

# Outcome Statement



Global  
Landscapes  
Forum

## Restoring Africa's Landscapes: Uniting Action from Above and Below

Accra, Ghana  
29 – 30 October, 2019

### Participating organizations

GLF Accra 2019 would not be possible without the support and participation of the following hosts, partners and organizations. For a full list of everyone involved, please visit: [events.globallandscapesforum.org/accra-2019/partners](https://events.globallandscapesforum.org/accra-2019/partners)





Musonda Mumba of UNEP reminds GLF Accra that many Africans already feel the worst effects of climate change.

# Key Messages



1 Time is running out for significant change, including for addressing the climate crisis.

2 Restoration efforts will not succeed without genuine consultation of local communities and the support of local institutions and leaders.

3 Landscape restoration must be linked to improving the lives and livelihoods of people who live and work in the landscapes being restored.

4 Collaborative knowledge and a clear understanding that landscapes must deliver meaningful benefits will help to ensure that the right restoration work is performed in the right location at the right time.

5 Integrating UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration work with the UN Decade on Family Farming – that is, weaving improvement of food systems with environmental efforts – may serve to build a stronger platform for attracting political and financial support for smallholder producers, local communities and broad landscape restoration work.





# Background

The world is growing more and more aware of the urgent need for restoration of degraded landscapes. There's a strong consensus that restoring forests and ecosystems must be linked to improving the lives and livelihoods of people who live and work in forests and forested landscapes, especially in the Global South.

The global discussion on restoration must focus on landscapes holistically, taking account of the many types of land use, including forests,

agriculture and livestock production, among others. It must also take account of how land use decisions, livelihood needs, macroeconomic factors and policy decisions shape social and ecological outcomes.

There are a number of challenges to implementing restoration initiatives in ways that meet ecological and social goals simultaneously, and the [Global Landscapes Forum Accra 2019](#) conference tackled many of them.



Connecting communities as catalysts for restoration session at Global Landscapes Forum Accra 2019.

# Introduction

The role of Africa and its people in connecting landscape restoration with human development was the cornerstone of the GLF Accra 2019 conference, *Restoring Africa's Landscapes: Uniting actions from above and below*. Held in the Ghanaian capital on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, the event highlighted scalable solutions and local-level successes in confronting many of Africa's pressing climate and development challenges, including gender equity, biodiversity conservation, land tenure security, Indigenous rights, attracting private finance and reforming policy.

The international event was conceived as an opportunity to assess the progress of the 2014 *New York Declaration on Forests'* goal of

eliminating deforestation due to the production of major tropical commodities, such as palm oil, soy, beef and timber; and of the *Bonn Challenge*, which seeks to restore 350 million hectares of degraded forest land globally by 2030. The Challenge's creator, *Horst Freiberg*, spoke at the Accra event.

The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) represents Africa's commitment to the Bonn Challenge goals: *28 African countries have committed to restoring more than 113 million hectares* of land and ecosystems on the African continent by 2030. GLF Accra was held immediately after *the fourth annual partnership meetings of AFR100*, and many of Africa's restoration leaders from the AFR100 meeting attended the GLF.





# This decade is about you and me

"This Decade is about you and me, the environments we live in... and it's about our very survival," said **Musonda Mumba**, head of UN Environment's Terrestrial Ecosystems Programme and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (**GPFLR**). She spoke during the opening plenary of the GLF Accra, where speakers and audience members created a vibrant, electric atmosphere by calling for action to confront many of Africa's pressing climate and development challenges. More than 800 participants came together at the Accra International Conference Centre, while GLF Accra reached some 5,000 more participants online through the digital edition of the conference. In fact, through extensive social media, the ideas of GLF Accra ultimately reached more than 18 million people worldwide, with messages from speakers ranging from the **Queen of Buganda**

to Grammy-nominated Afro-roots star and UN Goodwill Ambassador **Rocky Dawuni**, as well as leaders of United Nations agencies and senior Ghanaian government officials.

