

Preface

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The world's forest cover continues to decrease. In recent years, the world's forests have been affected by over-harvesting, overgrazing, pests and diseases, high global temperatures, floods, droughts, storms, air pollution and forest fires, as well as the economic crises in Asia and other regions. In particular, the forests in Asia have been strongly affected by these phenomena.

Numerous initiatives have suggested reforms of forest policy and the necessity of sustainable management of forests has been widely recognized and encouraged. However, as implementation at the local community level appears to be insufficient, more effective participation and involvement of local people in forest planning and management, as well as in protected area management, should be sought in each area.

The IGES Forest Conservation Project, launched in April 1998, has carried out research activities on forest strategies, including policy analysis and on-site surveys. This interim report of the Project covers forest issues in countries in Southeast and East Asia. Recognizing that viable forest strategies work best when based on the involvement of local people, this report is addressed to stakeholders in each local community of the relevant countries.

This report aims to provide the bases for discussions on formulating forest strategies, which will be published in 2000. Any comments or suggestions on any subject in the report would be highly welcome. (Please send by post, facsimile or e-mail to the contacts noted below.)

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