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Back issues of *arborvitæ* can be found on the WWF/IUCN Forest Innovations website, at:
<http://www.iucn.org/themes/forests>

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Russian

On May 17, Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a decree liquidating the State Committee for Environmental Protection, the committee responsible for independent monitoring and testing of the environmental effects of natural resource development and enforcing environmental laws, and the Federal Forest Service (FFS). Their functions were transferred to the Ministry for Natural Resources, which oversees development of Russia's oil, natural gas and other mineral deposits as well as water resources.

Reaction against the decree has been strong both nationally and internationally. The main concern related to the conflict of interests likely to occur in a Ministry responsible for environmental protection and the use and management of natural resources. Many environmentalists believe that the committees were axed under pressure from powerful business interests, which argue that green regulation is blocking development. As the hastily convened All-Russian Conference on Environmental Protection (Moscow, 13 June 2000) noted the overwhelming message from the reforms was that 'Russia's environmental problems must be resolved only after the solution of its economic problems'.

The onus is now on the Ministry and its Minister for Natural Resources, Mr. Yatskevich, to prove that the restructuring can allay the fears of its critics. The Ministry will have four functional Departments: Dept. on Use and Restoration of Forest Fund (Lands), Dept. on Geology and Mineral Resources Use, Dept. on Nature Conservation (Environment) and Dept. on Use and Restoration of Water Fund (Resources). The Departments will be independent from each other, but will not be financially self-sufficient, nor will the Ministry's budget be expanded to cover the abolished agencies' work. A further concern is the intention to 'simplify' the environmental rules governing industry, suggesting a further relaxation of controls that have already proved ineffective.

Meanwhile, news from the Russian forests continue to cause concern. According to Dmitriy Odintsov deputy head of the former FFS, over two million m³ of trees were illegally cut down in Russian forests in the first half of 2000, compared with only 800,000 m³ illegally felled during 1999. Odintsov blamed the increase on the re-organisation of the forestry service and lax control over forests. By May 2000, more than 312,000 hectares of forest had been burnt, according to *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* the main Russian governmental paper, and almost 4,000 fires had been registered in Russia, 300 more than for the same period last year. In July, an An-26 plane from Moscow was sent to the Komi Republic to shoot the rain out of the clouds to try to dampen the 50,000 hectares of fires burning in the region. The State Forest Service reported that most of the fires were man-made. Meanwhile the future of the Russian Aerial Forest Fire Protection Service, Avialesookhrana, which was part of the Federal Forest Service and is responsible for aerial forest fire protection on the largest contiguous forest of the world, remains uncertain.

Sources: Victor K. Teplyakov, Forest Programme Co-ordinator IUCN Office for CIS, Dima Aksenov, Russian Taiga Rescue Network Co-ordinator, Environmental News Service, *Forest Update*, Published by Russian NGOs Forest Club and Socio-Ecological Union Informational Coordination Center (52:54-55).

Threat to Brazilian Amazon averted: For the first time the Brazilian environmental movement has prevailed over the powerful ranchers' lobby – the one per cent of the landowners who control some 50 per cent of Brazil's agricultural land. In May, congressional leaders dropped proposed legislation to change the National Forest Code (see *Arborvitae* 13), which would have reduced the reserve area of the Amazon rainforest in each property from 80 to 50 per cent of the total (and down to 20 per cent where the ecological and economic zoning were completed). A flood of email and faxed protests to Senate offices, which Government officials attempted to block, and wide media opposition to the new law resulted in Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso pledging to veto the measure and the subsequent shelving of the legislation.

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Temperate and boreal forest assessment: The UN Economic Commission for Europe and UN FAO have published the most detailed study ever on the status of forests of the temperate and boreal countries, covering everything from forest area to status of threatened forest species. Forest and woodland cover some 2.48 billion ha in 55 countries, with the Commonwealth of Independent States accounting for over half this area. Around two thirds outside the CIS remains in public ownership. Over half is classified by country correspondents as 'undisturbed by man' but 94 per cent of this is in Canada and the Russian Federation and in many countries less than one per cent is undisturbed.