The stirring lyrics of the US civil rights anthem 'We Shall Overcome' became something of a battle hymn of the GLF event as smallholder producers, women, youth and men from across Africa called for shared solutions to the worldwide climate crisis and successful landscape restoration. From large plenaries to smaller group discussions, GLF participants agreed on the necessity of widespread action based on local knowledge and input to save the planet's biodiversity and restore landscapes – all while keeping the voices and rights of people and their communities at the center of restoration efforts.



GLF Accra 2019 grooved to a live performance by Rocky Dawuni, international artist and humanitarian.



# “Time for reconciliation between man and nature”

“Climate change is a form of war that has come about because of our irresponsible actions,” Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa, founder of the Green Republic Project, told the audience in an early plenary session, [Sparkling A Mass Restoration Movement](#). “Nature is rebelling against us (but) it’s time for reconciliation between man and nature,” he added. The youth activist and social entrepreneur brought his audience to its feet to sing the civil rights anthem with the intention of overcoming injustice — including landscape destruction. “The only outcome if we lose this war is extinction of the human race,” he said.

But restoration efforts will not succeed without genuine inclusion of local communities and the acceptance of projects by their traditional leaders, warned Tangu Tumeo, Principal Forestry Officer in Malawi’s Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining and Department of Forestry. “In parts of Africa where traditional authority is powerful, recognizing the importance of traditional voices is essential,” she told an interactive session [Restoring Forests, Restoring Communities: How Secure Resource Rights Help Communities in Africa Restore Forests and Build Local Communities](#). “Without involving the community at the heart of what we’re doing, we’re not going to get very far,” she added. “We’re just putting money down the drain and communities don’t appreciate that.”

People’s voices are only likely to be heard where they have clear tenure rights to their land, forests and pastures. Customary tenure systems are effective at organizing fair access to resources, but governments retain underlying ownership rights. “Unless communities have the capacity to negotiate terms suitable to local needs and priorities, investments from donors and the private sector will rarely succeed,” said Steven Lawry, a CIFOR Senior Associate.



Constance Okollet of Uganda's Osukuru United Women's Network describes the new Climate Wise Women organization at GLF Accra 2019.



# Women as catalysts for change

Meanwhile, momentum for change continued building in Accra as 11-year-old Ghanaian music sensation **DJ Switch** called for greater attention and justice for women and girls working in degraded landscapes. "The voice of the women is powerful as a catalyst for change. So, write land restoration songs!" shouted DJ Switch, who urged the audience to join her chant: "I have a tree to plant! Dig, dig and plant. One voice, one song to restore our land," added the young woman, whose off-stage name is Erica Armah Bra-Bulu Tandoh.

African royalty made a rare appearance during the GLF event to support the urgent call for a greater global emphasis on landscape restoration. For Her Royal Highness Sylvia Nagginda, the Nnabagereka (Queen) of Buganda, ecosystem restoration represents a revival of civility, and the "core social values of respect, dignity, responsibility and integrity among others." The Nnabagereka is known as a traditional leader and advocate of human development rooted in cultural values.

Interactive sessions provided by key GLF partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Peatlands Initiative and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) were followed by the afternoon plenary, **Restoring Africa's Landscapes: Connecting Efforts**. The plenary maintained the event's focus on tapping into some of the most authentic voices of Africa's landscapes and connecting these with the recognition and resources they need. While scrutinizing the scope of the Bonn Challenge, a diverse panel reflected on barriers to success as well as achievements to date. Panelists also reviewed some of the knowledge generated from applying ROAM (Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology) and other research and planning tools concerning social, economic and governance factors that can contribute to success.

**"I have a tree to plant! Dig, dig and plant. One voice, one song to restore our land."**



**Erica Armah  
Bra-Bulu Tandoh**  
DJ Switch

Collaborative knowledge and a clear understanding that landscapes must deliver meaningful benefits will help to ensure that the right restoration work is in the right location at the right time, participants said. "You cannot tell people to stop doing what is feeding them if you do not give them an alternative," said Basiru Isa of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development during the plenary **Restoring Africa's Landscapes – From the Ground Up**. The session analyzed the crucial AFR100 initiative, which enjoins participating African countries to significantly scale up restoration efforts, and speakers elaborated on the immense variety of potential benefits for food security, health, biodiversity conservation, climate change resilience and poverty alleviation. The session placed particular weight on the profiles of the speakers themselves: voices from "deep inside the landscape" whose lived experience of the cost of climate change gave the session its beating heart.

