

# Report for ForestQuery into Global Deforestation, 1990 to 2016

ForestQuery is on a mission to combat deforestation around the world and to raise awareness about this topic and its impact on the environment. The data analysis team at ForestQuery has obtained data from the World Bank that includes forest area and total land area by country and year from 1990 to 2016, as well as a table of countries and the regions to which they belong.

The data analysis team has used SQL to bring these tables together and to query them in an effort to find areas of concern as well as areas that present an opportunity to learn from successes.

## 1. GLOBAL SITUATION

According to the World Bank, the total forest area of the world was 41,282,694.9 sq. km in 1990. As of 2016, the most recent year for which data was available, that number had fallen to 39,958,245.9 sq. km, a loss of 1,324,449 sq. km, or 3.21%.

The forest area lost over this time period is slightly more than the entire land area of Peru listed for the year 2016 (which is 1,280,000 sq. km).

## 2. REGIONAL OUTLOOK

In 2016, the percentage of the total land area of the world designated as forest was 31.38%. The region with the highest relative forestation was Latin America & Caribbean, with 46.16%, and the region with the lowest relative forestation was Middle East & North Africa, with 2.07% forestation.

In 1990, the percentage of the total land area of the world designated as forest was 32.42%. The region with the highest relative forestation was Latin America & Caribbean, with 51.03%, and the region with the lowest relative forestation was Middle East & North Africa, with 1.78% forestation.

Table 2.1: Percent Forest Area by Region, 1990 & 2016:

Region	1990 Forest Percentage	2016 Forest Percentage
Latin America & Caribbean	51.03	46.16
Europe & Central Asia	37.28	38.04
North America	35.65	36.04
Sub-Saharan Africa	30.67	28.79
East Asia & Pacific	25.78	26.36
South Asia	16.51	17.51
Middle East & North Africa	1.78	2.07
<b>World</b>	<b>32.42</b>	<b>31.38</b>

The only regions of the world that decreased in percent forest area from 1990 to 2016 were Latin America & Caribbean (dropped from 51.03% to 46.16%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (30.67% to 28.79%). All other regions actually increased in forest area over this time period. However, the drop in forest area in the two aforementioned regions was so large, the percent forest area of the world decreased over this time period from 32.42% to 31.38%.

### 3. COUNTRY-LEVEL DETAIL

#### A. SUCCESS STORIES

There is one particularly bright spot in the data at the country level, China. This country actually increased in forest area from 1990 to 2016 by 527,229.1 sq. km. It would be interesting to study what has changed in this country over this time to drive this figure in the data higher. The country with the next largest increase in forest area from 1990 to 2016 was the United States, but it only saw an increase of 79,200 sq. km, much lower than the figure for China.

China and the United States are of course very large countries in total land area, so when we look at the largest *percent* change in forest area from 1990 to 2016, we aren't surprised to find a much smaller country listed at the top. Iceland's forest area increased by 213.66% from 1990 to 2016.

## B. LARGEST CONCERNS

Which countries are seeing deforestation to the largest degree? We can answer this question in two ways. First, we can look at the absolute square kilometer decrease in forest area from 1990 to 2016. The following 3 countries had the largest decrease in forest area over the time period under consideration:

Table 3.1: Top 5 Amount Decrease in Forest Area by Country, 1990 & 2016:

Country	Region	Absolute Forest Area Change (sq. km)
Brazil	Latin America & Caribbean	–541,510
Indonesia	East Asia & Pacific	–282,194
Myanmar	East Asia & Pacific	–107,234
Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa	–106,506
Tanzania	Sub-Saharan Africa	–102,320

The second way to consider which countries are of concern is to analyze the data by percent decrease.

Table 3.2: Top 5 Percent Decrease in Forest Area by Country, 1990 & 2016:

Country	Region	Pct Forest Area Change
Togo	Sub-Saharan Africa	–75.45%
Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa	–61.80%
Uganda	Sub-Saharan Africa	–59.13%
Mauritania	Sub-Saharan Africa	–46.75%
Honduras	Latin America & Caribbean	–45.03%

When we consider countries that decreased in forest area percentage the most between 1990 and 2016, we find that four of the top 5 countries on the list are in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa. The countries are Togo, Nigeria, Uganda, and Mauritania. The 5th country on the list is Honduras, which is in the Latin America & Caribbean region.

From the above analysis, we see that Nigeria is the only country that ranks in the top 5 both in terms of absolute square kilometer decrease in forest as well as percent decrease in forest area from 1990 to 2016. Therefore, this country has a significant opportunity ahead to stop the decline and hopefully spearhead remedial efforts.

### C. “QUARTILES”

*Note: This report template and the instructions for the project as a whole do not seem to understand the meaning of quartiles. Properly grouping the countries by quartiles of forestation percentage should result in four groups of exactly 51 countries each, by the definition of what quartiles are. However, the task required here seems instead to be grouping the countries by forestation percentage with breakpoints at 25%, 50%, and 75%, which is a different concept altogether. Thus, I am putting the term “quartile” in quotation marks throughout this section to indicate that it does not actually refer to a quartile according to the proper definition of that term.*

Table 3.3: Count of Countries Grouped by Forestation Percent “Quartiles,” 2016:

“Quartile”	Number of Countries
0–25%	85
25–50%	72
50–75%	38
75–100%	9

The largest number of countries in 2016 were found in the bottom (0–25%) “quartile”.

There were nine (9) countries in the top “quartile” in 2016. These are countries with a very high percentage of their land area designated as forest. The following is a list of countries and their respective forest land, denoted as a percentage.

Table 3.4: Top “Quartile” Countries, 2016:

Country	Region	Pct Designated as Forest
Suriname	Latin America & Caribbean	98.26%
Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	East Asia & Pacific	91.86%
Gabon	Sub-Saharan Africa	90.04%
Seychelles	Sub-Saharan Africa	88.41%
Palau	East Asia & Pacific	87.61%
American Samoa	East Asia & Pacific	87.50%
Guyana	Latin America & Caribbean	83.90%
Lao PDR	East Asia & Pacific	82.11%
Solomon Islands	East Asia & Pacific	77.86%

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

*Write out a set of recommendations as an analyst on the ForestQuery team.*

- *What have you learned from the World Bank data?*
- *Which countries should we focus on over others?*

## 5. APPENDIX: SQL Queries Used