

DIGITAL EVENT

2 September 2021

FOOD. NATURE. PEOPLE.

How to build thriving, sustainable food systems



#FoodNaturePeople

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A CIFOR-ICRAF event with the Global Landscapes Forum. Supported by the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry.



Global
Landscapes
Forum




RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Forests, Trees and
Agroforestry

Key messages


- An alternative, nature-positive form of agriculture and land management is not only possible, it is already being practiced at scale. It is supported by evidence as well as practical demonstrations of how to adapt, contextualize and invest in scaling up successful solutions.
 - Now is the time for wholesale, transformative change so that we can effectively confront and combat the impending crises, support smallholder farmers, and secure the future of farming and forest landscapes for everyone.
 - Land stewardship and the stewardship economy, and duty of care are critically important and must be supported. The *Food Nature People* event showed that a stewardship approach is more effective, with better results than in landscapes where those in control haven't exercised their duty of care.
- The consequences of that can be witnessed in the scale of devastation following the recent floods and forest fires in many parts of the globe.
- The *Food Nature People* event brought together people who are actually moving/transforming at scale, taking actions and not merely talking about acting.
 - Science is back in the forefront of respected approaches, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Food Nature People* event showcased evidence that is actionable while speakers discussed what they are doing to make certain that evidence is acted upon.

 **21**
speakers

 More than
11,000
web views

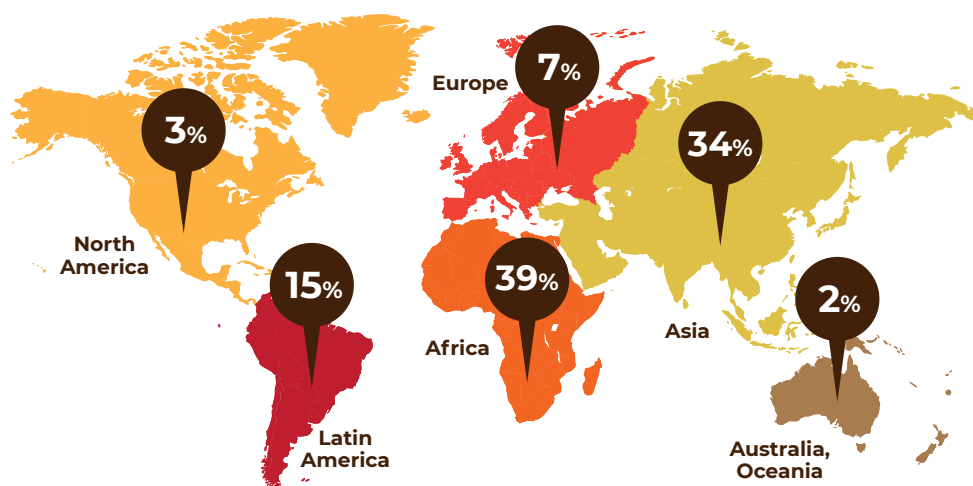
 More than
3,500
viewers

 **1.9** MILLION
reached on social media

 More than
200
questions

 Women **540**  Men **645**

 **139**
countries



On 2 September 2021, a wide range of speakers shared their knowledge and experiences during the digital event that drew more than 4,200 participants and reached another 1.9 million people on social media. Organized by CIFOR-ICRAF with the Global Landscapes Forum and supported by the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry, the event highlighted the interconnectedness of the world's ecosystems.

The Forest is our home, our supermarket

Vania Olmos Lau, a biologist with German development agency GIZ, opened the event from Mexico City with a statistical perspective, noting that between 2000 and 2010, commercial and subsistence agriculture comprised almost three-quarters of tropical forest loss. Meanwhile, 26 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions are from food production, while 30 percent of food is lost or wasted, she said.

"Clearly, something needs to change in our food system," said Lau.

"We must preserve, conserve, and manage our environment in a sustainable manner with innovative techniques to increase food production in the imminent to long-term," said James Marape, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Minister for Bougainville Affairs and Minister of Defence. The Prime Minister discussed the example of Papua New Guinea and the country's long term plan to harness the agricultural sector to make it the "food bowl of Asia" and neighbouring region.