Source:

Rosa M. Lemos de Sá, Protected Area Programme
Co-ordinator at WWF Brazil, reports on an exciting

News in Brief



What constitutes forest quality? And how do we measure this on a landscape scale? An ambitious collaboration between WWF, IUCN, GTZ and the federal university of Lausanne is looking for some answers. [Nigel Dudley](#) and [Sue Stolton](#) report.

Forest conservation does not exist in a social vacuum; in the real world ecological needs have to be integrated with many other, frequently competing, demands on the landscape: such as food, timber, places to live, recreational space and more complex values like aesthetic and spiritual values. In the end, a process of negotiation and trade-off often determines the eventual uses of land. As conservation professionals we need to understand and appreciate a wide range of perspectives, often straying well beyond our traditional areas of expertise. As part of this approach, in an increasingly modified environment, we need simple and cost-effective ways of identifying the management options that can enhance the conservation value of the forests in the landscape. Lastly, as approaches to conservation change, we also need to find ways of involving a wide range of interested people ('stakeholders') in discussions and decisions about the way in which land is managed.

For the last three years, WWF and IUCN have been collaborating with the German technical co-operation agency GTZ and the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in developing methods of assessing forest quality at a landscape scale.

The approach is based on the recognition that quality means different things to different people, and that although a single forest stand cannot supply all the potential forest goods and services, this should be possible in a well-designed and

Forest quality in Wales: An assessment has just been completed in the Dyfi Valley in Wales, UK, in a watershed partly within the Snowdonia National Park. The project worked with a local NGO, the Dyfi Eco Valley Partnership (DEVF), which has representations from local councils, farmers, state forestry and conservation bodies and from many citizens' groups. The Partnership requested that the assessment develop an initial vision of forests for its work within the catchment. A picture emerged of the type of forest and woodland desired by stakeholders in the catchment. This will be a mosaic of woodland and other habitat, covering much the same area as at present (around 25 per cent of the total land) but with a higher proportion of broadleaves in a more coherent pattern including the removal of some conifer plantations from traditional moor and heath and the regeneration of some native woodland lost in the lowlands. Most people want to see most of the forest as multipurpose, at least on a landscape scale, and think that it should be generating greater benefits – both financial and other goods and services – for the local community.

The two stakeholder meetings and subsequent interviews and discussions resulted in a draft set of objectives for the Partnership. These include:

