



International Day of Forests

Inspire for the future:

The Role of Forests in Ensuring
Sustainable Production and
Consumption

Key Messages of the High-level event in celebration of the International Day of Forests 2022



The forest sector contributes significantly to Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption) and related SDGs, acknowledging that trade-offs between ecology and economy are required to achieve goals related to climate, biodiversity and land degradation.



Renewable forest products hold vast potential to contribute to the transition toward carbon-neutral societies and build inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies.



Cities and communities are engines of innovation and provide new sustainable solutions and options to promote resource efficiency, opening opportunities to attract new capital and investments.



Local forest-based value chains support inclusive economic development and can be further strengthened by building trust and dialogue between stakeholders along the value chains and policymakers.

The contribution of forests to the well-being of people and nature

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offers a framework in which forests can contribute to greener, more inclusive economies and stronger, more resilient societies.

The theme of the International Day of Forests (IDF) 2022 was Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption. This theme is closely linked to the SDG framework, particularly SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). To mark the day, a high-level event titled “Inspire for the future – the role of forests in ensuring sustainable production and consumption” was organized at Expo 2020 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 21 March 2022 to discuss the contributions of forests to the well-being of people and nature worldwide.

Both the theme of IDF and the event’s title reflect the need to find new and viable solutions to increase the contribution of forests, forest goods and services to the well-being of people and nature around the world. They underline the need to strengthen the sustainable management of forests and promote the efficient and sustainable use of forest products and renewable resources to replace fossil fuels and less sustainable materials.

Informed by four guiding themes – Sustainable Lifestyles, Responsible Cities and Communities, Responsible Forest Ecosystem Services, and Responsible Industries – speakers and panelists shared their perspectives and insights on a range of global trends and inspiring local examples. These included the role of forests in ensuring planetary health and human well-being, environmental degradation associated with economic development and social progress, responsible consumption, technical innovation and resource efficiency for sustainable production, and the importance of global cooperation to address relevant concerns towards building a sustainable future.

All stakeholders are called upon to help identify and implement innovative pathways to upscale the contribution of forests to a more sustainable future.

Achieving the SDGs needs fundamental changes

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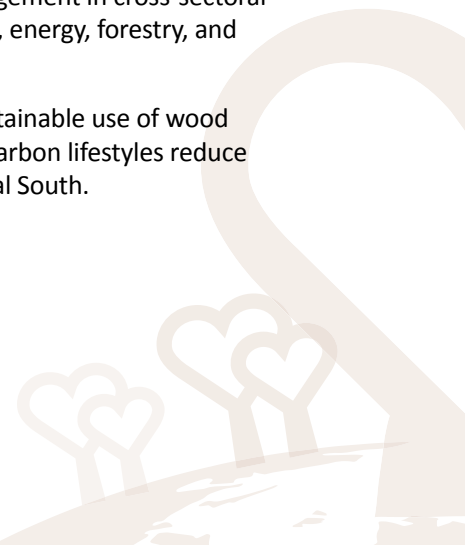
- Multi-lateral and cross-sectoral collaboration and innovative education can further advance progress to support the achievements of the SDGs. The forest sector contributes to SDG 12, as well as SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), but it cannot do this alone. Multi-lateral and cross-sectoral collaboration and innovative education are required to ensure impact at scale.
- The success of collective efforts in the forest sector depends critically on coordination and support actions with other land use sectors and at multiple governance levels, highlighting the importance of other SDGs, such as biodiversity, energy, sustainable land management, food security and poverty alleviation.
- It is crucial to align policies, including legal and financial incentives (and disincentives), to facilitate rather than obstruct efforts to address the direct drivers of forest loss and to promote self-sustaining land management and resilient land use systems following the principle of a circular bioeconomy.
- Policy environments should consider local conditions more holistically, including land tenure and land use systems, and engage all stakeholders, especially local communities, by taking a landscape approach and developing innovative educational tools adapted to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Given the envisaged expansion of the forest sector to satisfy the growing demand for forest products and the increased need for a skilled and competent workforce, forestry education and research should be aligned to the transformations happening in society. It is important to communicate sustainable consumption and production to consumers and producers, including youth, by showing successful examples of emerging green job opportunities.
- The value of forests can be increased beyond its conservation value by factoring in biological diversity and other multi-purpose values, including subsistence and commercial uses, into the economic calculus. The successful integration of biodiversity and other goals requires certain trade-offs.

Renewable forest products hold a vast potential to contribute to the transition toward carbon-neutral societies and build inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies.

