

# **The Impacts of the Sustainable Development Goals on Forests and People – Conclusions and the Way Forward**

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# 1 Forests play a key role in sustainable development – but the forest - people relationship is complex

- Forests – one of three major life supporting ecosystems
  - Forest – people interface: an ongoing co-evolution process (forest transition)
  - People are not people – winners and losers of forest transition (at different scales and across generations)
- Political nature of governing the forest people interface

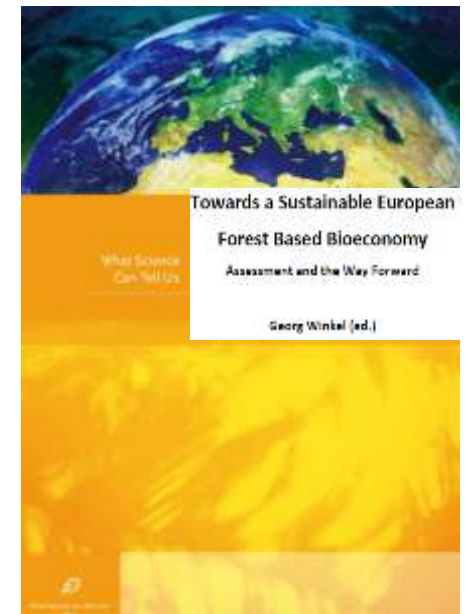
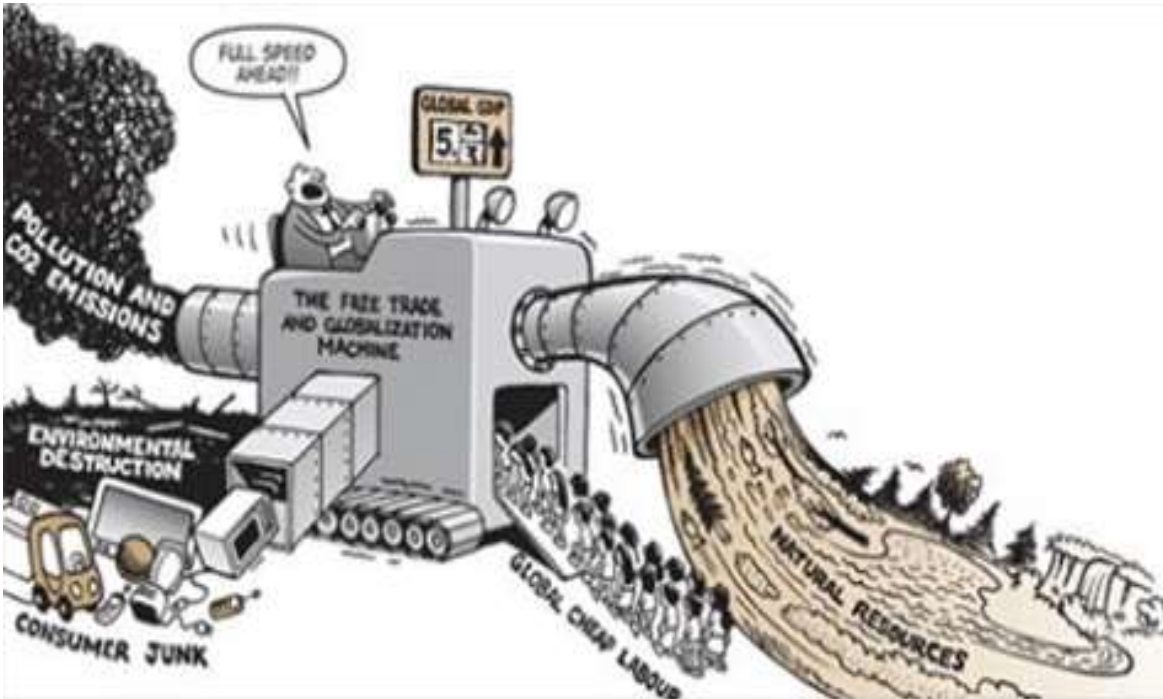


Source: Gregersen (2013)



## 2 The SDGs include partially conflicting visions for forests and people: dealing with trade-offs is unavoidable

- SDGs: a compilation of distinct development paradigms (with potential trade-offs)
- Fundamental question: economic growth as solution or problem?
  - Trade offs need assessment and priority setting



### 3 The SDGs impacts on forests and people are context dependent and diverse

- Impact of SDGs – depend on implementation channels in respective context
  - Distinct forest related phases in forest transition and development trajectories may determine impact
  - “Rich forests, poor people” – possible to go alternative forest transition pathways?
- Global interdependencies matter – they provide leverage points for “shared responsibility”

