TOP-DOWN VERSUS BOTTOM-UP RESEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE TROPICAL FOREST USE

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SOME STATEMENTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Research priorities should be based on a top-down overview.

- This applies equally to policy design.

- Overly detailed research is less relevant, given the scope of the tropical deforestation problem.

- The lack of a multidisciplinary approach in tropical forest research may easily lead to biased and wrong conclusions.

- The fundamental cause of tropical deforestation is human behaviour; without a proper understanding of such behaviour, there is no serious clue to a solution.

- Since ecosystems as well as economic systems are linked internationally, one must, in serious macro-research, pay attention to such interlinkages.

- Various well-intended instruments aiming at sustainable tropical land use are counter-effective, because the important interlinkages are overlooked.

- The population-pressure/mobility/land-use/deforestation nexus is somewhat under-researched, when compared with research investment in other issues related to tropical forests.

- Bottom-up tropical forest research needs to fit into top-down tropical forest research, not the other way around.

- Bottom-up tropical forest research can well be monodisciplinary; top-down tropical forest research should not be.

- As far as rules for tropical forest land use are concerned, a clear distinction should be made between the rules themselves, and the compliance with these rules.

- For tropical rain forest research to be effective, strong lines of communication between the on-site research teams and the regional and national authorities are imperative, so that all parties can realistically assess what can be gained from one another, and what can be achieved; concessionaires can play an important liaison role in this respect, but also local NGOs, experts, etc.

- Researchers who show more respect for the local forest than for the local people may easily suffer from counteractive local behaviour.