

## Welcome

### Welcome to FRA News, the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment E-Newsletter

In this issue, you will find a summary of the successful launch of FRA 2015 in Durban, South Africa, during the XIV World Forestry Congress, including farewell words from Kenneth MacDicken, who is retiring in November. There is also information about the new FRA Website and the different result formats of FRA 2015, containing the launching of the FLUDE, which is now operational. Finally, information about the beginning of the path towards FRA 2020 is also provided.

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### 1. FRA 2015: A New Global Forest Resources Assessment is born!

Producing the Global Forest Resources Assessment seems similar to the process of giving birth - at least the last 8 months or so of the process! Confucius once said that every good idea has a thousand fathers - and certainly the FRA has thousands of fathers, which helps verify that it is a good idea! A great deal of effort was made by thousands of people to produce national forest resource information shared across the globe. Months of hard work, with a big push in the end - and FRA 2015 was born!

FRA 2015 was successfully delivered to a global audience on 7 September 2015 during the [XIV World Forestry Congress](#).

It was presented to somewhere around 3,000 people live and to more through streaming, YouTube videos and [presentation](#) in pdf format.

It has been covered so far in over 1,000 news stories around the globe and has stimulated debate about how forests are changing, the definitions of forest, the meaning of tree cover change, and thinking on many other topics. In the first three weeks there were over 25,000 downloads of the reports, journal papers and infographics - this is 100 times the number of downloads of FRA 2010 in the first two months.

In sum, what we presented at the 15 minute launch was:

1. The rate of global forest loss has decreased by over 50% since 1990.
2. Most forest gain is occurring in the temperate and boreal domains and most forest loss is occurring in the tropics.
3. Capacity to manage forests has never been greater.

This is perhaps more good news about forests than many stakeholders have heard in recent years. For some, it is unbelievable - for others it is recognition of a great deal of progress. In the end, it is important to carefully examine FRA 2015 results and compare them with other sources that provide different types of data and come to fact-based conclusions.

The inclusion of a tier system of classifying the reliability of quantitative variables helps users understand how much confidence to place in reported values. The publication of the Special Issue of Forest Ecology and Management opened the door for over 50 authors from over 20 countries to analyse and report findings from FRA 2015 in an independent, peer-reviewed format - a significant step forward in transparency and credibility.

We focus quite a lot on measurement and reporting - but the exciting part of course is when forest management actions are taken to meet national stakeholder objectives. An example of reducing deforestation as a result of the sustained efforts by the government and civil society is in Ecuador, where the rate of loss of native forests has been halved; 93,000 hectares per year in the 90s to 47,000 hectares per year during the period 2008 to 2014. Among the efforts made by Ecuador are "Socio Bosque", an incentive program to the community for forest conservation, restoration and the recovery of degraded areas; the creation of a system to gather updated data for forest monitoring, an increase in the extent of protected areas and actions of forest control and wood traceability.

This is an excellent example of how countries can overcome obstacles to reduce the rate of forest conversion. Forest area and deforestation data from 2014 were updated after the FRA 2015 report but they have been updated in the FRA Country Report.

There is still much to do - the 18,000 pages of Country Reports are great resources for domestic use and are often underutilized. Certainly there are some errors that remain that need to be found and corrected, along with a wealth of useful information that is yet unexplored. We encourage National Correspondents and their Alternates to circulate these reports widely to ensure they get as much practical use as possible.



#### Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvJ66a-oT38>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoCpyBZA6bE>

Presentation "[How have forests changed?](#)"

### TreeTALKS



*This is my last month with FAO before I retire. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with many of you and want to thank you for all you have contributed to the FRA - and in friendship to me and the rest of the FRA Team. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.*

*Sincerely,  
Ken*

### 3. Kenneth MacDicken's departure

We would like to announce the departure of the FRA 2015 Team Leader, Dr. Kenneth MacDicken. He is leaving the Team to enjoy a well-deserved retirement after 40 years of passionate dedication to forests and forestry.

Kenneth MacDicken started his career in 1975 in the Philippines and lived and worked in Southeast Asia for over twenty years. The FRA 2015 Team would like to deeply thank him for his professionalism and key guidance in making FRA 2015 a remarkable achievement.

Dr. Anssi Pekkarinen, Team Leader, Forest Monitoring and Assessment Team has been appointed as interim.

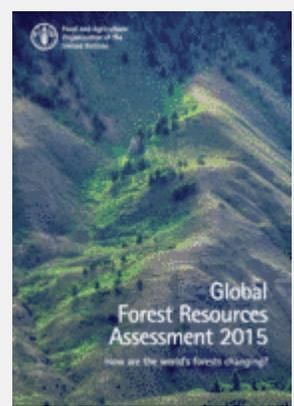
*Welcome Anssi!*



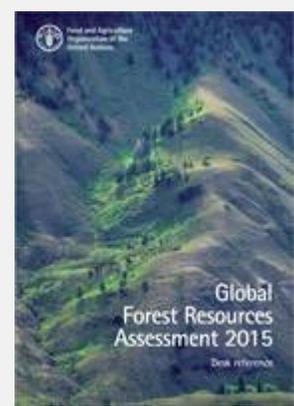
## 2. New FRA Website and the different FRA 2015 result formats

We are pleased to announce that on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, at the same time of the FRA 2015 launch at the XIV World Forestry Congress in Durban, the new FRA website was also launched: [www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/](http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/). It contains past FRA-related reports going back to 1948, including these FRA 2015 documents:

- Synthesis document: "How are the World's Forest Changing?": <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4793e.pdf>
- Desk Reference: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4808e.pdf>, which contain summary tables for most of the quantitative and boolean variables collected through FRA 2015.
- Special Issue of the journal *Forest Ecology and Management* containing 13 independently peer-reviewed papers: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4895e.html>.
- Country Reports: <http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/current-assessment/country-reports/en/>



Synthesis document



Desk Reference



Special Issue *Forest Ecology and Management*



Country Reports



FLUDE

We are also pleased to announce the Forest Land Use Data Explorer (FLUDE) [www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/explore-data/flude/en/](http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/explore-data/flude/en/), a portal that allows data analysis of FRA and other FAO data. In the FLUDE you can select data presented in FRA 2015 and display them on an interactive map and several graphs, compare them with other FAO agriculture data, or download the data in .csv format to do your own analyses.

## 4. Towards FRA 2020

*The FRA Team has started to work on preparations for FRA 2020 with a meeting of the FRA Advisory Group that was held during the XIV World Forestry Congress, where key issues like definitions and variables were discussed. In the framework of the FRA Long-Term Strategy, FRA 2020 will emphasize, among others, continuous improvement, a focus on forest resources and capacity building. Capacity building work is beginning in November 2015 and will continue through most of the FRA 2020 cycle.*