with a practical, easy and cost-effective tool to calculate the monetary cost of biodiversity within a targeted production forest area, we will be the pioneers in this sector." One criterion is that the tool can be replicated to be used in other tropical forests around the world.

The project was mooted by former FRIM scientist Dr S. Appanah and American forest scientist Dr Peter Ashton. It took them six years to get the project off the ground and obtain funding from the Global Environment Facility. The Perak Integrated Timber Complex has been chosen as the project site.

Project manager Dr Woon Weng-Chuen said that one of the easier methods to calculate the value of the biodiversity of a



specific forest area was to consider the extent of ecotourism the area could attract. The amount of non-timber forest produce collected from the area and sold by the indigenous people could also assist in the value calculation. "This will give us an idea of the opportunity cost of logging that area."

The bigger elements to consider in terms of opportunity cost would be how the forest area contributes towards flood mitigation or acts as water catchment areas with natural filtering systems. [Source: *New Straits Times* [Malaysia], 28 June 2007.]

THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY INDICATOR PARTNERSHIP

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has inaugurated a multimillion dollar effort to track the fate and fortune of the world's biological diversity. Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the 2010 Biodiversity Indicator Partnership (<http://www.twentyten.net/>) aims to complete a set of indicators that will allow the international community to assess better whether conservation efforts are succeeding towards the target of "reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010".

Under the new US\$8.8 million partnership, which has secured over \$3.6 million from GEF, a wider range of existing and new indicators will be brought together to gain greater and deeper insight into whether the 2010 biodiversity target is on course. Some of the new

indicators, emerging from a list chosen by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), include threats to biodiversity; the degree to which forests, farmlands and fisheries are managed in a way that protects biodiversity; the extent to which people are affected by changes in biodiversity and the contribution of traditional knowledge to the biodiversity target.

There will also be a focus on the components of biodiversity, including genes, species and ecosystems. Several of the new indicators will require a comprehensive gathering of data exercise, including trends in the spread of invasive alien species and in the health and well-being of communities dependent on the goods and services provided by local ecosystems. [Source: *Afrique en ligne* [France], 18 July 2007.] ♣



A forest bird never wants a cage.

Henrik Ibsen