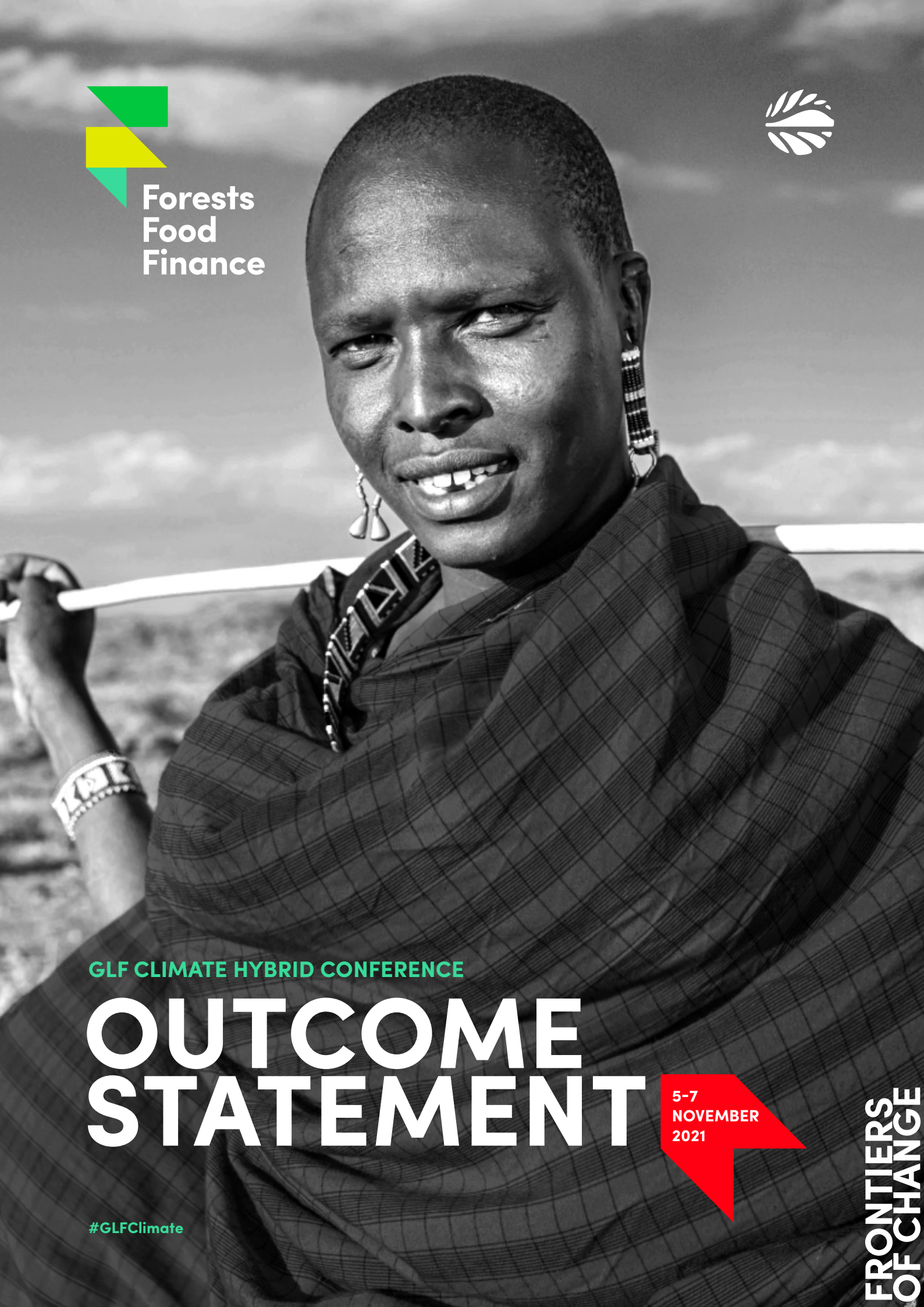


Forests
Food
Finance

GLF CLIMATE HYBRID CONFERENCE

OUTCOME STATEMENT

5-7
NOVEMBER
2021

#GLFClimate

FRONTIERS OF CHANGE

Executive summary: Conserve inclusively, manage wisely and restore actively

The planet is on track for three degrees of global warming by the year 2100, and scientists say we could soon reach negative **tipping points for climate change and biodiversity loss, beyond which it may be difficult or impossible for us to return**. But are there also positive tipping points that could strengthen our efforts to address these crises? If so, how can we trigger them?