## 4 There are fundamental values and principles that may guide sustainable development related to forests and people

SDGs provide fundamental values/principles for decision making

1. Basic values: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships – also for forest dependent people
  2. Forest specific considerations: irreplaceability, intergenerational responsibility
  3. Procedural guidelines: “good governance” – transparency, inclusiveness
- Boundaries for development and principles how to maneuver within them

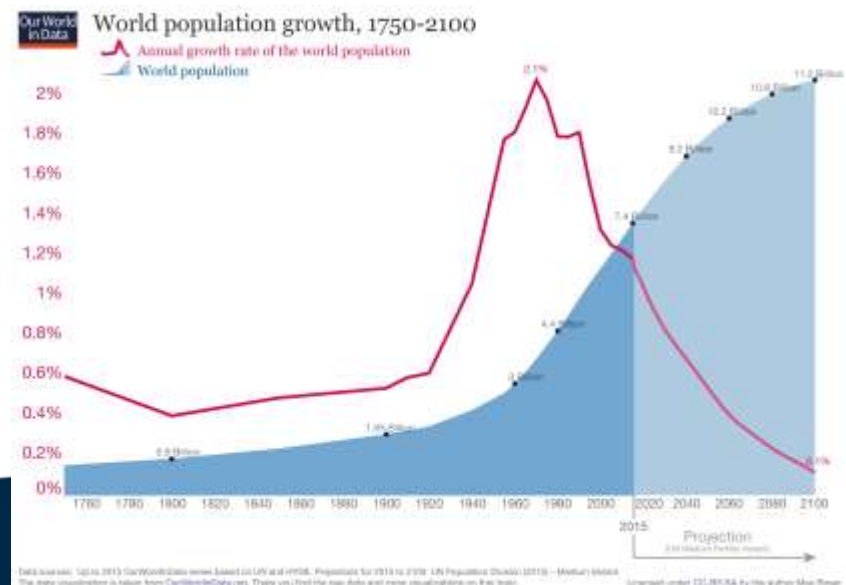


# 5 Sustainable development at the forest–people interface depends on sustainable development at large scale

- Forest-people interface is largely driven by “mega-factors”
  - Population growth, economic growth & consumption, investment, climate change, governance (failures) → cross sectoral linkages are critical
    - Research needs to tackle those: e.g. financing, trade, livelihoods and related policies
    - Full accounting of forest ecosystem services and related value chains → enable and diversify forest related development



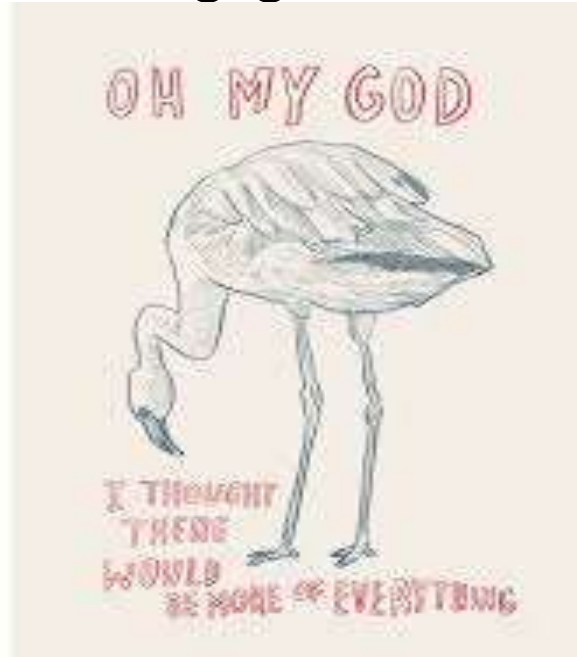
Source:  
<https://sincereforests.eu/>



Source:  
<https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-growth>

## 6 The planet is changing rapidly – Sustainable development will require learning and adaptation of targets and their implementation

- SDGs – a potpourri of development paradigms at a certain time
- Change is unavoidable - learning and adaptation needed
- Critical role of research: provide information on social, ecological and economic change – but also need to engage with society



## Final Remarks...and the way forward

1. Forests are essential for sustainable development – but forest & people is not the same
2. The SDGs could have different impacts on forests and people depending on context
3. Facing our own growing needs – use forests sustainably is best to conserve them
4. Essential need to consider the full spectrum of ecosystem services forests provide
5. Trade-offs need to be made transparent
6. Invest in the human part of the forest-people interface – “informed optimism”
7. Invest in global collaboration and understanding in science and policy







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## Read more

Winkel, G.; Galloway, G.; Colfer, C.; De Jong, W.; Katila, P.; Pacheco, P. (2020): The Impacts of the Sustainable Development Goals on Forests and People. Conclusions and the Way Forward. *Cambridge University Press* (in print).

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