

ADDRESSING UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION, NGOS' PROCESS AND IGES INITIATIVE AN INTRODUCTION

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I. BACKGROUND

Alarming past and current trends in global deforestation and forest degradation document a deepening forest crisis worldwide. Asia Region has lost 95% of its frontier forests. Apart from the Mediterranean and Middle East - where all such forests have disappeared, this represents the world's greatest loss of frontier forest outside of Europe. South Asia sub-region countries such as India and Bangladesh, as well as East Asia sub-region such as China, Korea and Japan today have only small patches of their original forest. On main land Southeast Asia, most frontier forests are gone. Some remaining important isolated pockets are confined primarily to Burma, Laos, and Cambodia, where war and civil unrest until recently inhibited further development. Large amount of Asia's remaining forests are found in the insular Southeast Asia, particularly the four big island of Indonesia, including Borneo, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Irian Jaya (West Papua). Even here, however, industrial logging has been threatening most of the accessible forests along their coasts and major rivers. More than half of Asian last remaining frontier forests are under moderate or high threat, particularly from logging and international timber trade, which are followed by oil and natural gas extraction, mining, large scale plantation development, including oil palm, transmigration schemes, large dams and other industrial development projects. These development schemes made good forests and land scarcer, and have a significant impact on indigenous communities in these outer islands whose livelihoods are deeply depend upon them.

In addition, rapid disappearance of remaining old growth forests in the Northern Hemisphere has come to be an international concern. The destruction of such forests in the Pacific Northwest of United States and Western Canada, due to industrial logging in the past decades, particularly those in the 1980's under Reagan administration in The United States was brought to a wide public attention. Environmental movement mobilized public protests and successfully prevent many of Federal logging plans through their law suits in the federal supreme court. Endangered Species Act and " Spotted Owl" come to be the token symbol of these disputes. Even the President Clinton's efforts to solve these problems by starting with his initiative to hold " The Forest Conference" in Portland and subsequent proposal (Forest Plan) could not provide the prescription for the cure. Crisis of the old growth forests in British Columbia also generate even greater international attention, especially when 800 people were arrested in Crayquat Sound in Vancouver island. This episode was symbolized the serious dispute between forest industry and environmentalists as well as threatened first nations (North American Indigenous peoples).

Further more, after the collapse of former Soviet Union, crisis of Siberian boreal forests and its potential contribution to the worsening the global climate change became a truly global concern. A few years back in Japan, one national TV documentary film drew much attention from Japanese public on the forest destruction in Far-East Siberia. This new concern also brought more cautious approach for the environmentalists who have been involved tropical timber reduction campaigns to look at the shift of tropical timber to Siberian timber in plywood production as a raw material. Another huge boreal forest zone in Northern Canada, although it has lesser extent of public awareness and higher immediate development threats, may become a major source of the GHG emission on this planet.

II. THE UN RESPONSES- FROM UNCED TO IPF

1. UNCED Related Decisions

During the last decade, the forest crisis has received increasing attention and has prompted many initiatives by governments and intergovernmental agencies, such as: "The Tropical Forestry Action Plan(TFAP)", Chapter 11 of Agenda 21(Deforestation) and the non legally- binding "Forest Principles" (agreed at 1992 Earth Summit), The National Forest Programs (NFP) in many countries, and the regional processes to develop and apply "Criteria and Indicators" for sustainable forest management (SFM). Still, these and other responses remain insufficient to achieve significant changes and reversal of the current alarming trends. In other words, these responses were found largely ineffective for solving, or even improving these critical situations.

2. The Reason for the Failure and "Underlying Causes"

Why they were failed? A number of prominent environmentalists believe that many of the prescriptions made by governments and international agencies only dealt with the symptoms and rarely addressed "Underlying Causes" or "Root Causes". As the result, those efforts never reached truly responsible actors which may dictate that massive forest destruction continue as it is.

1) What are " Underlying Causes" of Forest Ecosystem Destruction?

Most of the agents which might promote forest destruction noted earlier were largely what we call immediate or direct causes of forest destruction. Those were merely the result of national development policy goals, or export-oriented economies driven by the current international economic conditions. Many of the national legislation with regard to forest and land use, tenure and their management decisions were heavily influenced by these broader development objectives. In addition, some of the ecologists also might find real root causes in the intensified and large scale production and consumption patterns in distance cities or in foreign consumption centers (Urban cores) with their own political, economic and financial systems. Indeed, according to some renowned archeologists and historians, it became to be apparent that there is much evidence

which shows similar courses of forest destruction as we have now, even in the ancient urban cores- periphery relationship in China, Mesopotamia, as well as Mediterranean area in some millenniums before.