In November 2021, on the sidelines of the 26th session of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26), GLF Climate: Forests, Food, Finance – Frontiers of Change sparked a global discussion on exactly this question.

A core theme that came out of the event is that the health of people and the planet requires collective actions, individual behavioral changes, and enabling and enforcing government policies and investments that *put nature and people first.*

This outcome statement summarizes the entry points for making such transformative change.

1. Development entails more than technological innovation and economic growth. Technology and finance are only part of the solution to reducing emissions and shifting to a decarbonized economy. It also requires social capital, with nature as a solid foundation of a *stewardship economy,* in which everyone is entitled to share in the wealth created by nature.
2. A stewardship economy is built on sustainable and climate resilient landscapes, in which the multiple functions of land, water, trees, forests, biodiversity, and culture are equally valued. It combines these into bottom-up, integrated, inclusive, and regenerative agricultural production practices that bridge the conservation and food security gap, while staying within the critical limit of 1.5 degrees of global warming.
3. A stewardship economy enhances efforts to conserve areas of high biodiversity and carbon status, while also increasing efforts to restore degraded lands, and accelerates commitments and actions through the Bonn Challenge and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem and Restoration.
4. It prioritizes those institutional and structural changes that are needed to transform the food system: fundamental changes throughout supply chains and markets to deliver accurate food pricing, and significantly improve the production, distribution, and consumption patterns of nutritious food.
5. It amplifies the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and recognises their role as long-standing custodians of biodiversity, right-holders, legitimate partners and change makers – at local, national, regional, and high-level global governance and decision-making. It builds on the longstanding knowledge and practice from IPLCs – combined with scientific knowledge – and integrates these into the policies, planning and management systems that are needed to keep the planet alive.
6. It builds on trustworthy government commitments to reduce emissions – and excessive, unnecessary energy consumption of certain industries and high-wealth actors – to transform into a decarbonized economy that is based on human rights.
7. It thrives on a financial sector that integrates the real costs of climate change and restoration into its pricing and employs nature-based solutions to triple capital investments in nature by 2030.
8. It delivers on existing global pledges and even goes beyond, by allocating more funding to mitigation, adaptation, and enhanced climate resilience, particularly in those countries that contributed least to global warming. It builds on the range of tools that are already available for this, in carbon markets, sustainable finance mechanisms, public-private partnerships and environmental, social and governance driven (ESG) funds.

"Making the necessary changes to halt climate change should not just be thought of as a perpetual burden that requires constant investment. It can also lead to positive outcomes beyond climate change that tip us into a state where positive feedback loops lead us to a more sustainable future"

FRANK VAN VEEN
PROFESSOR OF ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION,
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Tipping points

According to Professor Frank van Veen (University of Exeter), climatic tipping points are small shifts in the climate system that can cause wider changes which in themselves cause further climate change, and become a self-perpetuating process that is very difficult to stop. A similar process occurs within ecosystems which have been degraded to such an extent that the loss of just one more species causes a domino effect of cascading extinctions that is resistant to being restored.

Positive tipping points are triggered by restoring collapsed, low-biodiversity ecosystems back to something like their original diverse state, whereafter the ecosystem will continue to grow in diversity and be resilient to certain degrees of climate change. This is best done at the landscape level, where all the various interests of landscape actors are aligned to reach that positive tipping point where the effects of ecosystem restoration on food, livelihoods, health, and wellbeing provide self-sustaining momentum.

