Sustainable Development
Goal 15: Life on land

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SDG 15 is concerned with how we protect and manage Earth’s resources

• Achieving sustainable use
• Addressing problems of equity, intergenerational and intragenerational
• Dealing with
  • problems of the Commons
  • effects of climate change
SDG Goal 15, Specifics

- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems
- Sustainably manage forests
- Combat desertification
- Halt and reverse
  - land degradation
  - biodiversity loss
Outline of remarks

• Why is SDG important?
• How are we doing with it?
• Prospects and challenges going forward
Why is SDG 15 Important?

• The global population is growing, but our ability to sustain it is eroding
• We are continuing to lose biodiversity at unprecedented rates, and with it the services natural systems provide us
• We are faced with a problem of the Commons, and must find pathways to cooperation in preserving our environment.
Ecosystem services
(EPA.gov)
Projected renewable water resources, 1950-2050 (m³ per capita)

Global forest cover is changing
Outline of remarks

• Why is SDG important?
• How are we doing with it?
Annual net forest gain/loss (ha) by country (1990–2015) Source: FAO FRA 2015
Brief summary

• Pace of forest loss has slowed
  But,
• Declining land productivity
• Continued biodiversity loss
• Poaching and wildlife trafficking a continuing challenge
Causes

- Habitat loss and degradation
- Climate change
- Excessive nutrient load and other forms of pollution
- Over-exploitation and unsustainable use
- Invasive alien species

(UN’s 3rd Global Biodiversity Outlook, 2010)

Expert group conclusions

• Progress positive on actions (# protected areas)
• Not good on status (red list #s, state of species)
• Monitoring framework inadequate
• Need better metrics for quality
Progress

• PROTECTED AREAS
  • Terrestrial increased from 16.5% to 19.3%
  • Freshwater from 13.8 to 16.6%
  • Mountain ecosystems from 18.1% to 20.1%

• SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT
  • Growth of about 20% /year
NEGATIVE SIGNS

• Biodiversity and protected species have declining probability of survival, especially in South Asia

• Forest coverage down overall, especially in
  • Latin America and Caribbean
  • South Asia
  • Subsaharan Africa
  • Southeast Asia
Outline of remarks

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Challenges

• Institutions
• Governance
• Social values and preferences
• Equity for indigenous people
Coupled Human and Natural Systems

Interconnected ecological, social and economic systems

Fisheries trade flows

Food security, poverty alleviation

Complex Adaptive Systems

Courtesy Jane Lubchenco
HLPF: Many of the challenges derive from conflicts among differing priorities

• How do we trade off multiple uses?
• How do we value the services we derive from natural systems?
• How can we develop cooperative agreements among nations, and within nations that
  • Maintain intergenerational and intragenerational equity?
  • Empower women and indigenous peoples?
  • Create a sustainable pathway forward?
Steps forward (HLPF)

- Evidence-based knowledge, disaggregated data
- Priority setting based on sound knowledge
- Involve multiple regional and global stakeholders
- Adjust government structures to cross boundaries
- Better monitoring and enforcement
- Systems perspective
Holistic and integrated approaches to achieving SDG 15

Ecosystem approaches require holistic thinking and cross-sectoral actions to achieve success in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems.