



FACTS & FIGURES



Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and Limitations

A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

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The Global Forest Expert Panel (GFEP) on Forests and Poverty assembles 21 Panel Members from 10 countries and 5 continents. They were supported by 22 additional experts, making a total of 43 authors, 22 female and 21 male. The report underwent a thorough peer-review process by 11 reviewers.

POVERTY

“End poverty in all its forms everywhere” is the first of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed upon by 193 Member States of the United Nations in 2015.

Multidimensional definitions of poverty understand it as a state of deprivation or disadvantage that prevents an individual or group from attaining a certain level of well-being and participating fully in society.

Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than USD 1.90 per day (approximately 736 million people in 2015). Globally, 1 out of every 10 people lives in extreme poverty.

2/3 of the world's population live on less than USD 10 per day.

FORESTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

SDG 15 aims to “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”.

Currently, forests cover 31% of the global land area, i.e. an area of 4.06 billion hectares. (Source *State of the World's Forests 2020*)

Over the last 8,000 years, about half of the forests on the planet were cleared by human activities.

Although the rate of deforestation has slowed in the decade since 2010, the net deforestation has increased across much of the tropics, leading to a net reduction in tree cover of 8% (-95,000 km²) in the tropical dry forest and 2% (-84,000 km²) in the tropical moist deciduous forest biomes since 1982.

Most tropical deforestation and associated biodiversity loss in recent decades have been driven by well-resourced farming, ranching and logging, as well as international agricultural corporations meeting consumer culture and market demands for timber, soy, beef and palm oil.

14 of the 18 categories of contributions that nature makes to human well-being, identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), have declined over the past three decades.

A recent study found, not 1 out of 150 countries was able to meet the basic needs for its citizens at a globally sustainable level of resource use.

An estimated USD 70-160 billion annually is needed to achieving sustainable management of the world's forests. However, since 2014, only USD 7 billion in international aid has been allocated to forest-related projects.

ECONOMY AND RIGHTS

The global forest sector contributes at least USD 539 billion directly to the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The total contribution (accounting for direct, indirect and induced effects) accounts for some USD 1.2 trillion. These figures are likely significant underestimates.

In tropical countries, forests contribute an average of 22% of household income in communities near forests.

Indigenous peoples and local communities have legally recognized rights to an estimated 15.3% of the world's forests.

Globally, forest crimes were estimated to a total of USD 30-100 billion per year, or 10-30% of the global timber trade.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORESTS, TREES & POVERTY



The relationship between forests, trees and poverty is dynamic – spatially, temporally and contextually.

Governmental policies to alleviate poverty tend to focus on agriculture, infrastructure, and cash transfers, while neglecting the roles of forests.

Worldwide, more than a billion people derive direct and indirect benefits from forests. Many of these forest-reliant people live below the international poverty line.

Forests and trees outside forests can help people move out of poverty by providing a range of goods and services that directly or indirectly enable households to earn income.

Forests support well-being because they provide subsistence goods, improve food security, offer cultural and spiritual goods and services, formalize rights and strengthen democratic processes.

Many rural populations living in or around forested areas rely to varying degrees on the harvesting of wild foods to help meet their dietary needs.

The presence of trees and forests in agricultural landscapes showed an overall positive or neutral effect on crop yields in 52% of the case studies in a pan-tropical review.

Forests can play a critical role in risk management and coping with shocks by providing a safety net or 'natural insurance' function and through serving as seasonal gap fillers.

Forests and trees help the poor manage risk by providing a means to smooth consumption and income across seasons and years, effectively offering insurance in the form of forest products.

Forests also help reduce the vulnerability of households to climate change.

Forests symbolize cultural cohesion in a rapidly changing environment and, hence, cultural integrity.

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) is a world-wide organization devoted to forest research and related sciences. Its members are research institutions, universities, and individual scientists as well as decision-making authorities and other stakeholders with a focus on forests and trees: <https://www.iufro.org/>

The IUFRO-led Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) initiative <https://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/gfep-initiative/> of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) <http://www.cpfweb.org/en/> established the Expert Panel on "Forests and Poverty" with the aim to provide a comprehensive global assessment of scientific information on the relationship of forests and trees on the one hand, and poverty eradication on the other hand, and to prepare a report to inform relevant policy decision-makers.

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