



Forest Politics: The Evolution of International Cooperation

David Humphreys

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'An important and timely book' from the Foreword by Stanley Johnson 'A complete and absorbing history of a decade of intense international politics' offers many insights for future negotiators of sustainable solutions' Stephen Bass, International Institute for Environment and Development 'Skillfully navigates the jungle of forest politics, leaving us in no doubt that the verbal commitment to save the world's forests has yet to be translated into action on the ground. The way forward must clearly lie in political commitments and international cooperation if forests are to continue to preserve life on Earth' Francis Sullivan, World Wide Fund for Nature Global deforestation and its attendant processes - including soil degradation, climate change and the loss of biological diversity - emerged as international political issues during the 1980s, prompting politicians to seek consensus on programmes and policies for the conservation and sustainable management of forests. Yet global initiatives have been bedevilled by tensions between the North and South and between governments, industry, local communities and indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, rates of deforestation in the tropics are increasing, and international political efforts are demonstrably failing. Forest Politics carefully traces the evolution of international cooperation on forests, from the inception of the controversial International Tropical Timber Organization and the failed Tropical Forestry Action Programme in the mid-1980s, to the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests in the mid-1990s. The book also provides a detailed analysis of the negotiating stances of the parties involved in the divisive negotiations that took place prior to the 1992 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro and the equally factious negotiations for the International Tropical Timber Agreement of 1994. It provides a fascinating insight into the nature of such processes, illustrating the difficulties that arise when concepts such as 'global commons' come into conflict with national sovereignty. Complete with annexes of important political documents, and making extensive use of primary source material and interviews with participants. Forest Politics presents case studies of all the major forest negotiations over the last 13 years. It is an essential reference point for policy makers, environmental campaigners and students, and required reading for all those who care about the future of the world's forests. David Humphreys is Research Fellow in Global Environmental Change at the Open University. Originally published in 1996

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