

Eye-in-the-sky Fix on Illegal Loggers

by Manolo b-Jara

THE Philippine government has junked what it calls "outmoded" concepts of forestry law enforcement in its efforts to make life difficult for big-time illegal loggers. It has turned to modern techniques.

One of the innovations now being implemented is the Forest Air Surveillance Team (FAST). According to the authorities, it has proved remarkably effective in the campaign against illegal logging.

FAST employs modern technology and military tactics, combining air surveillance teams and ground strike forces working simultaneously. Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Fulgencio Factoran Jr. explained in a report to President Aquino.

The introduction of FAST is

a follow-up to the total ban on log exports introduced by the government on July 1, 1989. In addition, restrictions were imposed on the cutting of hardwood species as well as the cutting of saplings used as props in banana plantations, especially in Southern Philippines.

Hence the need for a more effective means of stopping illegal logging, which is a major cause of forest destruction in the country. The others are kaingin or slash-and-burn farming, fuelwood-gathering and charcoal-making.

According to Secretary Factoran, unsupported foot patrols had been shown to be useless. "A forest guard assigned to protect 4,000 hectares of forest is as good no guard at all," he said.

Not so with FAST, he said, explaining how it operates. Helicopters provide the "eye in the sky" and sightings of suspicious logging activities below are transmitted immediately to the ground component of FAST, backstopped by armed military units.

When reports of illegal logging are confirmed, both air and ground teams close in on their quarry. Almost always, this kind of operation has succeeded.

An example is a FAST operation mounted late last year against a huge logging and plywood manufacturing firm in Isabela province, Northern Luzon.

The firm was raided following confirmation of reports that the bulk of its log supplies came from illegal sources. The

FAST teams confiscated more than 50 million pesos (US\$1.8 million) worth of logs, timber and plywood sheets, considered the biggest single haul in years.

The teams also seized and impounded about 15 million pesos (US\$455,500) worth of machinery and vehicles used in manufacturing and transporting finished products.

Secretary Factoran said FAST teams are proving equally useful in the surveillance of forest covers, monitoring of reforestation projects, aside from providing valuable aerial photographs.

At the same time, the government has ordered the closure of 441 wood-processing plants like sawmills, "drying up the once-lucrative clandestine timber market."

The war against illegal loggers also extended to the courts throughout the country where charges have been filed against violators.

Unknown to many said Mr Factoran, at least 700 charges have been filed so far in the courts against forestry law violators. In 1989 alone, he added, 376 such cases were filed and are awaiting judicial action.

Of the numerous charges filed, the government won in at least two big cases. The first involved the wife of a Constabulary captain and her business partner who were convicted for attempting to transport illegally-cut logs.

The second involved a

Manila councillor who was given a stiff prison term for possessing illegally-sourced logs.

But officials admit that the fight against illegal logging is far from over. One of Secretary Factoran's aides explained to Depthnews that "powerful social and political forces" have reacted strongly against policies designed to protect the country's forest.

The aide was apparently referring to powerful businessmen and politicians as well as military officers whose illegal logging and similar nefarious activities have been adversely affected by the government's uncompromising stand.

— Depthnews Asia

Fixing the Blame for Forest Losses

by Domingo C. Abadilla

RECRIMINATION between rich and poor nations over the destruction of the environment should give way now to consensus. But who should shoulder most of the responsibility and the blame?

The latest exchange of charges about forest denudation has involved environmentalists from Britain, Australia, Japan, France and Germany who denounced logging in Sabah state in Malaysia. There was a heated response from the chief minister of Sabah who demanded compensation for preserving tropical forests.

The environmentalists were among those demanding a stop to the cutting of tropical timber and a global boycott against buying that timber.

A good example of how the developed countries are meeting this responsibility may be seen in the establishment of a special fund of at least US\$160 million by the parties to the Montreal Protocol of 1987 over three years to protect the ozone layer. The World Bank will administer and manage this fund and finance the incremental costs incurred by developing countries in solving environmental concerns.

This concept of pinning primary responsibility for environmental problems on industrial countries finds support from another multilateral lending institution — the Asian Development Bank. In its report, outlook for 1991, the ADB said rich countries that wanted to protect the world's environment should pay poorer Asian nations to preserve tropical rainforests and limit pollution.

