

State of the World's Forests, 2022

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In news– The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has released the State of the World's Forests (SOF0) during the World Forestry Congress recently.

Key highlights of the report-

- It presents data and analysis on the interaction between forests and people every two years, with a focus on a specific pertinent topic.
- It says that the **world has lost 420 million hectares (mha), approximately 10.34 per cent of its total forest area in the last 30 years.**
- It stated that forest biodiversity remains under threat from deforestation and forest degradation.
- It added that although the **rate of deforestation was declining**, 10 mha of forests were lost every year between 2015 and 2020.
- **It has** warned that **unless additional action is taken, an estimated 289 mha of forests would be deforested between 2016 and 2050 in the tropics alone**, resulting in the emission of 169 GtCO_{2e}.
- It has warned that India and China could well emerge as the biggest hotspots for new zoonotic viral diseases.
- It stated that **15 percent of 250 emerging infectious diseases have been linked to forests** and 30 percent of new diseases, reported since 1960, can be attributed to deforestation and land-use-change.
- Deforestation, particularly in the tropics, has been associated with an increase in infectious diseases such as dengue fever and malaria.
- The report estimated the cost of global strategies to prevent pandemics based on reducing the illegal wildlife

trade, avoiding land-use change and increasing surveillance to be \$22 billion to \$31 billion.

- It also stated that approximately 124 million more people fell into extreme poverty after COVID-19 and this may have longer-term impacts on wood-based fuel, as there is evidence of increased wood-based fuel use in some countries during the pandemic.
- According to the report, around **a billion people in sub-Saharan Africa will keep relying on polluting fuels like charcoal and fuelwood till 2025.**
- The world population is projected to reach 9.7 billion people by 2050, which will increase competition for land, as the demand for food for this large population will rise by 35 to 56 per cent by the 2050s.
- It has predicted that the **annual global consumption of all natural resources combined is expected to more than double from 92 billion tonnes in 2017 to 190 billion tonnes in 2060** due to increases in population size and affluence.
- It further stated that **annual biomass extraction was expected to reach 44 billion tonnes by 2060, from 24 billion tonnes in 2017.**
- The report also **presented three pathways for achieving green recovery and tackling environmental crises:**
 - Halting deforestation and maintaining forests.
 - Restoring degraded lands and expanding agroforestry.
 - Sustainably using forests and building green value chains.

Note— More than 140 countries have pledged, through the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, to eliminate forest loss by 2030 and to support restoration and sustainable forestry.