

## Nature Conservation and Development: The Case for Tropical Rain Forests

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It is impossible to expect large tracts of rain forests to be set aside inviolate for perpetuity. With rapid population growth, and increased demand for resources, tropical forests will be harvested for timber and various other products. If this premise is not accepted, we will see the remaining forests being completely wiped out. It is only within the context of development can conservation of these great terrestrial ecosystems be integrated; conservation has therefore, got to become part of the development of the forest resources. Sustainable forest management practices, holistic approaches which marry both development and conservation, are being increasingly sought after as the means to conserve the tropical rain forests. Currently accepted sustainable practices require attention be paid to the legal and physical protection of the forests, sustainable production practices, conservation of flora and fauna, tolerable impacts from development, and protection of forest dwellers rights and forest usage. Research is beginning to look towards harvesting practices which have minimal damage to the forest environment. Other studies are investigating into conservation issues like the size of a jungle reserve that will permit the maximum genetic flow and maintenance of species, the minimum set of species which are required to prevent ecosystem collapse, and the mobile links and keystone species which maintain the key ecological functions. All these studies are providing insights into how one can cut the forest, and yet keep it.