

## Forest loss slows as Asian nations plant

Forest loss across the world has slowed, largely due to a switch from felling to planting in Asia. China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines have all seen their forested areas increase in size. There are also gains in North America and Europe, but forests are being lost in Latin America and Africa driven by rising demand for food and firewood. The findings come in the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) *State of the World's Forests* report. The FAO's reports formal launch recently at the UN headquarters in New York co-insides with the start of the UN's International Year of Forests. The initiative aims to raise awareness of conservation among governments and other stakeholders. The FAO is urging governments to explore ways of generating income from forests that do not depend on chopping trees down. Forests now cover 40m sq km – just less than one third of the earth's land surface. Although 52,000 sq km were lost between 2000 and 2010, that was a marked improvement on the 83,000 sq km annual figure seen during the previous decade. Europe traditionally has been the region with the biggest increase but now Asia has overtaken it. A net loss in Asia during the period 1990-2000 has been transformed into a net gain in the decade since.

Eduardo Rojas-Briales, assistant director-general of the FAO's forestry department: "China has increased its forest by three million hectares (30,000 sq km) per year – no country has ever done anything like this before, it's an enormous contribution. But we can also highlight the case of Vietnam, a small and densely populated country that has implemented very smart forest reform – or India, which has not controlled its population as China has and where living standards are even lower. Nevertheless India has achieved a modest growth of its forest area, and the Philippines have turned around things as well – so we're seeing improvement across Asia except in the weakest states." The report cites agriculture as the leading cause of deforestation in South and Central America and the Caribbean. In Africa, the need for firewood is the key factor. Madagascar's forests have been hit hard by illegal logging following political unrest. The riverbanks of the Mekong river are also under threat. Environmental groups are warning that priority needs to be given to old forests and the biodiversity they maintain in the face of climate change and growing demand for resources.

**Category: UN / Forests / Conservation**

**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

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## EXERCISES

**1. Forest loss around the world:** What three areas of the world suffer from deforestation? What do you think about deforestation? Go round the room swapping details.

**2. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

**3. Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

**4. Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

**5. The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

**6. Let's think!** Think of five countries/regions with forests decreasing in the world. Then add five regions with increased forest growth. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these. (see links on page 8)

Five countries/regions with forests decreasing	Five regions with increased forest growth
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**7. Let's discuss: Forests:** In pairs. Think of two positive and negative things you know about forests. Compare and discuss together with your partner.

Positive	Negative
1	1
2	2

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8. **Let's think!** Think of five ways to slow or stop deforestation. Then add five crops that are grown instead in the cleared area? Why? Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these. What conclusion do you come to?

Ways to stop deforestation	What is grown instead?
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

9. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Deforestation**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. **Let's talk! Radio UN:** *In pairs/groups*. You are in the Radio UN studio. One of you is the presenter; the other student(s) is/are one the people listed below. Today's interview is: **Forest loss slows as Asian nations plant**. Try to get a balanced interview. *5 minutes*.

1	Eduardo Rojas-Briales	3	Yourself
2	A journalist	4	A forest under threat!

**The teacher** will choose some people to roleplay the interview in front of the class.

11. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

**Student A**

- 1) Name the assistant director general of the FAO's forest department.
- 2) Name the report.
- 3) Name the UN department.
- 4) Which country is leading the way on replanting forests?
- 5) Name two regions under threat.

**Student B**

- 1) Which three countries received praise for increasing in size?
- 2) Where is the UN headquarters?
- 3) Why are forests decreasing in Africa?
- 4) What is happening in Madagascar? Why?
- 5) What are environmental groups warning?

12. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Forest loss in my region**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

13. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

a) Forest loss \_\_\_\_\_

b) China \_\_\_\_\_

c) Chopping down trees \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION

### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Do you burn firewood? When? Why?
- 3) Have you ever planted a tree? When? Why?
- 4) Do you think governments should plant more forests?
- 5) How do forests affect erosion?
- 6) How do forests affect carbon sequestration?
- 7) What three bits of advice would you give for saving the world's forests?
- 8) Would you live a forest or in a tree in order to save it?
- 9) Why is Asia leading the way in saving the world's forests?
- 10) Should your country plant more trees?

### Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Do you have a solution for this issue?
- 3) After this lesson will you consider planting a tree?
- 4) What forests are under threat in your country?
- 5) Who owns the forests in your country?
- 6) Are forests in your country likely to be privatised?
- 7) Do you think privatised forests are a good idea or not?
- 8) What would you do to stop illegal logging?
- 9) What alternative is there in Africa to burning wood as fuel?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

### *What is terrestrial carbon sequestration?*

Terrestrial carbon sequestration is the process through which carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere is absorbed by trees, plants and crops through photosynthesis, and stored as carbon in biomass (tree trunks, branches, foliage and roots) and soils. The term "sinks" is also used to refer to forests, croplands, and grazing lands, and their ability to sequester carbon. Agriculture and forestry activities can also release CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere. Therefore, a carbon sink occurs when carbon sequestration is greater than carbon releases over some time period.

## SPEAKING

Let's debate! The state of the world's forests

*Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1*

Forest loss slows as Asia nation's plant
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The teacher can moderate the session.

## GAP FILL: READING:

*Put the words into the gaps in the text.*

### Forest loss slows as Asian nations plant

Forest (1)\_\_\_\_\_ across the world has slowed, largely due to a switch from (2)\_\_\_\_\_ to planting in Asia. China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines have all seen their forested areas increase in size. There are also (3)\_\_\_\_\_ in North America and Europe, but forests are being lost in Latin America and Africa driven by rising (4)\_\_\_\_\_ for food and firewood. The findings come in the UN Food and (5)\_\_\_\_\_ Organisation's (FAO) *State of the World's Forests* report. The FAO's reports formal launch recently at the UN headquarters in New York co-insides with the start of the UN's International Year of (6)\_\_\_\_\_. The (7)\_\_\_\_\_ aims to raise awareness of conservation among governments and other stakeholders.