Direct / Proximate causes, Indirect Causes and Underlying (Root) Causes.

Since inquiry into "underlying causes" is a new aspect of the whole sets of forest questions, there are no established explanations on what are underlying causes and what are others. Although there have been tremendous number of books and papers written about " tropical deforestation", some may find the mixture of these causes with some different characteristics in them. For example, Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) explained as follows.

Direct Causes

- Harvesting of timber, fuelwood, or games above the capacity of the forest ecosystem to replace the quantities extracted;
- Excessive selectivity of species, size and form cut;
- Overgrazing;
- Air pollution;
- Pollution of forest watercourses;
- Soil erosion within the forest;
- Anthropogenic fires;
- Depletion of biodiversity;
- Introduced disease or pest species;

Underlying Causes

- National policies;
- Failures of policy or planning;
- Insecurity of tenure;
- Absence of alternative sources of forest goods and services or substitutes for them;
- Failures of regulation or control;
- Land speculation;
- The temptation of a profitable market;
- Absence of employment;
- Land hunger;
- Displacement of populations;

- Farming failure;
- Improved accessibility;
- Displacement of Populations by other land uses;
- Greed and corruption;
- Unwise intensification of land use;

(IPF document, E=CN.17/IPF/1996/2, 13 February 1996,P13-15)

Recent WWF US's study of "Root Causes on Biodiversity Loss" utilized a more systematic explanation on a similar subject. It uses 4 different scales such as Time (Temporal), Geographical, Political and economic levels. It also utilizes 3 level of causal scales: Distant Determinants(Global Scale)-Intermediate Determinants(National Level) - Proximate Determinants(Local Level)-Environmental Change

First level Processes

Examples:

- Change in Method of Production
- Change in Living Conditions
- Change In Socioeconomic Relation/ migration, land tenure

Second Level Processes

Examples:

- Change in Productive System- Expansion of Commercial crops/ Industrialization

Third level Process

Example:

- Change in National and International Development Policies
- Change in National and International Markets
- It also suggested to accumulate case studies in various different places and develop conceptual models to examine their interlinkages and the degree of influences

("Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss- An Analytical Approach" Pamela Stedman-Edwards, For the Macroeconomics for Sustainable Development Program Office, WWF USA, April 1998)

For Example, a peculiar distant determinants demonstrating a cause and effect relationship is the annual number of houses being built in Japan. It is widely believed by the timber business world that it largely determine or heavily influence

the rate of logging in many key timber exporting countries, provinces in the Asia and the Pacific Rim region. Recent economic crisis in East Asia supports this belief. After the crisis and shrinking market became obvious, newspapers reported the closures of many logging camps in Canada, as well as the many of the Southeast Asian timber exporting countries.

Chain of Custody or Causalities

These analyses will not stop here, because there are many other factors which determine the numbers of annual housing start in Japan and other East Asian countries. All these potential determinants and factors in both proximate, intermediate, and distant places form what they call a "Chain of Custody" or Causalities. It is necessary to analyze their linkages and extent of influences among each other. This could be applied to other major causal relationships such as those between the trends of paper consumption, GDP and timber production. Similarly, Agriculture and plantation sectors, mining and energy resources development sectors have those complex chains of custody as well. It is apparent that it requires cross-sectoral approaches and both quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to understand those complex relationships sufficient enough to identify the strategic points for the possible solutions. In addition, historical aspects would be important to understand the development of those linkages. Thus we will be able to assess the true cause and effect relations and what should be the key points to tackle with. Major changes of domestic legislations, regulations and policies with regard to land tenure, land and resource use might be the reflection of the changes of those complex factors mainly from the out side of forest sector.

2-3. From "Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)" to "Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)"

Given the lack of progress on combating deforestation since UNCED and in order to promote and monitor the implementation of Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the Forest Principles, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 1995, established "Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)" to address a wide range of Forest-related issues, including one element, entitled: "Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation". The IPF produced a final report in early 1997 containing a set of 135 "Proposals for Action" that governments have agreed to implement. This package of proposals was formally endorsed at the June 1997 UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) of the implementation of Agenda 21.

