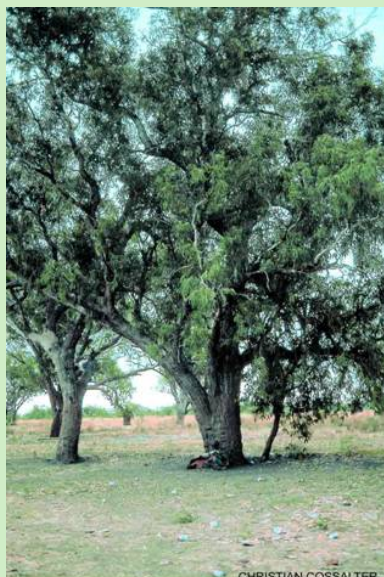


Oceania – Islands of Contrasts

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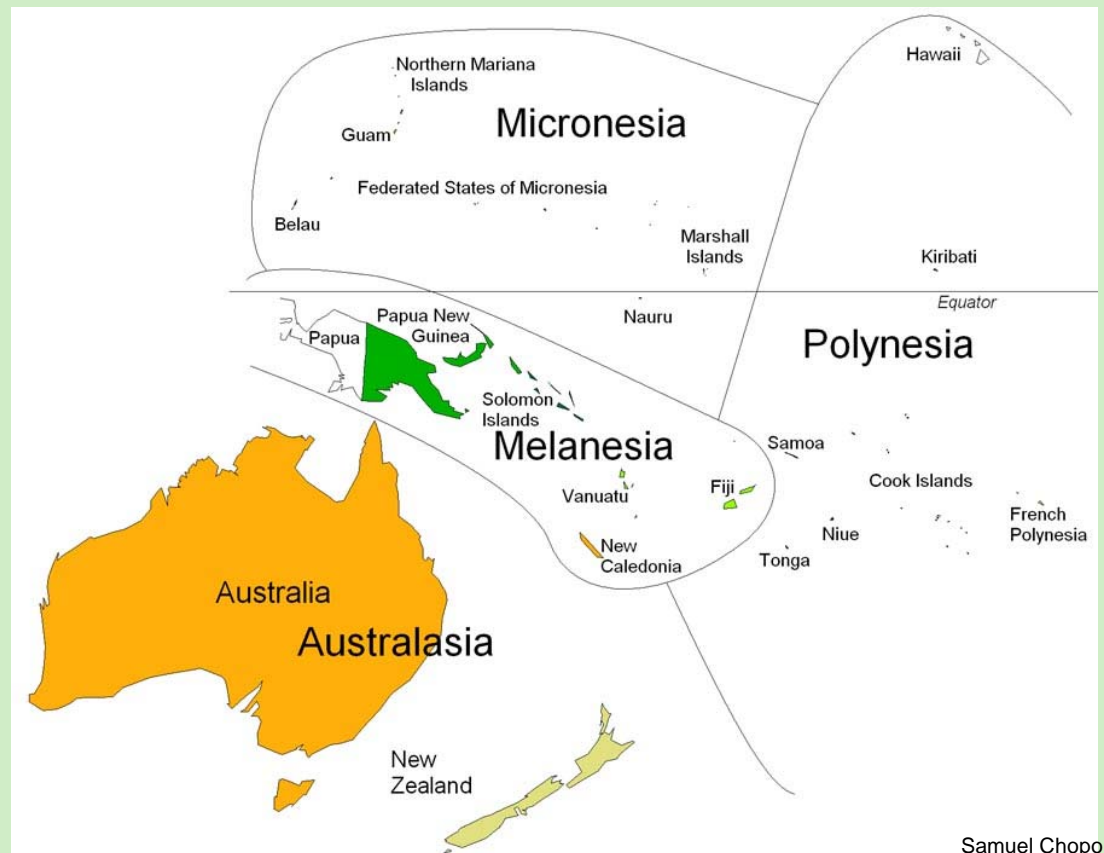
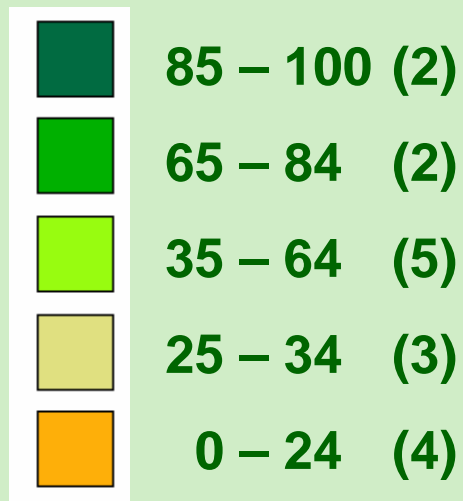