*initiative*

*demand*

*loss*

*gains*

*forests*

*felling*

*agriculture*

The FAO is urging governments to explore ways of generating (1)\_\_\_\_\_ from forests that do not depend on (2)\_\_\_\_\_ trees down. Forests now cover 40 million sq km – just less than one third of the (3)\_\_\_\_\_’s land surface. Although 52,000 sq km were lost between 2000 and 2010, that was a marked improvement on the 83,000 sq km annual figure seen during the previous decade. Europe traditionally has been the region with the biggest increase but now Asia has overtaken it. A net loss in Asia during the period 1990-2000 has been transformed into a net gain in the (4)\_\_\_\_\_ since.

*earth*

*chopping*

*weakest*

*hectares*

*income*

*enormous*

*densely*

*decade*

Eduardo Rojas-Briales, assistant director-general of the FAO's forestry department: "China has increased its forest by three million (5)\_\_\_\_\_ (30,000 sq km) per year – no country has ever done anything like this before, it's an (6)\_\_\_\_\_ contribution. But we can also highlight the case of Vietnam, a small and (7)\_\_\_\_\_ populated country that has implemented very smart forest reform – or India, which has not controlled its population as China has and where living standards are even lower. Nevertheless India has achieved a modest growth of its forest area, and the Philippines have turned around things as well – so we're seeing improvement across Asia except in the (8)\_\_\_\_\_ states."

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

*Listen and fill in the spaces.*

### Forest loss slows as Asian nations plant

Forest loss \_\_\_\_\_ slowed, largely due to a switch from felling to planting in Asia. China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines have all seen their forested areas increase in size. \_\_\_\_\_ in North America and Europe, but forests are being lost in Latin America and Africa driven by rising demand for food and firewood. The findings come in the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) *State of the World's Forests* report. The FAO's reports formal launch recently at the UN headquarters in New York co-insides with the start of the UN's International Year of Forests. The initiative aims to \_\_\_\_\_ conservation among governments and other stakeholders.

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The report cites agriculture as the leading cause of deforestation in South and Central America and the Caribbean. In Africa, the \_\_\_\_\_ the key factor. Madagascar's forests have been hit hard by illegal logging following political unrest. The riverbanks \_\_\_\_\_ are also under threat. Environmental groups are warning that priority needs to be given to old forests and the biodiversity they maintain in the face of climate change and growing \_\_\_\_\_.

## GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### Forest loss slows as Asian nations plant

Forest loss across the world has slowed, largely (1)\_\_\_ to a switch from felling to planting in Asia. China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines have all seen their forested areas increase in size. There are also gains (2)\_\_\_ North America and Europe, (3)\_\_\_ forests are being lost in Latin America and Africa driven (4)\_\_\_ rising demand for food and firewood. The findings come in the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) *State of the World's Forests* report. The FAO's reports formal launch recently (5)\_\_\_ the UN headquarters in New York co-insides with the start of the UN's International Year (6)\_\_\_ Forests. The initiative aims to raise awareness of conservation among governments (7)\_\_\_ other stakeholders.

**and**

**but**

**due**

**of**

**in**

**at**

**by**

The FAO is urging governments to explore ways of generating income (1)\_\_\_ forests (2)\_\_\_ do not depend on chopping trees down. Forests now cover 40 million sq km – (3)\_\_\_ less than one third of the earth's land surface. (4)\_\_\_ 52,000 sq km were lost between 2000 and 2010, that was a marked improvement on the 83,000 sq km annual figure seen during the previous decade. Europe traditionally has been the region with the biggest increase but now Asia has overtaken it. A net loss in Asia during the period 1990-2000 has been transformed into a net gain in the decade since.

**where**

**also**

**that**

**although**

**which**

**from**

**just**

**ever**

Eduardo Rojas-Briales, assistant director-general of the FAO's forestry department: "China has increased its forest by three million hectares (30,000 sq km) per year – no country has (5)\_\_\_ done anything like this before, it's an enormous contribution. But we can (6)\_\_\_ highlight the case of Vietnam, a small and densely populated country that has implemented very smart forest reform – or India, (7)\_\_\_ has not controlled its population as China has and (8)\_\_\_ living standards are even lower. Nevertheless India has achieved a modest growth of its forest area, and the Philippines have turned around things as well – so we're seeing improvement across Asia except in the weakest states."

## SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	conservation	11	implemented
2	awareness	12	enormous
3	although	13	hectares
4	initiative	14	improvement
5	illegal	15	population
6	weakest	16	deforestation
7	nevertheless	17	densely
8	resources	18	environmental
9	decade	19	priority
10	gain	20	forest

### LINKS

<http://www.optimumpopulation.org/blog/?p=3487>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8586701.stm>

[http://news.mongabay.com/2010/1006-fao\\_forest\\_cover.html](http://news.mongabay.com/2010/1006-fao_forest_cover.html)

<http://pressroom.ipc-undp.org/2011/forest-loss-slows-as-asian-nations-plant/>

### ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Forest loss slows as Asian nations plant: Forest **loss** across the world has slowed, largely due to a switch from **felling** to planting in Asia. China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines have all seen their forested areas increase in size. There are also **gains** in North America and Europe, but forests are being lost in Latin America and Africa driven by rising **demand** for food and firewood. The findings come in the UN Food and **Agriculture** Organisation's (FAO) *State of the World's Forests* report. The FAO's reports formal launch recently at the UN headquarters in New York co-insides with the start of the UN's International Year of **Forests**. The **initiative** aims to raise awareness of conservation among governments and other stakeholders.

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