Introduction

The Global Landscapes Forum convened for three days (5–7 November 2021) on the sidelines of the most important climate summit in history, the 26th session of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26). The GLF brought together 400 experts to discuss three other avenues toward mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving the SDGS: forest conservation and restoration, food system transformation, and the expansion of sustainable finance in the global economy. Core to these topics are social and environmental justice, and that all solutions to socio-environmental challenges must be contextualized locally and in tailored policies, in collaboration with local communities.

Participants engaged across three days – focused respectively on the themes of forests, food, and finance – to evaluate progress and identify solutions that can accelerate action on land management, meet climate goals, and tackle seemingly incompatible trade-offs.

Event

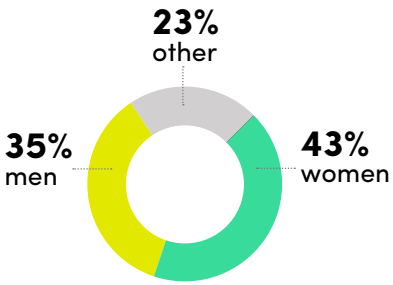
400 speakers, including:
- **13** Heads of State and Ministers
- **21** Industry leaders
- **11** Indigenous leaders

50+ youth speakers

67 sessions

over **1 million** total session views across all event platforms

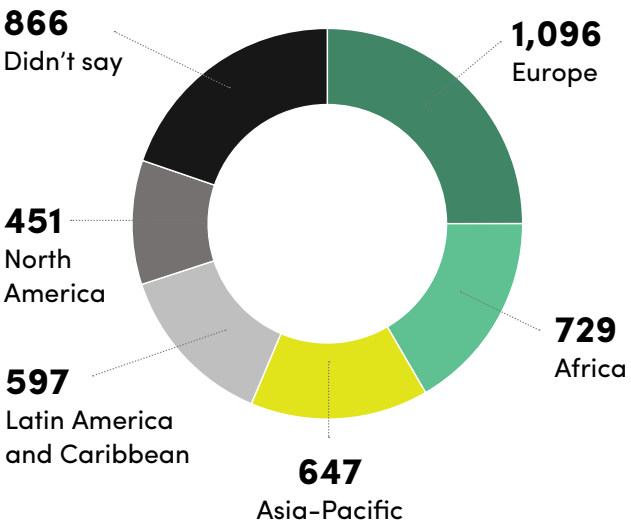
Participation



4,386 registered participants

481 in-person registered participants

Geographical distribution of attendees



Reach

265,450 engagements

341.32 million media reach

49,500 website page views

42 million social media reach

126 million impressions

15 white papers

Want more? Catch up on sessions or download the white papers

Download white papers

Streamed sessions

Forests: conservation, management, restoration

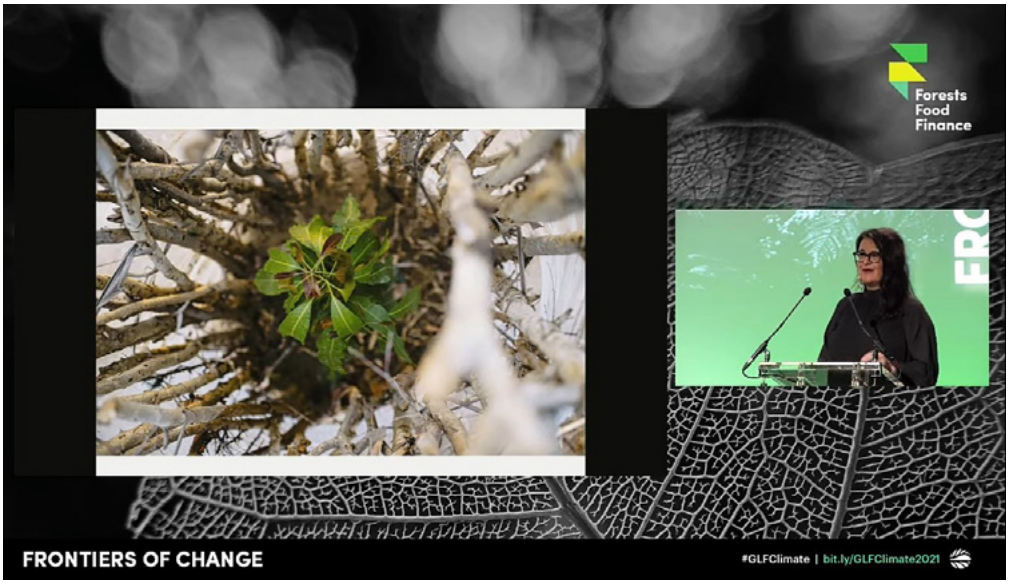
As part of a comprehensive global climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy, positive tipping points for forest restoration can be reached by bringing collapsed, low-biodiversity ecosystems back to a level of diversity that resembles their original resilient state. This requires taking into account the socio-economic and political dynamics behind degradation. As forests are increasingly in the global spotlight – pledges are escalating and a favorable policy context appears to be developing – many issues and questions remain.

