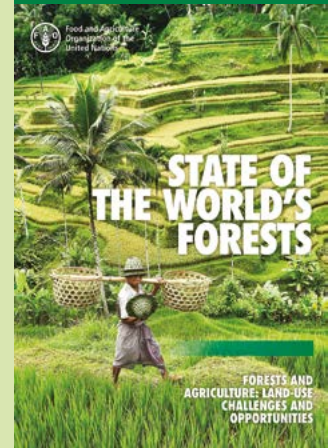




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

2016

# STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS

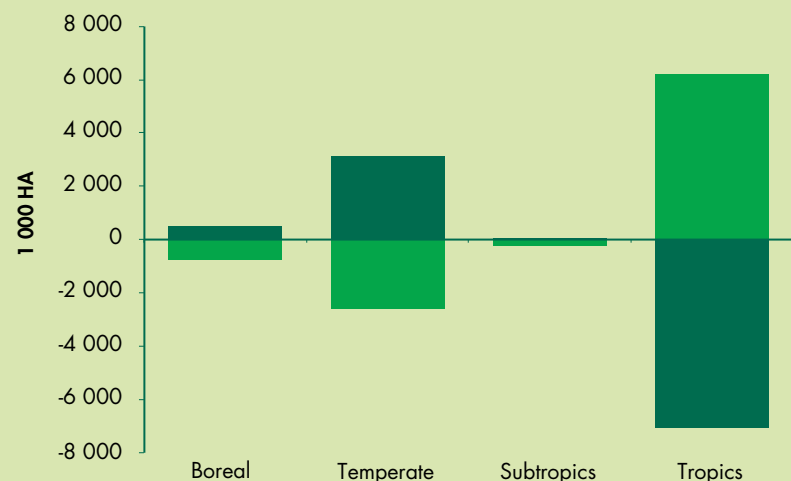


## Forests and agriculture: land-use challenges and opportunities

**F**orests and trees support sustainable agriculture. They stabilize soils and climate, regulate water flows, give shade and shelter, and provide a habitat for pollinators and the natural predators of agricultural pests. They also contribute to the food security of hundreds of millions of people, for whom they are important sources of food, energy and income. Yet, agriculture remains the major driver of deforestation globally, and agricultural, forestry and land policies are often at odds.

*State of the World's Forests* (SOFO) 2016 shows that it is possible to increase agricultural productivity and food security while halting or even reversing deforestation, highlighting the successful efforts of Costa Rica, Chile, the Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Tunisia and Viet Nam. Integrated land-use planning is the key to balancing land uses, underpinned by the right policy instruments to promote both sustainable forests and agriculture.

**NET ANNUAL AVERAGE CHANGE IN FOREST AND AGRICULTURAL LAND, BY CLIMATIC DOMAIN, 2000–2010**



  
Net annual average change in  
agricultural area, 2000–2010

  
Net annual average change in  
forest area, 2000–2010

# KEY MESSAGES

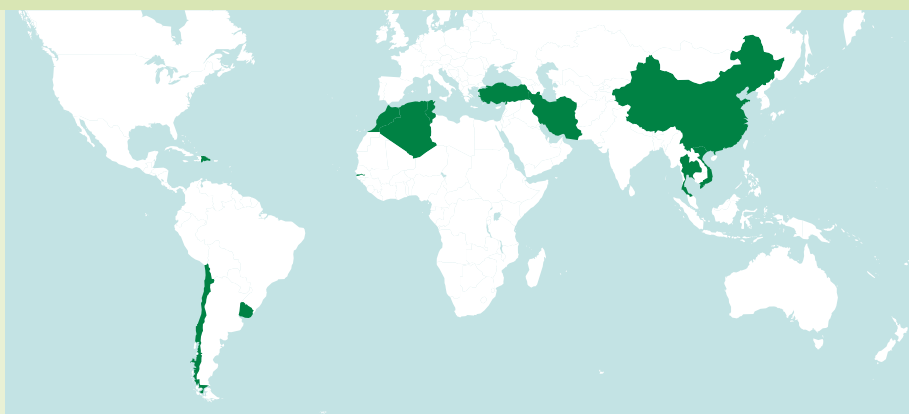
- 1 Meeting the world's increasing demand for food and other land-based products will require **HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES** that are managed sustainably.
- 2 Forests play key roles in the **WATER CYCLE, SOIL CONSERVATION, CARBON SEQUESTRATION**, and **HABITAT PROTECTION**, including for pollinators. Their sustainable management is crucial for sustainable agriculture and food security.
- 3 Agriculture remains the most significant driver of global deforestation, and there is an urgent need to promote more **POSITIVE INTERACTIONS** between agriculture and forestry.
- 4 The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by countries in 2015 are **"INTEGRATED AND INDIVISIBLE"**. Progress towards sustainable agriculture, food security and sustainable forest management, core elements of the SDGs, should be made simultaneously.
- 5 **IMPROVED COORDINATION** is required between policies on forests, agriculture, food, land use, and rural development. Equally important are clear legal frameworks governing land-use change, including secure land-tenure systems that recognize traditional customary rights to use land and forest products.
- 6 Where large-scale commercial agriculture is the principal driver of land-use change, effective **REGULATION OF CHANGE**, with appropriate social and environmental safeguards, is needed. Private governance initiatives, such as voluntary certification schemes and commitments to zero deforestation, also have a positive impact.
- 7 Where local subsistence agriculture is the principal driver of land-use change, wider **POVERTY ALLEVIATION** and **RURAL DEVELOPMENT** measures should be implemented alongside actions to improve local agricultural, agroforestry and other land-use practices.
- 8 **INTEGRATED LAND-USE PLANNING** provides a strategic framework for balancing land uses at the national, subnational and landscape scales. This should include meaningful stakeholder participation to ensure the legitimacy of land-use plans and obtain stakeholder buy-in for their implementation and monitoring.
- 9 Food security can be achieved through **AGRICULTURAL INTENSIFICATION** and other measures such as social protection, rather than through expansion of agricultural areas at the expense of forests.

## IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND HALT DEFORESTATION, BUT ACTION IS NEEDED

**Over 20 countries succeeded in improving food security while maintaining or increasing forest cover since 1990**

**12 of these countries increased forest cover by over 10%**

- Algeria, Chile, China, the Dominican Republic, the Gambia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Morocco, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Viet Nam



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The *State of the World's Forests* reports on the status of forests, recent major policy and institutional developments, and key issues concerning the forest sector. It makes current, reliable and policy-relevant information widely available to facilitate informed discussion and decision-making with regard to the world's forests.