

The Eliasch Review. Climate Change: Financing Global Forests

By Johan Eliasch
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News reports that June 2010 was the warmest June on record across the world coincided with the arrival of this book for review. And although climate change seems to have dropped from the agendas of world leaders about as fast as BP's share price, your editor thought that a review would appeal to you, the reader.

After staggering through the book, I'm not so sure. I have no doubt that the book's topic is important. It deals with ways of financing REDD. But if you have never heard of REDD, don't start with this book!

REDD is "reduced emissions through deforestation and forest degradation." It is a very popular topic in climate change circles because 30% of the annual CO₂ emissions are estimated to come from deforestation and forest degradation. The basic concept is simple: governments, companies



or forest owners in the underdeveloped world should be rewarded for keeping their forests instead of cutting them down. But REDD is one of the most controversial new issues in the climate change debate because



it involves carbon markets and carbon credits. You can read about the controversy on the REDD Monitor web site at www.redd-monitor.org. Although the concept is simple, and it seems worthwhile at an intuitive level, the devil, as the website notes, is always in the details.

Now to the book: Johann Eliasch is a Swedish business man who runs the Head Sports equipment company. He was special representative on Deforestation and Clean Energy to the immediate past Prime Minister of the UK, Gordon Brown. He was commissioned to write the review with the support of the government climate change office. While the jacket blurb claims that the author makes a clear and forceful case for forests to be included in international carbon trading markets, I found it heavy going. Individual chapters appear to be summaries of reports by separate research groups and it wasn't until I reached the last chapter that I gained a sense of the purpose of the book. Even the executive summary had me puzzled. This said, individual chapters are well written. They deal with such topics as the drivers of deforestation, the current international climate change framework and measuring and monitoring emissions from forests.

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The book clearly deserves to be on the shelves of those members who are especially interested in REDD and carbon markets, but for the rest of us, I suggest visiting the one of the many climate change websites or the REDD monitor site and pursuing links from there. The book can also be downloaded from a website, but when I followed the link provided, it took me to a government website on "whole farm help" which I was advised is under reconstruction. Perhaps this is a result of the recent change in government in the UK.

Earthscan publishes a range of interesting books on international forestry and climate change. They can be found at www.earthscan.co.uk
Five cones for importance but two cones for readability.