In that context, the first day of GLF Climate, which focused on the role of forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change, began with a sense of renewed optimism, particularly having opened just days after the global leaders' pledge to end deforestation by 2030. The pledge committed USD 12 billion in public funds towards this goal. A further USD 1.7 billion was pledged to IPLC, providing a measure of long-awaited recognition of their role as invaluable agents in the fight against climate change through protection and management of the world's forests.

However, while the increasing emphasis on forests' role in mitigating climate change is welcome, there still needs to be greater recognition of the multiple values of forests beyond storing carbon. We need to build knowledge of, and resources for, forests' adaptation potential. Learnings from Indigenous and local knowledge that value and sustainably use forest resources must be better recognized within 'conventional' forest conservation policy. Moreover, the adoption of systems approaches that recognize the intricate connections and interdependencies between people, forests, and other land uses can utilize the contribution of forests to proximate agroecosystems, account for trade-offs, and enhance biodiversity outcomes at scale.

Speakers highlighted the importance of recognizing and integrating the contribution of IPLCs in forest and landscape management and governance. IPLC territories cover over a quarter of the global land surface, make up around 40% of the terrestrial protected-area estate, and contain at least 36% of intact forest landscapes. This overlap of IPLCs and highly-biodiverse areas is no coincidence: these communities often have a close connection to nature, and recognise the multiple values of forests and trees. As the guardians and stewards of their forests, IPLCs' knowledge and practices represent the oldest form of conservation, which has ensured the protection and resilience of areas where rates of loss are considerably lower than other lands.

However, IPLC territories are increasingly vulnerable to land-clearing threats from commercial agriculture, other extractive industries, infrastructure, and development projects. Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) is also being challenged by the pace and scale of environmental change: planting and harvesting practices, and coping strategies for environmental shocks, are disrupted by the increased intensity and frequency of climate-related anomalies. Furthermore, despite their important roles in forest and landscape management – and their minimal contributions to the climate crisis – IPLCs remain very poorly represented at high-level global climate and environmental policy negotiations.



"There are many social benefits of trees. When you lose a forest, you lose a whole network of people"

HOURIA DJOUDI
SENIOR SCIENTIST,
CIFOR-ICRAF

To address these challenges, a delicate weaving of ILK and scientific knowledge is crucial. IPLCs must be recognised as long-standing custodians of biodiversity, and welcomed into decision-making spaces as legitimate partners and change makers. To enable such collaborative partnerships, we need to address land tenure insecurity. Often, the social capital and networks exist, but the capacity of existing local institutions falls short. To develop and strengthen capacities, we need to direct resources to empower communities to equitably participate in decision-making processes. Interventions need to be designed collaboratively, based on the principles of trust, humility, and reciprocity – and with a clear understanding of local capacity needs.

There was broad support for initiatives that recognize and develop livelihood opportunities which restore or sustainably use the local resource base upon which social-ecological resilience depends. These included, among other initiatives: the Integrated Community Forest management approach; introducing (or strengthening existing) agroecological practices; improving market access for pro-environmental commodities; and integrating trees at the farm and landscape level to address issues of soil erosion, flooding, soil fertility and farmer-herder conflicts. Such actions must, however, be embedded in social realities and center the agency of local farmers, communities, and decision makers.

