



# Sustainable tropical forestry for advancing the SDGs

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INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION (ITTO)

# We are living unprecedented times ...



- Armed conflicts
- Extreme weather events
  - ecosystems degradation
- Recovery from a global pandemic
- Disrupted supply chains
- Inflation



Higher awareness of the need for sustainable development.



# What is sustainable development?



- It is a principle for meeting human development goals while sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services on which the economy and society depend.
- The desired result is a society where living conditions and resources are used to continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity and stability of the natural system.
- Sustainable development was first institutionalized with the Rio Process initiated at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.



# In summary ...



“Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.\*

\* 1987 [Brundtland Report](#)

# Examples of recent international commitments on sustainability



- The UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
- The G7 Ministers responsible for Climate, Energy and the Environment.
- The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use (November 2021).
- The Paris Agreement.
- The UN Forum on Forests.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The Global Environment Facility.
- The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.



# The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- World leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs at a historic UN conference in September 2015.
- The SDGs are a call for action to:
  - promote prosperity while protecting the planet,
  - recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies to build economic growth, address social needs, tackle climate change and preserve the environment.



# Tropical forests—vital for planetary wellbeing



- Forests cover **31% of the planet's land surface**, and are among the world's most productive land-based ecosystems:
  - Conserve soil and water
  - Filter the air we breathe, mitigates climate
  - Prevent land degradation and desertification
  - Host terrestrial biodiversity
  - Reduce the risk of floods, landslides, droughts and other disasters, among others
- Around **1.6 billion people** depend on forests for their subsistence.
- **Tropical forests represent 45%** of all forests (1.84 billion ha —22% in Latin America, 16% in Africa and 7% in South and Southeast Asia).
- **Over 70%** of global population in **extreme poverty** live in **the tropics**.
- Recent IMF Report—economic imbalance globally sees 95 million living in acute poverty today.



# What is sustainable tropical forestry?



“The process of managing forest to achieve one or more clearly specified objectives of management with regard to the production of a continuous flow of desired forest products and services without undue reduction of its inherent values and future productivity and without undue undesirable effects on the physical and social environment”:

- Continuously satisfying needs for goods and environmental services from forests.
- Ensuring the conservation of forest soils, water and carbon stocks.
- Conserving biodiversity.
- Maintaining the resilience and renewal capacity of forests, including for carbon storage.
- Supporting the food-security, cultural and livelihood needs of forest-dependent communities.
- Ensuring the equitable sharing of responsibilities in forest management and of the benefits arising from forest use.

(ITTO definition)



# Benefits of sustainable tropical forestry



- The sustainable harvesting, processing and trade of tropical timber and other forest products:
  - Supplies residential and commercial consumers worldwide,
  - Contributes to local and national economies, and
  - **Enhances value to tropical forests**—a key factor in **reducing forest conversion to other economic land uses**.
- When sustainably managed, tropical forests are:
  - **Healthy, productive** and **renewable** ecosystems.
  - Contribute to nature-based solutions.
  - The sustainable management of forests is of critical importance for most SDGs, in particular:



# Despite their importance deforestation and forest degradation continue ...



- The world lost an estimated 10 million hectares of forest (the size of the Republic of Korea) per year between 2015 and 2020.
- Most deforestation occurs in the tropics:
  - Competing land uses that produce higher/more rapid financial returns (agriculture, energy, mining and infrastructure).
  - Failure of market policies (don't reflect the full value of forests).
  - Illegal logging, fragmentation, woodfuel collection.
  - Climate change.

# Is tropical forestry misunderstood?



- Forest-based enterprises and international timber trade add value to tropical forests and can contribute significantly to sustainable economies and livelihoods.
- The share of tropical wood in major markets is affected by the negative environmental image of tropical wood and by its substitution by non-tropical wood and non-renewable materials (plastics, non-wood laminates, concrete and metals).
- Consumer markets are overlooking the significant benefits of tropical timber as a renewable, environmentally friendly resource —nature-base solution.

# ITTO's mission



- Promote the sustainable management and conservation of tropical forests.
- Promote the expansion and diversification of trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests.

ITTO—THE SOLE inter-governmental organization focused entirely on tropical forest resources.

ITTO members cover over 80% of global tropical forests and account for 90% of trade in tropical forest products!



# Sustainable tropical forestry, key for meeting future demand and the SDGs



- The world population projected to reach 9.7 billion people by 2050, competition for land will intensify:
  - More demand for forest products and ecosystem services.
- The sustainable management of tropical forests, and a sustainable tropical timber trade, can help in meeting future wood demand and achieving the SDGs.



# Legal and sustainable supply chains, a key element for sustainable development



## Legal and sustainable supply chains:

- Promote the use of wood as the most environmentally friendly material of choice.
- Pursue economic growth.
- Address social needs.
- Advance environmental awareness.
- Tackle climate change.
- Advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its associated SDGs.
- Provide nature-based solutions (as illustrated in the examples that follow).



