
[Tell the United Nations: Plantations are NOT forests!](#)

At the UN's World Forestry Congress in Durban, South Africa, in September, policymakers, industry and others will debate the 'sustainable future' of forests and people. But there can be no sustainable future until the UN and governments accept that real forests have nothing in common with sterile industrial tree plantations.

The world's forests are being destroyed at a breathtaking pace.

In September, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will convene the World Forestry Congress in Durban, a gathering dominated by the timber industry. FAO's approach to forests has long been marred by a fundamental mistake: They define forests as mere tree cover. Rainforests can be razed and replaced with rubber plantations, or highly biodiverse temperate and subtropical forests can be cut down to make way for sterile pine or eucalyptus plantations – yet by FAO's definition, this qualifies as 'no net deforestation'. If grasslands are ripped up or peasants' land is grabbed and plowed up by companies to establish industrial monoculture tree plantations which many call Green Deserts – FAO calls it 'afforestation'.

FAO's refusal to accept that forests are defined through their biological, social, cultural and spiritual diversity thus promotes the expansion of large-scale tree plantations at the expense of communities and real forests as well as other ecosystems. It also promotes false solutions to the climate crisis, viewing forests as mere carbon stores. Even plantations of genetically engineered eucalyptus and other trees are falsely called 'forests'. This flawed definition has been denounced by civil society groups, social movements and many scientists for many years.

During September's World Forestry Congress, Rainforest Rescue will be joining civil society organizations and social networks around the world for the [Civil Society Alternative Program](#), which will challenge the WFC's profit-oriented model. We will speak out against the real causes of forest destruction and those responsible for it.

[Please support our petition.](#)

which will be handed over to the World Forestry Congress.