



THE FORESTS DIALOGUE

Initiative on Food, Fuel, Fiber and Forests

Scoping Paper

Introduction

The Forests Dialogue (TFD) helps forest stakeholders engage in vital but contentious forest issues, to explore them together and seek effective changes. Created in 2000, TFD provides international forest sector leaders with a platform to run multi-stakeholder dialogues focused on developing trust, shared understanding and collaborative solutions that promote sustainable management of forests and improved local livelihoods around the world. Over the last 10 years, TFD has brought together over 2000 diverse stakeholders, many of them leaders of organizations that are highly influential for forests and livelihoods, in dialogues that have addressed and worked through eight urgent forest issues.

This paper is intended to inform a TFD scoping dialogue on the 4Fs topic. This is essentially a dialogue around the potential role and value of forests, and the supply of food, fuel and fiber, in a future world where humanity is living within the Earth's ecological limits and sharing its resources more equitably.

The broad purposes this dialogue stream are to:

- ➔ Provide thought leadership, catalyze debate and rally influential stakeholders around solutions for conserving forest values, while meeting a growing world population's needs for food, fuel and fiber.
- ➔ Identify key issues on land-use, trade and lifestyle from a global perspective that warrant further dialogue (at international level or within a specific geography to explore if and how they can be reconciled with local or national aspirations).
- ➔ Establish specific and practical ways forward on key issues, and preparedness to pursue them, amongst stakeholders involved in, or targeted following dialoguing.

This paper identifies some key issues and potential fracture lines on the 4Fs topic. During the scoping dialogue, we will further identify and explore those issues and fracture lines and discuss how future dialogues and dialogue linked actions can contribute to overcome those fracture lines.

Rationale: why 4F?

According to the Ecological Footprint¹, we are currently exceeding the Earth's biocapacity — the area available to produce renewable resources and absorb CO₂ — by 50 per cent. To eliminate this ecological overshoot, we need to balance human demand with the regenerative capacity of the planet. This would involve a shift in consumption and production patterns so that people use natural resources at a level the Earth can sustain, and share them fairly.

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Forests are a vital part of this future. But if they are to continue to provide us with the goods and services we depend on, we urgently need to stop deforestation and forest degradation.

One of the biggest challenges of the 21st Century is how to meet the needs of a growing, high-consuming human population with the resources of a single planet. Key projections from influential models and reports include:

- ➔ The global population will surpass 9 billion by 2050²
- ➔ This will require expanding food supplies by 70 per cent³
- ➔ Climate change will reduce crop yields in many countries⁴
- ➔ After 2030 food, fiber and fuel will compete intensively for limited land and water resources⁵
- ➔ Demand for wood and fibre products will continue to increase⁶
- ➔ 100% renewable energy would need bioenergy from an additional 250 million ha of crops and tree plantations by 2050 plus 4.5 billion m³ of wood from multiple sources⁷
- ➔ Global warming can be kept below 2°C through strategies including reduced emissions from forestry and agriculture; the costs and investment needed are fairly low, but implementation is highly challenging⁸

A recent WWF report⁹ concludes that, with better governance, the world would have enough productive forest and land available for agriculture to meet current demand for food, fuel and fibre without further conversion of forests. However, as we get closer to 2050, maintaining a “near zero” deforestation rate will require forestry and farming practices that produce more with less land, water and pollution, and new consumption patterns that meet the needs of the poor while eliminating waste and over-consumption by the affluent.

Why TFD

TFD has unique convening capacity and a proven track record in bringing together industry, conservation organizations, international agencies (such as the World Bank) and social/community representatives including indigenous peoples.

For some issues, TFD has developed content in a bottom-up manner through local dialogues in specific places. In other cases, TFD has enabled diverse international stakeholders initially to explore the issues with a global perspective and debate on global challenges and choices. It is this latter global “scoping” dialogue approach that is proposed here. This, in turn, would help shape later dialoguing on how global challenges and pressures could play out in specific places or on more specific issues.

Teasing out this global perspective and potential fracture lines between global “solutions” and local aspirations fits well with TFD’s niche. This global perspective sets the context for many of the issues that need to be addressed locally and highlights underlying causes of more ubiquitous threats to forests, as well as global values of forests and the importance of maintaining them.