Keynote speaker Jewel H. Bronaugh, deputy secretary of U.S. Department of Agriculture, emphasized the importance of encouraging youth in work to transform agriculture, forests and land management in the face of multiple global challenges.

Rajiv Kumar, vice chairman of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, highlighted examples of agro-ecological transitions in India. "Real change can be brought about only through changing behaviors on the ground," said Kumar. Such change will help draw more young people to land-based livelihoods, which will have long-term impacts, he added.



By bringing some of our best minds together, we can work to find practical solutions to address climate change, diversity and make our food systems more equitable



Dr Jewel H. Bronaugh
Deputy Secretary of USDA,
United States of America



Nature-positive breakthroughs will attract youth back to agriculture; it will bring excitement back and be seen as a practice which helps our planet and helps prevent further climate damage.



Dr Rajiv Kumar
Vice Chairman at NITI Aayog





The forest is our home, our supermarket.... everything we have ever wanted we can extract from the forest, but there are red flags raised and alarm bells are ringing everywhere you care to look, because we have disconnected ourselves from nature.



Gary Juffa
Governor of Oro Province
in Papua New Guinea



It is critical to educate a new and diverse generation of leaders because that's going to change the thinking around and decision-making tables in very important ways.



Kathleen Merrigan
Professor & Executive Director,
Swette Center for Sustainable
Food Systems, Arizona State
University

Big ideas – insights from leading policy makers around the world

Food production and consumption differs from region to region, depending on rainfall, geography, soil and a host of economic, social and cultural factors. If agriculture is to become more sustainable and equitable, it will be critical to establish the policy frameworks that are appropriate for the conditions and circumstances of different regions. Expert speakers from around the world highlighted the value of this approach by the premise that working with nature and people – including their networks, relationships, solidarity, knowledge of local people – is a key success factor to sustainably manage land and transform food systems.

There is no shortage of warnings about the risks to our future unless we change destructive practices and re-learn how to sustainably manage production systems while ensuring future generations have necessary skills and opportunities, said Gary Juffa, Governor of Oro Province in Papua New Guinea.

“Sustainable agroforestry practices are the best option by which we can secure the future of cocoa farming in West Africa and forest landscapes for everyone,” he added. Cocoa production supports the livelihoods of some three million smallholder farmers.

Kathleen A. Merrigan, professor and executive director at Arizona State University's Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems, added that diversity, including more women and youth, in agricultural leadership is essential. “Educating a new and diverse generation of leaders is going to change the thinking around decision-making tables in very important ways,” said Merrigan.

The change requires mobilizing stakeholders, said Christophe Kouame, regional coordinator, West and Central Africa, CIFOR-ICRAF. “From farmers to farmer organizations, policymakers, private sector and international communities – all should be involved,” he said.



The science of food sustainability

Empowering communities with decision-making skills, establishing farmer-centered learning systems and putting monitoring tools into the hands of people on the ground: these are among the many innovations to come out of recent research on food systems. This discussion featured both scientists and practitioners as they look at the surprises and discoveries in research and science that have emerged and are leading to a food-systems transformation that produces food sustainably, equitably and affordably.

Many participants emphasized the value of recognizing and investing in local, practical knowledge. This is crucial to successful food systems, said Cheikh Mbow, director of the Future Africa project at the University of Pretoria. He urged greater investment in proven, less expensive local knowledge, practices and approaches rather than chemical-intensive forms of agriculture.

Science must also be linked with practical knowledge from the ground up, said Danielle Nierenberg, president of non-profit Food Tank. “We need new kinds of food systems that are based on science....that are participatory, and action based,” she said. “We need science that is living and evolving and actually transformative.”

Gabriela Lukas Deecke, director general of CIASPE Mexico, added that politicians must acknowledge the suffering of so many producers and take concrete actions to support them. That might include steps as small as calling for greater space in supermarkets for local produce and serving locally made biscuits at their political meetings. Building bridges between women in cities and women in the rural communities could help each understand the needs of the others and contribute to creating socially just transitions.