The landscapes of Africa – with **the world's second-largest tropical rainforest region**, the world's **largest swath of carbon-rich tropical peatlands**, great lakes that together hold **27 percent of the world's freshwater** and tropical grasslands that serve as home to some of the most diverse and rare forms of animal life on the planet – play a major role in shaping the future of human life on Earth. And in addition to the carbon sequestration powers of undisturbed peat soils, healthy forests and savannas, African ecosystems are vital for the continent's booming human population.



# Moving from inspiration to action

Epitomizing the theme of the Accra event, GLF<sub>x</sub> was unveiled as GLF's latest initiative for building independent, community chapters of the organization. This "community of communities" – as described by GLF's managing director, John Colmey – is seen as a means to empower local communities, providing the tools, technology, knowledge and support of the GLF network to help them make their landscapes more resilient.

Although tree-planting has perhaps been the most resounding image for ecosystem restoration, the GLF Accra event made it very clear that the narrative of restoration is widening substantially, as epitomized by the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030)** which sees forests joined by other ecosystems – from drylands and rangelands to mangroves, peatlands, mountains and oceans – in the restoration agenda.

"The Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is not about creating something new; it is an umbrella to get together all the efforts already ongoing," said **Elke Steinmetz**, political advisor to the German Federal Ministry for the Environment.

In response to Africa's growing population – its sub-Saharan population alone is **expected to double to 2.4 billion by 2050** – food and water security is becoming the urgent focus of restoration in the continent. This means developing new agricultural practices, adapting traditional methods to new conditions, and integrating the future of food production with solutions to social issues.

"It's not normal that we import rice and food," said **Amath Pathe Sene**, environment and climate lead for West and Central Africa at the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). "We have lands, we have water, and we need to change the way we do business with smallholder farmers," he told the plenary session **The Decade to Act**. "We need

“We have lands, we have water, and we need to change the way we do business with smallholder farmers. We need to see agriculture as opportunities... opportunities for jobs, for women and closing the gender gap, and for youth particularly.”



**Amath Pathe Sene**

Environment and Climate Lead for West and Central Africa, UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

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Many event participants stressed the importance of integrating the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration with the UN Decade on Family Farming that began in 2019. Weaving food systems with environmental efforts may serve to build a stronger platform for attracting political and financial support for smallholder producers, local communities and broad landscape restoration work.

"To synergize the two as one system, we are looking at it as [a] comprehensive agriculture ecosystem," said Nelson Godfried Agyemang, CEO of the Coalition of farmers Ghana. "We want to see initiatives be farmer-driven; for farmers to be in the driver seat."



Pastoralist Harouna Abarchi describes sustainable rangeland management at GLF Accra 2019.



# Challenges posed by global trade

Challenges facing farmers in Africa, their rural communities and their place in a fast-paced world of global trade was a theme that a numerous speakers returned to frequently. **Afriyie Obeng-Fosu**, who was named Ms. Agriculture Ghana for 2019, stressed the need for young farmers like her to have easier access to credit with low interest rates, so they can finance the purchase of essential inputs like seeds and organic fertilizers, as well as marketing and extension services. During the all-women plenary **African Women in Sustainable Business and Environment Management**, Violet Awo Amoabeng echoed Oeng-Fosu's points when describing the origins of her business **Skin Gourmet**, which sources organic shea butter – a growing commodity for the country – from northern Ghana. The shea butter is then transformed, largely by women, into handmade hair and skin products.

"Africa is dependent on natural resources for our economy," said UN Environment's Mumba. "Shea butter goes all the way from a village in Ghana to a shop in Paris with the label 'L'Oréal' [an international cosmetics brand]. That's how global we are. We're a global village."