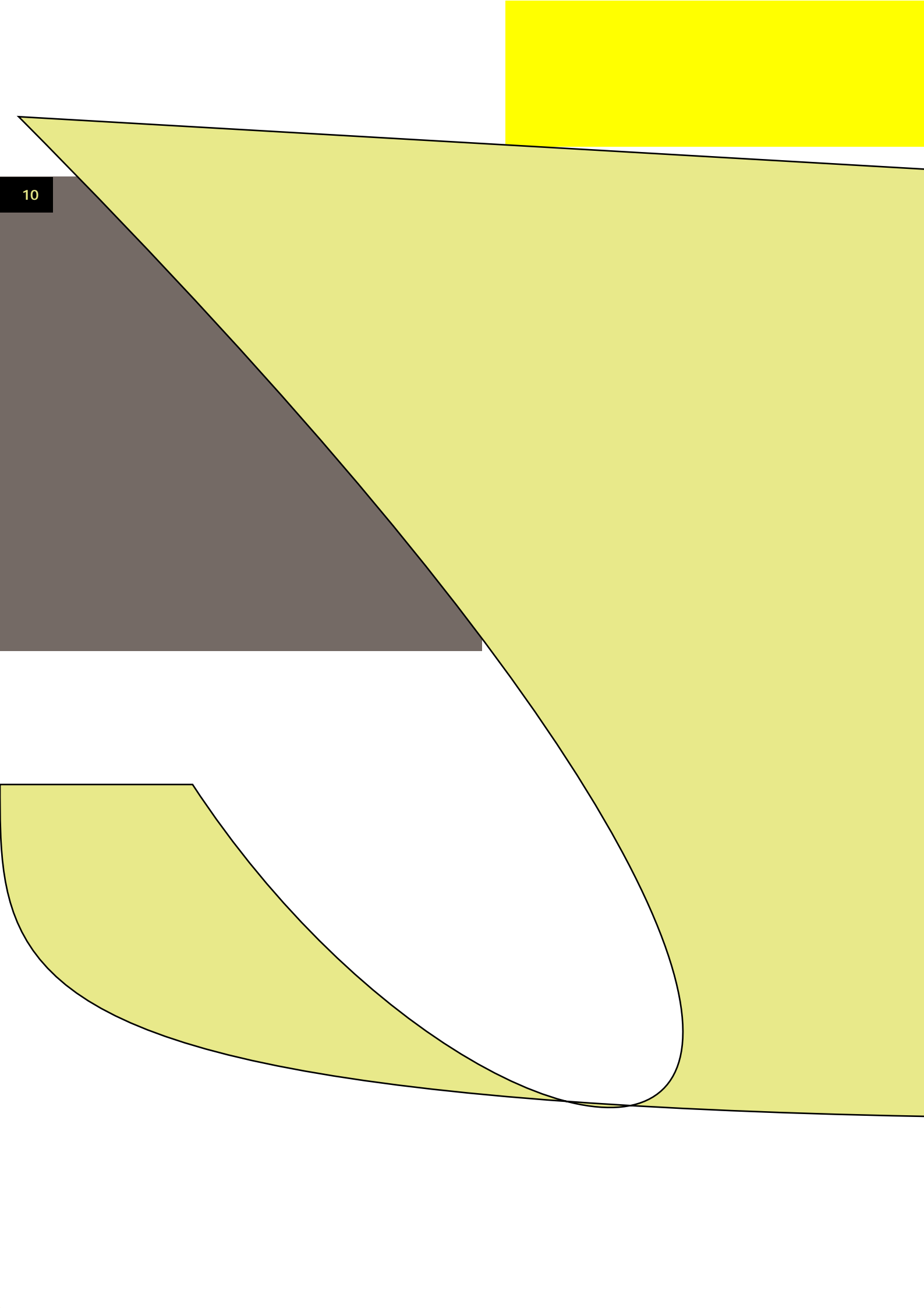
- A role in helping co-ordinate initiatives relating to a possible biosphere reserve
- A community education role in terms of grants perhaps through organisation of courses
- Specific involvement in a community-managed woodland in the catchment
- Developing wood-fuel production options
- Co-ordination of a mapping and planning exercise leading to a community-based approach to forest management

A draft report detailing the processes followed and the results of the assessment has been prepared. A few clear lessons on using the methodology were immediately apparent. Arranging individual meetings with key stakeholders is as important as

managed forest landscape, containing a mosaic of different land uses. For example, some forests might be set aside particularly for specialised needs like biodiversity protection or intensive wood production, while others will serve more multipurpose functions.

For the purposes of the project, forest quality is defined as: *the biological, social and economic components that together constitute the total significance or value of the forest.* Forest quality can be measured by use of a number of indicators, which the project proposes be divided into three main groups:

- Authenticity – a measure of ecological naturalness, viability and health
- Environmental benefits – such as watershed management,



Results

Since 1989, more than 1,000 new protected areas have been designated, bringing the total area of Canada protected to Campaign standards to slightly less than 7 per cent, still well short of our 12 per cent national goal. For the forested regions, the overall proportion is slightly over 8 per cent but still less than the 10 per cent target for 2000 set by the IUCN/WWF Forests for Life Policy.

While important, these numbers do not tell the real story. Representation is what really counts. An analysis by WWF revealed that only 32 of Canada's 388 forested natural regions were judged as adequately represented within protected areas. Another 75 were moderately represented, 122 were partially represented and the remaining 159 were unrepresented, meaning they had no protected areas greater than 200 ha. So there remains a long way to go.

While we can only claim partial success thus far on the ground, there is hope that one day protected areas designation will be achieved. So the progress is encouraging.

Campaigns are a key part of the strategy to reach our goal.

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East Africa Communities and Forests

Community conservation sounds good but does it actually work? In a new study, extracted below, [Edmund Barrow](#), [Helen Gichohi](#) and [Mark Infield](#) argue that it can and illustrate their theory with an example from Kenya.

