

How to increase forest cover of Namibia's landscapes

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Namibia must stop deforestation!

... said Agriculture and Forestry Minister Dr Nickey Iyambo in April 2005.

“IT is imperative that Namibia finds ways to halt deforestation so that it can prevent and halt desertification.”

Since then, over the past 17 years,
Namibia has made little progress.
Things have got worse.



Why? Because we talk too much and do too little.

Why are we losing forest and woodland cover?

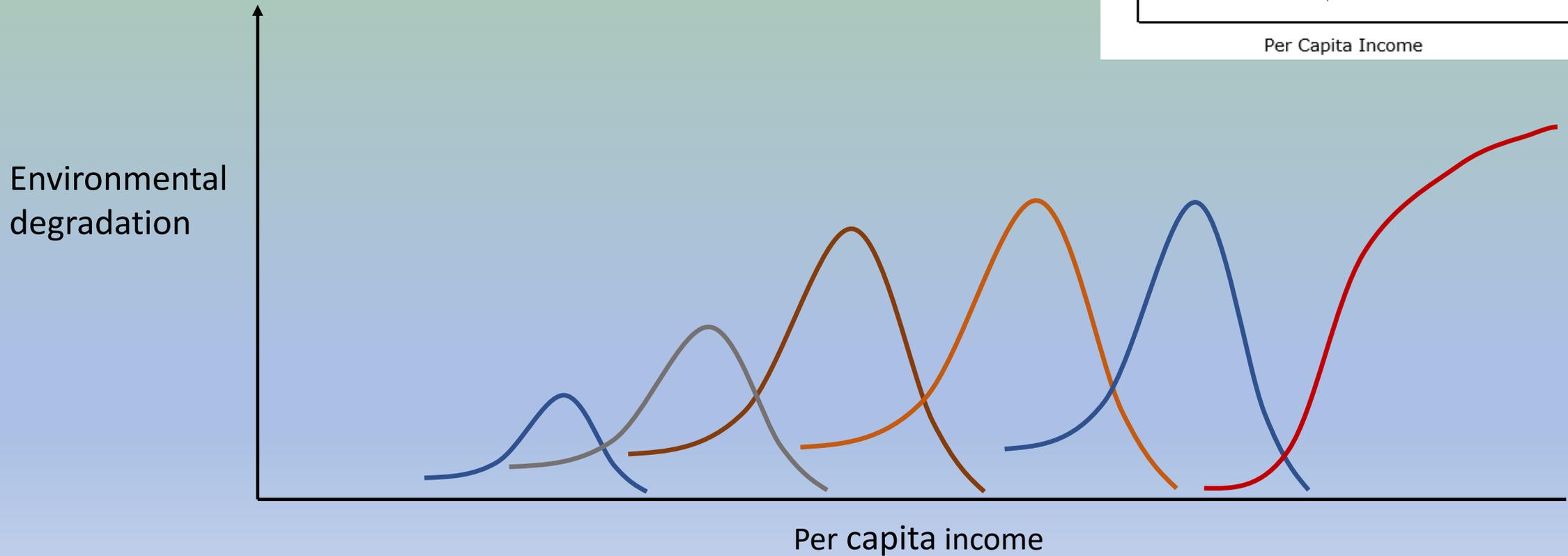
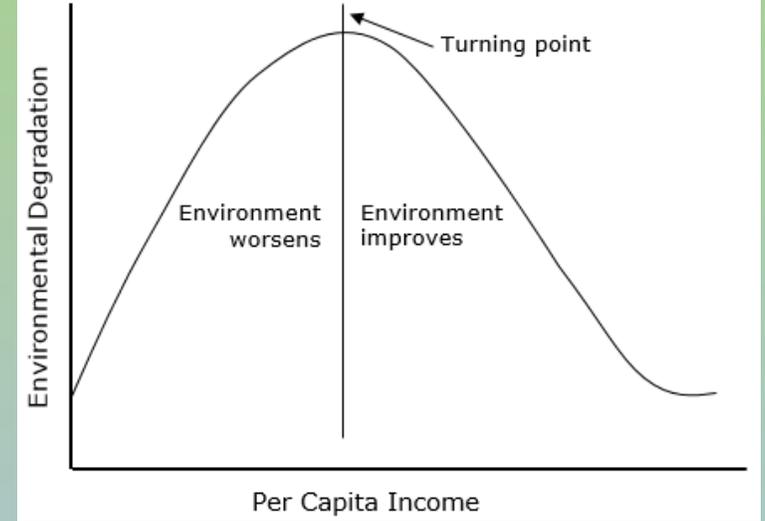
- Land-use change
 - Subsistence cropping – slash and burn
 - Agriculture – green schemes – inefficient
 - Mining
- Cutting trees
 - Building homesteads and livestock kraals
 - Logging – timber export
- Rising global temperatures and lower rainfall - impacts regeneration
- Excessive fires
- Poverty



Less than 9% of Namibia is “forested” – deciduous woodlands. Between 1990 and 2010 Namibia lost about 1.5 million ha of woodlands (about 17%). Woodland loss has accelerated since then to about 25-30% loss today!

Poverty??!!

