



THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS



Forest pathways to sustainable development

The 2018 edition of *The State of the World's Forests* shines a light on the profound interlinkages that exist between forests and trees and multiple goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Bringing together evidence from a wide range of scientific sources, the analysis indicates how forests are critical to the livelihoods of the world's poorest people and confirms the vital importance of healthy and productive forests to sustainable agriculture. It provides proof of the significance of forests and trees for water quality, climate and biodiversity, for future energy needs and for designing sustainable, healthy cities. SOFO 2018 draws on eight case studies in countries across continents, describing how actions and landscape approaches that simultaneously address forests, agriculture, food, land use, and rural and national development have led to progress.

Delivering the 2030 Agenda requires fortifying an enabling environment and creating the conditions necessary for transformational change. Forest pathways to sustainable development will be fundamentally strengthened by legal frameworks that recognize and secure the rights of local communities and smallholders to access forests, by transforming the informal sector and helping to incentivize private sector engagement in pro-sustainability activities.

Investing in effective monitoring will help plug data gaps so that countries can fashion integrated policies based on evidence. Ultimately, ending hunger and poverty and transforming

to a sustainable world can only be realized if sectoral ministries – forestry, agriculture, rural development and national development – coordinate policies across government. ■

PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT FOR EACH OF THE SUB-INDICATORS OF SDG INDICATOR 15.2.1

SDG regional grouping	Forest area net change rate	Above-ground biomass stock in forest	Proportion of forest area located in legally established protected areas	Proportion of forest area under long-term forest management plans	Forest area under independently verified forest management certification schemes
World	●	●	●	●	●
North America	●	●	●	●	●
Europe	●	●	●	●	●
Latin America and the Caribbean	●	●	●	●	●
Central Asia	●	●	●	●	●
South Asia	●	●	●	●	●
Eastern Asia	●	●	●	●	●
Southeast Asia	●	●	●	●	●
Western Asia	●	●	●	●	●
North Africa	●	●	●	●	●
Sub-Saharan Africa	●	●	●	●	●
Oceania, excluding Australia and New Zealand	●	●	●	●	●
Australia and New Zealand	●	●	●	●	●
Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)	●	●	●	●	●
Least-developed countries (LDCs)	●	●	●	●	●
Small island developing states (SIDS)	●	●	●	●	●

NOTE: The indicator is presented as a dashboard of traffic lights that shows progress in each of the five sub-indicators, with green, yellow and red indicating the direction and rate of change.

SOURCE: FAO, FRA 2015

● Positive change
● No/small change
● Negative change
● No certified areas

KEY MESSAGES

→ **To achieve our global goals, urgent action is needed to sustain the planet's forests.** Time is running out for the world's forests, whose total area is shrinking by the day.

→ **The branches of forests and trees reach out across the SDGs.** From tackling poverty and hunger to mitigating climate change and conserving biodiversity, the impacts of forests and trees go well beyond SDG15 to contribute to achieving multiple goals and targets across the 2030 Agenda.

→ **It is time to recognize that food security, agriculture and forestry can no longer be treated in isolation.** Sustainable agriculture needs healthy and productive forests. Forests and trees supply hundreds of millions of people with food, energy and income, acting as a safety net during hard times.

→ **To reach those furthest behind first, we must go down the forest path and empower agents of change.** Policies that secure tenure rights for the poor and vulnerable, including indigenous people, landless farmers, rural women and youth, will go a long way to ending poverty and food insecurity.

→ **Landscape approaches balance sustainability.** Landscape approaches that protect and sustainably use vital ecosystem services, sustain livelihoods and tackle food security challenges while adapting to the impacts of climate change must be integrated into national strategies and development priorities.

→ **Coherent policy frameworks encourage partnerships and stakeholder engagement in forests.** Effective partnerships and private sector engagement, clear legal frameworks, community engagement and coherent policy measures that balance stakeholder interests are part of the enabling environment needed to successfully integrate forests into sustainable development strategies.

→ **Healthy cities need trees.** Trees, parks and forests are a must for planners designing the sustainable cities and peri-urban landscapes of the future.

→ **Evidence is key in achieving recognition of the true value of forests in the 2030 Agenda.** By investing in monitoring at national and subnational levels, governments will gain a clearer picture of the social, economic and environmental impact of forests and trees across the SDGs.

FACTS

Studies suggest that forests and trees may provide around **20 percent of INCOME FOR RURAL HOUSEHOLDS** in developing countries, both through cash income and by meeting subsistence needs.

In 2015, **25 PERCENT OF FORESTS** were **managed with soil and/or water conservation** as an objective, a global increase over the past 25 years.

Forests supply about **40 percent of GLOBAL RENEWABLE ENERGY** in the form of woodfuel – as much as solar, hydroelectric and wind power combined.

An estimated **38 percent of GLOBAL INDUSTRIAL ROUNDWOOD** was certified as being sustainably produced in 2016.

By the end of 2017, some **120 countries** had made commitments to **CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION** that include action on forests.



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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.

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