Outline

- Forest resources** (Slides 3-4)
- Diversity of Oceanic states** (Slides 5-6)
- Paradigm shifts** (Slides 7-14)
- Challenges** (Slide 15-16)
- The way forward** (Slide 17)

Forest cover in Oceania

Forest cover %
(number of countries)



Diversity within tree and forest resources

- Only Australia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands have over 5 ha of forest per capita; the rest much less; some have almost no forest.
- In Oceania:
 - Forested landscapes, managed forests and agroforestry systems are diverse.
 - Many “forests” are managed landscapes.
 - Native and plantation forests and farm trees have important and diverse roles in agricultural landscapes and production systems.
 - Plantation forests are important in New Zealand (22% of the total forest area), Fiji (11%) and Australia (1%).

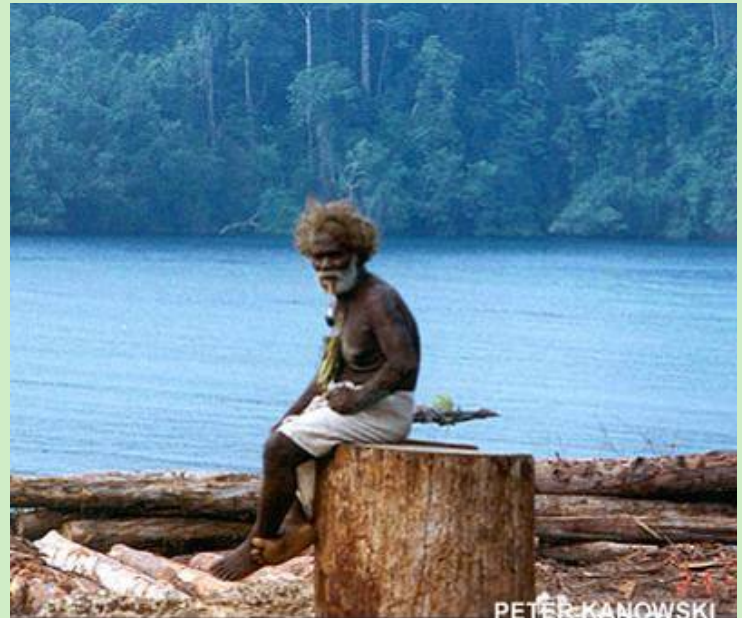


Diversity within ecosystems, economies and societies

- Nations range from continental scale (Australia) to coral atolls (Tuvalu).
- Majority of forests is tropical; but all of New Zealand's and two-thirds of Australia's forests are temperate.
- The importance of forests to national economies and economic development opportunities vary greatly.
- The importance of large-scale exploitation and harvesting, often for export, varies.
- Diverse customary land tenure and land use systems exist, and are respected to varying degrees.

Common themes despite diversity:

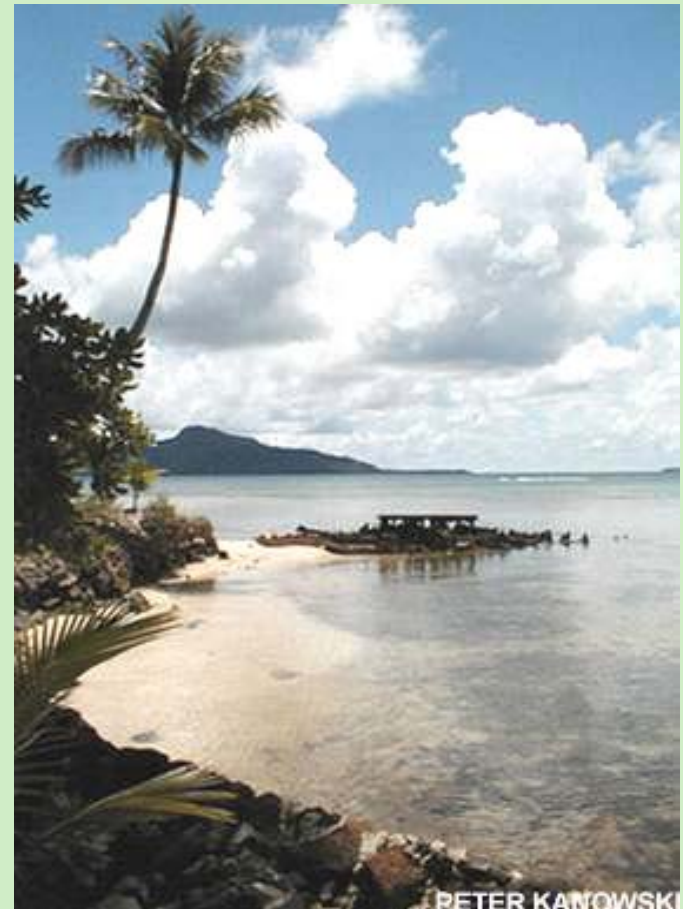
- the importance of trees and forests to traditional livelihoods and cultures and to ecosystem function
- the emergence of social conflicts over forests, reflecting differences in values
- the recognition or assertion of indigenous rights over land and resources
- high levels of forest biodiversity and endemism, and thus a strong focus on conservation and sustainable use
- substantial unsustainable exploitation and significant environmental degradation.



Paradigm shifts in the relationship between forests and societies (1)

A progression between phases in a cycle reflecting interacting societal issues such as:

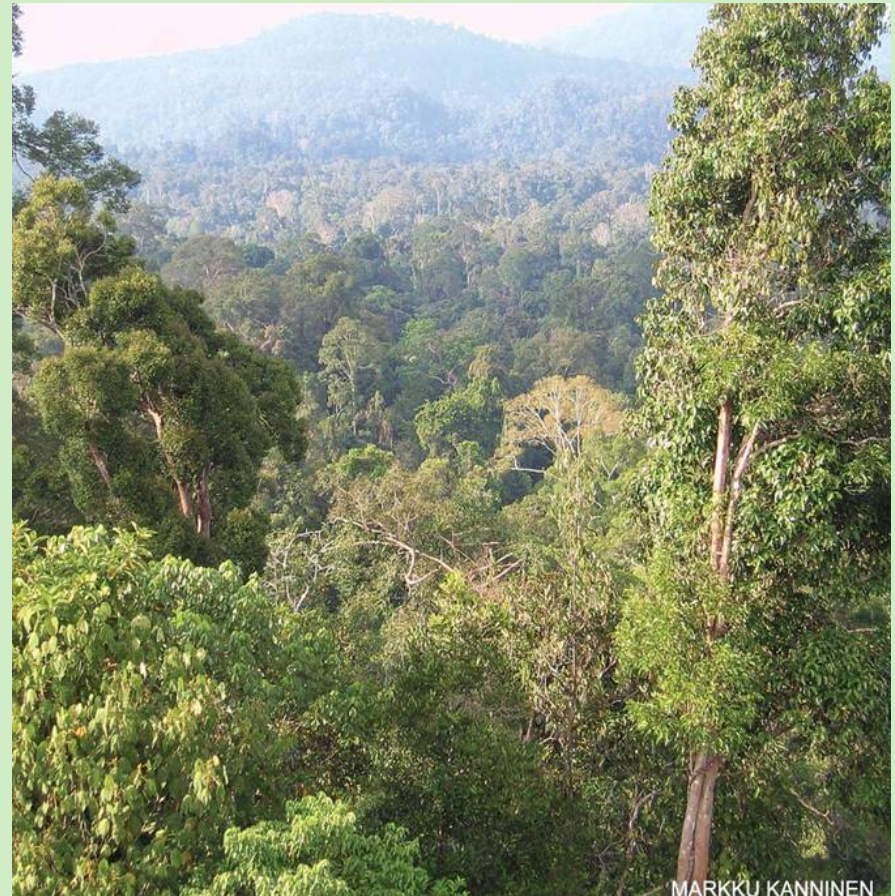
- values accorded to forests
- importance of forests in economic development
- contested rights to forests and tree resources
- decision making processes about natural resources.