[African countries] are or will soon be facing a problem: how to find room for wildlife and wild spaces in a land of more people. And populations are not just expanding in numbers, but in expectations for a more secure and comfortable life. It is likely that population and land use pressures will have a greater influence than any other single factor on the success of conservation. This argues for conservation finding a distinct niche, particularly outside protected areas, in rural livelihoods and land use in the future. Ultimately elements of rural landscapes managed for conservation must provide a comparative advantage over other forms of land use, unless long-term external assistance is assured.

The example of the Loita Maasai in Kenya reported here highlights the issue of the rights of indigenous people and local communities to maintain control over their natural resources for their own sake and for posterity. However, support for community conservation is by no means universal, most community conservation approaches have not been in place very long and their results are mixed.

Meeting
of the
Loita
Maasai
Elders

However this may change in the future. The power of community conservation as a set of ideas is so strong that it will begin to change the philosophy of the conservation authorities. The increasing practical evidence of its effectiveness, and national and international trends towards decentralisation will hasten the metamorphoses of government conservation bodies.

The Loita Maasai Forest

Kenya's Loita Maasai protect their *Naimina Enkiyo* indigenous forest through their traditions, culture and customary laws. All decisions concerning land issues rest with the whole community and are reached by consensus. The dense forest is intact and has not suffered encroachment or human disturbance. Its flora and fauna are rich and diverse and it is an important watershed for the whole region. The community uses the medicinal herbs, trees and plants in the forest to treat, cure and prevent many diseases. There is no charcoal burning, no logging and no need for forest guards. This legacy of protecting and conserving the sacred forest has been handed to the chief laibon from generation to generation. In 1993 the value of these resources to the local community was demonstrated. The year saw the worst drought in living memory, but the Loita survived because they had access to their critical dry-season pastures in the forest.

Despite these obvious values, the Narok County Council wants to turn the forest into a reserve for the development of mass tourism. If the plan goes ahead local access to the forest will be lost, and the Loita society, together with the forest will face inevitable destruction. However, the Loita are resisting and have created a trust run by ten community leaders, including the chief laibon, and have challenged the council in court on their interpretation of the Trust Land Act to prevent the land being gazetted as a government reserve.

This article is extracted and edited from *Rhetoric or Reality? – A review of community conservation policy and practice in East Africa*, number 5 in the *Evaluating Eden* series from IIED and IUCN – the series covers many other regions of the world. Available for £16.00 plus postage and packing (check as rates vary in different regions) from IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, email bookshop@iied.org

The IUCN East Africa office has also just published a series of papers on *Forest and Social Perspectives in Conservation*, covering collaborative mangrove management in Tanzania, engaging local users in wetland management in Uganda, collaborative management in Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda and forest reserves in Kenya.
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The 'Millennium Forests for Life Conference' was the third annual WWF conference and trade fair. Twenty-three of the world's largest producers of wood-based products, including eight of the top ten, were present. Together, these represent one third of the world's total production of forest products. A mix of large and small companies opened new channels between suppliers and buyers.

Governor Jorge Viana from the Brazilian Amazonian state of Acre, spoke about his support for forest certification and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) at the Conference. The state recently set up a goal to maintain more than 80 per cent of the former total forested area and to FSC certify 25 per cent. This is part of an overall strategy that will see the forests of Acre used for the benefit of the indigenous peoples and the families of rubber tappers who have lived in the forests for many generations.

Several state governments in the US were also represented at the event and informed the audience how they have already certified their forests or have plans to do so. The state of Pennsylvania has over 1 million hectares of FSC-certified forest, more certified hardwood forestland than any other state. The state of New York has FSC-certified its 320,000 hectares of forests and Governor George Pataki in a video addressed to the conference encouraged all public and private forest owners to follow suit. Washington State plans to FSC certify its forests, which cover 12 per cent of its surface, partly to meet the demand from those who are

Watching Africa's Forests

An ambitious new project from the World Resources Institute is using a combination of satellite mapping and local knowledge of indigenous NGOs to pin down information on exactly what is happening in the world's forests. **Wale Adeleke** and **Nigel Dudley** report on the first two reports from Africa.

