



“By considering forests as an integral part of wider economic and social development goals, we will make giant strides in our efforts to reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition.”

Read the interview with **Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** who will be speaking at the opening Ceremony of the XIII World Forestry Congress in Argentina.

Dr Jacques Diouf
Director-General
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
[FAO](http://www.fao.org)

Rome, FAO headquarters - “By considering forests as an integral part of wider economic and social development goals, we will make giant strides in our efforts to reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition.” Read the interview with **Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** who will be speaking at the Opening Ceremony of the XIII World Forestry Congress in Argentina.

Q. What does the theme *Forests in development – a vital balance* mean to you and to FAO?

A. The theme you have chosen for this Congress could not be more appropriate. By considering forests as an integral part of wider economic and social development goals, we will make giant strides in our efforts to reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition. The vital balance we all strive to achieve is not only in terms of the economic, environmental, social and cultural pillars of sustainable forest management. The challenge is far greater. The balance we seek is also in terms of our interface and collaboration with other sectors such as agriculture, energy, and water – where decisions affecting forests are often made. Unless proper decisions are made, required follow-up actions are taken and necessary resources are made available, the situation would worsen, including in terms of food shortages, when the population reaches an estimated 9.2 billion by 2050. The need to adopt integrated and sustainable approaches to land and forest management and address these issues has never been more urgent and opportune.

Q. Feeding the hungry may mean converting forests to agricultural land as a way to increase food production. Given what we now know about the importance of forests in mitigating climate change and water control, what do you see as a solution?

A. Agriculture and forestry do by nature contribute to climate change mitigation by acting as carbon sinks and their ability to maintain carbon stocks and could contribute more through adoption of more effective land, crop and livestock management practices.

Given that agriculture and land use changes such as deforestation contribute about one third of global greenhouse gas emissions, the potential role of these sectors in meeting the climate change challenge is great. Financial incentives for improving livestock and crop production systems, reducing deforestation and forest degradation and increasing the amount of carbon sequestered in agricultural soil can help to mitigate the effects of climate change. Support to developing countries through farmer training, capacity building of farmers' organizations, agriculture support services and technology transfer is of paramount importance.

The global hunger challenge is twofold: to secure food security for the one billion hungry people and to double food production to feed a population set to reach 9.2 billion by 2050. This can only be achieved by increasing agricultural production and productivity in the developing countries, thus the need to boost investment in water, rural infrastructure and sustainable forestry and fisheries resource management and to promote farming techniques that are better suited to the new conditions arising from climate change.