Paradigm shifts in the relationship between forests and societies (2)

The emerging sustainable forest management paradigm has three principal elements relating to:

- sustaining forests on a landscape scale
- sustaining the extractive uses of forest
- how decisions are made and implemented.



Sustaining forests on a landscape scale

Utilitarian paradigm:

- prevalent during the 1st part of the 20th century
- forested landscapes narrowly valued for industrial wood production
 - unsustainable exploitation in richly forested nations.

Continuing shift:

- towards recognition and realisation of the commercial, cultural and ecological values of forests and trees in land use systems at landscape scale
- towards development of more sustainable management systems.

Sustaining the use of forest resources

- In smaller island nations, the focus is on sustainable management of trees outside forests. In some cases, plantation development is also possible.
- Nations with forests of industrial scale or commercial value follow a succession of phases:
 - **1st phase:** unsustainable use, transformation of natural capital to financial capital, and change to non-forested land uses
 - **2nd phase:** reduction of harvest levels from natural forests as resources diminish and plantation forests mature
 - **3rd phase:** increasing reservation of native forests from logging, recognition of other functions than wood production for plantation forests, and recognition of importance of trees on farms.



Towards sustainable forest management

- Forest-rich but economically poor countries focus on how forests should be harvested to minimise adverse environmental and social impacts.
 - Reduced impact logging
 - Eco-forestry
- In economically developed countries the paradigm shift has progressively overcome the historically strong distinction between the management of public and private land.
 - More consistent regulation of forest practices on all land tenures in Australia and New Zealand

Recognition of indigenous rights

- Indigenous rights were never denied in the Oceanic Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- Maori and Aboriginal rights have been reinstated in Australia and New Zealand, where they were denied to varying degrees
 - Today, 18% of Australia's landmass and 13% of forestland are under indigenous ownership.
 - In New Zealand, Maori are now significant land owners and stakeholders in native and plantation forestry.



Increasing recognition of plurality

There is increasing recognition of the plurality of interests in forest policy and management.

- In Oceanic SIDS, customary ownership and associated institutions are the starting point for decisions about forests.
- Mechanisms have been developed to facilitate greater community input into decision processes about public forests:
 - various consultative and participatory mechanisms related to public forest policy and management in Australia and New Zealand (in customary forests in Oceanic SIDS, mechanisms facilitate government and industry involvement)
 - forest certification processes require mechanisms for stakeholder participation
 - collaborative forest management arrangements are slowly emerging in some places.

Changes in forest governance



The dominant shifts in Oceania are:

- from oversight by public forestry agencies to that by other government agencies and to new generation regulatory instruments, e.g. forest certification, criteria & indicators of SFM
- from the public sector to private and community organisations
- increasing investment in partnerships with private sector, NGOs and community-based organisations.

These shifts reflect the general global shift in political ideology, and the set of choices about the use of scarce public funds and diminishing public sector capacity.

Common challenges

Some important challenges are common to all Oceanic nations:

- significant environmental degradation and associated economic and social challenges
- balancing economic development with conservation and cultural values
- emerging challenges posed by climate change
- challenges related to human capacity and governance.



Challenges within and among nations relate to finding a balance between:

- traditional and conservation oriented management versus more intense exploitation
- valuing forest products versus services
- recognition or denial of traditional rights
- some of the world's best and worst forest practices
- traditional poly-cultural land use systems versus modern industrial plantation forestry
- sustainable value-adding forest industries versus exploitative industries
- supply and demand within both domestic and global economies.

The way forward

- Continuing efforts are needed to balance diverse values and benefits of forests and the costs associated with particular choices.
- Both traditional and modern knowledge and practices are needed for the dynamic and ongoing process of reconciling society's demands and the benefits forests and trees offer.