“Politicians need to feel the anguish,” of local farmers including women, who have worked their land but have no ownership rights, she said. “It’s not about (agricultural) yields, it’s about making a life.”

“There is hope – a lot of hope,” added Vijay Kumar Thallam, vice-chair of the Indian non-profit Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS). Thallam leads a movement in India’s Andhra Pradesh state for climate-resilient, community-managed natural farming, also known as Zero Budget Natural Farming.



How do we address the urgency of multiple crises we’re facing? It’s overwhelming but we need to remain optimistic. We can do things and we can change things. It’s not too late. We can make it if we want.



Robert Nasi

Managing Director, CIFOR-ICRAF,
Director General, CIFOR



There is no dichotomy between nature and science. Our understanding of nature through science is flawed. With more research, science will improve and we can find solutions.



Vijay Kumar Thallam

Vice Chair Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS), Special Chief Secretary, Govt of Andhra Pradesh





Reforestation does have a place in climate mitigation, but this should not compromise food security and be a smoke screen for continued use of fossil fuels.



Nafkote Dabi

Climate Change Policy Lead
for Oxfam



We pay homage to the planet as if the planet is at risk. The planet is not at risk... we are.



Satya S. Tripathi

Secretary General,
Global Alliance for a
Sustainable Planet

Accelerating the sustainable food system transition

Smallholder farmer initiatives demonstrate some of the fastest changes that are taking place around the world. This panel featured innovators who are pushing for large-scale transformation of land management for food production alongside sustainable investors who shared insights into how innovative farmers can accelerate their businesses and ideas with financing.

Satya S. Tripathi, secretary-general of the Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet, urged that private finance be applied for public good via a new approach involving financial risk assessment. Wisdom is found at the smallholder farm level, where champions can be identified and successes replicated, he said.

Ecosystem restoration is the foundation of our future, said Tabi Joda, executive director for GreenAid. Joda emphasized the importance of building capacities for communities that can manage resources in a dignified manner, enabling them to handle their own livelihoods and the landscapes around them.

Nafkote Dabi, climate change policy lead for Oxfam, warned that food security is sometimes being sacrificed to reforestation schemes. Four leading energy companies need a land area twice the size of the U.K. for tree-planting sufficient to meet their carbon offset goals – posing a significant threat to food security, she said.

“We need to be linking everything up – agroecology, protecting the environment and protecting people; we can’t do it without the local communities and we can’t do it in isolation, and we need investment”, said Chantal Marijnissen, head of unit of Environment, Sustainable Natural Resources (INTPA.F.2) at the European Commission and directorate-general for international partnerships. Marijnissen proposed to look at rural areas not only from the food safety and nutrition quality perspective but also looking at the protection and restoration of ecosystems and creation of jobs.



Looking ahead

This half-day digital event showed the way forward, by providing actionable scientific evidence to build sustainable landscapes and by connecting with people on the ground to share knowledge and experience and fundamentally transform agriculture and land management. By rebuilding resilient food systems, supporting sustainable use of forests, trees and other healthy landscapes, we can adapt to the crises we have created.

Scientists and policymakers alike acknowledged the threats to the climate, biodiversity and sustainable food systems while discussing solutions aimed at restoring the balance between the world and how it feeds itself. They united to forge a new coalition to promote nature-positive landscape approaches to agriculture and land management for greater food and nutrition security, while reducing environmental damage – the [Coalition for Landscape-based Engagement, Adaptation and Resilience \(CLEAR\)](#), aiming to confront the serious, imminent threats that face humankind.



Our reaction has to be as strong as the challenges are.



Alexander Müller
Founder and Managing Director,
TMG Think Tank





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Resilient
Landscapes



(TMG)
ThinkTank Sustainability
Töpfer Müller Gaßner



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Swette Center
for Sustainable
Food Systems
Arizona State
University