

Rate of global forest loss halved: UN report

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The rate at which the world is losing its forests has been halved. (TOI photo)

DURBAN: The rate at which the world is losing its forests has been halved, but an area of woodland the size of South Africa has still been lost since 1990, a major UN report said on Monday. Improvement has been seen around the globe, even in the key tropical rainforests of South America and Africa, according to a surprisingly upbeat Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), which is released every five years. READ ALSO: Severe wildfires threatening world's temperate forests Despite the good news, it points out that since 1990, the world had lost forests covering some 129 million hectares - an area the size of South Africa. "Even though, globally, the extent of the world's forest continues to decline ... the rate of net forest loss has been cut by over 50 per cent," said the report by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The assessment was released at the World Forestry Congress in the South African port city of Durban, host to the 14th edition of the conference. READ ALSO: Dense forests mowed down and new, sparse cover can't hold the soil "FRA 2015 shows a very encouraging tendency towards a reduction in the rates of deforestation and carbon emissions from forests and increases in capacity for

sustainable forest management," said FAO director-general Jose Graziano da Silva. "The direction of change is positive, with many impressive examples of progress in all regions of the world. "However this positive trend needs to be strengthened, especially in the countries that are lagging behind," he said.

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