

Deforestation Trends in the Congo Basin: Reconciling Economic Growth and Environmental Protection by CAROLE MEGEVAND with ALINE MOSNIER, JOEL HOURTICQ, KLAS SANDERS, NINA DOETINCHEM and CHARLOTTE STRECK
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Deforestation Trends in the Congo Basin ('*Deforestation Trends*' hereafter) reports on recent changes in the tropical forests of Central Africa, and then draws upon these changes to project what Congo basin forests might look like in 2030. The Congo rainforest represents the world's second largest block of tropical rainforest, so its continued existence as a biodiverse carbon sink has global significance. In this context *Deforestation Trends* provides us with a welcome update on the status and likely future of the Congo forest.

The book begins with a broad overview and summary of what we know about deforestation in Central Africa. The authors report rates of deforestation and discuss relevant trends in the agricultural and forest economies of the Congo Basin countries. The authors also incorporate the ongoing urbanisation of the population into their discussion of the growing human pressure on Congo rain forests. This discussion includes an analysis of the often overlooked charcoal industry that provides urban residents with fuel for cooking. The second half of the book presents a model, called CongoBIOM, of deforestation's dynamics in the Congo basin. The authors use this model, which makes assumptions about trends in agricultural commodity prices and government road building activities, to simulate changes in land cover in the Congo Basin until 2030. The simulation makes it clear that high commodity prices on world markets should induce urban residents to substitute relatively inexpensive, locally grown agricultural products for imported foodstuffs, thereby increasing the pressure to expand agriculture around Central African cities at the expense of the forests. This dynamic promises to raise the regional deforestation rate, from the lowest in the tropical world at 0.1–0.2% per year during the 1990–2005 period to 0.4–1.3% per year during the 2020–2030 period. The final chapter in the book discusses policy options that, harking back to the book's subtitle, would make it possible to raise incomes in the region without expanding agriculture into the remaining forest. This analysis includes an assessment of the ability of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) and other PES (payments for environmental services) programmes to induce higher levels of resource conservation while economic growth accelerates in the region.

Deforestation Trends does a commendable job of incorporating ongoing trends in urbanisation and in agricultural commodity prices into its model of deforestation dynamics. The CongoBIOM model does, however, fall short in the political domain. Events such as the current strife in the Central African Republic and the long-running hostilities in the Eastern Congo have strong documented effects on land cover, so it would seem necessary to incorporate them into the model building. The model includes scenarios for a biofuels-related surge in commodity prices. It should also include a political disorder scenario. This shortcoming aside, *Deforestation Trends* provides

an informative update and forecast for one of the world's most important natural resources.

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Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria by NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA
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Nigeria's current Finance Minister, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, is the image of an honourable reformer. A Harvard and MIT-trained economist and former Vice-President of the World Bank, she has the experience, technical skills and connections to carry through tough reforms in Nigeria's large and unwieldy economy. In her signature Nigerian print wrapper and headtie, she cuts a figure of integrity and home-grown savvy essential to any effective intervention in such a complicated country. Dr Okonjo-Iweala's recent book, *Reforming the Unreformable*, tells the story of her travails and triumphs on the Nigerian reform trail between 2000 and 2007, as Financial Adviser and Finance Minister to the former President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Billed as an account from the front lines of economic reform in Africa, this book offers a comprehensive tour through the thinking of a key player in Nigeria's post-structural adjustment economic reforms. It details Dr Okonjo-Iweala's efforts to tackle corruption, implement a major debt-relief strategy, clean up the budgetary process, and modernise, deregulate and where possible privatise the telecom and energy sector, ports and customs service, as well as overhauling the civil service and banking sectors. Despite constant references to the originality and homegrown character of the reform strategy, anyone who knows Nigeria cannot help but have a strong sense of *déjà-vu*. Nigeria's Structural Adjustment Programme instituted in 1986 was also a 'homegrown' economic reform programme, formulated after the IMF/World Bank-branded structural adjustment package was resoundingly rejected by the Nigerian public.

In similar fashion, the 'homegrown' NEEDS programme put together by Dr Okonjo-Iweala and her team looks suspiciously like the IFI-led PRSP reforms rolled out across the Third World, emulating exactly the PRSP repertoire of integrating neo-liberal policies into a more congenial package of debt-relief and civil society consultations, and requiring at least a year of implementation before actual debt forgiveness is granted. Yet this package of economic reforms is presented in the book as a product of Dr Okonjo-Iweala's capacity to think 'outside the box' and to challenge the hypocrisy of the international financial institutions. Even spiced up with personal reflections and moments of economic suspense as Dr Okonjo-Iweala attempts to secure vital international support for her policies, sometimes with only seconds to spare, the book reads like a very long IMF strategy paper, complete with Boxes. Rather than 'development economics in action', it seems more like post-Washington Consensus neo-liberalism in action.

The emphasis on the novelty and local ownership of the reforms is further belied by constant recourse to strategies for bypassing rather than engaging with local democratic institutions and Nigerian civil society. While playing to a