



Forests are Key to Ending Malnutrition & Hunger But UN Members Would Allow 10 More Years of Deforestation!!

Forests can reduce, end global hunger, according to the new report launched on 6th May, 2015 during the United Nations Forum on Forests in New York. It is a bold claim, and [the report](#), published by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), doesn't shy away from the enormity of the problem it seeks to address.

Some 805 million people — one in nine citizens of Earth — are undernourished, primarily in Africa and Asia. At the same time, between 1.2 and 1.5 billion people worldwide depend on forests for all or most of their diet and livelihood, according to the report. This suggests that if countries with big forest-dependent populations adopt national policies and land-use strategies that support the planting of multi-functional trees to provide food, timber, fuel wood, medicine, and a host of environmental services, they could do much to ensure access to safe, nutritious food for all. Agro-forestry, like agro-ecology, is important to achieving UN Secretary General's Zero Hunger Challenge!

But in an ironic twist, the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) negotiation co-facilitators, David Donoghue of Ireland and Macharia Kamau of Kenya released the revised SDGs' targets a day later, on 7th May, 2015, where **the Goal 15¹, target 2², has been diluted and the cut-off year for total halt on deforestation has been increased from 2020 to 2030!**

They have rationalised it as in coherence with the Aichi targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This doesn't hold since Aichi targets are holistically committed to achieving bio-diversity goals with restoration of the accompanying eco-system by 2020!

Centre for International Forestry Research, CIFOR, the apex institute dedicated to global forestry research, acknowledges deforestation as the global issue, high on the political agenda. It leads to questions of land use planning and landscape management, and what the overall return for new agricultural land might be. Global deforestation is at 13 Million hectares/year, which amounts to 0.41 hectares/second. Juxtapose that with the fact that planted forests account for only 7% of all forests but they are key to sustainable landscapes and sustainable provision of bio-based products. But planted forests can not achieve the bio-diversity of original forests and **the current pace of plantation at 3.4 million hectares per year, is still about 1/4th the deforestation pace.**

We at the Global Call to Action against Poverty, GCAP, the pro-justice, anti-poverty, southern-led global campaign, are concerned with this 10 years' reprieve and the havoc it will wreak on the lives and livelihoods of first nations, the fragile ecosystems and the global warming such deforestation will fuel. The adverse impact on food and nutrition security and sovereignty is another concern! Hence **we, along with the people's movements, the grassroots movements and global coalitions, call on the country-governments, negotiating the SDGs, the co-facilitators to stick to the cut-off year of 2020 for the total halt on global deforestation!**

¹ Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

² By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and increase afforestation and reforestation by [x] per cent globally

We need to recognise the planetary boundaries and make life-style choices, which are not dependent on ravaging our forests. In our [Justice for 2015](#) campaign manifesto, we recognise the challenge of deforestation is not just about forests, but, about climate justice, equity, lives and sovereignty of some of the most displaced and discriminated against communities, i.e. the first nations and eliminating poverty. It is also about **bringing an end to the hedonistic life of some that is pushing the future of all to brink.**

We need our forests for our future and we need the UN and country governments and their negotiators to recognise that and commit to a total halt to deforestation by 2020!!

Marta Benavides, Amitabh Behar, Richard Ssewakiryanga
GCAP Co-Chairs