# Importance of sustainably managed and use native trees



- An ITTO project in Sulawesi, Indonesia, increased awareness among farmers of the benefits of a sustainable wood supply using planted native trees.
- Cempaka, native to North Sulawesi, Indonesia, has been used widely since the 18th century in the construction of traditional wooden houses:
  - Its popularity led to overharvesting and scarcity.
- The project increased the sustainable supply of plantation-grown cempaka in three regencies, documented silvicultural techniques, developed 18 hectares of demonstration plots and built local capacity.
- The project demonstrated to farmers that growing trees can provide them direct benefits:
  - supporting local industries and
  - improving the environment.
- It's a functioning example of ITTO's approach to tropical forest conservation and sustainable use aimed at producing positive outcomes for people and the environment.

# Promoting teak sustainable supply chains in the Greater Mekong



- The first phase of the ITTO project was recently completed. The project contributed to:
  - The conservation of natural teak forests and their gene pools.
  - Increased incomes for forest communities and smallholders.
  - Improved wood processing and marketing; and
  - Enhanced regional collaboration and coordination in teak management.
- Implemented in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.
- Project publication "*Teak in the Mekong for a Sustainable Future*":
  - Presents best practices for planting, managing, harvesting and processing teak and demonstrating legality and sustainability along supply chains.

[www.itto.int/news/2022/09/07/itto\\_launches\\_new\\_book\\_on\\_teak\\_in\\_the\\_mekong/](http://www.itto.int/news/2022/09/07/itto_launches_new_book_on_teak_in_the_mekong/)

*Phase II to commence soon*



# Timber tracking, assisting with proof of legality



- Many consuming markets are tightening their requirements for importing tropical timber.
- Timber tracking advances sustainable forestry and solutions by:
  - Strengthening the capacity of forest companies to control their flows of timber;
  - Improving efficiency across the supply chain;
  - Facilitating the monitoring and control of forest products by the authorities and combatting illegal logging;
  - Improving forest governance; and
  - Assuring the legality and sustainability of harvested timber.
- ITTO projects have established timber tracking systems in:
  - Cameroon,
  - Ecuador,
  - Guatemala,
  - Panama,
  - Philippines.

*Recently a project in Guatemala released an app to calculate log volumes requiring only photographs and a few simple measurements. See: [www.itto.int/news/2023/06/09/itto\\_project\\_releases\\_app\\_for\\_calculating\\_timber\\_volumes\\_in\\_products\\_using\\_smartphones](http://www.itto.int/news/2023/06/09/itto_project_releases_app_for_calculating_timber_volumes_in_products_using_smartphones)*



# Mangrove restoration, livelihoods and empowered women in Fiji—advancing SDGs

- Fiji has the third-largest area of mangroves in the Pacific, and communities depend on them for their subsistence—**resilience**.
- An ITTO project completed in 2022: supported local communities and Fiji's government in restoring mangroves in the Rewa Delta (a poor area affected by climate change—sea level rising).
- The project established sites for mangrove restoration and rehabilitation (including nurseries):
  - E.g., the Nasilai women's group planted 5000 mangrove seedlings along the foreshore.
- Empowered communities and stakeholders, improved decision-making on mangroves:
  - Some communities banned the cutting of mangroves and women's involvement improved food security—**resilience**.
- Developed guidelines on mangrove use and management.
- Raise awareness of the importance of mangroves.
- Introduced **alternative livelihoods** which are benefiting households:
  - Apiaries (beehives),
  - Brackish water shrimp farming,
  - Fruit tree planting,
  - Piggery farms, etc.

The sustainable use of mangroves involving local communities is an effective management resource approach that **benefits people, the economy and the environment—inclusiveness**.

Watch videos and more: [www.itto.int/project/id/PD696\\_13-Rev.2-F](http://www.itto.int/project/id/PD696_13-Rev.2-F).



# Nature-based solutions: FLR, agroforestry and charcoal (Côte d'Ivoire and Togo)



- ITTO supported the charcoal business ventures of women in [Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Togo](#) to reconcile the short-term subsistence needs (food and woodfuel) with the medium- to long-term need to rehabilitate the forest:
  - women realized that the viability of charcoal production requires SFM—efforts to reforest and ensure the availability of the forest resource.
  - forests restored in the Ahua gazette forest (Côte d'Ivoire) and in Blitta and Lakes prefectures (Togo).
  - training provided in seedling production, nursery establishment, forest plantation establishment and maintenance, and agroforestry.
  - thanks to ITTO interventions in Côte d'Ivoire, MALEBI (a women's association) improved its charcoal production using metal furnaces and efficient, eco-friendly techniques. In Togo women have increased income through agroforestry while restored forests grow for charcoal production.
- High potential for replication and for piloting decarbonized charcoal—more support is needed!

# Educating forester's next generation for nature-based solutions



- ITTO released a new training module on legal and sustainable supply chains tailored for the Congo Basin. It covers:
  - Understanding “zero deforestation”;
  - Assessing legality and achieving accountability;
  - From legality to sustainability and
  - Markets and market access.
- It aims at expanding market access for tropical timber produced in the subregion and increasing the contributions of the sector to sustainable development, climate-change mitigation and other challenges.

