

WATER-RELATED ISSUES AND PROBLEMS  
OF THE HUMID TROPICS  
AND OTHER WARM HUMID REGIONS



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*IHP HUMID TROPICS PROGRAMME SERIES NO. 13*

## DECISION TIME FOR CLOUD FORESTS



International  
Hydrological Programme

NETHERLANDS COMMITTEE FOR

**IUCN**

THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

# PREFACE

At a Tropical Montane Cloud Forest workshop held at Cambridge, U.K. in July 1998, 30 scientists, professional managers, and NGO conservation group members representing more than 14 countries and all global regions, concluded that there is insufficient public and political awareness of the status and values of Tropical Montane Cloud Forests (TMCF). The group suggested that a science-based "pop-doc" would be an effective initial action to remedy this. What follows is a response to that recommendation. It documents some of the scientific information that will be of interest to other scientists and managers of TMCF, but not overwhelming for a lay reader who is seeking to become more informed about these remarkable ecosystems. The purpose of this booklet, therefore, is to:

- Impart an understanding of what these TMCFs are and how they function, based on the best science currently available, incomplete though that information is;
- Engender an appreciation of the values of TMCFs and why they are important to humans and our biological consorts on this planet Earth;
- Develop an awareness of the forces that threaten these ecosystems and cause the losses that are resulting from our resource development activities;
- Arouse a concern that will influence the way and speed with which research, management, protection and policy are carried out.

Donor institutions and development agencies are especially invited to read this document. Conservation NGOs are urged to use this information to raise awareness among the stakeholders in TMCFs, and to work with decision-makers in halting the degradation and disappearance of these valuable and unusual forests. Information about the TMCF Initiative and the supportive organizations that made this booklet possible, is given on the final page.

*We believe decision time for cloud forests is here. Let us see if we can convince you, and move you to action!*

**L.A. Bruijnzeel and L.S. Hamilton**

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**Sources of remaining illustrations:**

- Figure 1: Adapted from T.C. Whitmore (1984). *Tropical Rain Forests of the Far East* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Figure 2: Adapted from C.G.G.J. van Steenis (1972). *The Mountain Flora of Java*. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands.
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- Figure 4: Adapted from L.S. Hamilton et al. (1995), (see reference list).
- Figure 5: Adapted from L.A. Bruijnzeel (1990), (see reference list).
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- Figure 7: Adapted from M. Brown et al. (1996), (see reference list).
- Figure 8: Adapted from M. Brown et al. (1996), (see reference list).
- Figure 9: Adapted from J.A. Pounds et al. (1999), (see reference list).

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# THE TROPICAL MONTANE CLOUD FOREST INITIATIVE



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Because of the threats to cloud forests, the relatively low scientific state-of-knowledge of these ecosystems, and lack of information about their location and status, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1995 called for a 'Campaign for Cloud Forests'. The World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) rose to this challenge and began to acquire data for a tropical montane cloud forest directory and eventually an atlas. An initial draft directory of 268 pages was issued in August 1997. With funding from the Netherlands Committee of IUCN Forest Programme, IUCN's Forest Conservation Programme, WWF's Forests For Life Programme and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the U.K., a planning and advisory workshop was held at WCMC at Cambridge in 1998, bringing together key players from the scientific, professional management and NGO communities. This meeting laid the groundwork, subsequently refined at a smaller meeting, for what is now the Tropical Montane Cloud Forest Initiative. Concurrently DFID largely funded a part-time Coordinator position at WCMC. The Initiative's Steering Group consists of representatives from WCMC, IUCN's Forest Conservation and Wetlands and Water Resources Programmes, the IUCN/World Commission on Protected Areas Mountain Theme, WWF's Forests For Life and Fresh-water Programmes, UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands Committee for IUCN and an NGO representative from Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The Cambridge Workshop called for the production of an UNESCO science-based publication, written in terms that would also inform and stimulate concern among a non-scientific audience. This document is that awareness-raising early product of the TMCF Initiative. A Spanish version is expected to become available later in the year.

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