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Promoting sustainable forestry and addressing climate change: Two mutually achievable goals

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Deforestation is the first global environmental challenge

- Traditionally, global concerns regarding deforestation focused on loss of biodiversity.
- Today, in addition to biodiversity, international attention is focused on the role of forests in addressing climate change, and the contribution of deforestation to global warming.



Forests as Carbon Sinks



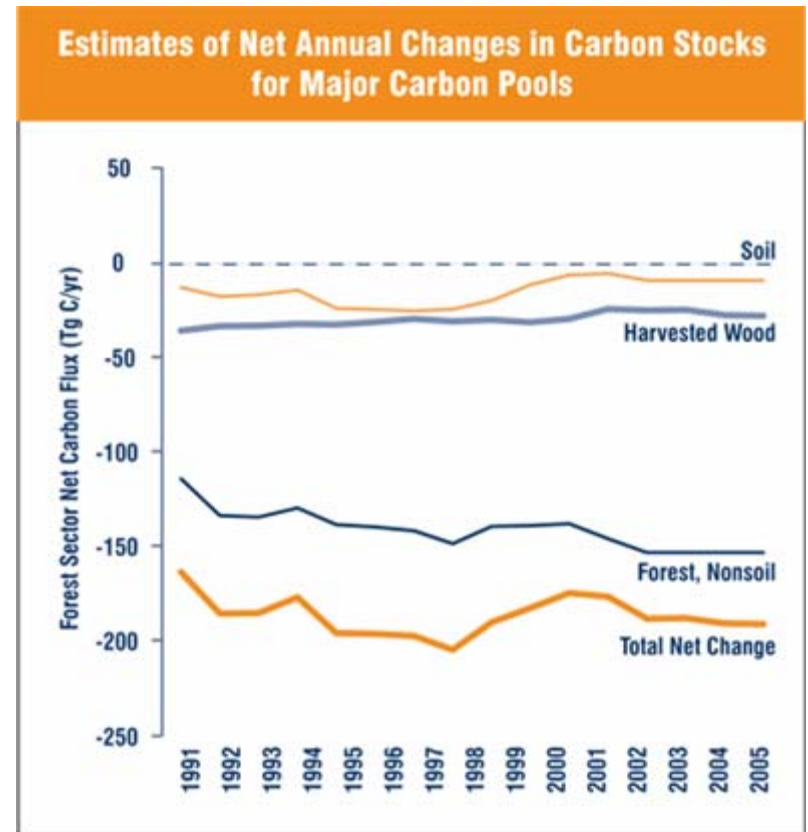
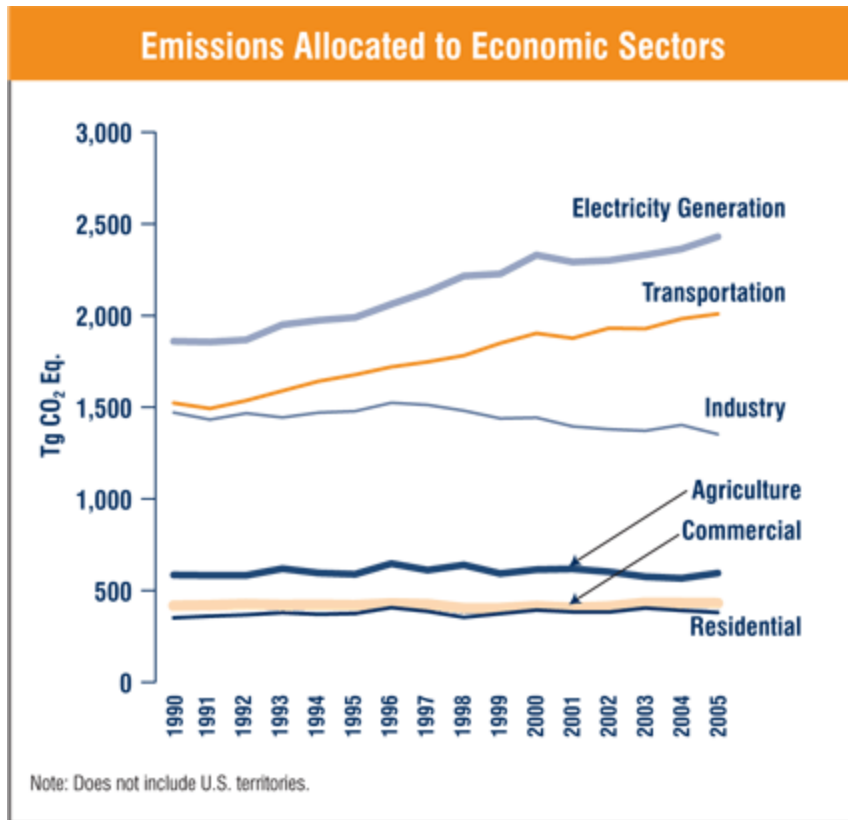
- Tropical forests store carbon through transpiration (or evapotranspiration).
- Leaves react with sunlight and carbon dioxide to produce sugars, which is energy for growing.
- Forests function akin to carbon sequestration.