It added: "It is not reasonable to expect developing nations, many of which are among the world's poorest countries, to limit or divert scarce resources for the alleviation of the world's environmental problems." It noted that Asia's tropical hardwoods were disappearing so rapidly that South Asia was beginning to feel shortages as well as countries such as Thailand and the Philippines, which used to export wood products.

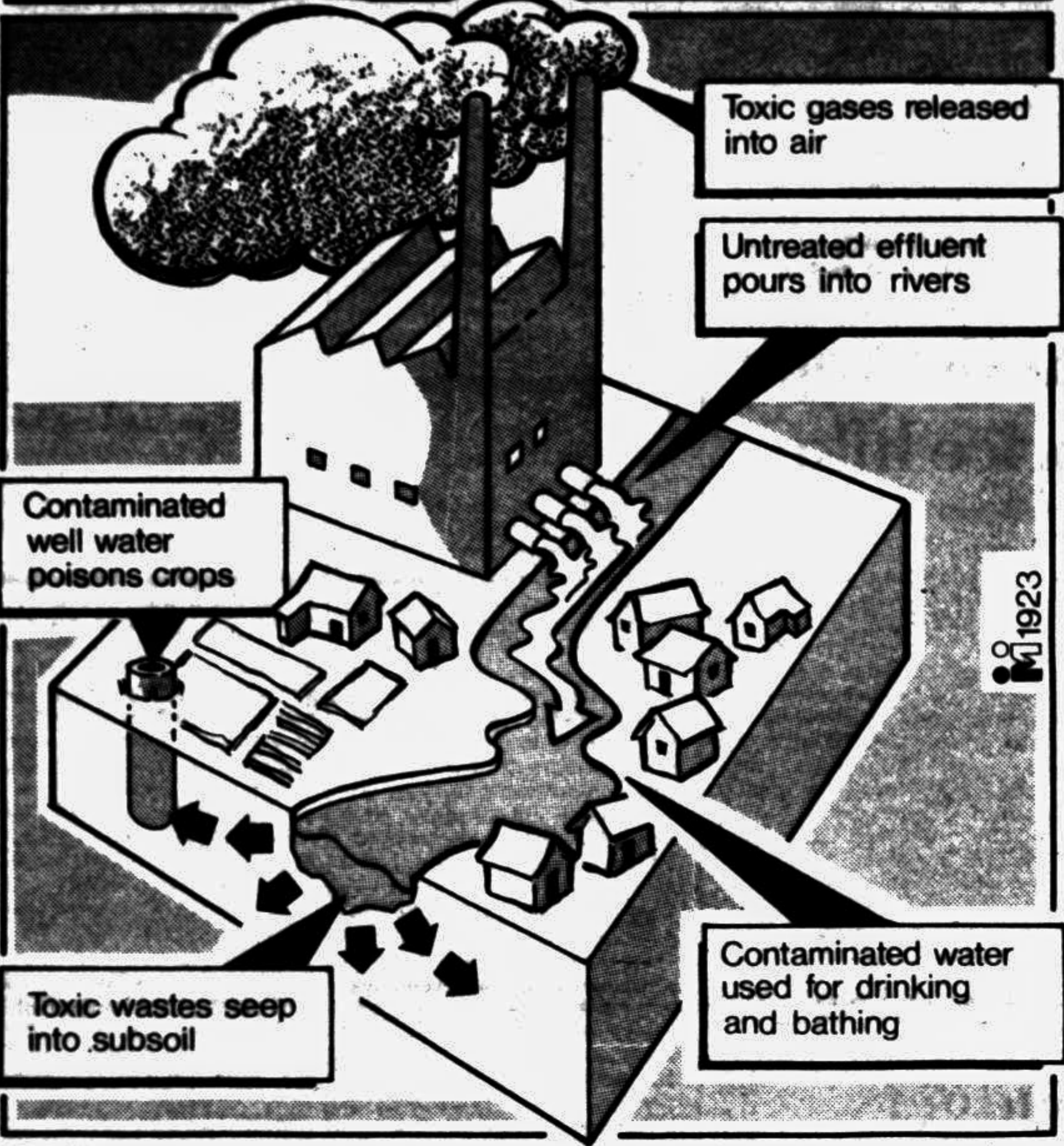
The bank's recommendation is to reward poor nations for not destroying their dwindling stocks of tropical forests through some sort of compensation like cash or debt relief.