Available at:

[www.itto.int/resources/learning-materials](http://www.itto.int/resources/learning-materials).

# LLSC online course—an ITTO contribution on global forest education

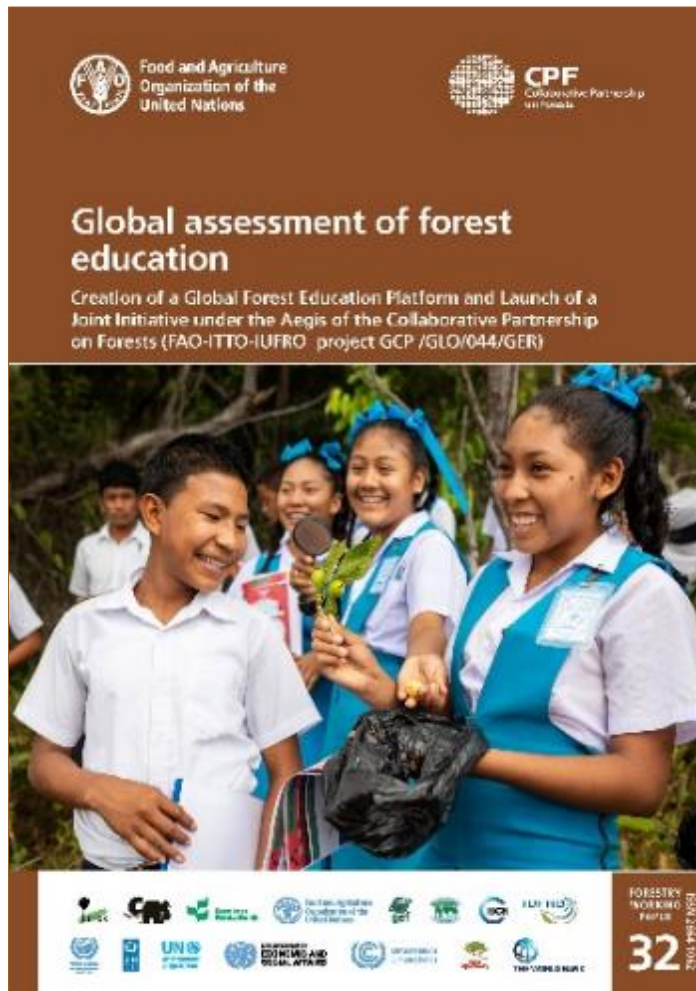


<https://lsscource.com/>

- ITTO June 2021—launched a free online learning course on legal, sustainable timber supply chains (LSSC).
- **INCLUSIVE**—open to all—CONNECTS with resilience of tropical forest ecosystems.
- Four modules:
  - Sustainable forest management, reduced impact logging and forest landscape restoration,
  - Timber legality assessment,
  - Meeting legality requirements for ensuring sustainable outcomes, and
  - Marketing for expanding, maintaining and forest businesses.
- The course highlights sustainable use of forest resources—**ESSENTIAL** for protecting biodiversity and maximizing the contributions of forests as nature-based solutions to climate change.
- Raising awareness of sustainable production and consumption—shared responsibility of ALL stakeholders.



# Forest education beyond foresters—much needed for building nature-based solutions



- ITTO and partners—global assessment on forest education, completed in October 2022:
  - Forest education is essential for safeguarding natural resources.
  - The assessment addresses education and training related to forests, trees outside forests and other wooded land and covers all levels of formal education: primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and training, universities and colleges.
  - There’s an urgent need for well-trained forest workers, entrepreneurs, practitioners, researchers, professionals and policymakers and a well-informed public to maximize the contribution of forests to the SDGs.
  - Forest education should:
    - be locally relevant
    - be inclusive/accessible and
    - take into account digital divides, language barriers and gender and racial/ethnic balance.
- Uptake forest education—key role for governments, universities and educational institutions.

Download the report at [www.itto.int/other\\_technical\\_reports](http://www.itto.int/other_technical_reports).

# Sustainable forestry and sustainable wood touches almost all SDGs



Andrea Stocchero, Nov 2017

[www.fao.org/forestry/sustainable-wood/en](http://www.fao.org/forestry/sustainable-wood/en)

# Moving forward: key elements



- The sustainable management of tropical forests, forest-based enterprises and international tropical timber trade **add value to tropical forests and contributing to most SDGs** by improving economies and livelihoods.
- Tropical forest and wood products **sequester and store carbon**, thus helping mitigate climate change.
- **Further investments** in sustainable tropical forestry and forest enterprises are needed for promoting **nature-based solutions** that produce positive outcomes for people and the environment in a circular bioeconomy.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement, gender parity and cross-sectoral collaboration are critical.
- Forest education needs widen beyond the forestry sector.



# Thank you for your attention!



LSSC online course



ITTO Policy Series



ITTO Technical Series



Other reports



<http://www.youtube.com/user/ittosfm>



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