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# **EMBRACING COMPLEXITY: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL FOREST GOVERNANCE**

***A Global Assessment Report Prepared by  
the Global Forest Expert Panel on  
the International Forest Regime***

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## Preface

The present volume is the second in the series of reports commissioned by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests' Global Forest Expert Panels initiative. Following the highly successful report on Adaptation of Forests and People to Climate Change, presented to UNFF 8 in 2009, the members of the GFEP Steering Committee approved the topic of "the international forest regime" for a new panel in the fall of the same year. More than 30 experts in political science, policy studies, law and international relations agreed to take part and met for the first time in Vienna in December 2009. A subsequent meeting of the whole panel was held in Nairobi in July 2010 and smaller groups gathered in Singapore, New York and Washington DC. Every effort was made to draw panel members from around the world with different experiences and points of view. A similar effort pulled together a blue-ribbon team of reviewers from universities, research organizations, governments and international organizations whose careful scrutiny of the draft report resulted in the removal of many errors and a significant improvement in the clarity and direction of this document. Indispensable administrative support for the panel was provided by the IUFRO Secretariat under the direction of Alexander Buck. The report was language edited by Alastair Sarre and the whole editorial process overseen by Pia Katila. This is truly a collaborative effort and could not have been achieved without remarkable collegiality and teamwork. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to everyone involved, almost all of whom voluntarily took on what turned out to be a considerable burden in addition to their existing professional obligations.

The topic of the international forest regime is a complex one. At the heart of regime are a number of international organizations with different mandates and capacities, all of whom are rightly proud of their achievements in raising awareness of the threats to the world's forests and adopting instruments and programs designed to protect forest conditions and live-

lihoods. Nonetheless, there is an undeniable sense that the regime as a whole is failing. Rates of deforestation, though declining overall, show significant regional variations and remain "alarmingly high" according to the latest State of the Forests report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Non-state actors are conspicuous by their absence in many of the key initiatives and have their own issue networks existing alongside the regime. Much is going on at local, national and regional levels that is not reflected in the regime's outputs. In short, the effect of the international forest regime is rather less than the sum of its many parts.

More than forty years ago, the distinguished philosopher and social scientist Donald Schoen wrote that "we must become able not only to transform our institutions in response to changing situations and requirements; we must invent and develop institutions which are 'learning systems', that is to say capable of bringing about their own continuing transformation." In seeking to understand what has gone wrong with international forest governance and how it can be put right, the panel has avoided taking positions on the various issues of instrument choice and organizational reform currently exercising the chief actors in the international forest regime. We have, instead, directed our efforts towards reconceiving the regime as a forest-focused learning system of the kind imagined by Schoen. It is my hope that those with the responsibility for forest governance at all levels will find this report, and its accompanying policy brief, a useful guide to the complexities of the regime as it currently stands and a source of inspiration for setting in motion the "continuing transformation" which embraces this complexity, turning it from source of weakness to a source of strength.

*Jeremy Rayner*

Chair of the Expert Panel on  
the International Forest Regime

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<i>Jeremy Rayner</i>	<i>Alexander Buck</i>	<i>Pia Katila</i>
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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>A/R</b>	Afforestation/Reforestation	<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>ABS</b>	Access and Benefit Sharing	<b>LEI</b>	Indonesian Ecolabelling Institute
<b>ACTO</b>	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization	<b>LRTAP</b>	Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution
<b>AFP</b>	Asia Forest Partnership	<b>MCPFE</b>	Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>ATO</b>	African Timber Organization	<b>MRV</b>	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
<b>C&amp;I</b>	Criteria and Indicators	<b>NBSAPs</b>	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity	<b>NFP</b>	National Forest Programmes
<b>CBFP</b>	Congo Basin Forest Partnership	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>CDM</b>	Clean Development Mechanism	<b>NLBI</b>	Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests
<b>CER</b>	Certified Emission Reduction	<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CIFOR</b>	Center for International Forestry Research	<b>PEFC</b>	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	<b>PoW</b>	Program of Work
<b>COMESA</b>	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	<b>PROFOR</b>	Programme on Forests
<b>COMIFAC</b>	Central African Forest Commission	<b>REDD</b>	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties	<b>SADC</b>	South African Development Community
<b>CPF</b>	Collaborative Partnership on Forests	<b>SFI</b>	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
<b>CSD</b>	Commission on Sustainable Development	<b>SFM</b>	Sustainable Forest Management
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility	<b>SLIMFs</b>	Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council	<b>SPS</b>	The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
<b>EFI</b>	European Forest Institute	<b>TBT</b>	Technical Barriers to Trade
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>TRIPS</b>	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>FCPF</b>	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility	<b>UNCCD</b>	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>FIP</b>	Forest Investment Program	<b>UNCED</b>	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
<b>FLEG</b>	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>FLEGT</b>	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade	<b>UNDRIP</b>	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
<b>FPIC</b>	Free Prior and Informed Consent	<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>FSC</b>	Forest Stewardship Council	<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>GATT</b>	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade	<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>GBIF</b>	Global Biodiversity Information Facility	<b>UNFF</b>	United Nations Forum on Forests
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility	<b>UN-REDD programme</b>	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
<b>GFEP</b>	Global Forest Expert Panel	<b>VPA</b>	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gases	<b>VPN</b>	Virtual Policy Network
<b>GTZ</b>	German Technical Cooperation	<b>WBCSD</b>	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
<b>IBPES</b>	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	<b>WCED</b>	World Commission on Environment and Development
<b>ICRAF</b>	World Agroforestry Centre	<b>WRI</b>	World Resources Institute
<b>IFF</b>	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests	<b>WTA</b>	World Trade Agreement
<b>IIED</b>	International Institute for Environment and Development	<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization	<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund for Nature
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund		
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change		
<b>IPF</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests		
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization		
<b>IUFRO</b>	International Union of Forest Research Organizations		
<b>ITTA</b>	International Tropical Timber Agreement		
<b>ITTO</b>	International Tropical Timber Organization		

