

These remarks led to discussion of the worldwide Tropical Forests campaign launched on four continents in January 1986:

"Its genesis was really a few international foresters sitting down together, scratching their heads and saying, 'Where have we gone wrong? There is a remorseless deterioration, and we don't seem to be getting anywhere. The loss of 11.5 million hectares a year is certainly not decreasing.' And we decided that what we were doing wrong was that foresters were just talking to themselves. We're still doing that. I'm just back from a meeting of heads of all the forestry administrations in Latin America, and there wasn't an agricultural engineer or a livestock specialist, a sociologist or an anthropologist anywhere around.

"So for this campaign we tried to bring in people from outside the forestry profession and to do something quite new. We have begun to get a handle on how much forest we are losing—we didn't really get that information until the early 1980s through the FAO and satellite imagery. We said, 'Instead of talking about the rate of destruction, why don't we try to find out why it is happening, what series of programs can address this problem, where are projects incorporating these ideas that have been successful, what are the countries most critically affected, and how much would it cost to do something corrective on a meaningful level?'

"It was a crazy business getting 10 members of a task force from all over the world to two week-long meetings and to produce this study. The study is full of inaccuracies, but in every sense it broke trail. I firmly believe that, if you have an approximation, you should publish it and others will come along and improve on it. We launched the study at a press conference in Washington on October 22, 1985, with representatives of the three sponsoring organizations and the three governments who gave most support—Canada's \$75 000 was critically important.

"The media coverage was flabbergasting. For the first time we said, 'Listen, we estimate we are spending \$400 million a year in external assistance to forestry, and the governments concerned are spending about the same amount. Over five years that is a program of \$4 billion. But, in order to make any sort of impact on the problem of deforestation, we absolutely have to double that figure in the next five years.' Now, funds are damned difficult to come by. If we can succeed in doubling expenditure, it will already be a monumental achievement. But we will have got our feet just off the ground towards the first rung of a rather high ladder.

"Take two examples. The Task Force calculated that, in the Sahelian zone and the Indian subcontinent, 400 million tonnes of animal residues are used each year as a source of basic energy, to cook and to keep warm. That translates conservatively into about 14 million tonnes of lost cereal production. In 1985, the total grain shipments to all developing countries, including those to Africa during the famine crisis, amounted to 9.7 million tonnes. So we could in fact save twice the amount of food aid that is now flowing, if we could reduce the loss of animal fertilizer and thus improve soil fertility. Isn't that a powerful argument why all governments should support community fuelwood plantation projects?!