Forests as Carbon Emitters



- Short term emissions: the removal of trees release the carbon stored within the forest (respiration).
- Reduction of carbon stocks: deforestation also eliminates the trees that serve as carbon sinks.

GHG emissions in the United States



GHG emissions worldwide

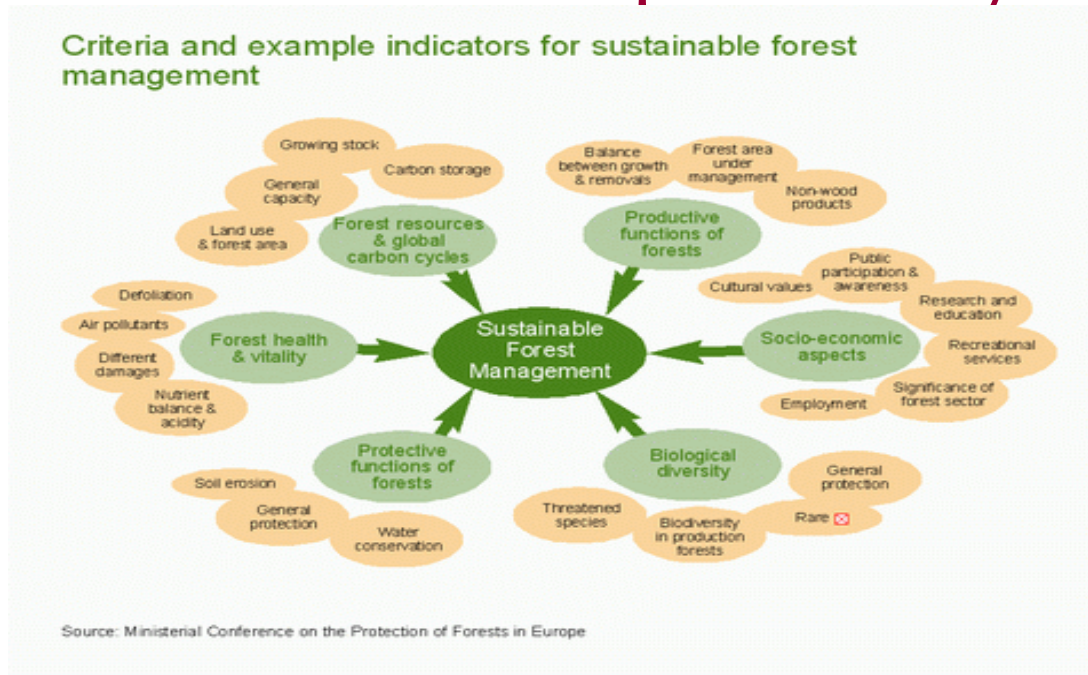
- Deforestation is the largest source of GHG emissions for many countries (deforestation accounts for up to 90 percent of GHG emissions from the world's third and fourth largest emitters, Brazil and Indonesia).
- Some experts believe deforestation in Brazil and Indonesia alone equals 80 percent of Kyoto reduction targets.
- Worldwide, deforestation is considered the largest or second largest source of GHG emissions, behind electricity generation.
- Deforestation contributes 19 million tons of CO₂ to the atmosphere each day; in 1990, estimated to contribute 1.6 GtC (gigatons or billion metric tons) per year.
- Deforestation and other land use changes account for 20 percent of the world's GHG emissions (more than twice the emissions produced by all the cars and trucks in the world).

