

WHY FORESTS?

**Frances Seymour
Jonah Busch**



WHY NOW?

**The Science,
Economics and
Politics of Tropical
Forests and
Climate Change**



FRANCES SEYMOUR



Frances Seymour is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development, where she leads work on tropical forests for climate and development. An expert on international forest policy, she also serves

as an adviser to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. From 2006–2012 Seymour served as Director General of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). For her leadership there, the Government of France awarded her the rank of Officier in the Order of Agricultural Merit, citing her “exceptional dynamism” and “visionary thinking.” Seymour was the founding Director of the Institutions and Governance Program at the World Resources Institute and Director of Development Assistance Policy at the World Wildlife Fund. Seymour holds an MPA in Development Studies from Princeton University.

JONAH BUSCH



Jonah Busch is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development. He is an environmental economist whose research focuses on climate change and tropical deforestation. He is the lead developer of the

OSIRIS model for analyzing and designing policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation. Busch’s publications have appeared in academic journals including *Science*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Land Economics*, and *Environmental Research Letters*. He serves on the editorial board of *Conservation Letters*. Busch has advised on climate and forests for the President of Guyana, the Government of Indonesia, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, and other governments and institutions. Busch holds a PhD in Economics and Environmental Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Climate change threatens the world’s poorest people most. They are least protected from climate-related disasters by savings or insurance, least able to access modern health care when diseases spread, and least able to move to safer locations when storms rage. Preventing dangerous climate change is critical for promoting global development. And saving tropical forests is essential to doing both.

At the landmark Paris climate conference in 2015, countries unanimously pledged to keep global temperature rise to well below two degrees Celsius. The world cannot meet this pledge without stopping tropical deforestation. Every year an area of tropical forest the size of Austria is destroyed. Ending tropical deforestation and letting damaged forests recover could reduce current annual global greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 24 to 30 percent.

Protecting tropical forests is among the quickest and most affordable ways to decrease emissions, while also advancing development. Standing tropical forests contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals related to food, water, health, energy, human safety, and biological diversity. For the climate and development, tropical forests are an undervalued asset.

It’s time for the world’s rich countries to invest more—much more—in protecting tropical forests.

Today, more than ever, protecting tropical forests is feasible. A revolution in satellite data has brought unprecedented reliability and speed to forest monitoring. And Brazil has shown that slowing deforestation is possible, successfully reducing deforestation in the Amazon by 80 percent over the course of a decade, even while growing agricultural production. Yet with every passing year, climate change cuts into tropical forests’ capacity to operate as a safe, natural carbon capture and storage system.

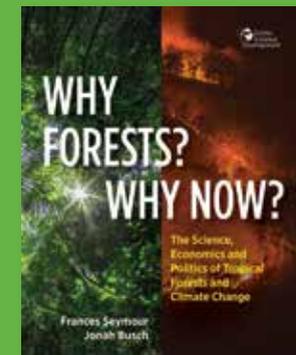
Science, economics, and politics are now aligned to support a major international effort to protect tropical forests. International agreement has been reached on how to incorporate forests into global strategies to protect the climate, many corporations have taken on commitments to get deforestation out of commodity supply chains, and dozens of developing country governments have expressed their willingness to increase their ambitions to reduce deforestation in return for more certain reward.

But one critical piece of the puzzle is still missing: finance. Performance payments offer an especially promising approach, providing tangible incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation while going beyond aid to build partnerships between rich and poor countries.

About the CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

The Center for Global Development works to change the policies and practices of rich countries and powerful institutions to reduce global poverty and inequality. We are a policy crucible, where world class scholars use independent, rigorous research to develop new knowledge and practical solutions.

To learn more about the Center for Global Development’s work on tropical forests for climate and development, and to access our publications and data sets, visit our website at cgdev.org/tropical-forests.



***Why Forests? Why Now?* is available from Brookings Institution Press and on Amazon.com**

With forewords by . . .

Alec Baldwin, Actor and international advocate for forests and indigenous peoples

“International cooperation to protect forests is urgent, affordable, and feasible. . . . *Why Forests? Why Now?* should be mandatory reading for people who already care deeply about tropical forests, as well as for those who remain not yet convinced.”

Lord Nicholas Stern, IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government, London School of Economics and President of the British Academy

“Seymour and Busch make a compelling argument that rich countries should reward developing countries for their success in slowing deforestation. . . . It is a clear and sound application of the ‘Cash-on-Delivery’ approach to international cooperation promoted by . . . the Center for Global Development.”

Praise for *Why Forests? Why Now?*

“Anyone who cares about climate change or sustainable development should read this book.”

Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme; former Chair, OECD Development Assistance Committee

“Seymour and Busch show how international support for efforts to stop deforestation can advance transparency and accountability, resulting in a triple win for sustainable development, climate stability, and good governance.”

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Minister of Finance, Nigeria

“*Why Forests? Why Now?* provides a welcome source of optimism that deforestation can be tackled through complementary public and private sector action.”

Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever

“Seymour and Busch highlight an important achievement of global climate negotiations—agreement on cooperation to reduce tropical deforestation—and suggest an effective path for the realization of this goal.”

Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change