

**WORLD'S FORESTS: Rio+8: POLICY, PRACTICES AND PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, EDITED BY MIA SODERLUND & ALAN POTTINGER, MARCH 2001, COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY ASSOCIATION, PAGES 310**

Rio+8 is the third book of the Commonwealth Forestry Association series of publications entitled *The World's Forests*. The rationale for this book is "To intensify our collective efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all type of forests" in accordance with the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Forest issues have attracted increasing attention of the international community since 1980s. An international forest policy dialogue has emerged out of concerns for the alarming rate of deforestation. Major policy developments for sustainable forest management have largely been accomplished by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), as well as 21 government- and organization- led initiatives, including meetings of experts, workshops and in-depth studies, in support of these processes.

This book focuses on the forest policy developments under the umbrella of the IFF process (1997-2000) and other high level initiatives in support of sustainable forest management. The book consolidates important international forest policy developments during the period 1997-2000 and aim to:

- facilitate easy access to texts of agreed international forest policy, aimed at negotiators, forest experts and the scientific community, as well as forest managers on national and local levels;
- serve as background document that includes bibliography of a large number of otherwise scattered, but very rich forest policy documents for future deliberations on international forest policy; and
- attract part of the forest community that, so far, has had limited knowledge of intergovernmental forest deliberations under the auspices of the United Nations.

Part One of the book focuses on the outcomes of the intergovernmental dialogue on forest under the auspices of the United Nations during the time period 1997-2000. It includes the (i) conclusions and proposals for actions from the final report of IFF, and (ii) the resolution of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) establishing the United Nations Forum on forest (UNFF), that succeeds that IPF & IFF process.

Part Two of the publication highlights the government- and organization-led initiatives in support of the IFF process. The success of the IFF process is largely derived from these initiatives, since it was in the international meetings of experts, workshops and in-depth studies that many of the complex and politically sensitive issues in the IFF were extensively discussed and analysed. These initiatives have produced an impressive list of documents, which are included in this publication. The bibliography also lists all documents, reports and papers produced by the IFF. Experts from all 11 government- and organization-led initiatives in support of the IFF are produced, in order to truly reflect the outcome of these meetings.

Some high-level initiatives outside the framework of the United Nations are highlighted in Part Three, and include either an overview of a particular initiative or excerpts from their report. Part Three begins with an overview of the evolution of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Criteria and indicators has become an important forestry tool to assess and monitor progress towards sustainable forest management. Approximately 150 countries are currently involved in some of the nine international initiatives on criteria and indicators.

In addition to IPF and IFF processes, the World Commission on Forest and Sustainable Development (WCFSD) has worked on addressing issues related to sustainable forest management. In Chapter 16 The outcome and recommendations made by WCFSD are given. The declarations from the XI World Forestry Congress in Anatalya, Turkey, 1997, and the Ministerial Meeting on Sustainability Issues in Forestry, Rome, Italy, 1999 are reprinted in Chapters 17 & 18. Excerpts from the group of 8 Action Programme on Forest and its follow up activities are reproduced in Chapter 19.

The fourth and last part of the book is an assessment of the progress achieved since Rio. Jagmohan Maini has discussed the influence of policies and practices in shaping international forest policy dialogue and principle areas where progress has been achieved.

This book is recommended for inclusion in the syllabi for forest policy, management and/or environment courses of forestry students. The is also most valuable for the policy makers and all those who want to know the latest trend in forestry.