

GLF Bonn
Digital
Conference
2020

GLF BONN DIGITAL CONFERENCE

FOOD



In the time
of crises

Outcome
Statement

June 2020

Key messages



Human and planetary health are inextricably interconnected. The “One Health” approach is needed to prevent zoonotic diseases.



Food system transformation can reduce the likelihood of future pandemics through the creation of resilient, food and nutrition secure landscapes.



Combining sustainable agriculture and farming practices; traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge with innovative science can halt environmental degradation by addressing multiple threats to food security and building much needed resilience.



Applying the “landscape approach” can help humanity “build back better” by securing rights and fundamentally changing the way people produce, consume and live.



The economic, social and environmental benefits from digital conferencing compared with in-person events are tremendous, particularly regarding inclusivity and reach.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global health crisis on a scale that has not been seen in a century, leading to millions of infections, more than 450,000 deaths, countries in lockdown, lives disrupted by economic hardship, social isolation and the growing [threat of hunger](#). The global emergency has also highlighted the need to reconsider humanity’s relationship with the natural world and the consequences of ignoring the nexus between humans, wildlife and landscapes that provide food and livelihoods.

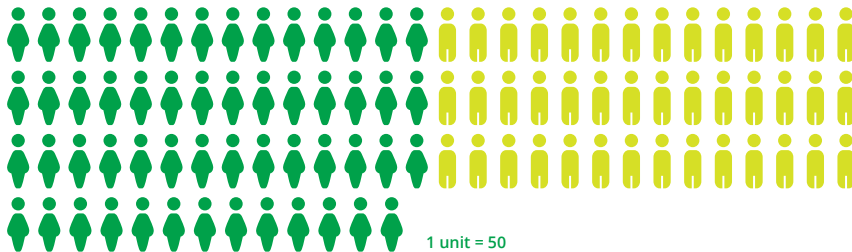
The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Bonn Digital Conference 2020 took place on 3–5 June with the focal theme of “Food in the Time of Crises.” The GLF broadcast its largest digital environmental conference to date from Germany and Indonesia, minimizing carbon emissions and accommodating current pandemic-related bans on mass gatherings. The three-day event provided a unique opportunity for people from various walks of life, including scientists, chefs, policymakers, farmers, Indigenous communities, young professionals, artists and even an astronaut – to discuss food through the prism of current crises and to harness the potential of shared knowledge. The last day of the conference also coincided with World Environment Day.

With the support of the [German government](#) and the [Foundation for International Dialogue](#) of the Savings Bank (Sparkasse) in Bonn, the GLF Bonn Digital Conference involved 300 speakers, over 4,900 participants from six continents and 50 million people on social media. Primatologist [Jane Goodall](#), environmentalist Bill McKibben, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen, and Indonesian Environment and Forestry Minister [Siti Nurbaya](#) delivered keynote addresses. No matter where attendees were located, they could tune in through a mobile app, pitch questions to the speakers and chat with other participants. The agenda included documentary screenings, interviews with experts, live polls, cooking shows and even a guided meditation session. As a prelude, a half-day [youth forum](#) was held on 2 June with the theme “Restore Our Planet,” featuring landscape leaders under the age of 35. In the overall conference, 55 youth representatives actively participated in sessions as speakers.

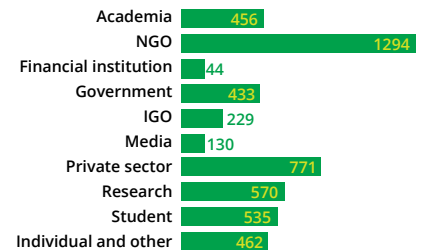
Participants

4,924
people

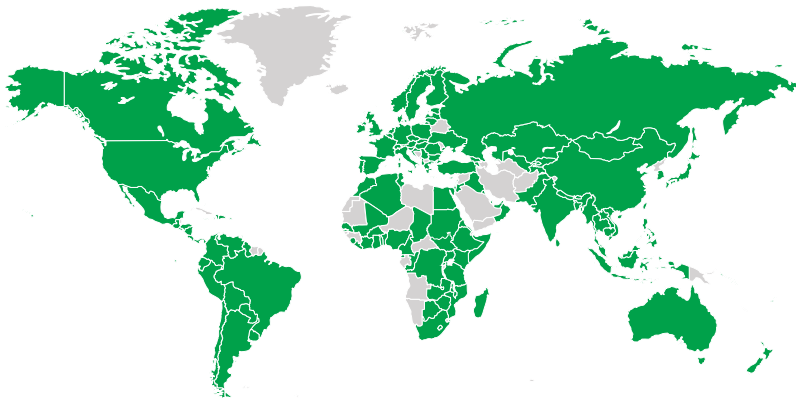
91% of participants surveyed rated the overall quality of the event as good or excellent