Regarding industrial pollution, the ADB said rich countries were not free of blame for the environmental degradation because many of their firms relocated to the Third World where their factories produced pollutants. The tendency to transfer industrial operations to poor countries was increasing as the home countries tightened their standards.

Assumption of primary responsibility by the rich countries is in accordance with the universally accepted principle that "polluters must pay." And there is no question that industrial pollution as well as destruction of natural resources has been largely the handiwork of the rich countries.

Depthnews

The poison chain



Young People form Network Of Earth Partners

THE devastating environmental legacy of the Gulf war is galvanising world youth to greater efforts to preserve the environment.

At a Global Youth Forum meeting in New York, 1,500 students from all parts of the world told governments and adults in general: "Don't leave the Earth to us in worse shape than you found it."

Most national leaders have done just that. The Forum heard: "The half-life of radioactive waste could be longer than the whole of remaining human life on the planet unless we stop now manufacturing more death."

The participants, aged nine to 18, promised: "We pledge to support you and collaborate with you in preserving our common home for future generations."

The students agreed to form a worldwide network to be known as Earth Partners. Their first official act will be to sign a Forum Petition.

The Forum is held annually by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). After attending workshops and holding their general assembly at the United Nations, they plan to keep in touch with each other and work on joint projects transcending national boundaries.

Many young people view national borders as just artificial "lines in the sand" drawn by greedy old men playing for

more power and profit by military means. They see what the astronauts see from the space: a fragile Earth, its wounds of toxic dumps and raging oil-fire smoke "visible even to the heavens."

UNEP arranged for workshops in networking and computer communication, in addition to panels in environmental education, conservation, recycling and waste management.

The young delegates worked in the conference rooms where the delegates of the 160 UN member governments meet to argue out their own national interests.

In speeches, videos, poems and song they tell what they did to make the world a little bit better.

Canadian youth have made a major impact. Some 17,000 members of the Environmental Youth Alliance in Vancouver made people throughout Canada, the United States and Australia aware of "how to save our world through local action," using conference, newspaper campaigns and special ties.

Eighteen Canadians went on a Youth Development Tour of Africa in 1990 and have ever since been urging adults to join them "in taking action on international environmental and development issues."

From Labrador, two young Inuit with their Canadian

teacher explained their efforts to protect their health and culture from the effects of low-altitude flying by warplanes from nearby NATO military base Goose Bay.

Their ritual and survival of their culture depend on the caribou. The traditional routes and habits of the herds are being disrupted by the German, Dutch, British and soon Soviet aircraft streaking low over the ground to straf, bomb and engage in air combat practice. The Canadian Government has agreed to carry out an environmental impact study.

In Costa Rica, a Boy Scout group decided to rescue the sea turtles by preventing poachers stealing their eggs. As a result of the public awareness generated by their media campaign egg poaching was reduced from 85 per cent to 10 per cent.

In New Jersey, youngsters designed a T-shirt promoting a bottle deposit bill in the state legislature. They sold the shirts to raise funds at the same time to save rain forests in Belize. The bottle bill passed into law; the rainforests will take some more work.

The Earth Partners plan to show up at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Brazil, according to Forum Coordinator Dulete DeMontagnac.

Barbados Politicians Challenged by the New 'Green Vote'

by Robert Goddard

BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS: Politicians in Barbados are assessing the strength of a new factor in the Caribbean island — the "environmental vote".

A coalition of groups ranging from teachers to taxi-drivers is campaigning against plans to build luxury houses on the pristine East Coast. The issue has produced the biggest lobby in the island's history.

The protest is the latest in series of rows over proposed developments. A government plan to build a golf course on the last fresh-water swamp was shelved after opposition. Lobbyists also forced government to prevent squatters from building on the country's most important water catchment area.

While the lobby has so far failed to block the East Coast development, it has succeeded in another important goal: land use has a new high profile in the island's press and all three political parties have been forced to debate the issue.

The government has refused to reconsider its East Coast plans and has ignored requests for a meeting with objectors, but pressure is being maintained.