- The inequality in lifestyles between rich and poor people needs to be accounted for, especially considering the diverging levels of per capita emissions from consumption and their compatibility with the 1.5°C Paris Agreement.
- Policies and incentives must be implemented to change the lifestyles of those with high impacts on carbon emissions while allowing space for people with lower impacts to improve their livelihoods.
- Through awareness raising and empowerment, consumers can be incentivized to make responsible choices and promote sustainable consumption.
- Sustainable consumption must be made affordable. Since resource scarcity has become a global trend, there is a need for more resource efficiency, for example, by reusing, reducing, recycling, refurbishing, and repairing products, as well as improving residual management and ensuring sustainable local sourcing. Undoubtedly, recycling agendas involve enormous uncaptured possibilities to reduce material footprints.
- Consumers, especially youth, increasingly care about the environmental impact of their purchases and lifestyles. Industries are also seeking to find sustainable alternative materials for their products. The new UN Global Plastics Treaty, addressing plastic pollution, has increased the interest in responsibly sourced wood products as a sustainable environmental solution. Thus, mechanisms should be put in place to provide transparent evidence to the consumers that materials derived from trees and forests have been sustainably sourced.
- It is important to show consumers the vast potential of renewable forest products by changing the value proposition of forests. Education, introduction to nature, and communication about the importance of sustainability are key elements and should especially target youth for inspiration.

Cities and communities are engines of innovation and provide new sustainable solutions and options to promote resource efficiency, opening opportunities to attract new capital and investments.

- Cities can be made greener by using trees, forest products and services that improve urban environments, strengthen urban-rural linkages, and increase the resilience of urban systems.
- Green cities and communities provide new opportunities for resource efficiency and sustainable solutions in an increasingly urban world, helping to reduce the detrimental environmental impact of urbanization globally. Urban forests lower temperature gains, protect biodiversity, promote agroforestry, preserve culturally significant landscapes and encourage community engagement.
- Urban communities and cities should be seen as a part of the conversation with nature and not as separate from nature, influencing policies on issues such as urban greening, health, climate change, food security and building materials in architecture.
- The demographic dividends require new partnerships in terms of land use management in cross-sectoral collaborations, for example, between architecture and building, land-use, health, energy, forestry, and governing sectors.
- These collaborations open opportunities to attract capital that promotes the sustainable use of wood while connecting cities, nature and sustainable landscapes. Investments in low-carbon lifestyles reduce our material footprint and create green job opportunities, especially in the Global South.



Local forest-based value chains support inclusive economic development and can be further strengthened by building trust and dialogue between stakeholders along the value chains and policymakers.

- New business models for the private sector – especially for small-scale forest owners and producers – can make sustainable production more affordable.
- In addition to carbon footprint, there is growing dialogue on the nature footprint of businesses. The New Deal for Nature calls for a global coalition, similar to the global coalition on climate change, to combat nature loss and halve the negative ecological impacts of production and consumption.
- Demographic dividends point to an increased focus on responsible forest ecosystem services. We can increase the value of forests by including conservation value, among others, and factor in biological diversity and other multi-purpose values into the economic calculus.
- An adequate mix of regulations and mechanisms that incentivize sustainable investment and practices and a reduction of overregulation is needed to address local conditions to make wood products less costly and more competitive. Important examples are micro credits and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) systems. Forest certification programs must be economically feasible and accessible for small-scale forest owners to ensure widespread uptake and compliance.
- Local value chains should be strengthened to support inclusive economic outcomes based on trust and dialogue between local stakeholders along the value chains and policymakers. More research and knowledge exchange are required between developed and developing countries to find locally adapted markets and policy solutions. Business models should focus on climate-smart capital built on affordable local production and trust between stakeholders.

About the event

The main IDF event on 21 March 2022 was titled “Inspire for the future – the role of forests in ensuring sustainable production and consumption” and was co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and the IUFRO World Congress 2024 | Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). It was hosted by the Swedish Pavilion at EXPO 2020 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The three-hour event titled “Inspire for the future – the role of forests in ensuring sustainable production and consumption” consisted of a high-level dialogue, a keynote speech, and a panel discussion. It offered physical participation in Dubai, virtual participation online, and real-time webcasting to the public with translation into the six official languages of the United Nations. Around 1 000 participants joined the hybrid event, most of them online.



In 2012 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests (IDF) to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests for planetary health and human well-being. After an inaugural event in 2013 the IDF has been celebrated worldwide at local, national and international levels. From 2014-2021 eight themes were covered, including climate change, water, energy, sustainable cities, education, biodiversity, and restoration in relation to forests.

For more information, please visit:

www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/live-event/



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