

- 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2: Achieve universal primary education
- 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4: Reduce child mortality
- 5: Improve maternal health
- 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 8: Develop a global partnership for development

MDG 7 aims to ensure environmental sustainability. It has four targets:

- integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources;
- reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010,

- a significant reduction in the rate of loss;
- halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and
- by 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Environmental sustainability is the foundation of the natural resources base and ecosystems,

which must be managed in ways that sustain human populations, meeting their food requirements and other environmental, social and economic needs. However, hunger and poverty often compel the poor to over-exploit the resources on which their own livelihoods depend. Climate change, increased water scarcity and conflicts over access to resources all pose challenges to environmental sustainability and food security.

WHAT FAO IS DOING

FAO provides support to member countries and development partners in sustainable natural resource management for conservation, sustainable use and equity goals, including agricultural water use efficiency; land and soil productivity; sustainable forest management, aquaculture and inland fisheries; integrated crop and livestock systems; pesticide management and watershed management. FAO also supports implementation of the major environmental conventions, namely, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Natural resource management:

Sustainable use of natural resources, particularly land, water, forestry, fishery, genetic resources and biodiversity, is fundamental to economic

and social development. FAO provides technical and policy advice to address the main threats to the natural resource base, which include land degradation, water scarcity, deforestation, overgrazing, over exploitation of marine resources, increased green house gas emissions and loss of genetic resources and biological diversity. FAO also supports sustainable development efforts in fragile and marginal areas such as drylands, mountain and coastal areas where the majority of the poor are concentrated. The Organization develops improved responses to global environmental challenges affecting food and agriculture, notably climate change, bioenergy and biodiversity.

Forests:

FAO helps countries manage their forests in a sustainable way. The Organization's approach balances social, economic and environmental

objectives so that present generations can reap the benefits of the Earth's forest resources while conserving them to meet the needs of future generations. FAO helps countries to strengthen their capacities and to overcome the obstacles to sustainable forest management by providing reliable information, policy advice, and technical assistance.

FAO is part of the UN Programme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), and supports the development of cost effective methods to monitor emission reductions.

Aquatic ecosystems and fisheries:

Aquatic ecosystems – inland, coastal and marine – provide humans with resources for food and livelihoods. They also perform many other important environmental functions, contributing to general human »



Desertification: one billion people at risk.
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Key facts

Between 2000 and 2004, around 262 million people were affected by climate-related disasters. Of these, 98 percent lived in developing countries.

More than 1.2 billion people live in areas of severe water scarcity.

An estimated 250 million people already have been affected by desertification, and nearly one billion more are at risk.

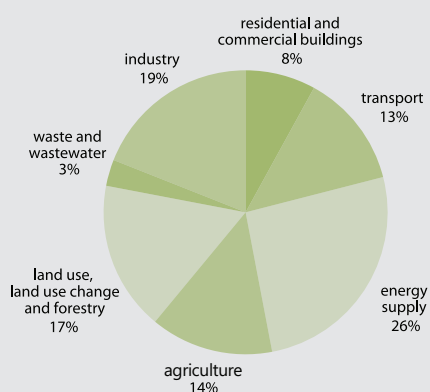
According to *FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010*, world deforestation has decreased from 16 million hectares a year in the 1990s to 13 million hectares per year over the past ten years, yet it continues at an alarmingly high rate in many countries.

Currently 72 percent of the world's fisheries are sustainable, compared to 90 percent in 1974.



Harvesting sugar cane for ethanol in Brazil.
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Agriculture and deforestation contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions



Greenhouse gas emissions by sector

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007

well-being. Achieving sustainable use of aquatic ecosystems has been the main objective of fisheries management for decades. The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, adopted in 1995, is considered to be the basis on which to promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development for the future. The code pays due attention to the environmental aspects of the sector.

Water:

In the face of increasing water scarcity and the dominance of agricultural water use, FAO is addressing water use efficiency and productivity. FAO focuses on best practices for water use and conservation, including integrated water resources management, water harvesting, modernization of irrigation systems, on-farm water management, drought impact mitigation and institutional capacities. FAO also contributes to the formulation of national and regional water management strategies. AQUASTAT, FAO's global information system on water and agriculture, collects, analyses and disseminates information on water resources and agricultural water use in member countries. FAO contributes extensively to the UN World Water Development Report.

Biodiversity:

Aware of the importance of biodiversity for food and agriculture, FAO established the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) in 1983. It aims to ensure the conservation and sustainable utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use for present and future generations. The Commission is a permanent forum for governments to discuss and negotiate matters relating to genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Commission negotiated, inter alia, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Global Plan of Action for plant and animal genetic resources.

Soil and land:

Soil and land are the basis for enhanced food security and provide vital ecosystem services such as maintaining the water cycle and biodiversity and absorbing carbon dioxide. FAO assesses land degradation globally, nationally and locally and promotes wide adoption of improved sustainable land management technologies and practices.

Bioenergy:

The work of FAO on renewable sources of energy has been continuous since the UN Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy in 1981. Since 2006, FAO has carried out significant work on the links between food security and bioenergy development. Recent activities include the promotion of small-scale bioenergy aimed at improving access to modern forms of low-carbon energy for rural populations, as a key way to maintain and improve food security in the context of climate change.

Climate change:

Climate change and variability are having a profound impact on croplands, pastures and forests, which occupy 60 percent of the Earth's surface. This is slowing progress towards the achievement of the MDGs, especially those dealing with hunger and poverty reduction and ensuring environmental sustainability. FAO's work covers a broad spectrum of activities that range from local to global and from immediate actions to long-term strategies for dealing with climate change. FAO places particular importance on identifying opportunities and practices that have potential to promote synergies between adaptation and mitigation. FAO strengthens member countries' capacity to integrate climate change concerns into food security and development planning in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors and in sustainable food production.