State of the World’s Forests 2016

Forests and Agriculture: Land Use Challenges and Opportunities

Eva Muller
Content

• Introduction
• Trends in Land use change
• The governance and management of land use change
• Making room for forests and food security
• Key messages: Towards better governance of land use for forests and agriculture
Introduction

Evelyn Nguleka, President of the World Farmers’ Organization:

“It is time for a change in consciousness – it is a fact that agriculture and forestry can no longer be treated in isolation. Linking the two is imperative for socio-economic development in the 21st century”
Historical trends in land use change

- Deforestation to gain new agricultural land has been part of human development for millennia.
- Regrowth happened when land was abandoned, mainly due to outbreaks of disease.
- Most prevalent in temperate climatic domain until late 19th century, now greatest in tropical domain.
- Concern about depletion of forest resources led to emergence of sustainability concept (Von Carlowitz 1713).
Recent trends in forest conversion

The greatest loss of forests and gain in agricultural land was in tropical and low-income countries.

Annual net forest loss
7 million ha

Annual net gain in agricultural land
6 million ha
Forest conversion in the tropics and subtropics

- Large-scale commercial agriculture: 40%
- Local subsistence agriculture: 27%
- Infrastructure, mining etc.: 33%
Forest conversion and income level

**NET ANNUAL AVERAGE CHANGE IN AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST AREA IN COUNTRIES GROUPED BY INCOME CATEGORY, 2000–2010**

- **High**
- **Upper-middle**
- **Lower-middle**
- **Low**

- **Net annual average change in forest area, 2000–2010**
- **Net annual average change in agricultural area, 2000–2010**
Governance and management of land use change

Need for policies on land use change

Need for coordination of land-use related policies, setting of cross-sectoral priorities or strategic targets for land-use change and institutional arrangements

Complex legal frameworks and weak governance favor informal local land use change practices; customary rights often not recognized despite their importance for vulnerable groups

Countries promoting agricultural investment and providing enabling infrastructure are better able to address forest loss
Governance and management of land use change

Need for multipronged approach addressing policy, tenure, law enforcement, economic incentives, stakeholder engagement, public-private partnerships, integrated land-use planning and monitoring of land use change

Secured investment in the forest sector → lower forest loss; investments can achieve wider social and environmental goals

Need for strategic framework encompassing all relevant stakeholder groups to balance competing land uses
Making room for forests and food security

More than 20 countries have improved food security while maintaining or increasing forest cover.

12 of these have even increased forest cover by more than 10%.
Common success factors

1. Effective legal and institutional frameworks, incl. secure land tenure and regulation of land use change

2. Coordinated and balanced approach to agricultural and forest policies

3. Market-oriented agriculture with social and environmental safeguards

4. Economic reform and economic growth
Common success factors

5. Adequate funding and investment to increase agricultural productivity and manage forests sustainably

6. Stronger involvement of local communities and smallholders

7. Use of policy instruments to improve agricultural productivity and SFM

8. Promotion of Integrated land-use
Key messages

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.

Meeting the world’s increasing demand for food and other land-based products will require highly productive, sustainably managed landscapes.

Forests’ role in the water cycle, soil conservation, carbon sequestration and habitat protection make their sustainable management indispensable for agriculture and food security.
Key messages

As agriculture remains the main driver of deforestation, there is an urgent need to promote more positive interactions between agriculture and forestry.

The SDGs are integrated and irreversible, therefore, sustainable agriculture and forestry and food security should be achieved simultaneously.

Improved coordination between sector policies related to land use and clear legal frameworks governing land use change are needed, including secure tenure.
Key messages

Large scale agriculture as main driver of deforestation \(\rightarrow\) requires effective regulation of change, social and environmental safeguards

Local subsistence agriculture as main driver of deforestation \(\rightarrow\) requires broader poverty alleviation and rural development measures and improved land use practices

Integrated land use planning involving stakeholders = strategic framework for balancing land uses at different levels
Points for consideration

The Committee may wish to invite countries to:

• improve coordination between sector policies for more effective regulation of land use change

• promote integrated land use planning as a strategic framework for balancing land uses

• Use policy instruments and boost investments to increase sustainable agricultural production and encourage SFM
Points for consideration (cont.)

The Committee may request FAO to support countries to:

• develop integrated land use strategies taking into account the role of forests for water, soil, climate and habitats

• strengthen land governance by improving tenure security and encouraging partnerships

• monitor and collect data on the effectiveness of governance mechanisms and on social, economic and environmental values of forests
Thank you for your attention