Key messages

- Stop deforestation, and enhance efforts to conserve areas of high biodiversity and carbon status
- Increase efforts to restore degraded lands, and encourage and accelerate commitments and actions through the Bonn Challenge and UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
- Increase government commitments to reduce emissions and move to a decarbonized economy
- Create enabling conditions to facilitate a new, inclusive bioeconomy, based on standing forests
- Indigenous Peoples and local communities are critical in protecting and restoring forests, but they need the resources, ownership and support to do so

"In this COP we've heard a lot about the Amazon and Indigenous people, but we don't see Indigenous people being at the forefront and at the center of the discussion, occupying the spaces of negotiation and discussion. We see many prominent people talking on our behalf, but we don't need anyone to talk on our behalf. We have a voice, and we know what we need"

SAMELA SATERÉ MAWÉ
INDIGENOUS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST,
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY OF SATERÉ MAWÉ, MANAUS, BRAZIL

Food: rethinking agriculture for a nourishing, climate-smart future

The global food system is broken: this was the message that resonated clearly throughout the sessions on food. The way we use our land to produce food and other goods and services is responsible for just under a quarter of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, almost 90% of global deforestation, and nearly 70% of species loss. Meanwhile, escalating temperatures forecast in coming years due to climate change will send yields of staple crops into major decline, as well as displacing people and pushing more species into extinction. If we don't change consumption patterns or diets, we will need to produce 50 – 70% more food to feed the global population, which is expected to reach 10 billion by 2050. Yet 40% of food currently produced globally is wasted, and more than 800,000 people go to bed hungry every night.

These challenges are clearly interlinked. In a nutshell, unsustainable production is driving climate change, which will make food production more difficult, but we need to produce more food to feed a growing population. Or do we? The narrative of increasing food production is being questioned and challenged. Indeed, many speakers suggested that addressing institutional and structural barriers that prevent food system transformation should be prioritized, and may in fact represent a low-hanging fruit, given that in many cases we already know what we need to do – for example, improving food distribution and reducing food waste.

Transforming the global food system requires fundamental changes throughout supply chains. But the discussions were imbued with cautious hope. Speakers were largely in agreement that the means for creating a climate-smart food system are well within our reach – but they'll require considered, consistent effort at multiple scales. For instance, Walter Willet, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, explained that in many parts of Africa, there is very little food wastage at the household level, but high pre- and post-harvest waste due to issues with storage and transportation, while in the US the inverse occurs, with very little pre- and post-harvest waste but lots of food thrown out in the home. He said that more accurate pricing of food in high-income countries that accounted for environmental 'externalities' would help to alleviate food waste.

Many speakers claimed that shifting to a more plant-based diet would help further, and represent a 'triple win': for climate (reduced emissions); for human health (healthier diets, reduces risk of zoonosis, and can contribute to alleviating hunger); and for biodiversity (less water and land required).

"The COVID pandemic has shown us that we cannot have healthy people on an unhealthy planet"

PAUL POLMAN
BUSINESSMAN,
CAMPAIGNER AND AUTHOR OF 'NET POSITIVE'

Paul Polman went further still, claiming that market rather state intervention is the answer, and what's needed is a price on nature itself. "Half of our global GDP depends on nature," he said. "Most businesses are using nature, but they don't pay for it, because we never put a value on [it]... Putting a value on nature will lead to the costs of destruction being taken into account in the pricing of products."

Other sessions reimagined a more bottom-up, integrated food system that is based on the principles of social inclusion and environmental justice. There was consistent advocating for farmer-managed natural regeneration and regenerative agriculture – a set of agricultural principles and/or practices that emphasize minimal soil disturbance and composting, and deliver agricultural outcomes beyond yield such as carbon sequestration, improved soil health, and biodiversity.

Speakers concluded that regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology are key to bridging the conservation and food security gaps, as they can help to overcome the historical administrative silos that affect the delivery of a sustainable landscape and food system. However, they acknowledged that – irrespective of the proposed solutions offered – implementation needs to happen both quickly and carefully, placing equity and justice at the center, with IPLCs engaged as partners at every step of the way.

