

The legislation will replace the deeds of agreement which have been signed by landowners who have already received *ex gratia* payments.

The Earth Summit: What does it mean for us?

Other indigenous forest policy measures

The sustainable management legislation will complement two highly successful voluntary forest protection schemes, the Forest Heritage Fund and Nga Whenua Rahui, which have been running since mid 1990. These funds are designed to provide permanent protection for private and Maori forest with high or moderate conservation values through gifting, the use of covenants and by outright purchase. The funds are contestable. Anyone can apply to the Forest Heritage Fund. Nga Whenua Rahui is restricted to Maori landowning interests. Each fund is administered by a committee appointed by the Minister of Conservation. To date nearly 59,000 hectares of forest have been protected at a cost of some \$9.4 million.

The Government is considering measures to reforest suitable land in indigenous species and rehabilitate degraded indigenous forest.

The Resource Management Act 1991 also has a valuable role to play in protecting indigenous forests.

Attachment

Increased beech coupe size

The Secretary of Forestry before considering applications for coupe size larger than 0.5 ha would need to be satisfied that there is *prima facie* evidence that either:

- i 0.5 hectare beech coupes make sustainable management commercially unviable; or
- ii 0.5 hectare beech coupes could be more damaging to the forest's ecology than larger coupes.

Having satisfied him/herself as to the above, the Secretary of Forestry would consider the matter taking into account matters including whether the use of larger coupes would:

- i have significant adverse impacts on flora and fauna;
- ii significantly increase soil erosion or the risk of soil erosion;
- iii have significant adverse impacts on drainage or aquatic ecosystems;
- iv have adverse impacts on forest regeneration;
- v have significant adverse impacts on scenic, cultural, and landscape values in the forest.

The above matters will be considered in a national and regional context.

In June this year 40,000 people, from heads of state to journalists and NGOs to UN officials, gathered in Rio de Janeiro at the UNCED Earth Summit. It was the first time in human history that so many world leaders gathered together to address issues of environment and development. The conference ended with the endorsement of a number of major policy documents. Don Wije-Wardana, Chief Economist of the Ministry of Forestry, was at the Earth Summit. In this article he analyses its significance to New Zealand forestry.

It was only in recent years that the world has focussed attention on the environment. The UN Conference on Human Environment held in 1972, for the first time, placed environmental issues on the international agenda. But not much progress in addressing the issues has been made in the intervening period until the UNCED (UN Conference on Environment and Development) process was initiated in 1989. The importance of the UNCED is that it considered environment and development together as two sides of the same issue; perhaps, more importantly, it brought together both the North and the South to jointly address the issue.

Progress towards the Rio Summit was made through a number of preparatory meetings (Prepcoms), the last of which was held in New York in March 1992. The Summit included almost a fortnight of negotiations by officials followed by Ministerial level meetings which ultimately resolved the remaining disagreements. In a parallel event NGOs gathered at 'the Global Forum' to address the environmental issues.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference focussed on five main areas:

- a) **The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development** – a set of principles addressing the interrelationship between economic activity and the environment;
- b) **Agenda 21** – an action programme addressing the full spectrum of environment and development issues for the rest of the century and beyond;

- c) **Forestry principles** – a set of non legally binding principles for conservation and sustainable development of forests;
- d) **Adoption of a Framework Convention on Climate Change**; and
- e) **Adoption of a Convention on Biological Diversity.**

The first three of these were negotiated within the UNCED process while the two Conventions had been negotiated separately but in close association with UNCED. The Rio Declaration and the Forestry Principles represent important advances by the world community in defining the rights and the obligations of countries and individuals in the area of sustainable development. Although these two and the Agenda 21 are not legally binding, their endorsement by the Summit lent support towards their acceptability.

FORESTRY

Rather than discuss each of the agreements reached in Rio it would be productive to concentrate on implications for New Zealand forestry. A large number of issues were considered by UNCED ranging from oceans to atmosphere and desertification to education. But forestry was the sector that became the central focus. This was largely because it had major implications for both environment and development on which there were embedded extreme positions held by the developing countries and some of the major developed countries.

Negotiation of "an authoritative set of principles on all aspects of the use, conservation and management of all types of forests" is perhaps the most important achievement of UNCED in relation to forestry.

