

PREFACE

This report is the first in a series to be published by the Commonwealth Secretariat within the next year. Each volume will trace the development of tropical forest management in a Commonwealth country, to illustrate the range of experience and knowledge that has been gathered during the past century and more of Commonwealth forestry. Forest management is no longer the concern of foresters alone, and the fate of the tropical forests is increasingly dependent on the understanding of interested people outside the profession, especially environmentalists, politicians, social scientists, the general public and the media. This series is intended to assist a wider understanding of the historical basis to the new directions and policy initiatives now being taken in the countries concerned.

The series of reports is the first step in the Commonwealth Forestry Initiative (Kemp, 1992) intended to provide more productive links, not only between past experience and modern concerns for forest conservation, but also among countries actively developing new programmes in natural forest management. It is hoped that the next step will be supported for study visits and scientific exchange, as part of a coordinated programme, centred on selected demonstration, research and development areas in a number of countries.

The origins of professional management in the Western Ghats in Southern India can be traced to the early part of the last century. Having been at the forefront of the earliest attempts at tropical forest management, India is now pioneering new approaches to resolve the competing economic, social and environmental demands on the remaining areas of forest. As the author of this study suggests, the innovative approaches needed to meet the pressures from increasing human and livestock populations on the severely reduced forests are not only advances in technical aspects of forest management but involve foresters in assisting local communities in broader aspects of the rural economy. Mr. Shyam Sundar, formerly Principal Chief Conservator of Forests in Karnataka State, has brought to the subject his long experience as a distinguished member of the Indian Forest Service, and has provided a detailed bibliography to assist others in future studies in these forests.

A second volume, on Uganda, is in draft, and this will be followed by accounts of experience in tropical forest management in Ghana, and in Queensland, Australia. The work has been funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), and this first volume was made possible by funding provided by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), of Canada.

Brian Kerr
Commonwealth Secretariat
August 1993.