"My advice to all of you: get to know the reality of local people, get to know their needs, and their potential to restore their environment and their lives. Create an ecosystem of humanity, in which everybody deserves a place"

SISTER MARIA MARCIANA
COORDINATOR OF THE MISSION OF THE DOMINICAN SISTERS
OF MONTEILS, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND HAITI

Key messages

- We do not need to produce more food for a growing population, but we do need to address the institutional and structural barriers that hamper accessible, affordable and quality food for all
- Farmer-managed natural regeneration and regenerative agriculture could form the basis of a more bottom-up, integrated food system based on social inclusion and environmental justice
- At the same time, shifting to a more plant-based diet represents a triple win for climate, human health, and biodiversity
- Fundamental changes to supply chains should include a more accurate pricing of food in high-income countries that accounted for environmental 'externalities' would help to alleviate food waste
- Subsidies in the meat and dairy sector must end or be reduced

Finance: 'greening' funding flows for nature-based solutions

The GLF held its fifth Investment Case symposium on the third day of the conference. As part of the Luxembourg–GLF Finance for Nature Platform, the symposium aimed to promote nature-based solutions (NBS) and sustainable land-use approaches in green finance practices, while exploring opportunities to expand investments in these spheres. The message throughout the day was clear: there must be systematic change in the finance industry to address the climate crisis through NBS, and take advantage of undervalued opportunities in the field of green finance.

There is increasing support for the belief that unlocking the trillions of dollars of global private capital seeking positive returns can bridge the significant funding gaps that currently constrain the achievement of the sustainable development and climate targets. "About USD 10 trillion in business opportunities could be unlocked by transforming three key systems: food, infrastructure and energy," said Lucy Coast, communications director of Business for Nature. According to many, Government development funding alone is insufficient, but offers potential to strategically leverage private funds in so-called 'blended finance' mechanisms, as an instrument which can also help to de-risk investments.

Concerns were also voiced around distribution, capacity, risk, and return on investment. One crucial concern was ensuring funding reached IPLCs and local-level actors. This is further challenged by limited technical and administrative capacity within rural communities, which often struggle to satisfy all of the (often excessively bureaucratic) criteria required by international funding agencies. To that end, Sara Scherr of EcoAgriculture Partners suggested that intermediary brokering organizations could be better utilized to help bridge the gaps between local, national, and international actors. Contextualization is fundamental for designing and funding projects, systematizing key processes and developing basic rules and methods would help, particularly in terms of transparency and accountability.

While distribution in terms of funding reaching local people is a significant challenge, it is not the only one. Some domains within the umbrella of sustainable development have been chronically and disproportionately under-funded. Forests are well-recognized for their mitigation potential, but less so for adaptation, climate resilience and the many other ecosystem services they provide. This is reflected in the current funding gap, where mitigation currently receives 90% of the total climate finance, while adaptation only receives 10%.

Mahamat Assouyouti of the Adaptation Fund claimed that until we address the adaptation financing gap, low and middle income countries will continue to struggle to address food insecurity, and local livelihoods will be compromised by escalating climate impacts. A collaboration between FAO and CIFOR-ICRAF aims to correct this by encouraging countries to integrate forest and trees into their adaptation planning, raising awareness of the multiple values of forests and trees, and providing support for building forest resilience – but crucial questions remain. As Assouyouti explained, adaptation needs are driven by local communities, but they are not expressed in national policies, so national priorities are often misaligned with what local people need on the ground. In a context where most climate funds are managed by national level partners, how then can local needs inform central systems, policies, and funding flows?

There was a sense that the private sector and finance industry are increasingly committed to financing socially and ecologically sustainable projects – both through financing green, and greening finance. Simon Zadek, Chair of the Finance for Biodiversity Initiative, pointed out that although they seem to be juxtaposed, financing green and greening finance are a sequential process – we can't finance green without first greening the financial industry. Carbon markets, sustainable finance, public-private partnerships, and environmental, social and governance funds are among the tools available to help build on the money that governments have pledged to fight the climate crisis over the coming decades.