We in New Zealand have grown up with planted forests; as such we have come to recognise their role in providing wood needs as well as their importance in protecting our natural forests. But it came as a surprise that this view was not shared by most other countries. In fact, at the third Prepcom held in August 1991 when New Zealand proposed the inclusion of a statement in the Forestry Principles on the role of plantation forests the reaction of most countries ranged from reluctance to hostility.

The reasons for this were many: for countries which have been under colonial rule plantations represented exploitation of labour and other resources.

Cotton and sugar cane plantations established in developing countries during the last two centuries are good examples of this. Others saw plantations as monocultures lacking biological diversity.

These concerns were real. We realised that unless these issues were addressed there was no hope of the Conference accepting plantations as we saw them. In such an event the outcome of the Conference could have been far different and less productive. Maurice Strong, the Secretary General of UNCED, summed up the position well: "plantation forests, as described by New Zealand, are absolutely essential if we are to protect the natural forests: but if it is to be accepted by other countries we need to use a different term to describe them."

The role of the NZ Forest Industries Council in addressing the issue is commendable. The Council not only funded the production of a video on planted forests but also sent its own representative to attend the meetings. At the same time, the NZ Forest Owners' Association canvassed views on alternative terms. Although there was no complete agreement among members it was decided to use, for this purpose, the term **planted forests** instead of plantations. The video was shown to a large number of delegates at the 4th Precom in New York; a number of informal meetings were also held with delegates and NGOs to explain the role of planted forests and the history of forestry development in New Zealand.

This background work was very helpful in making many of the key delegates understand that planted forests are indeed an essential component of a durable solution to the problem of world deforestation and sustainable development. The results of these efforts were evident in that when the Forestry Principles came up for discussion towards the end of the New York Precom the role of planted forests was completely accepted. The Rio Summit endorsed it without any amendment.

The recognition of the role of planted forests is of immense importance for world forestry. The success of managing natural forests in a sustainable way depends essentially on the availability of an alternative source of wood.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW ZEALAND

The acceptance of the role of planted forests by the world community has major implications for New Zealand. Following are some of them:

1. It has laid the foundation for promoting radiata pine as a sustainably managed, environmentally favourable product.
2. It also has created the opportunity for New Zealand to utilise its forestry



This group at the UNCED Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro includes New Zealanders Philip Woolaston, Don Wije-Wardana, Beth Vaughan, Ken Shirley, John Adank, Simon Reeves, Hon. Rob Storey, Roger Blakeley, and Maori Queen Dame Te Arikinui Te Atairangikaahu.

expertise to help the developing countries establish planted forests. Our research capability and management experience are world recognised and the UNCED has created the market niche for them.

3. The third area of opportunity lies in education: New Zealand has developed in recent times modules for forestry education encompassing different levels of education and training.
4. The UNCED also agreed on the need for reduction and removal of tariff barriers and impediments to better market access for value added products. It may be some time before these provisions get incorporated, if at all, to GATT negotiations; but the acceptance by countries should strengthen our position in demanding tariff reductions, particularly in Japan and Korea.

CONCLUSION

5. The Rio Summit ended with the world community unanimously agreeing to a set of principles to govern the management of the world's forests and the Agenda 21 incorporating action for sustainable development for the rest of the century. Because of the need for unanimity, however, the final document had to be watered down.

But the significance of the Rio Summit is more in the coming together of both developed and developing countries and recognising the interrelationship between environment and development.

For New Zealand forestry the Conference had tremendous importance: for the first time the world community recognised the important role of planted forests as a means of protec-

ting the world's natural forests. This recognition is far reaching, for it gives us the opportunity to play a very important role in protecting the world environment while assisting sustainable development. It could also form the basis for the promotion of radiata pine as an environmentally friendly product. Additionally, it should also result in a growing market for New Zealand forestry technology and forestry educational services.

The UNCED outcome will also strengthen our hand in persuading countries such as Japan to lift tariffs on processed wood products. There is a lot that needs to be done. UNCED was the beginning; not the end.

New Zealand joins ITTO

In July Forestry Minister John Falloon announced New Zealand is to become a signatory to the International Tropical Timber Agreement.

"Although New Zealand is only a very minor importer of tropical timber, by joining the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) we can help contribute to work aimed at sustainable use of the resource," he said.

Membership documentation would be lodged with the United Nations in New York in the near future, Mr Falloon said.

The recent Earth Summit in Brazil highlighted the need for sustainable management of the world's forests, and ITTO has a key role in developing internationally acceptable ways of achieving this.

"The organisation provides a unique forum for constructive dialogue between