As a follow-up to the IPF, at UNGASS, governments established the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) :

- (i) To promote implementation of the 135 IPF proposals for action;
- (ii) To monitor such implementation
- (iii) To address matters left pending by the IPF (e.g., financial resources, transfer of technology and trade and environment).

The Forum was also mandated to identify the possible elements of and work

towards consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally binding instrument of all types of forests.

In the first meeting of the IFF (IFF -I) held in New York from October 1st to 3rd which defined its terms of reference of the three-year work program, participants decided to include analysis of underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation in the program of work, "including transboundary economic forces, taking into account a historical perspective and the pressures exerted on forests by other sectors, notably agriculture in the quest for food security" ("Report Of The IFF On Its First Session" E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4, p.12, 10 Oct.1997). This issue was incorporated under Category II, related with matter left pending and other issues arising from the program element of the IPF process.

III. A JOINT INITIATIVE TO THE IFF ON ADDRESSING THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION

1. A NGOs Initiative

Participants in the IFF-I meeting affirmed the important role of NGOs and other major groups in the IFF process as observers on a fully participatory basis. Indeed, governments encouraged inputs from major groups in all activities under the IFF program of work. At IFF-I, NGOs announced a particular interest in contributing to the IFF deliberations on underlying causes. At one of the formal plenary sessions, a group of nearly 20 NGOs presented a joint statement expressing their willingness to contribute-with their intellectual, organizational and financial capacities-to a joint initiative on national and international underlying causes designed to help inform the IFF discussions on this topic. The NGO statement included the following elements:

- (i) An offer to organize, in partnership with governments, the global workshop on national and international underlying causes referred to above. The statement invited governments and international agencies to join NGOs as partners in organizing this workshop, and suggested that the workshop could include:
 - presentations by governments of their case studies using the diagnostic framework;
 - proposed by IPF-with a focus on solution-oriented approaches to address underlying causes; and
 - presentations by NGOs and indigenous peoples on relevant reports and case studies on this subject.
- (ii) A proposal that the workshop organizers prepare a synthesized report of the results, focused on solution-oriented approaches, and that this report form the basis for a review by the IFF on the progress being made in implementing the IPF Proposals for Action on underlying causes.

These proposals put forward by the NGO-coalition at IFF-I, were welcomed

by many participants. Several governments, for example, expressed their willingness to join as partners in the process and the Costa Rican Government officially offered to host the global workshop. UNEP, the lead agency on underlying causes within the Interagency Task Force on Forests also expressed strong interest in cooperating with the process.

More specific ideas on the project were discussed at an informal meeting held during IFF-I among representatives of governments, NGOs and intergovernmental agencies who showed interests with the initiative. Subsequently, an Organizing Committee was formed to help advance this initiative, beginning with the elaboration of a framework project proposal and preliminary fundraising efforts. A partnership of the World Rainforest Movement and the Netherlands Committee for IUCN was asked to serve as a joint global secretariat for the process.

2. Overall Approaches, Goal and Objectives

The main challenge of the project was to involve all of the main actors and stakeholders on underlying causes in a broad participatory process and to move beyond general discussion to concrete solutions and actions. A strong emphasis was put upon developing national, regional and global partnerships between governmental and non-governmental actors and IPOs aimed at developing solution-oriented approaches towards addressing underlying causes. The project sought to bring out the viewpoints of local communities and other major groups and ensure that local visions and priorities would be fully taken into account in future proposed actions. For this reason, there was a strong emphasis on the regional preparatory process in the overall project.

Presently, there is a regional process in every continent (Latin America, North America, Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Pacific, Former USSR-countries=CIS and Europe) as well as specific workshop for indigenous peoples which will discuss and further elaborate upon the results of the regional processes.

3. Regional Preparatory Process

This regional process began in the spring of, 1998, and the dates and locations of regional / indigenous peoples organizations workshops have been decided as followed:

CIS region :	July 29 , Krasnoyarsk, Siberia
Oceania :	September 28-29, Fiji
North America :	October 1-2, Winnipeg, Canada
Latin America :	October 8-10, Santiago, Chile
Africa :	October 26-28, Accra, Ghana
Asia :	December 4-6, Bogor or North Sumatra
Indigenous Peoples :	January 1999, Quito, Ecuador
Global Workshop :	January 18-22,1999, San Jose, Costa Rica

In order to carry out these preparatory processes, workshop, brainstorming sessions and internet-facilitated dialogue process are being conducted. The preparation and collection of case studies on underlying causes in the various regions will form an essential element of the regional process. It should be ensured that valuable existing case studies and other, generic in-depth studies are being incorporated in the over-all process. All important stakeholders from governmental, non-governmental and indigenous people's organization are encouraged to undertake such studies and to participate the process.