Integrating knowledge holders, addressing imbalances in power relations and addressing governance while ensuring transparency were some key ideas flowing from a **side event** for practitioners developing effective,

sustainable landscape approaches. Operationalizing Landscape Approaches for Nature, Development and Sustainability was led by three PhD researchers heading into communities in three tropical landscapes – in Ghana, Indonesia and Zambia – on a five-year research project.

In addition to six plenaries, eight interactive sessions, four workshops, two launchpads and several pre-events were organized for GLF Accra 2019, including GLF's first Youth in Landscapes Camp, an immersive leadership program which was held over several days leading up to the main conference. Meanwhile, a GLF-organized version of a hackathon – dubbed the "HAccrathon" in recognition of the location – brought together young professionals to work on real-world problems. Participants were led by Johnmary Kavuma, CEO of Upcycle Africa, in reflections on prospective environmental movements that could emerge from Africa's young population and its capacity to mobilize local action. In all, more than 400 young people participated in GLF Accra 2019.

The **AsaseFest**, a series of workshops and focus group discussions, dealt with questions such as whether landscape restoration is a nature-based solution; making restoration work through business; and landscape restoration as a means to mainstream biodiversity conservation.



10 hours to solve the next 10 years was the theme of the GLF Accra 2019 hACCRAthon, organized by the Youth in Landscapes Initiative.

# AsaseFest

For Ghana's Ashanti people — especially the farmers among them — Asase Ya is an important figure: she's the Earth goddess of fertility.

That also made her the perfect patron for 'Asase Fest', a side event at GLF Accra 2019. Dubbed a 'restoration festival', Asase Fest offered twelve highly interactive sessions across two days, exploring ways to boost restoration practices — and to engage in ways that are 'radically inclusive' of all stakeholders within a community and its ecosystem.

AsaseFest presented a series of sessions sharing landscape restoration initiatives in various biophysical and socio-economic contexts. Most sessions emphasized the role of forests, as deforestation rates in Africa in general, and in Ghana in particular, are high, and reforestation is commonly considered an effective way of restoring landscapes and ecosystems.

The Forest Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) kicked off the festival, explaining that forest degradation in Ghana is mainly due to urbanization, infrastructural disclosure, agro-investments, illegal mining and forest fires. Restoration efforts are quickly emerging, but are challenged by the country's complex land-rights system. In their work on Ghana's Forest Investments Program, FORIG is dealing with this by mobilizing local communities and allowing them to farm under the trees, since they also have ownership of the land.

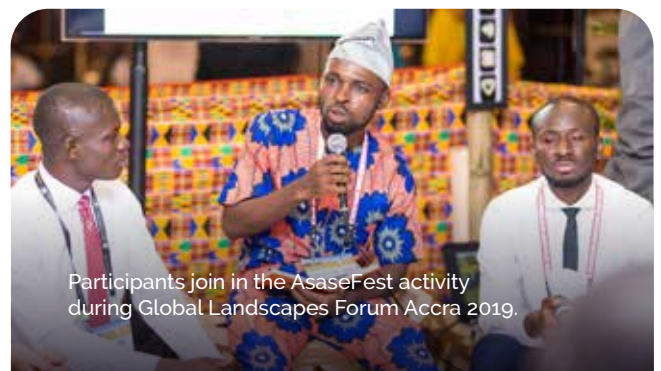
Building on FORIG's presentation, the Satoyama Initiative, together with the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), presented the landscape approach as a nature-based solution for socio-ecological production landscapes. This approach supports multi-faceted, multi-level and multi-stakeholder discussions on shared interests, goals and interventions regarding landscape restoration. PBL showed how landscape scenario planning, which compares the outcomes of various 'what if' scenarios, can facilitate this process.

“I have learned that landscape restoration is much more than just planting trees. It is about the right to land, and the right to decide which is the best tree and the best place to plant.”

**Latif Abdulai Alhassan**  
The Green Republic

The challenges of competition for land and competing land uses that PBL touched upon was further explored by the Ghanaian contingents of international environmental NGOs A Rocha and Tropenbos, who are working to address the negative impacts of mining activities in the country.