Sustainable value chains are critical to support food security while preserving natural ecosystems. However, unsustainable commodities production is still a major source of deforestation and biodiversity erosion. To address this global issue, the GEF is financing a new global initiative, which was launched at the event: the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program. With USD 345 million from the Global Environment Facility, and expected additional co-financing of over $2.7 billion, FOLUR promotes sustainable integrated landscapes and efficient food value chains at scale.

Conclusion: restoration, transformation, innovation, integration

GLF Climate was framed around the positive tipping points to be derived from forests, food, and finance – but much of the discussion across the three days centered on what humanity can do to correct the actions of the past. Transformational change is clearly required: particularly in the food system, but also in how we manage forests and distribute finance.

Globally-conceived agendas, pledges, and commitments run the risk of being interpreted as silver-bullet solutions, which we know are not the answer and can lead to perverse outcomes – especially for already-marginalized groups. There is an urgent need for a far more nuanced approach. Tree-planting initiatives, for instance, have a checkered history as they often don't respond to local demands, and can be used as a smokescreen to continue business as usual. Greater integration is needed to enhance connectivity across actors, sectors, and scales. However, we also need to reflect more about what this means, how it can be achieved, and what the outcomes might be. For instance, there was much support for connecting international finance to rural communities, which requires innovative mechanisms and mobilizing capacities on the ground, but little reflection on the long-term impacts for local communities and their environments.

There was repeated reference to the need to alleviate poverty to solve the biodiversity and climate crises, with some commentators even suggesting that poverty and biodiversity can't coexist – a statement easily disproved by any spatial overlay of poverty extent and high-biodiversity areas. Instead of poverty, it is rather the unequal distribution of wealth that is the key driver of deforestation, food insecurity and climate change. Similarly, there were clarion calls to upscale or accelerate action, which while well-intended were also called into question for their potential local impacts. For instance, Galina Angarova, Executive Director of Cultural Survival, remarked that she doesn't believe in scalability, as "all initiatives need to be locally designed and owned." Indeed, positive tipping points for the climate might be more readily achieved by downscaling operations in high-income regions.

In sum, a wide range of solutions were identified at the conference that can positively contribute towards the climate, poverty, and biodiversity crises. Perhaps the key message, however, was that in many cases we already know what we need to do. The challenge now is transforming pledges into action, and potential into reality.

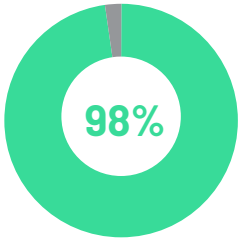
"Because we are part of the community, we thrive with the community we rise and fall together as a community."

HIS MAJESTY NGWENYAMA INKOSI YA MAKHOSI GOMANI V
KING OF THE MASEKO NGUNI/NGONI

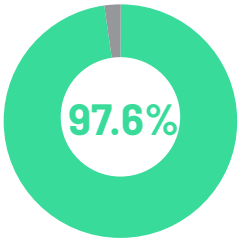
Launches at GLF Climate

- The Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program (World Bank, GEF)
- Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD) (Crop Trust and Government of Norway)
- Transparent Monitoring in Practice (CIFOR and partners)
- Actioning Agroecologically-Conducive Policies for a Food System Transformation (CIFOR-ICRAF and partners)
- The Forest Allies community of practice (Rainforest Alliance and partners)
- Restore Africa (EverGreening Global Alliance)

