



MEDIA ADVISORY



CIFOR-ICRAF announces Dr Eliane Ubalijoro as Chief Executive Officer

- Dr Eliane Ubalijoro will be the first African woman CEO of a CGIAR Research Center
- CIFOR–ICRAF's acting CEO Dr Robert Nasi will become Chief Operating Officer
- Ubalijoro and Nasi will lead the merged organisation of CIFOR-ICRAF – the world's leading research and development centre on trees, forests and landscapes

(Montreal, 17 January 2023) – The Board of Trustees for the [Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry \(CIFOR-ICRAF\)](#) is very pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Eliane Ubalijoro as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CIFOR-ICRAF and Director General of ICRAF. Ubalijoro will be the first African woman Director General of a CGIAR Research Center and CEO of two Centers in CGIAR's 52-year history.

Born in Rwanda, Ubalijoro is the Executive Director of [Sustainability in the Digital Age](#), and Professor of Practice for public-private sector partnerships at [McGill University](#)'s Institute for the Study of International Development. Over the past two decades, her research has focused on innovation, gender, and sustainable development.

"I see CIFOR-ICRAF as a critical institution, poised to accelerate its research and impact, leading the way to achieving the 2030 goals by harnessing the potential of forestry and agroforestry to create ecosystems that





generate prosperity, sustainably,” said Ubalijoro. She is interested in combining CIFOR-ICRAF’s wealth of knowledge in forestry, ecology and sustainable agriculture with the transparency that high-resolution satellite data and artificial intelligence can bring to connect with work that aims to increase biodiversity worldwide and ensure transparency in terms of carbon sequestration.

Alongside Ubalijoro’s appointment starting May 2023, Dr Robert Nasi – CIFOR-ICRAF’s acting CEO – will take up the position of Chief Operating Officer. Nasi is a globally recognised forestry scientist who has been researching the ecology and management of tropical forests for the past four decades, including the sustainable use of forest resources and the intersection of conservation and development.

“This appointment marks a new era for CIFOR-ICRAF,” said Nasi. “As the potential of trees and forests in addressing the climate, food and biodiversity crises becomes increasingly apparent, the new leadership team stands ready to take CIFOR-ICRAF into an ambitious era of growth to provide much-needed solutions to some of the greatest challenges of our time.”

CIFOR-ICRAF is the world’s leader on harnessing the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time - biodiversity loss, climate change, food security, livelihoods and inequity. It has partnerships in 64 countries, 159 funding partners and 192 active projects, alongside more than 2,200 completed projects across 92 nations. The organisation has an annual budget of USD 100 million, and a combined legacy investment of USD 2 billion in research and technology, policy and development. On average, CIFOR-ICRAF research is cited nearly 137 times a day, and appears in global media more than 3,000 times per year.

“CIFOR-ICRAF has never been better equipped than now, with the combination of Dr Ubalijoro’s wealth of experience in agricultural research, digital innovation and transformational leadership, and Dr Nasi’s deep knowledge of tropical forestry and exemplary success in guiding both organisations through the merger,” said CIFOR-ICRAF Board Chair Doris Capistrano. “We look forward to the new heights CIFOR-ICRAF will reach in its mission to address interconnected global challenges through the power of forests, trees and agroforestry.”

About CIFOR-ICRAF

[CIFOR-ICRAF](#) is the world’s leader on harnessing the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time – biodiversity loss, climate change, food security, livelihoods and inequity. The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) merged in 2019. CIFOR and ICRAF are [CGIAR Research Centers](#). Learn more at cifor-icraf.org.



FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES:
cifor-icraf@cgiar.org

CIFOR-ICRAF is the world’s leader on harnessing the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time – biodiversity loss, climate change, food security, livelihoods and inequity. The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) merged in 2019. CIFOR and ICRAF are [CGIAR Research Centers](#).

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES CONTACT:
cifor-icraf-media@cgiar.org



For more information, please contact:

Global

Azzura Lalani
Global Head of Outreach and Engagement
Bonn, Germany
Tel: +49 151 1062 6686
Email: a.lalani@cifor-icraf.org

Africa

Susan Onyango
Global Communications Coordinator
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 7224000
Via USA: +1 650 833 6645/+1 650 833 6646
Email: s.onyango@cgiar.org

Asia

Budhy Kristanty
Communications Project Coordinator (Asia)
Bogor, Indonesia
Cell phone: +62 811 1904283
Work: +62 251 8622622 Ext.506
Email: b.kristanty@cgiar.org

Latin America

Yoly Gutierrez
Communications Coordinator, Latin America
Lima, Peru
Cell phone: +51 1 993 59 22 61
Email: y.gutierrez@cgiar.org





Dr Eliane Ubalijoro

Dr Eliane Ubalijoro is the incoming CEO of [CIFOR-ICRAF](#) and Director General of [ICRAF](#). This appointment makes her the first African woman CEO of a CGIAR Research Center in its 52-year history. Dr Ubalijoro is joining the organisation from her role as Executive Director of [Sustainability in the Digital Age](#) and Professor of Practice for public-private sector partnerships at [McGill University](#)'s Institute for the Study of International Development.

