

Policy Options for the Adaptation of Forests to Impacts of Climate Change

Jeremy Rayner and Peter Glueck

Expert Panel on Adaptation of Forests to Climate Change

UNFF8, 22 April 2009, New York



Key messages

- Forest conditions will change in response to the *direct* and *indirect* effects of climate change
- The policy challenge is to ensure the continued provision of forest goods and services, including carbon sinks
- **Sustainable forest management is integral to reducing the vulnerability of forests to climate change. The current failure to implement it limits the adaptive capacity of forests.**



Policy design challenges

- Uncertainties about the magnitude, rate and even direction of climate change impacts on the ground
- Conflicts over the goals of adaptation
 - Balance of social, economic and ecological goals
- Conflicts about means, even if we could agree on goals



Causes of policy failure

- Traditional modes of governance are top down and rely too heavily on regulatory instruments
- Traditional modes of forest governance are not well adapted to take account of drivers of change originating in other sectors
 - Improving *intersectoral coordination* will become a much more urgent priority



National forest policies

- Take a precautionary approach but encourage flexibility
 - “locking in” to bad policies is as dangerous as doing nothing at all
- Disappointing for those who want more regulation
 - Efficient use of regulatory instruments – narrowly defined – requires a degree of precision that we still don’t have
 - Make better use of well designed policy mixes
- Recognize that forest policies must engage with new stakeholders





International Processes

- Consensus Building: International Dialogue on Sustainable Forest Management
 - Already a consensus formed around this idea
 - Time spent forging a new consensus can never be recovered
- New Policy Instruments
 - Certification and “regional standards”
 - Combating the causes of deforestation



Regime Interaction

- Adaptation to climate change an issue that exists at the intersection of a number of global governance regimes
- Reflected in the multiplicity of programs and the variety of goals
 - World Bank's warning about goals
 - Can we reduce deforestation AND poverty?
- Urgent need for priority setting and coordination



Key challenges

- The optimal mix of precaution and flexibility
- How to achieve better inter-sectoral coordination
- Funding
 - Portfolio (and “nested”) approaches
 - Also needs better coordination
- Research
 - Central to progress on choosing the right policy instruments
- Managing the issue attention cycle

