

## Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of this year of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment E-Newsletter, the FRA News.

In this issue, you will find important updates on the FRA process, publications and FRA-related meetings.

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### 1. COUNTRY REPORTING FOR FRA 2015

The deadline for the submission of the FRA 2015 final Country Reports has passed and thanks to the crucial contribution of the National Correspondents, we now have a total of 200 submitted country reports in the on line Forest Resources Information System of which 115 completed (FRIMS).

We would like to thank all National Correspondents for the support provided to the FRA 2015 Reporting process, their participation and dedication have been beyond expectations! For those countries that did not provide any reports, the FRA secretariat will prepare a number of desk studies based on information previously submitted to the FRA 2010 and available literature.

The analysis of data will begin in mid-April with an initial release of preliminary results to authors of the FRA publications described below. By the end of June 2014 the complete FRA 2015 dataset will be sent to the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaires (CFRQ) partners for their member countries.

The FRA 2015 Advisory Group will meet in October 2014 in Salt Lake City (US) to review the draft publications. A brief summary of selective FRA 2015 findings is planned for the UN International Day of Forests on 21 March 2015, while final results and main FRA 2015 publications will be released in September 2015 at the World Forestry Congress in Durban (South Africa).

### 2. Remote sensing survey at the UN International day of forests

The results of the FAO's global remote sensing survey of forests have been released during a seminar highlighting the importance of forest monitoring on the occasion of the second International Day of Forests, proclaimed by UN on the 21 March. The survey is the result of a partnership between FAO, its member countries and the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) and it represents the first consistent survey to show the changes in forest land use for those four main ecological domains over the past 20 years. Data confirm that forest areas continue to decline globally, with the biggest losses of tropical forests occurring in South America and Africa. According to the updated survey, the area of forest cover decreased by some 5.3 million ha/year, corresponding, over the period 1990-2010, to a net loss equivalent of nearly 4 times the size of Italy or the size of Colombia. The updated findings of a global remote sensing survey show that total forest area as of 2010 is 3.89 billion hectares or 30 percent of the total land area of the Earth.



Worldwide, the gross reduction in forest land use caused by deforestation and natural disasters over the 20-year time period (15.5 million hectares per year) was partially offset by gains in forest area through afforestation and natural forest expansion (10.2 million hectares per year).

There were considerable regional differences in forest losses and gains. The area of tropical forests declined in South America, Africa and Asia - with the biggest loss in absolute terms in tropical South America, followed by tropical Africa, whereas gains in forest area were reported for subtropical and temperate Asia.



The world's forests are distributed unevenly with just under half the world's forests in the tropical domain (45 percent of total forest area), about one third in boreal (31 percent) and smaller amounts in temperate (16 percent) and subtropical (8 percent) domains.

More information at:

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/217717/icode/>

### 3. FRA 2015 Publications

Thanks to the information collected through the Country Reports, external data sources and remote sensing, FRA 2015 will produce three main publications containing national data and analysis of the results. Raw data by country and topic will be published in the FRA 2015 Desk Reference that will be composed by a set of global tables displaying national data by reference year, by variable and by country along with graphics and regional summaries.

The second publication will be an FAO Forestry Paper that will provide an analysis and summary trends over the last 25 years of sustainability indicators such as forest area, forest designations, biomass and carbon, contribution of forest to GDP, sustainable forest management, employment and forest production.

The third publication will be a special volume in the journal Forest Ecology and Management dedicated to FRA 2015 and entitled Changes in Global Forest Resources from 1990 to 2015. Over 55 authors from all over the world will contribute to this special volume that will be the primary analytical venue for FRA 2015, ensuring broad international authorship of the analyses and independent peer review for the papers.

All three of these publications will be released in September 2015.

### 5. Meetings

Twenty Second Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and Fourth World Forest Week (WFW) 23 - 27 June 2014, Rome, Italy



*The 22<sup>nd</sup> session COFO and 4<sup>th</sup> WFW will take place in Rome 23-27 June 2014. A joint Global Forest Watch-FRA side event is planned to take place during the week.*

The Committee on Forestry (COFO) is the highest FAO Forestry statutory body. The biennial sessions of COFO (held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy) bring together heads of forest services and other senior government officials to identify emerging policy and technical issues, to seek solutions and to advise FAO and others on appropriate action. Other international organizations and, increasingly, non-governmental groups participate in COFO. Participation in COFO is open to all FAO member countries. FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy.

More information at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/57758/en/>

### 4. "Improved Information to promote Forest Management for Protection of Soil and Water" Project

With the support and cooperation of the Japan Forestry Agency, FAO launched the project "Improved Information to promote Forest Management for Protection of Soil and Water". The project aims to develop a set of methods for assessing soil and water conservation functions of forests. Using data collected through FRA 2010 and FRA 2015 and field trials, this Trust Fund Project will test methodologies intended to improve global forest information on forest soil and water protection in preparation for future forest resources assessments.



Field studies will be conducted in selected forests sites in the three pilot countries Mexico, Vietnam and Nepal. Experiences will be analysed to define practices that can be implemented at country level and will also be used to help build national capacities to conduct these assessments and use the results in the formulation of national policies. FAO will integrate the study findings into publications, capacity building and dissemination activities.

More information at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra/85987/en/>

### 6. Staff News

Congratulations to Yoganath ADIKARI, a national of Japan, who has joined the team as Chief Technical Advisor/Forestry Officer for FRA. He will be working on the *FAO-Japan Project: Improved Information to Promote Forest Management for Protection of Soil and Water*.

