



Forests for human health and well-being

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FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN OR NEAR FORESTS

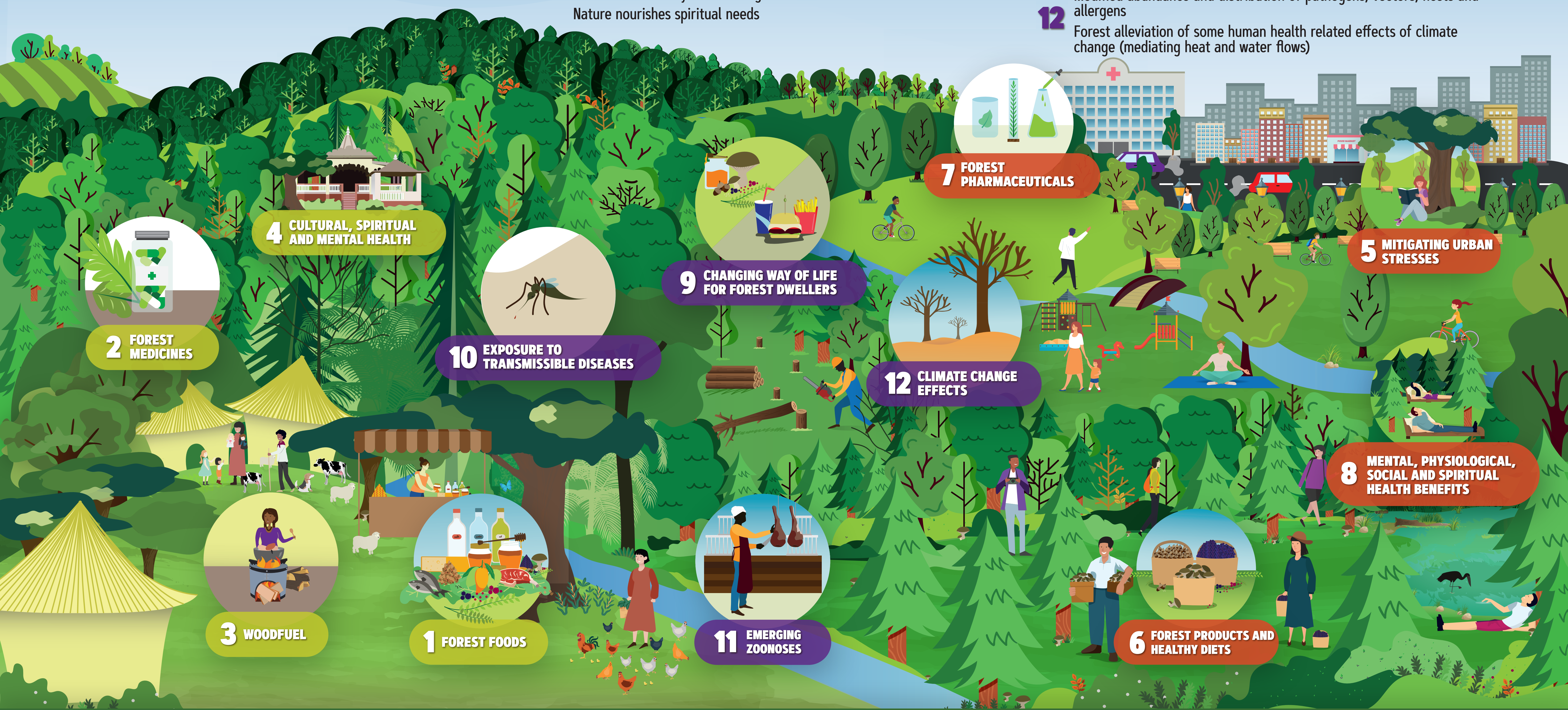
- 1 Macro- and micronutrients for a healthy diet
Dietary diversity
- 2 Forest plants underpin traditional health care systems
Challenges: remoteness from health services, diseases associated with forest pest vectors
- 3 Woodfuel used by over 75 percent of rural households for cooking, improving food safety and nutritional quality; and for boiling drinking-water, eliminating water-borne diseases
Health risks if improperly burned
- 4 Forest well-being linked to individual and community well-being

FOR URBAN POPULATIONS AND INDUSTRIALIZED SOCIETIES

- 5 Green space for exercise, recreation, recovery from stress
Urban forests buffering noise, improving microclimate, absorbing pollution
- 6 Wild-collected and tropical forest foods reaching urban consumers
Potential of forest-based diets in reducing non-communicable diseases related to unhealthy urban diets
- 7 25 to 80 percent of drugs in developed and fast-developing countries are plant based
Outdoor physical activity mitigates mental illness and non-communicable diseases
- 8 Forest visits lower blood pressure and pulse rate, calm nervous-system activity
Volatiles emitted by trees strengthen immune function
Nature nourishes spiritual needs

CHANGES IN FOREST ECOSYSTEMS AND TRADITIONAL FOREST COMMUNITIES

- 9 Transition to less healthy diets
Reduced dietary diversity
Erosion of traditional knowledge of edible and medicinal forest plants
- 10 Growth of settlements near forests increases exposure to transmissible diseases
Alteration of forest biodiversity modifies presence of pathogens, hosts and/or vectors
- 11 Zoonotics related to land-use change, encroachment of humans into forest areas, forest fragmentation, inadequately regulated wildlife trade and increased contact of humans with wild animal products
Animal origin of 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases
- 12 Modified abundance and distribution of pathogens, vectors, hosts and allergens
Forest alleviation of some human health related effects of climate change (mediating heat and water flows)



WAYS FORWARD

Promote a One Health approach to bring together professionals and policy-makers in forestry, natural resources, agriculture, livestock and public health and nutrition for health solutions at the interface between humans, animals and their various environments.

Promote best practices of sustainable forest management to prevent the loss of forests and trees and maintain their integrity.

Ensure secure land tenure rights and forest access for local people to support their livelihoods and their access to health-giving products while providing a strong incentive to conserve forest resources.

Harmonize conservation with livelihoods and human health. Promote livelihood and income generation opportunities for forest communities, including the sale of sustainably harvested forest products and nature-based tourism enterprises, and undertake reforestation and greening initiatives in urban and peri-urban areas.

Manage wildlife sustainably, and promote safe handling of wild meat.

Take into account the role of hunting and trade of wild animals in local livelihoods, nutrition and traditional medicine, on the one hand, and in the transmission of zoonotic diseases, on the other.



Include health and nutrition aspects in forest management planning, not only for rural areas but also for peri-urban and urban areas, in both developed and developing countries. Encourage a cross-sectoral approach, public participation and inclusivity.

Ensure gender equality, as women are the main providers of safe food, water and medicine for their households and the main holders of traditional knowledge on managing and transforming local biodiversity for nutrition and health.

Develop methods for measuring the health benefits of forests, which would also assist in obtaining resource allocation for initiatives linking forests and human health.

Collect disaggregated data on topics such as forest cover; health and nutritional status of the population; nutrient composition of local forest foods; collection and consumption of edible and medicinal forest products; wildlife monitoring of likely disease vectors; and indigenous medical knowledge with wider application potential.

Encourage partnership among governmental and intergovernmental agencies, the private sector, civil society organizations and research institutions to promote innovative approaches and the sharing of best practices, knowledge, data and information.

Encourage behaviours that support human and ecosystem health, based on a vision of humans as part of nature and nature as linked to human well-being.

