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Addressing International Forest Policy Issues through Independent Forest Monitoring

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International Forest Policies

1. International Forest related policy linked to development of international forest governance regime
2. United Nations Forum on Forests produced a report in 2007 – ***International Forest Policy – the instruments, agreements and processes that shape it***
3. Policy – *purposive* course of action or inaction that an actor or set of actors take to deal with a problem (McDermott *et al* 2007)
4. No single ‘forest convention’ or legally binding instrument focused primarily on forests
5. A plethora of instruments & processes has been developed – vary in focus, scale, geographic scope & institutional type
6. Focus ranges from protection of **biodiversity, climate change mitigation** (& adaptation), **trade, combatting illegal logging** etc

International Forest Policies

7. Include but not restricted to;

- **Global Instruments:**

started after the conclusion of WWII marking a new era of global governance – **UN Processes and Conventions** e.g. CITES, ITTA, CBD, IFF, UNFF....**REDD+**

- **Regional Instruments:**

regional agreements and processes prioritising regional concerns e.g. **FLEGT Action Plan**

- **Non Governmental Approaches:**

non state governance led by environmental NGOs e.g. **FSC**, ISO etc

The Issues – Global Public Goods

1. Forests provide **environmental, social & economic** benefits at **global, national & local** levels - balancing these (SFM) is the greatest challenge for forest governance
2. Meanwhile:
 - Current scale & pace of deforestation & degradation is alarming – negative impact on **local** economies and livelihoods but also **globally** on ecosystem goods, climate change, biodiversity etc
 - Agriculture main driver - around 80% of deforestation worldwide
 - Timber extraction & logging account for +70% of total forest degradation – **most is illegal**
 - Half of tropical deforestation between 2000-2012 due possibly to illegal conversion of forests for commercial agriculture
 - Significant portions of tropical timber comes from conversion areas – **possible illegal logging**

The Issues – Global Public Goods

3. Forested countries that are major timber producers face a multitude of challenges e.g. *Illegal logging, land grabbing, loss of biodiversity, poverty, corruption, climate change.....*
4. Consensus that poor forest governance underlies most forest problems
5. Drivers of poor forest governance and illegal logging transcend national boundaries
6. Forest governance is dynamic and complex and involves governments, communities, private sector & civil society
 - Good forest governance needs to involve multiple stakeholders in decision making
7. A number of international policy initiatives already underway to tackle poor forest governance
 - **EU FLEGT Action Plan**, and **REDD+**, certification etc

International Forest Policy Responses

1. The EU FLEGT Action Plan 2003

- Blend of demand and supply side measures to fight illegal logging with both a development and trade dimension
- Two core components;
 - a) The EUTR
 - b) VPAS

Is this a forest or trade policy ?

2. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation – part of the UNFCCC process(1992) started in 2005

- REDD+ aims to create incentives for developing countries to slow, halt and eventually reverse emission from forests including the conservation, sustainable management & enhancement of carbon stocks
- Now enshrined in the Paris Agreement (Article 5)

Is this a forest or climate change policy?

The Role of Independent Forest Monitoring

1. Contributes to **improvements in forest governance** - IFM undertaken mostly in the context of industrial timber harvesting & trade but potential in other areas of forest and forest land management such as REDD+
2. Contributes towards combating **corruption** – forest & land use policies are susceptible to corruption
3. Contributes towards reducing **illegal activities/logging**
4. Supports improvements in **accountability** & ensuring **transparency** within the forest sector – key to the credibility and viability of **FLEGT** and **REDD+**

The Role of Independent Forest Monitoring

6. IFM enables stakeholders to build **open & accessible** information systems allowing citizens to observe official governance systems and push for improvements if needed
7. IFM assesses forest governance and legal compliance in the forest sector – supporting **law enforcement &** informing government & other stakeholders about shortcomings in enforcement efforts
8. By engaging civil society (**mandated** or **self mandated**) it strengthens the system of checks and balances – enhancing overall forest governance by providing **credibility to enforcement work**

The Role of Independent Forest Monitoring

9. Provides for the **rights** of citizens to **access information** on the forest sector
10. Independent monitors can be or are a source of information for the **Independent Auditors** in VPAs
11. Through its use in REDD+ - creates the opportunity for scrutinising **land use change decisions, governance** and **tenure reforms** beyond the forest sector
12. Monitors the implementation of **REDD+ safeguards & standards** including **MRV**, payments for results & flow of benefits

Conclusion

1. IFM is about forest governance monitoring, particularly the principles of governance - **Accountability, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Fairness/Equity, Participation & Transparency**
2. International forest policies will succeed if they deliver on the above principles. FLEGT & REDD+ are not just about illegal logging, deforestation, climate change mitigation etc
3. IFM is very much part of the delivery of international forest policies – policies come and go....but good forest governance will always be needed
4. IFM compliments other forms of third party verification e.g. audit by certification bodies – EUTR Due diligence
5. IFM needs to be more **demand led** rather than **supply led** – engage more with the needs of the private sector, governments, **legislators**, competent authorities and citizens – EUTR Due diligence & other legislative instruments



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