The East Coast is a geographically distinct area in the densely-populated tourist country of 254,000 people. Unlike the rest of the island, which is covered by impermeable sandstone, the East Coast is made up of permeable limestone. Scientists have been studying its unusual rock formations since the last century.

It has remained untouched during the extensive developments of the last 30 years, which have taken Barbados to the top of the UN Development Programme's "human development index", based on factors such as adult literacy, life expectancy and national income.

Generations of Barbadians, as well as more recent tourist arrivals, have enjoyed its hilly

vistas and spectacular views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Since the 1950s successive governments have agreed to protect the fragile environment and preserve access to its unique geological features. The Barbados Development Plan reserves the area for "special environmental control".

That policy is now under threat: the government has given permission for construction of 100 resort-style homes, together with roads and other facilities.

The decision provoked a public outcry early last year when the Minister of Housing and Lands overruled the Town and Country Planning Department, which had previously turned down the proposal. The protests forced the government, which was facing an election, to put its plans on hold.

A year later, the plan has been resurrected. In March the land sales were advertised in the press, signalling that the project was to go ahead.

Environmental groups called a series of meetings, co-ordinated by the Barbados National Trust. For the first time the coalition brought together organisations as diverse as wildlife groups, teachers, estate agents, business people, taxi drivers, farmers and hoteliers.

The Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union has attacked the plan in its weekly newspaper column and the Barbados Hotel Association calls the development "tragic". Other protesters include the Barbados Agricultural Society and the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners.

In an objection to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the National Trust has said: "The land forms part of an area of outstanding natural beauty and is at the core of a larger area considered to be the focal point in the proposed National Park."

Despite the United States' long proclaimed war on drugs, the drug trade in South America is flourishing. Cocaine barons are using new routes through Brazil now that traditional trade routes from refineries in Colombia through the Caribbean are under tight control.

With them have arrived violence and corruption that other South American countries have experienced for years.

Sixty tonnes of cocaine, refined in Colombia, Bolivia and Peru, pass through Brazil each year on its way to North America and Europe. The phenomenon was virtually unknown in Brazil only five years ago.

The added transport cost is insignificant, with the street value of cocaine running at \$US50 million a tonne.

In the past seven months, police made three major seizures of half a tonne each in or near Sao Paulo, and about four tonnes in other parts of Brazil in the last 15 months.

Attempts to stop production and shipment of the drugs are proving futile. It is estimated that only five per cent

Drug Corruption Spreads to Brazil Like a Weed

By Patrick Knight

Attempts to block the flow of drugs out of Colombia, Bolivia and Peru have now pushed the drug trade into Brazil. As Gemini News Service reports, corruption has spread through all the layers of society — from farmers to police to politicians.

of what passes through Brazil is intercepted.

The rest finds its way easily onto one of the 25 international flights leaving Brazil each day, or one of the 100 ships which leave its ports each week, hidden among cargoes of coffee, cocoa, paper or shoes.

Even though thousands of traffickers have been imprisoned in Brazil, the price of cocaine in the US, the main cocaine market, is falling because so much is getting through.

The trade is penetrating all levels of society.

The brother of a federal congressman was caught driving a truck containing 455 ki-

The state of Rondonia borders Bolivia, where about one third of the coca is grown. The state is also within easy range of Peru, which produces the other two thirds.

As a result, Rondonia's dozens of airstrips, built by gold panners, are used by drug traffickers. And, under pressure from Colombia and Bolivia, cocaine refineries have been set up in the state's jungles.

Less than one per cent of Brazil's 140 million population uses cocaine half of them regularly, but the newspapers are full of reports of shoot-outs between rival drug gangs or between drug dealers and police.

Generals in Bolivia worry that the armed forces will have to confront the estimated 200,000 growers, which will undermine the country's struggle for democracy.

The situation is rather like the prohibition of alcohol in the US during the Thirties, when thousands died and corruption spread to the highest places before it was realised that the crackdown was causing more harm than good. — GEMINI NEWS

Lagos Faces Big Flood Control Bill

LAGOS: Heavy rains are causing the Lagos planning commissioner to wish the city had gone ahead with a 1981 proposal to install flood control structures.