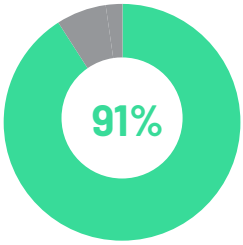
Ratings overview



98%
of surveyed participants rated the event as good or excellent

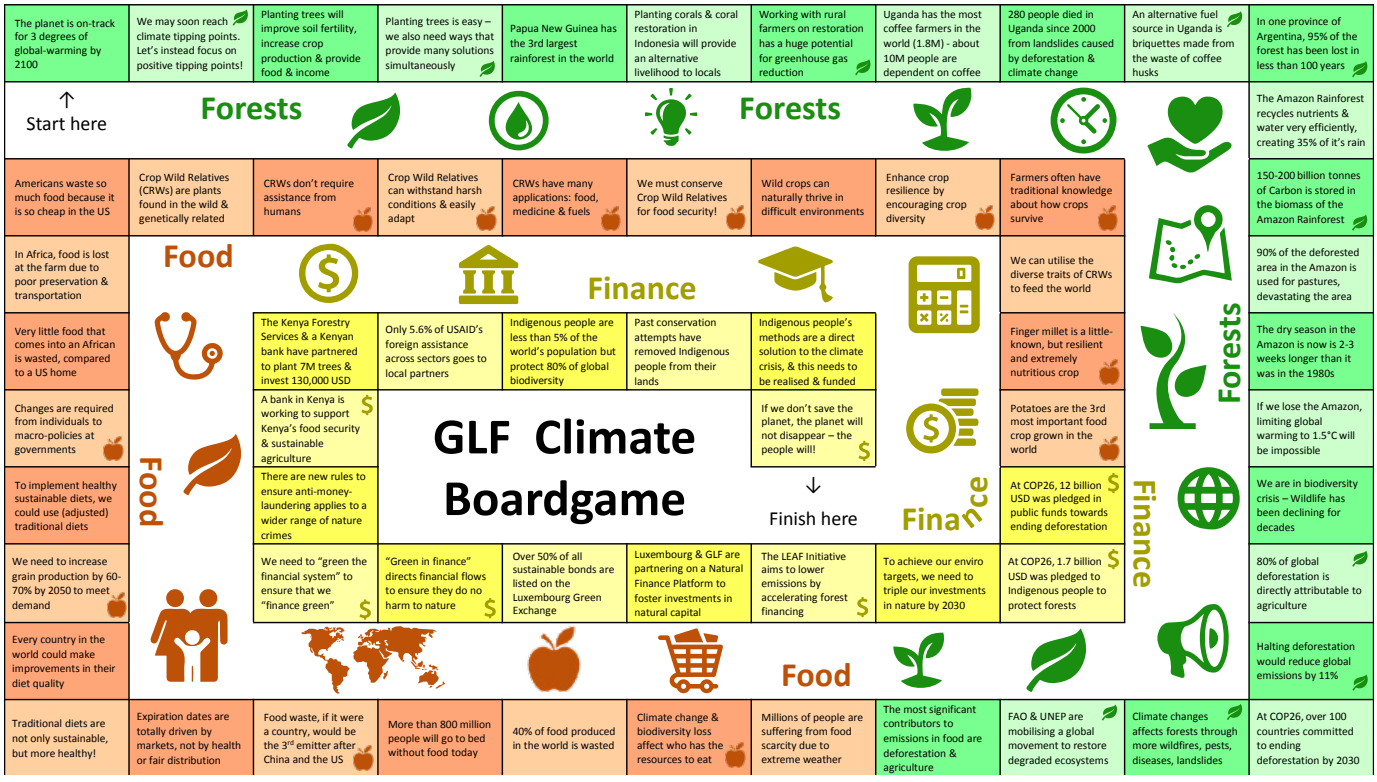


97.6%
of surveyed participants reported committing to action to transform our society and sustain life on Earth



91%
of surveyed participants reported learning about the role of food, forests and finance in addressing the climate crisis

GLF Climate board game created by Melissa Dirks, highlighting messages from the conference



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Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihoods, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UNEP and the World Bank and Charter Members.

Charter members: CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, Ecoagriculture Partners, The European Forest Institute, Evergreen Agriculture, FAO, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, The International Livestock Research Institute, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, Rights and Resources Initiative, SAN, TMG-Think Tank for Sustainability, UNEP, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation part of Wageningen Research, World Farmer Organization, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, World Resources Institute, WWF International, Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL)

Funding partners

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
FOLUR Food • Land Use • Restoration
gef 30 years

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