The Congo Basin contains some of the largest areas of intact forest in the world. But the WRI study shows that many areas are currently under threat. Cameroon's forests still cover from 19.6 to 22.8 million hectares but even official figures – which are ten years out of date – suggest that almost 2 million hectares have been degraded since 1980. More significantly, at least 81 per cent of Cameroon's unprotected forests have been allocated for logging with just 25 companies holding three quarters of the concessions and the commonest type of logging agreement being *vente de coupe*, the least regulated. Three parent groups wholly or partially financed by French interests control almost a third of the concessions.

A similar situation exists in Gabon, although the forest industry has not progressed so far or so fast. Over half the forests are allocated to concessions and areas under concessions have doubled in the last five years. A single species, okoumé,

accounts for 73 per cent of the export volumes and between 1995 and 1997 half of all logs exported went to Asian countries. Laws created to protect forests have been poorly applied and enforced and for example only five out of 200 logging companies have initiated work on a management plan.

The Global Forest Watch (GFW) initiative seeks to identify and monitor threats to the world's remaining frontier forests – i.e. large and relatively undisturbed forest ecosystems. By 2005, it is aimed to have Global Forest Watch 'chapters' up and running in 21 countries, accounting for 80 per cent of the world's remaining forests. All information is available from the World Resources Institute and on their website: www.globalforestwatch.org

Judging from the first batch of publications, GFW is fulfilling the ambitious aims it set itself two years ago. The publications are clearly produced, easy to read and contain a mass of technical detail, including maps, lists of concession holders and statistical information, that those who are happy to exploit forests in an unsustainable manner generally want to keep well hidden from the public eye.

A First Look at Logging in Gabon and An Overview of Logging in Cameroon, both written by multiple authors and available from Global Forest Watch, WRI, 10 G Street NE, Washington DC 20002, USA, telephone +1-202-729-7694.
Contact: Adlai Amor, email: aamor@wri.org

Way on high

Prepared by Mountain Agenda
Available from Centre for Development and Environment, University of Berne, Switzerland, fax: +41-31-631-85-44, email: agenda@giub.unibe.ch

Balancing the productive, protective and cultural functions of mountain forests is the focus of a new and beautifully produced publication *Mountains of the World: Mountain Forests and Sustainable Development*. Prepared as an input to the CSD, it addresses the many causes and consequences of forest degradation, relates experiences worldwide through a series of case studies and calls for new policies for mountain forest management.

CEEC overview

Available from the PHARE programme of the European Union
Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forests in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) is a new output from the EU's Phare programme, which aims to give technical assistance and know-how to CEECs. The brochure provides information on forest resources, protection and conservation status, biodiversity and ecological networks, ecosystem stability and legal frameworks in Phare countries.

Cambodian tribulations

Available from Global Witness, email: mail@globalwitness.demon.co.uk
Chainsaws speak louder than words, the new briefing document on the forestry sector in Cambodia from the UK-based NGO Global Witness, analyses the role of the government, concessionaires and neighbouring countries in relation to the countries on-going forestry reform. The report also highlights the illegal activities of concessionaires in the five Military Regions and timber smuggling by neighbouring authorities.

Endangered trade

TRAFFIC Network, August 2000
Download the report from www.traffic.org or contact TRAFFIC International at email: traffic@trafficint.org
The resinous, fragrant and highly valuable heartwood produced by *Aquilaria malaccensis* and some of the other agarwood species is being over harvested according to the new report *Heart of the matter – Agarwood Use and Trade and CITES Implementation for Aquilaria malaccensis*. The report, which includes an analysis of legal and illegal trade flows, warns that agarwood species considered threatened by IUCN continue to decline and that compliance of the trade with CITES provisions is low.

Bridging the Rift

More details from Sam Kanyambwa, email: samk@wcmc.org.uk or Laurent Ntahuga, email: arcos.rc@imul.com
ARCOS (Albertine Rift Conservation Society), with funding support from the Netherlands Committee for IUCN and WWF Forests for Life Programme, have recently finished work on a series of *Site Profiles for Albertine Rift Montane Forests*. The profiles include (where available) basic data on size, location and status of protection, a summary of key biodiversity features and current and planned conservation initiatives together with contact details.

ODI on-line

www.odifpeg.org.uk
The new web site of the Forest Policy and Environment Group (FPEG) of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). As well as general forestry related information the site includes the latest research papers from FPEG Research Fellows and a searchable database of all FPEG's Rural Development Forestry Network papers.