

How Forests can End Global Hunger

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Forests and forestry are essential to achieve global food security as the limits of boosting agricultural production are becoming increasingly clear, a new study published today reveals.

The findings are included in the most comprehensive scientific analysis to date on the relationship among forests, food and nutrition launched today in New York at a side event of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

The new report released by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), the world's largest network of forest scientists, also underlines the need for the most vulnerable groups of society to have secure access to forest foods.

More than 60 renowned scientists from around the world collaborated on the peer-reviewed publication "Forests, Trees and Landscapes for Food Security and Nutrition. A Global Assessment Report", which was coordinated by IUFRO on behalf of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

"This report reminds us of the vital role of forests in building food security. It makes a convincing case for multi-functional and integrated landscape approaches and calls for community level engagement to re-imagine forestry and agriculture systems", says Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

"Large-scale crop production is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events, which may occur more frequently under climate change. Science shows that tree-based farming can adapt far better to such calamities." says Christoph Wildburger,

the coordinator of IUFRO's Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) initiative. "We know that forests already play a key role in mitigating the effects of climate change. This report makes it very clear that they also play a key role in alleviating hunger and improving nutrition."

"Forest foods often provide a safety net during periods of food shortages," says Bhaskar Vira, University of Cambridge, and the chair of the Global Forest Expert Panel on Forests and Food Security, which compiled the report. "In the study, we reveal impressive examples which show how forests and trees can complement agricultural production and contribute to the income of local people, especially in the most vulnerable regions of the world."

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