Next, the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) presented case studies of restoring degraded land after out-mining by planting bamboo and rattan, while simultaneously creating opportunities for development. FORM International — a plantation management company that employs and educates local communities surrounding their teak plantations — offered further evidence of the business case for employing rights-centered, nature-based solutions such as allowing farmers to do intercropping and involving them in fire management.



Participants join in the AsaseFest activity during Global Landscapes Forum Accra 2019.





GLF's Youth in Landscapes Initiative wrapped up the day with their own restoration experience from the Restoration Youth Camp, which ran for three days prior to GLF Accra and gathered young practitioners from across the globe.

On day two of AsaseFest, attendees dived into the pre-conditions needed for successful, inclusive and just landscape restoration efforts, through sessions led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Ghanaian tenure-security NGO COLANDEF, the World Bank, the Solidaridad Network, the Tamale University for Development Studies, the Sunyani Technical University, the Wageningen University's Youth in Landscapes group and the participants of the GLF's 'Securing Rights in Landscapes' course. "I have learned that landscape restoration is much more than just planting trees," said Latif Abdulai Alhassan of The Green Republic, a youth-driven, grassroots movement to 'make Ghana green again.' "It is about the right to land, and the right to decide which is the best tree and the best place to plant."

The participants concluded that restoration cannot be done without the radical inclusion of traditional leaders, political leaders, and youth engagement. They also determined that to achieve the goals, people need to commit and hold each other accountable, and that this could be done on the basis of a rights-based landscape approach that addresses the rights of local communities and other stakeholders to land titles, access to grazing land and information, and a voice in spatial decision making. Such an approach also addresses the duties of local actors as well as governments to secure local peoples' rights and ensure that restoration responds to local needs and demands.

In the case of Ghana, the participants established that the landscape restoration agenda needs to become a policy first, before it can be a community action agenda; and that within the process of the formulation and implementation of action plans, an understanding of land rights is fundamental.

#### **The major take-home messages from Asasefest were as follows:**

- Access to land is a right, not a gift. Wherever tenure rights and competing land uses are barriers to landscape restoration, policy and regulatory frameworks are needed in support of restoration efforts.
- In all cases, special attention has to be given to women and youth, who have particularly high stakes in landscape restoration and yet whose voices often go unheard.
- Benefit-sharing schemes need to be reliably enforced.
- Multi-stakeholder and multi-level partnerships, close collaboration and frequent communication are the ingredients for success.
- It's crucial to empower the local communities, create restoration-related jobs for them, and involve and assist them in restoration efforts.
- Connecting up restoration efforts through a landscape approach is the recipe for making restoration work for people.



AsaseFest was one of the activities during GLF Accra 2019: Restoring Africa from Above and Below.

# Youth

GLF Accra saw more than 450 young people involved in various activities, including volunteering, speaking, mentorship programs and much more. With three sessions run by youth, several youth speakers and around 50 youth volunteers, conference-goers experienced the power, passion and commitment of young people, highlighting once again the important role that youth can play in sustainable development.

Not only did the event put the spotlight on young people, but it also facilitated the beginning of key inter-sectorial and intergenerational relationships. For example, plastic recycling projects linked up with community-led initiatives, and like-minded people from different countries made valuable connections to enable collaboration on complementary activities.

