

# International Day of Forests, 2022

## Forests and sustainable production and consumption

### We Will Always Need Trees

Dedicated to create awareness of the importance of all types of forests and trees International Day of Forests, 2022, opens a dialogue on the theme 'Forests and sustainable production and consumption' and highlights a push for ecologically, economically and environmentally friendly ways of enjoying the benefits that forests and trees provide.

If you have written a note to a friend, had dinner with your family, enjoyed a game of chess, installed hardwood floors in your home or simply breathed in, you may not have made a connection of these everyday activities to trees and forests but they play a major part in our lives, affecting our existence in the most minute ways to the most significant. More than 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests for food, fuel, medicine and infrastructure as well as their jobs and livelihoods with millions of indigenous people depending directly on the forest to survive. Home to 80% of the world's biodiversity, forests are without a doubt one of the most important assets on earth.

Just like forests, Shea parklands sustain the livelihoods of millions of Africans directly and indirectly, particularly rural women in shea producing regions. Through picking and processing shea nuts, the shea tree offers food, medicine, cosmetics and a source of income to these women while also being an excellent hub for Carbon storage. Nearly 2 billion shea trees grow naturally on parklands, dry savannahs and forests on a strip of about 5,000 km across 21 African countries, stretching from Senegal to South Sudan. These trees grow naturally and are integrated with crops on smallholder farms, creating an [agroforestry](#) landscape that acts as a carbon sink. They sequester 1.5 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> every year reducing the harmful greenhouse gases that cause climate change and its imminent problems such as frequent and intense drought, storms, heat waves, rising sea levels, melting glaciers and warming oceans that can directly harm animals, destroy the places they live, and wreak havoc on people's livelihoods and communities.

### Why trees need protection

The growing urbanization of the world's population coupled with the increasing demand of wood and non wood forest products has led to many unsustainable methods of collecting forest products creating forest degradation, deforestation and forest fires. In the shea growing regions, the need for wood fuel and lands for commercial agriculture causes parkland fires and unnecessary tree cutting. As this goes on, one of the most dangerous effects is the release of trapped greenhouse gasses that have been sequestered, creating global issues of climate change.

While the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) put together policies, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production relating to forest raw materials and SDG 15 on

sustainable forest management practices, to mitigate the effects of these harmful practices, the forest areas continue to shrink hence emphasizing the need that more can be done to save the forests.

### **How the GSA Responds**

Every year, an estimated 7,929,417 shea trees are lost across West Africa due to climate change, lack of fallows, commercial agriculture and tree removal. If current trends continue, a projected shortage resulting in major interruption in the West African shea supply chain is anticipated by 2044.

As part of its Sustainability Program, the Global Shea Alliance (GSA) is mobilizing industry stakeholders across the globe to act now and preserve shea parklands. The three pillars, “Promote, Plant, Protect,” are mutually reinforcing. To find out more visit [www.actionforshea.com](http://www.actionforshea.com)

Simballa Sylla, the President of the GSA said *“We are working with partners across the globe to highlight the urgency to take action now to ensure the sustainability of the livelihoods of millions of women and their communities while protecting the African landscape. The survival of shea trees is critical to reversing some of the pressing climate challenges faced in this region”*

### **How You Can Honor International Day of Forests**

1. Go Paperless - Make a conscious effort to encourage people around you to go the paperless route on publications.
2. Plant a tree - Visit [www.actionforshea.com](http://www.actionforshea.com) to find out how
3. Recycle old wood into new projects, this should be both fun and safe for the environment.
4. Advocate for policies that mitigate deforestation, land degradation, tree burning and cutting.
5. Create awareness by posting and talking to others about trees, forests and good conservation practices.

### **SOURCES**

- About 60 per cent of the world’s forests – approximately 2.4 billion hectares – are primarily or partially used for the production of wood and non-wood forest products.  
[https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/UNFF13\\_BkgdStudy\\_For\\_estsSCP.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/UNFF13_BkgdStudy_For_estsSCP.pdf)

- Source for biodiversity etc

[https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our\\_focus/forests\\_practice/importance\\_forests/](https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our_focus/forests_practice/importance_forests/)