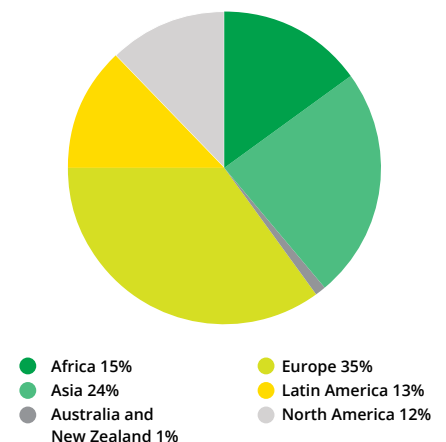
10
sectors



146
countries



6
regions



Event



89
sessions



300
speakers



77,000
session
views

Learning tracks

Networking

73%
participation



Storytelling



Measuring
Progress



Finance & Value
Chains



130
virtual
meetups



22,293
messages
sent between
participants



We are currently exporting natural resources and labor, which is contributing to inequalities. When crises like COVID-19 happen, if we are producing locally, then we can survive.



Tania Eulalia Martinez-Cruz,
Indigenous activist and researcher

Indigenous speakers included Indonesia's Forest Farmer Group (Kelompok Tani Hutan), who spoke on peatland-based food security, and Tania Eulalia Martinez-Cruz, who moderated a discussion on restoration and water conservation efforts of the Indigenous Nahua people of Mexico and El Salvador. Germany's agency for international development (GIZ) delivered a special session in French on how wild foods can boost nutrition, livelihoods and biodiversity. UNEP and the World Bank, joint coordinators of GLF with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), led presentations on "building back better" and food finance.



The economic, environmental, and social returns are almost incalculable, compared to an in-person conference. No one had to leave their house, everyone could watch the sessions of their own choosing at times most convenient for them, huge costs were saved on hosting and logistics that can instead go toward better use, and the emissions saved from air travel will be almost scary.



Robert Nasi,
CIFOR Director General

"One Health" approach

The effects of deforestation and ecosystem destruction are increasingly bringing people into contact with animals that have been displaced from their traditional habitats. This interaction makes the transmission of viruses and bacteria between species more likely as wildlife migrates to new areas, suffer from overexploitation in urban markets and ultimately join the human food chain. Scientists theorize that COVID-19 was transmitted from a pangolin or a bat to humans in a market in the city of Wuhan. About 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases affecting people are zoonotic – meaning they originated in animals – and are closely interlinked with the health of ecosystems, according to a 2016 report by UNEP.

COVID-19 has revealed multiple systemic frailties. Weak health systems are failing to care for the most vulnerable, economies lack the resilience to prevent mass unemployment, social inequality is worsening, and poverty is threatening a whole new generation of people. Almost half of the global workforce is in danger of losing their livelihoods, while some 49 million people may fall into extreme poverty.



The COVID-19 crisis may undo the development progress of the last few decades. We must not let that happen.



Maria Flachsbarth,
Parliamentary State Secretary Federal Ministry of
Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

According to UN agencies, more than one in ten people living in rural areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are hungry due to escalating and prolonged conflict and displacement. Farmers – the majority of whom are women – are in need of tools and seeds so that they can resume farming. Photo by Axel Fassio/CIFOR.



COVID-19 has demonstrated our ability to work together at the community level and to exchange and co-create knowledge more effectively than ever before. Scientists and pharmaceutical corporations are collaborating across borders in the race to develop a vaccine; governments and employers are discovering new ways to communicate advice and run businesses, while millions of people in lockdown have [increased their use](#) of online platforms to share information on daily activities that we once took for granted. This once-in-a-century health crisis is also widely seen as an opportunity to make permanent changes in the way we deal with the environment, after stay-at-home orders led to a seven percent drop in carbon emissions, a reduction in air pollution and a [resurgence of wildlife](#) in cities. As the new adage goes, “Nothing should go back to normal because normal wasn’t working.”

A key segment at the GLF featured 15 experts, including World Wide Fund for Nature director general Marco Lambertini, special envoy to the World Health Organization on COVID-19 David Nabarro and co-chair of the International Resource Panel Izabella Teixeira. Over three sessions, they discussed the [triple challenge](#) of averting climate change, achieving food security and creating space for nature. These sessions focused on land use change, including deforestation, as a key driver of emerging infectious diseases; how to scale up known solutions, such as reducing food waste; and how dietary shifts can improve human and environmental health.



99.9% of humanity knows that reconnecting with nature is the only way to overcome the challenges we face. Nature is the lifeblood of society, the core of society.



David Nabarro,
Special Envoy to the World Health Organization on COVID-19

Hunger crisis

How do we feed the world without eating the planet? The United Nations estimates that the global population will [grow by 2 billion](#) in the next 30 years and may reach 11 billion by the end of the century. More than 820 million people go to bed hungry each day, of whom 135 million suffer from acute hunger. An additional 130 million people are now at risk of acute hunger by the end of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the World Food Programme. These figures are even more daunting considering that [35 percent](#) of all food products are wasted.



The question that we asked for the last 50 years was: will this cause the economy to grow faster or not? Now we’re asking: Does this increase our chances of survival or not?



Bill McKibben,
author and co-founder of 350.org

In 2015, the UN [Sustainable Development](#) Goals (SDGs) were established to end poverty, protect the planet and improve people’s lives. SDG 2 aims to achieve [zero hunger](#) by 2030 and is linked to a range of other targets. These include ensuring [sustainable consumption and production patterns](#) (SDG 12); taking urgent action on [climate change](#) and its impacts (SDG 13); as well as [sustainably managing forests](#), combating desertification, reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss (SDG 15). These interrelated goals require science-based solutions and the [One Health](#) mindset that recognizes the symbiotic relationship between landscapes, wildlife and people.

The Apahui Agrarian Cooperative, located in Peru, dries cocoa beans. The cooperative is dedicated to the commercialization of the beans. Photo by Marlon del Aguila/CIFOR



The focus on food security at this year's GLF Bonn Digital Conference was timely and dovetailed with the [goals](#) of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 as well as the UN Paris Agreement on climate change. Without healthy ecosystems, we diminish our capacity to feed ourselves, to mitigate the future impacts of climate change and to achieve the SDGs by the end of the decade.

Activities at the GLF Bonn Digital Conference emphasized the inequity of the current food system and how despite the myriad international frameworks aimed at facilitating transformation, a lack of concerted political will exists, hindering progress on the creation of policies to tackle hunger and nutrition. Women and youth, particularly from poor and Indigenous communities, are routinely excluded from agricultural decision-making processes, thus restricting capacity to feed the planet. Family farms produce up to 80 percent of the world's food, with women providing more than half of the labor in cash crop farming while taking on most of the household responsibilities. But women have little access to finance and land, making it difficult to make long-term investments in regenerative and climate-smart farming. Such inequalities lead to limited uptake of integrated agricultural techniques by half the farming population.



That's really the message: Small-scale family farming, diversity of crops, engagement of the local people, helping them understand the need for conservation, and giving them the tools so that they can do conservation for themselves.



Jane Goodall,
founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and a UN Messenger of Peace listing five key goals for food security

Palm oil, one of the most controversial globally traded commodities, can deliver important economic development for its host countries and can often come at the expense of basic human rights and of biodiverse, carbon-rich tropical forests. A palm nut fruit in Indonesia. Photo by Tri Saputro / CIFOR



Land degradation

Agricultural production is one of the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions that exacerbate climate change and drive deforestation. Unsustainable farming methods also lead to land degradation, which causes biodiversity loss and in turn threatens food security. About [25 percent](#) of the world's total land area has been degraded, destroying its productive capacity while contributing to climate change through the release of soil carbon and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. Degraded land costs the world about USD 6 trillion annually in lost services, goods and livelihoods.



My dream for the future is that access to good nutrition will not be dependent on income and that we will finally be able to democratize good-for-you foods while empowering local farmers along the way.



Ada Osakwe,
founder and chief executive of Agrolay Ventures

The coronavirus pandemic has caused carbon dioxide emissions to decline due to lockdowns and a slump in demand for fossil fuels, but there are concerns that benefits to the climate may only be [temporary](#). Feeding the world sustainably will also require long-term structural and systemic changes. Almost 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions are produced in the supply chain that takes food from farm to fork, according to the UN.

During the plenary session on the last day of the conference, an online poll of attendees said that the most important way to implement a green recovery from the COVID-19 crisis would involve channeling stimulus investment into renewable energy and the restoration of nature; to introduce carbon-pricing programs around the world; and to halt government subsidies to the fossil-fuel industry. Governments have so far announced stimulus packages totaling at least [USD 9 trillion](#).

Climate solutions

Conference participants learned that solutions also include emission-reduction methods, seed system diversity for climate adaptation, productive agroecosystems as long-term carbon sinks, the importance of [protecting peatlands](#) and the recognition of rising competition for land from non-food sectors. One four-hour series of sub-sessions on drought-risk strategies featured more than 20 speakers and focused on safeguarding the livelihoods of local communities in Africa through natural resource management and social protection programs. An urgent need exists to scale up ecosystem restoration efforts that contribute to sustainable development, food security and nutritional needs in a world with a growing population.



Drought is a disaster. The moment you realize that communities' water for drinking is dirtier and more contaminated than your toilet water— that is when you realize that this is a crisis.



Vanessa Nakate,
Ugandan climate activist

Farmers from Mundri, Amadi in South Sudan discussed how their food security has been threatened by such consequences of climate change such as pests, deforestation and unpredictable weather conditions. Meanwhile, farmers and fishers in Colombia and Indonesia are facing similar challenges. In the Grassroots Relief and Development Agency (GREDA) session, panelists and participants explored innovative solutions to these agricultural crises to strengthen resilience to climate change, and build fishers' and farmers' productivity, sustainability and circularity. With simple technologies like mobile apps, farmers and fishers can share information on soil quality and fish catch data to overcome the tragedy of the commons -- where individual interests put collective resources at risk -- and unite communities for improved landscape health.



Farmers face so many challenges and aren't always armed with the solutions. They experiment, fail, try new methodologies and as a result become natural inventors in their field.



Samuel Agyemang Tutu,
Youth in Landscapes alumni

Youth leadership

People under the age of 35, also known as youth, have a more prominent role to play in forging a new future for local food sovereignty and global food security. The Global Landscapes Forum and the Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL) have created the [Generation Restoration](#) program to help young professionals promote restoration activities and youth leadership contributing to global restoration efforts. As part of this program, YIL carried out its first low-carbon, digital forum covering the topic "Restore Our Planet" as a half-day event from the new GLF Broadcast Center in Bonn on 2 June. Three 30-minute "Youth Daily Shows" were live-streamed during lunch breaks to share youth perspectives and contributions on sustainable diets, food sovereignty and food waste in a creative way.



We're beginning to see young people across the world really lobbying and advocating for change in their communities. They're saying, 'You're either with us, or just get out of our way.'



Musonda Xoliswa Mumba,
Chief, Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit (TEU),
UN Environment Programme

The responsibility of global citizens is to address multiple crises simultaneously by achieving sustainable food systems, securing livelihoods and combating climate change. This is only possible if the world agrees on integrated policies that allow for resilient landscape management, coordinated governance action, as well as sustainable and inclusive finance through public and private investment. The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder that the consequences of adopting a business-as-usual approach to land use, wildlife and the climate can be devastating. The future of food and livelihoods therefore depends on the collective will and ability to redefine the way humanity lives, produces and consumes today.



We, as youth, have to study history. Some of the most pressing sustainability issues are tied to understanding the past, present and future.



Kendi Borona,
conservation professional with specialization in
Indigenous conservation knowledge

Decentralization and Democratization of Knowledge

GLF is addressing the momentum to create resilient knowledge systems on sustainable landscapes rooted in the notion of knowledge commons, utilizing digital and other emerging technologies. GLF is building on the work of Dr. Elinor Ostrom, who in 2009 was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science, for challenging conventional wisdom on economic governance and public policy discourse. While Dr. Ostrom's early research was on natural commons, she later explored – in collaboration with Dr. Charlotte Hess – knowledge as a shared resource in the digital era. Although the richness of their contribution to understanding knowledge commons cannot be distilled into short quotes, there is one that is crucial for the mission of GLF to “spark a movement of 1 billion people around sustainable landscapes”. In the words of Dr. Ostrom during her (2009) [Nobel lecture](#): “To explain the world of interactions and outcomes occurring at multiple levels, we also have to be willing to deal with complexity instead of rejecting it.”

As a knowledge-led platform, GLF aims to further support knowledge and landscape diversity, by upscaling its capacity to facilitate disparate knowledge-holders to bring their own intellectual bases together and build a strong sense of community. As Hess (2010) has [noted](#), “(t)here is an ever greater need for robust systems of knowledge delivery that get the right information to the right people at the exact time of need”.

Following the GLF Bonn Digital Conference 2020, GLF is embarking on a journey to fully support digital knowledge commons on sustainable landscapes. With more GLF Digital Conferences on the horizon, and through the recently launched GLFx (an inclusive grassroots movement that connects local voices and global agendas), the Global Landscapes Forum invites all sectors to contribute in creating a global ecosystem of sharing sustainable landscape knowledge, fostering multi-stakeholder dialogues and catalyzing action on the ground.



Digital knowledge commons have the potential to become global system disruptors, a game-changer no less powerful than the printing press. And GLF can lead that disruption to create a global landscape that is more productive, more prosperous, more equitable, and more resilient – for the people and the planet.



John Colmey,
GLF Managing Director

Participating organizations



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 livelihood initiatives, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UN Environment and the World Bank and Charter Members.

Charter Members: CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, Ecoagriculture Partners, EFI, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, RRI, SAN, UN Environment, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen Research, WFO, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, WRI, WWF Germany, Youth in Landscapes Initiative.

Funding partners



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