Environmental Kuznets Curve



North-central



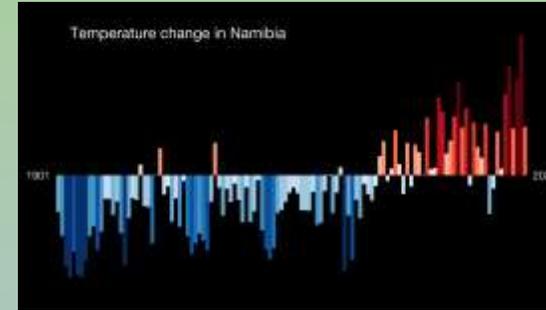
Border of Ogongo Agricultural College with communal land in North-Central Namibia



Many higher income countries have increasing forest cover, e.g. USA, Canada, most western European countries – even China.

Why is it important to stop deforestation and to reverse the process?

- Climate regulation
 - Carbon storage (takes centuries to rebuild carbon)
 - Regulating temperature and precipitation
- Environmental benefits & services
 - Biodiversity – landscapes, habitats, species, corridors and connectivity
 - Air purification, water filtration
 - Soil protection
- Social values
 - 65+% of Namibians depend on forest resources
 - Heritage values, recreation
- Commercial
 - Timber and non-timber forest products for the home
 - Craft and tourism

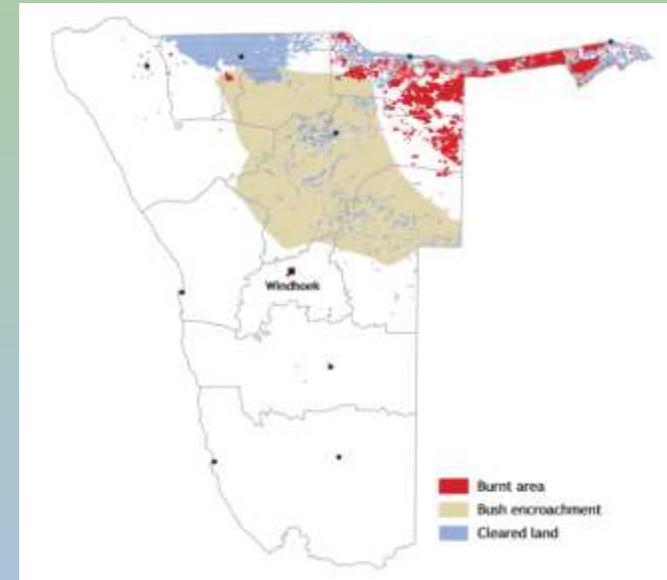


The value of forests to the world is estimated at US\$50-150 trillion – most from carbon storage - more than all the stock markets in the world combined.

We talk too much and do too little!

So what are the headline actions needed?

- Do not confuse bush thinning (de-bushing) with deforestation!
 - Bush thinning takes place in mainly thornveld savanna ecosystems and aims at **rangeland restoration** to fix impacts of inappropriate farming practices
 - Deforestation happens in mainly the deciduous woodlands of north and north-east Namibia
- Stop current deforestation (including through fire management) and protect areas to allow natural regeneration
- Implement an active, dynamic and multi-agency reforestation programme – with mainly indigenous tree species



Where should we focus our reforestation?

- River banks
- Roadways
- Abandoned crop fields
- Around green schemes
- Around villages
- Schools
- Urban areas



Recommendations to reduce deforestation

- No **commercial** harvesting of timber unless:
 - ✓ There has been a thorough, transparent and verifiable resource assessment to determine sustainable harvest; and
 - ✓ All harvested timber will be used for significant value addition in Namibia (i.e. as furniture or other goods). Raw timber (round and squared logs and planks) should not be allowed to be exported
- Set up an effective national fire management programme for north-east Namibia
- Support and expand the Community Forests programme far more effectively, and integration with conservancies
- Proclaim, protect and manage the three State Forests
- New areas of woodlands and forest should be identified and proclaimed.
- Minimum tillage agriculture should be rigorously promoted and supported at village level, so that soils become enriched and slash-and-burn cropping stops

Recommendations for reforestation

- Set up a national reforestation programme with:
 - Action plan that sets clear ambitious but achievable targets – annual and long-term
 - Select priority sites
 - Bring together the right stakeholders per site or group of sites
 - Make annual provision in national budget – include job creation as an added benefit
 - Build reforestation into talks with bilateral and multilateral partners
 - Engage private sector through incentives
- In parallel explore carbon credits
 - Various international organisations are looking at Namibia to explore potential to plant trees to trade Carbon Credits
 - Namibia needs to be proactive to identify areas and local partners, and facilitate this process on our terms – we decide where and how.
- Set up an urban tree planting and protection programme
 - Target for every urban dwelling to have at least 4 trees = 1 million urban trees
 - Provide appropriate tree species per ecological area - free
 - Discount on municipal / local authority rates for every tree alive at end of each year

General recommendations for forestry

- Set up a national Forest and Woodland Council:
 - Multi-agency Council to oversee reduction in deforestation and reforestation
- Set up an effective forest cover monitoring system that tracks:
 - Deforestation, natural regeneration and reforestation
 - Reports annually to parliament and to the general public
- Establish an additional funding mechanism from key CO₂ contributing industries:
 - Percentage of fuel levy must go towards protecting and restoring forests & woodland
 - Air travel into, out of and within Namibia should all attract compulsory carbon offset payments built into the ticket. These funds must be ring-fenced for climate change investment – both adaptation and mitigation, including investing in restoring forest and woodland cover
- Political engagement, support and accountability in this sector has been inadequate to date. Politicians need to take more responsibility.

THANK YOU