

Significantly less progress has been made on the ground. Development of practical methods for management and conservation of forests and biodiversity has been slow. Although forest management is highly site specific, general principles and systems can be adapted to different situations. For 30 years, however, scant attention has been given to implementing tropical forest management systems, improving them, or developing new ones. NGOs have begun innovative projects in and around tropical forest protected areas. Monitoring and evaluation of these will lead, gradually, to methods for involving local people in integration of tropical forest conservation and development. Other aspects of forest protection are being neglected, however, such as preventing government corruption that allows tree cutting and land clearing not sanctioned by management plans.

The existing (old) systems for sustainable management of tropical forests impose severe restrictions on use of the resources, so opportunity costs of sustainable management are high. Although the benefits would also be high when environmental effects such as biodiversity conservation are included, the opportunity costs accrue directly to citizens of tropical nations while the benefits are spread over global populations. Little scientific effort is directed to increasing the direct financial benefits from sustainable management of natural forests to local communities. Meanwhile, the major underlying cause of deforestation and species extinctions—lack of alternative employment opportunities for rapidly growing populations of tropical countries—remains. Hence, the forests and their biodiversity are still in jeopardy, despite momentum at the international and national policy and planning levels.

Numerous tropical countries now have national plans establishing goals and priorities for biodiversity conservation and forest management, and major programs to reform and implement improved forest sector policies have begun. Concern for biodiversity continues to grow, promoted by international assistance agencies and local NGOs through biodiversity conservation planning and through site-specific projects. The implementation of these plans and programs will succeed or fail in the next 5 to 10 years. Strong momentum for conservation-oriented development assistance exists in the United States and other donor countries. The bilateral and multilateral assistance agencies have **accepted** forceful mandates to promote forest and biodiversity conser-

vation. International technical and financial assistance will be a necessary but hardly sufficient condition for success.

Implementation of policy reforms requires secure commitments from national leaders, sufficient technical knowledge and skills, and continued momentum from grassroots supporters. Yet issues that have not been adequately addressed include the capability of technologies to achieve the goals over the long term, the ability of government agencies and NGOs to control corruption that undermines management plans, and the ways in which forestry and biodiversity use and conservation are linked to other economic and political sectors.

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