TFD has much to carry into the 4F’s topic with its past initiatives on intensively managed plantation forests and commercial forestry and poverty reduction, and in its current dialogue initiatives on investing in locally controlled forestry, in-country REDD readiness and Free Prior and Informed Consent.

Key issues:

Some cross-cutting issues that are critical for the discussions on 4F are listed below. These cross-cutting issues are highlighted in the recent WWF's Living Forests Report and reinforced by the conclusions from some TFD's past dialogue discussions. (See footnotes)

Biodiversity

- Strategies to halt deforestation could be at the expense of biodiversity conservation; for example, agricultural expansion in highly biodiverse grasslands to take pressure off forests. Strategies could immediately prioritize forests with highest biodiversity, so these are not lost during the time it takes to halt deforestation.¹⁰
- Preventing unnecessary tradeoffs between fiber production and biodiversity depends on effective strategic interventions to ensure that forest land use choices and management practices promote conservation.¹¹

Governance

- Valuable forests are being “squandered” today due to poor governance. This squandering is primarily a symptom of poor governance of forests and land. The contributing practices are poor forest management, inefficient livestock production, unregulated forest conversion, low-yield crop production, high-impact fuelwood collection, and failure to make productive use of idle, yet arable degraded land.¹² In addition, the frequent exclusion of women as a group of key stakeholders and laborers within the food and energy sectors has limited the effectiveness of governance mechanisms.
- Weak governance frameworks means that the land-use change process will inevitably be accelerated by pressures to access forest resources and the opportunities that arise as a result; and customary land rights and practices, many of which may have sustained environmental benefits, are typically ignored or overwhelmed, and the prospects for systematic, participatory and adequate land-use planning diminish.¹³

Market Demand for Commodities:

- Much destructive forest use is encouraged by market demand, but markets can also drive better management. Incentives for high social and environmental standards in forestry and farming, and bans on trade in illegally sourced timber can help achieve this.
- Certification is one of the tools that can help promote forestry and farming practices that meet high social and environmental standards.

Lifestyle and Consumption

- Crop and livestock production play a major role in forest loss. This suggests the need for strategies to reduce food waste, meat and dairy intake, energy use and over-consumption among richer people, and to ensure poor people have the food, energy and materials they need to lead healthy, productive lives. Consumption patterns are critical determinants of how much forest and biodiversity can be protected as demonstrated by the “Dietshift” Scenario in the WWF Living Forests Report.¹⁴

Produce More with Less:

- Advanced and innovative production processes that can produce more food, fuel or fiber with less land, water and pollution are needed to help reduce deforestation and degradation rate.

Local livelihoods:

- Global strategies must recognize local needs. Extreme care is required to reconcile a top-down vision of a world without deforestation with bottom-up perspectives reflecting the legitimate needs and wishes for self determination and well-being of the 300 million people living in forests and the over 1 billion more directly dependent on forests.
- Pro-poor forestry should be promoted. Markets for a wide range of sustainable forest products and ecosystem services provide more opportunities for pro-poor forestry: Fiber and wood, non-timber forest products, biomass and “green energy,” clean water, recreation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity all present opportunities for sustainable income generation.¹⁵
- Strategies should incorporate a gender perspective, based on women and men’s different roles, knowledge and reliance on forests for livelihood needs.

Rights-based approaches

- Strategies to reduce deforestation should protect hard-won rights to access and benefit-sharing, ensure traditional communities give free prior informed consent to activities affecting their territories, and ensure communities receive fair compensation for conservation introduced for the global good. Existing policies can provide a framework to help these decisions — for instance the UN’s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*¹⁶ or WWF’s *Position Paper on Poverty and Conservation*¹⁷.

Potential Fracture Lines to be explored:

With the above cross-cutting issues in mind, some potential fracture lines that can be explored through the 4F dialogue initiative are listed below.

Under what circumstances is industrial forestry (logging and plantations) a threat or a solution for biodiversity conservation, climate change or local people?

