

## International definitions of forest

**UNFCCC, 2001:** "Forest is a minimum area of land of 0.05-1.0 hectares with tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10-30 per cent with trees with the potential to reach a minimum height of 2-5 metres at maturity in situ. A forest may consist either of closed forest formations where trees of various storeys and undergrowth cover a high proportion of the ground or open forest. Young natural stands and all plantations which have yet to reach a **crown density of 10-30 per cent** or tree height of 2-5 metres are included under forest, as are areas normally forming part of the forest area which are temporarily unstocked as a result of human intervention such as harvesting or natural causes but which are expected to revert to forest.

**UNEP/CBD 2001:** Forest is a land area of more than 0.5 ha, with a **tree canopy cover of more than 10 percent**, which is not primarily under agriculture or other specific non-forest land use. In the case of young forest or regions where tree growth is climatically suppressed, the trees should be capable of reaching a height of 5 m in situ, and of meeting the canopy cover requirement.

**FAO 2006<sup>1</sup>:** Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 metres and a **canopy cover of more than 10 percent**, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agriculture or urban use.

<sup>1</sup>Explanatory note:

- Forest is determined both by the presence of trees and the absence of other predominant land uses.
- The trees should be able to reach a minimum height of 5 m in situ. Areas under reforestation that have not yet reached but are expected to reach a canopy cover of 10 percent and tree height of 5 m are included, as are temporarily unstocked areas, resulting from human intervention or natural causes, which are expected to regenerate.
- It includes areas with bamboo and palms provided that height and canopy cover criteria are met.
- It includes forest roads, firebreaks and other small open areas; forest in national parks, nature reserves and other protected areas, such as those of specific scientific, historical, cultural or spiritual interest.
- It includes windbreaks, shelterbelts and corridors of trees with an area of more than 0.5 ha and width of more than 20 m.
- It includes plantations primarily used for forestry and protection purposes, such as rubberwood plantations and cork oak stands.
- It excludes tree stands in agricultural production systems, for example fruit plantations and agroforestry systems. The term also excludes trees in urban parks and gardens.

**Kyoto** [Marrakech Accords Decision 11/CP.7, Annex 1(a)]  
[http://glossary.eea.europa.eu/EEAGlossary/K/Kyoto\\_forest](http://glossary.eea.europa.eu/EEAGlossary/K/Kyoto_forest)

The Kyoto Protocol and the Marrakech Accords allow industrial countries to discount their greenhouse gas emissions by certain land-use change and forestry activities. These activities are limited to strictly defined cases including afforestation, reforestation and deforestation since 1990, sometimes called 'Kyoto forest'. 'Kyoto Forest' is a minimum area of land of 0.05-1.0 hectares with **tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10-30 per cent** with trees with the potential to reach a minimum height of 2-5 metres at maturity in situ. A forest may consist either of closed forest formations where trees of various storeys and undergrowth cover a high portion of the ground open forest. Young natural stands and all plantations which have yet to reach a crown density of 10-30 per cent or tree height of 2-5 metres are included under forest, as are areas normally forming part of the forest area which are temporarily unstocked as a result of human intervention such as harvesting or natural causes but which are expected to revert to forest.