Born in Rwanda and raised on three continents, Dr Ubalijoro knew from a young age that she wanted a career in service to the world. She earned a bachelor's degree in general agriculture and a master's and doctorate in molecular genetics from McGill University, where she studied improving productivity in agriculture. She started her working life as a scientific director in the biotechnology sector working in molecular diagnostics, later pivoting to focus on improving the lives of women and smallholder farmers in emerging countries.

Over her decades-long career, Dr Ubalijoro has been recognised for her work in nature conservation and food security. She is a recipient of the [International Leadership Association](#)'s 2022 awards in women and leadership for outstanding practice with broad impact, and is part of the recent cohort of appointed [International Science Council](#) fellows in recognition for outstanding contributions to promoting science as a global public good.

Dr Ubalijoro is a member of: the [Crop Trust](#) Executive Board; the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development ([CCICED](#)) Special Policy Study on Post 2020: Global Biodiversity Conservation; the Impact Advisory Board of the [Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet](#); Rwanda's [National Science and Technology Council](#); the [Capitals Coalition](#) Supervisory Board; the [Expert Consultation Group on the Post COVID-19 Implications on Collaborative Governance of Genomics Research, Innovation, and Genetic Diversity](#); and the Advisory Board of [ShEquity](#).



FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES:
cifor-icraf@cgiar.org

CIFOR-ICRAF is the world's leader on harnessing the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time – biodiversity loss, climate change, food security, livelihoods and inequity. The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) merged in 2019. CIFOR and ICRAF are [CGIAR Research Centers](#).

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES CONTACT:
cifor-icraf-media@cgiar.org



As the incoming CEO of CIFOR-ICRAF, Dr Ubalijoro is set to helm the leading research and development institution as it enters an ambitious era of growth to provide solutions to some of the world's greatest challenges, including biodiversity loss, climate change and inequality.

She will further develop the institution, defining its next steps and fostering talent. and bring greater global attention to trees, forestry, agroforestry, natural resource management, full landscape approaches, and broader conversations on Net Zero, climate change, and sustainable livelihoods.



CIFOR-ICRAF is the world's leader on harnessing the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time – biodiversity loss, climate change, food security, livelihoods and inequity. The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) merged in 2019. CIFOR and ICRAF are [CGIAR Research Centers](#).

FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES:
cifor-icraf@cgiar.org

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES CONTACT:
cifor-icraf-media@cgiar.org



Dr Robert Nasi

Dr Robert Nasi is the acting CEO of [CIFOR-ICRAF](#) and has been the Director General of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) since 2017, steering the organisation's successful three-year merger process with World Agroforestry (ICRAF) and leveraging their combined expertise to harness the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time.

He has been part of the organisation for more than 20 years, joining CIFOR in 1999 and holding several research and management positions, including principal scientist, biodiversity program leader, and program director.

Dr Nasi is a leading global expert on forests, and advocates for integrating social and biological science for better forest management, more sustainable livelihoods, and improved forest policies.

Born in 1959 in Nice, France, Dr Nasi graduated as a forest engineer from the French National Forestry School and earned a doctorate in ecology from the University of Paris Sud–Orsay. Since 1982, he has lived and travelled extensively across Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, undertaking research in ecology and tropical forest management. Dr Nasi is based at CIFOR's Headquarters in Bogor Indonesia.

His research interests include the sustainable use of forest products, and multiple-use tropical forest management. His main disciplines are ecology, botany, biometrics, tropical forest management, and silviculture. He has authored or co-authored more than 300 scientific publications.

Dr Nasi will remain the Director General of CIFOR, and will take on the role of Chief Operating Officer for CIFOR-ICRAF.



About CIFOR-ICRAF

CIFOR-ICRAF is the world's leader on harnessing the power of trees, forests and agroforestry landscapes to address the most pressing global challenges of our time - biodiversity loss, climate change, food security, livelihoods and inequity.

CIFOR-ICRAF has partnerships in 64 countries, 159 funding partners, and 192 active projects, alongside over 2200 completed projects across 92 nations. CIFOR-ICRAF currently has 700+ staff worldwide, of which around 40% are women, in 25 office locations, mostly in the Global South. The organization carries a combined annual budget of USD 100 million, alongside a combined legacy investment of USD 2 billion in research and technology policy and development. On average, CIFOR-ICRAF research is cited nearly 137 times a day, and appears in global media more than 3,000 times per year.

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) merged in 2019. CIFOR and ICRAF are members of [CGIAR](#) – a global research partnership for a food-secure future – and share its focus on poverty reduction, increased food and nutritional security, and sustainable natural-resource systems. CIFOR-ICRAF's work is aligned with and contributes to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Learn more at: www.cifor-icraf.org