- ➔ How to recognise the environmental, social and economic benefits of well-managed forests including plantations and of using wood as a renewable resource without green-washing the impacts of destructive logging and indiscriminate conversion of natural ecosystems?
- ➔ What technologies offer prospects of increased bio-capacity, what risks do they pose, and what safeguards are needed to manage those risks?
- ➔ What is the role of forest certification and what are the opportunities and constraints on use of certification as a tool for improving sustainable forest management?
- ➔ Should global industrial roundwood production be expanded or be contained? How much of world fibre production can be generated via locally-controlled forestry?

Under what circumstances is bioenergy a threat or a solution for biodiversity conservation, climate change or local people?

- ➔ How much land can be freed up for bioenergy, and with what technologies and/or production systems/approaches (e.g. FAO’s IFES programme), without impacting forest biodiversity or displacing food production?
- ➔ How much forest fibre can be dedicated to bioenergy without impacting forest biodiversity?
- ➔ How much land and forest can be allocated to industrial bioenergy use without compromising livelihoods, rights and food security? Can sustainable bioenergy approaches contribute positively to livelihoods, land rights and food security (e.g. UN-Energy’s Bioenergy Decision Support Tool)?

- ➔ How much land and forest can be allocated to bioenergy without compromising, or potentially contribute further to, the value creation of the traditional wood consuming industries?
- ➔ Under what conditions does bioenergy use lead to reduced green house gas emissions, and how can these conditions be incentivized?
- ➔ Is it feasible/ethical to reduce and/or substitute fuelwood use and promote more efficient or alternative cooking and heating technologies in rural areas?

Do more forests need to be cleared to feed the world?

- ➔ How much land is needed for agriculture?
- ➔ What technologies offer prospects of win-wins for food and forests, what risks do they pose, and what safeguards are needed to manage those risks?
- ➔ How much “degraded” land is available for expanded “responsible” agricultural production?
- ➔ What role do forests play in agricultural productivity?
- ➔ What role for agro-forestry?
- ➔ What are the most sustainable practices in agriculture?
- ➔ What are the links between forest ecosystem services, water footprint and agriculture?

Should responsible companies do business in places with weak governance?

- ➔ How much deforestation is “unnecessary” (i.e. deforestation driven by failures of governance and associated land grabbing and speculation rather than demand for commodities) and is this beyond the reach of market solutions (e.g. commodity certification, investment screening, responsible procurement)?
- ➔ Is it possible or appropriate to apply market-based solutions in regions with poor governance?
- ➔ Should companies avoid regions of poor governance or engage in the hope of driving positive reform?
- ➔ Are market-based standards more effective if set at very high levels or at levels that are more attainable in frontier regions with weak governance?

What is a one-planet lifestyle?

- ➔ When is it better to buy local (e.g. to reduce transportation and packaging impacts) or to buy from afar (e.g. to encourage forest certification and improved practice in the world’s most valued and threatened forests)?
- ➔ How much can the future pressure on forests be reduced through the elimination of wasteful consumption; by lifestyle changes (e.g. diet, paper use); by increased efficiency in processing and product design; and without compromising quality of life?
- ➔ How much of the “pie” needs to be shifted from the rich to the poor to achieve a sustainable global economy?

How can the human rights of indigenous peoples and other forest dependent communities be secured in the context of plans for food, fuel, fiber and forests?

- ➔ Can “safeguards” ensure that global solutions contribute to local livelihoods and priorities?
- ➔ Are global forest conservation measures (e.g. restrictions in certification standards on conversion of High Conservation Value areas, REDD mechanisms) a threat or an

- opportunity for forest-dependent communities?
- How can forest peoples win from globalization and intensification of production?
- How can forest peoples be empowered to move from a state of dependency to self-determination and independence?
- How much timber, pulp, fuelwood and ecosystem services are needed by people living in poverty to achieve the Millennium Development Goals?
- Are forests a “safety net” or idle land for communities living in and around them?
- What measures are needed to ensure that men and women living in poverty get and control the timber, paper, fuelwood and ecosystem services they need to achieve the MDGs?
- What safeguards are needed to ensure forest dependent peoples livelihoods can be sustainably enhanced/ transformed from the benefits from REDD+ and other Payments for Ecosystem Services schemes? In particular, how do we assure that women who often bear the responsibilities for fuelwood collection are not negatively affected by these programs, and are included in decisions and benefits that would enable them to reduce consumption of forest products?

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