Through workshops and other activities, these case studies and additional, generic in-depth studies on specific topics, will be presented and analyzed in order to identify:

- (i) Commonalties among underlying causes at the national, regional and international levels;
- (ii) The main obstacles to addressing the specific underlying causes in each region;
- (iii) General solution-oriented approaches to address these obstacles, including various political, legal, economic, financial, social and institutional mechanisms which can be used to address" causative chains"; and
- (iv) Practical policy reforms and other specific measures to address these underlying causes.

4. Asian Regional Process

1) Joint Focal Points

In the earlier steering committee for this initiative, Mia Siscawati from Bio Forum Indonesia and Yoichi Kuroda from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies(IGES) were appointed as joint regional focal points in order to facilitate the process.

2) Preparatory Process

Due to the large diversity of the perspectives in Asia, we decided to organize various preparatory processes. For example, it is necessary to deal with many different languages in order to reach out to various stakeholders in the region, national NGOs process need to be facilitated wherever possible. Thus far, NGOs and a government from some countries expressed their interest in joining the process. Included among these countries are India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, The Philippines, as well as Japan and Korea. 5 case studies will be funded by the global secretariat and we will seek for more funds to support some additional studies from other key countries as well as in-depth studies with regard to this region.

3) Thematic Discussion for In-Depth Studies and the Synthesis Report

We are planning to initiate an inter-net facilitated discussion forum on certain key themes which relate to the underlying causes discussion. Number of key areas are need to be discussed in order to create common understandings about these

potential underlying causes and key actors/factors, inter alia, on trade and environment, production and consumption patterns, the impact of international financial institutions such as IMF, The World Bank and Asian Development Bank, export credit agencies (Export-Import Banks, and others), international debts and Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), the role of transnational corporations (TNCs), and others(See Box 1-2).

4. ABOUT THE IGES WORKSHOP

This is the first IGES's Workshop on Forest Conservation since IGES officially began. The purpose of this workshop is to discuss some key themes for the IGES forest conservation program to shape our strategic research. Although most of the subjects have some relationship to underlying causes, the first 3 sessions are planned for the relevant NGOs and researchers to discuss how this regional process should be prepared and implemented.

The first session is designed to discuss some selected country studies, namely, from Indonesia, Philippines, Nepal and India.

Reports from NGOs and researchers will be presented. Session 2 will be a panel discussion on "Trade and Environment". Trade provides us some real linkages between what's happening in forests and what's happening in the consuming countries and in the large cities. An ITTO expert will present a paper on this subject and a panel discussion with NGOs and a representative from Japanese government.

The third session is designed for general discussion on this subject, including discussions for some methodological questions on the underlying causes studies.

5. REMAINING QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

Although bulk of studies has been made by their investigations did not necessarily are not necessarily elucidate underlying causes.

It is necessary for us to clarify the differences between proximate or direct causes and indirect and underlying (root) causes. In addition, it is required to understand the linkages on all these causes, that is, what we call "Chain of custody" as implied in the IPF Proposal for Action. In addition, deforestation and forest degradation must be considered as a historical process so that historical analysis would be able to provide the basis for the in-depth analysis. Further more, thorough examination is necessary on trade and environment, particularly in terms of forest quality or degradation aspect.

Cross- sectoral examination, such as the relations between plantation development and northern consumption and production patterns must be scrutinized. From my understanding, for example, logging in the "frontier forests" as defined by World Resources Institute and the state of the international timber trade may have much deeper linkages than those opinions which appeared in various trade-environment related official documents, but this subject has not yet thoroughly studied(See, "The Last Frontier Forests-Ecosystems & Economies on the Edge", Dirk Bryant, et.al.,WRI 1997). Finally, underlying causes of forest

degradation and deforestation in the developed countries or the Northern temperate and boreal zones need to be clarified which may show some historical aspects of international linkages. Various determinants and factors in these countries including the "Chain of Custody" need to be examined in detail in this context.