Temilola Kehinde, Lagos State Environmental and Physical Planning Commissioner, estimates dealing with the Lagos flood problem will cost N20 billion. Had action been taken in 1981, the clean-up may have cost only N2 billion this year, he said.

The heavy rains are causing problems across the country. Climatologists at the University of Benin paint a grim picture for the future, predicting the Delta areas will experience heavy rainfall for the rest of the year.

In Ondo state, 500 houses have had their roofs blown off by wind. And in Lagos, residents bailing water out of their flooded houses and shops are a common sight. In rural areas the problem is a lack of drainage systems and no provision for the removal of household waste.

— GEMINI NEWS

Food Production in Nigeria Goes Up and up

LAGOS: Agricultural production in Nigeria has grown by four per cent annually for the past three years, compared with growth stagnated at one per cent between 1970 and 1980. The improvement follows a Structural Adjustment Programme adopted in 1986.

Production of maize, wheat, millet and vegetables rose by 22 per cent from 1987 levels. Fishery production jumped by 44 per cent in the same period. Production of livestock, however, declined marginally by 2.6 per cent.

Rising agricultural productivity has led to a drop in market prices on some crops and subsequent drops in income for some farmers.

MICHAEL Croggon is an inspiring and inspired man. Despite being confined to a wheelchair by the progressively crippling Motor Neurone Disease, he has undertaken a daunting five-year project aimed at protecting and conserving the resources of the world's rainforests.

Croggon, researching for his doctorate at Oxford University's Forestry Institute, has been selected as joint winner of a new global environmental award — the Jameson Award — for "achievement, vision and courage that impacts on the lives of the people of the Twenty First Century."

He is compiling what the Forestry Institute describes as the most comprehensive database on the characteristics and properties of almost 1,000 Amazonian tree species. Not only will the project help achieve better management of Amazon forests, it also has great relevance to the forest regions of Africa and Asia.

It is a subject to which he brings a wealth of practical experience, having spent 13 years as a timber buyer, dealing with imports of hard and

Seeing the Wood Through the Trees

How can the need to protect the resources of the world's rainforests be reconciled with the grave threat posed by continued logging and farming? Gemini News Service focuses on efforts by a man of "achievement, vision and courage" to show how commercial, ecological and environmental interests can co-exist. By Nick Cate

soft woods from all over the world, before turning to research and study.

Croggon wants to help introduce timber users to species of trees from Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador that they may not be familiar with, but which are perfectly suitable for their needs.

Croggon's research is inspired by the problems caused by commercial logging of a very limited number of well-known species, many of which are becoming endangered.

Pursuit of these species, such as Brazilian mahogany, can lead to much wider damage, especially when logging

would be to identify common, cheaper woods."

As part of rainforest management, Croggon's research could allow an expansion of the few existing schemes for carefully controlled harvesting and natural forest regeneration.

This would be done in concert with other sustainable systems — from rubber tapping and Brazil nut gathering to the collection of plants with medicinal or cosmetic properties — and would bring in higher incomes for forest peoples as well as more foreign exchange at national level.

Croggon says: "Sustainable logging is certainly possible. Even now, commercial logging on its own is far less damaging than stripping forest to create pasture for livestock."

The question of conserving forests is very close to my heart and I hope my work can be of real use to others in practical ways," he said at the award ceremony in London. "I am obviously keen that my achievements will encourage others all over the world to make that extra effort to succeed."

"Sustainable forest man-

agement is far more economically productive and I hope pasture in the forest becomes a thing of the past."

The judges of the first Jameson Award drew a clear link between the urgent need for progress towards sustainable forest development and the custodian role of indigenous people by sharing the £ 30,000 prize-donated by the Irish whiskey distillers, Jameson — between Croggon and Liz Hloksen.

Hosken's citation highlighted her campaigns for the rights of indigenous peoples in the fragile Amazon rainforest ecosystem threatened by government hostility, gold mining, land squatting and logging. In 1984 she established the Oala Foundation to direct political support and funds to rainforests groups.

International explorer and environmental writer Robert Swan, a winner of the coveted United Nations Environment Programme Global 500 Award, a member of the judging panel said of Croggon: "We believe his efforts and achievements will inspire others to fight for the future of the planet." — GEMINI NEWS