Statement by Glenn T. Pickett, Conservation International (January 24, 2008)

Two issues (and a third that's missing)

- (1) Using nature as a climate change self remedy
 - Preserving forests as climate sinks.
 - Creating new forests to offset other carbon emissions.
- (2) Mitigating further climate change impacts
 - Thinking of deforestation and degradation as a GHG emission sector
 - Preventing deforestation
 - Ensuring that other climate change actions do not have indirect impacts on forests, such as renewable fuels
- (3) Promoting renewable forestry
 - Focusing attention on the benefits of creating sustainable and renewable forests on climate change

Issue is not simple either/or



- “Parties identify sustainable management of forests not only as a tool that is being used to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation but also as a method to maintain or increase the amount of forest carbon stock.”

Submission by 26 nations to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

The December 2007 Bali Negotiations

- While loosely framed, the Bali negotiations are a historic turning point because they formally embrace deforestation in climate change talks.
- The Bali Conference launched a formal negotiation process for new targets, which need to be agreed on by 2009 if countries are going to have time to prepare for their emission reductions beyond 2012.
- Introduced “REDD” concept (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries) that actions to address climate change must include reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation.

Three outcomes from Bali

- The Bali Action Plan for future negotiations of GHG mitigation and commitments.
- An Adaptation Fund to assist least developed nations most vulnerable to climate change.
- A “Decision” on deforestation.

Bali Decision on Deforestation

- Acknowledges the contribution of emissions from deforestation to global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.
- Recognizes the complexity of the problem, differing national circumstances and the multiple drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.
- Notes that while actions to reduce deforestation and forest degradation are occurring, there is an “urgent need” to further reduce GHG emissions from these sources, and that such efforts could complement “the aims and objectives of other relevant international conventions and agreements.”

Possible actions on deforestation in Bali decision

- Support and strengthen efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.
- Support capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer for data collection, monitoring, and reporting, and for institutional development.
- Encourage a range of actions, options, and efforts to address causes of deforestation and enhance sustainable forest management.
- Create internet platform for information exchange.

Bali Action Plan

- Calls for deep cuts in global emissions.
- Focuses on four key areas: mitigation, adaptation, technology, and financial resources and investment.
- Calls for enhanced national and international action on mitigation of climate change, including consideration of policy approaches and incentives relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries.
- Among climate change mitigation actions identified, calls for “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and [identifying] the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.”

Post-Bali issues for negotiation

- Define, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable way, nationally appropriate emission limitation commitments for developed countries and mitigation actions for developing countries.
- Determine essential actions to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change and to promote climate-resilient development.
- Mobilize the necessary finance and technology cooperation to support these action in a measurable, reportable and verifiable way.

The June 2008 Bonn Climate Change Talks

- Over 2,400 participants, including government delegates from 172 countries and representatives from business and industry, environmental organizations and research institutions attended the two-week meeting.
- Following up on Bali, The aim is to create a successor pact to the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012. The UNFCCC talks are scheduled to wrap up at a convention in Copenhagen in December 2009.
- Talks focused on how industrialized countries can meet their emissions reduction targets beyond the first phase of the Protocol, which ends in 2012.
- Governments discussed ways to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, reduce emissions from deforestation, increase investment for climate change, and improve the emissions trading system established under the Kyoto Protocol.
- Regarding deforestation, talks addressed policy approaches and positive incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation.

Other international initiatives

- United States initiatives to increase resources to address deforestation by promoting forest conservation, combating illegal logging, and promoting sustainable forest management.
- Debt-for-nature agreements, such as the United States Tropical Forest Conservation Act.
- Major Economies Meetings recognize forests, adaptation, and technology as “critical” components of addressing climate change.
- Public private partnerships such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

Further Questions Ahead

- Promoting renewable forests
 - Including in discussions broader issues than merely deforestation and forestation, but also renewable forestry approaches that promote GHG benefits and sustainable timber harvesting
 - IPCC: Most sustainable policy for forestry is maintaining or increasing forest carbon stock while sustaining timber yields.
- Renewable fuels
 - 2007 Energy Independence Security Act calls for 9 billion gallons of renewable fuels in 2008 to 35 million in 2022.
 - Concern over whether global interest in renewable fuels to address climate change could do additional harm through deforestation
- Purchasers as emitters
 - Questions regarding accountability of nations that purchase and consume wood and wood products from deforested areas

Thank You.

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