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Agricultural Expansion and Tropical Deforestation:

Poverty, International Trade and Land Use

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Accelerated tropical deforestation in recent decades has resulted in the conversion of hundreds of millions of hectares of tropical forests to other land uses such as growing crops, pastures, roads, mines, reservoirs, industrial residential or administrative areas and wastelands. Moreover, vast areas of tropical forests have been badly degraded by logging, excessive fuelwood extraction, industrial pollution, overgrazing, destructive man-made fires and many other intentional deforestation processes.

In response, this 150-page study stresses the need to seek solutions in far-reaching institutional and policy reforms at local, national and international levels, if the challenges of tropical deforestation are to be tackled effectively.

The study shows that there is no clear-cut causal relationship between tropical deforestation, international trade and agricultural expansion in developing countries. Similarly, it demonstrates that policy makers, academics and the public are all too often tempted by simplistic solutions to complex problems. In search of the causal factors in this critical area of environmental decline, the authors have undertaken a multidisciplinary analysis of economic and agricultural development and their impact on increasing land-use pressure and change.

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Drawing on empirical data from case studies ranging over three continents, the study shows that the focus of analysis must be applied as much to the misguided policies of national and regional authorities as to the forces of trade and globalization. It also argues that a critical perspective needs to be adopted that incorporates historical and contextual factors such as land tenure and farming systems.

The present publication is an ideal reference work for researchers, policy-makers, conservation and development NGOs and anyone interested in issues of trade, globalization and the politics of land and the environment.

Contents: Introduction: Social Determinants of Deforestation: *A complex issue; Principal questions guiding the research; The case study countries* • The Extent of Tropical Deforestation and Agricultural Expansion in Developing Countries: *Recent land use changes* • Tropical Deforestation and Agricultural Expansion in the Case Study Countries: *Public policy-induced deforestation in Brazil; Deforestation and agricultural expansion in Guatemala; China; Cameroon; Malaysia* • Linkages with International Trade: *Brazil; Guatemala; China; Malaysia; Cameroon; Diverse and changing linkages* • Toward More Sustainable Use of Tropical Agricultural and Forest Resources: *Causes and impacts of tropical deforestation in the case study countries; Local-level constraints and opportunities; The crucial role of national policies and institutions; International reforms*

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