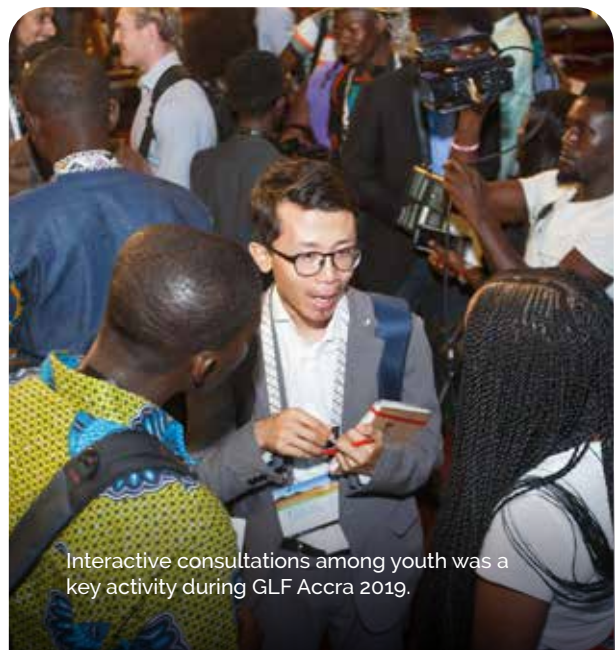
For some young people, GLF Accra was not a two-day event, but was part of a bigger program called the Youth in Landscapes Camp, led by GLF and the Youth in Landscapes Initiative. Three days before the conference, 30 young people (who were divided into two groups), left Accra and joined two different communities, one in the area of Sogakope and the other one near Winneba. Thanks to key collaborations with the Development Institute and A Rocha Ghana, participants had the opportunity to experience and learn from these organizations about community projects, and also offer ideas and suggestions based on their own areas of expertise.

The two-day camp was followed by a 10-hour 'hACCRAthon', the GLF version of a Hackathon. On October 28th, camp participants met at the FAO regional offices in Accra alongside other young people, and worked in small groups to develop ideas for engaging African youth in restoration

activities. A winning team was chosen, and team members were given the opportunity to donate US\$500 to a Ghana-based organization of their choice.

The day after GLF Accra, 50 people gathered again for two sessions. In the morning session, young people were engaged in a dialogue about youth involvement in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. In the afternoon, an intergenerational dialogue took place about a major environmental and social issue in Ghana: waste management.

The Youth in Landscapes Camp, the Haccrathon, GLF Accra and the Dialogues together provided the possibility for participants to connect with like-minded people, share knowledge as well as skills, and learn from each other. This enhanced young people's motivation and potential to create positive change in the landscapes they love and rely on.



Interactive consultations among youth was a key activity during GLF Accra 2019.



# Conclusion

A fundamental focus of GLF Accra 2019 was to send a warning that time is running out for significant change, including addressing the climate crisis. Participants agreed that action is required now – not tomorrow. That fact is very evident in Africa, as speakers in every GLF Accra session offered first-hand evidence of the climate emergency and the intolerable human cost of land degradation. Through conversations, collaborations and knowledge sharing, GLF Accra sought to articulate in human terms the warnings issued just one month earlier at GLF New York, which was held during UN Climate Week at the end of September 2019.

However, through GLF and events such as GLF Accra 2019, country- and donor-designed programs can become better informed about the success

factors behind positive local initiatives. Furthermore, by understanding local priorities and practices, they can potentially amplify the achievements of local people.

“This decade is about you and me, the environments we live in ... and it's about our very survival.”



**Musonda Mumba**

Head of UN Environment's Terrestrial Ecosystems Programme and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR)



A musical performance by SHADE, Green Republic Project Ambassador, was a highlight of GLF Accra 2019.





Sylvia Nagginda, the Nnabagereka (Queen) of Uganda's Kingdom of Buganda, addresses GLF Accra 2019.



GLF Accra 2019 hACCRAthon, organized by Youth in Landscapes, sought ways to engage African youth in landscape restoration.



Cécile Ndjebet, (right) African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests, joins a restoration and bioenergy discussion at GLF Accra 2019.



Johnmary Kavuma, CEO of Upcycle Africa, speaks at the Global Landscapes Forum Accra 2019 Plenary: Sparking A Mass Restoration Movement.



Coffee break rhythms during GLF Accra 2019.



Joselyn Dumas of the Joselyn Canfor-Dumas Foundation, is interviewed during Global Landscapes Forum Accra 2019.





Cover photo: DJ Switch urges everyone in a plenary session at the Global Landscapes Forum Accra 2019 to plant a tree.

All photos by Musah Botchway / GLF, unless otherwise credited.

Research on the Afrormosia tree in Yangambi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by Formation, Recherche, et Environnement dans la Tshopo (FORETS). Photo by Axel Fassio/CIFOR.

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

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