

Bad news/good news: Land-use change in the era of globalization

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A central challenge facing the planet is how to preserve forests while providing enough food to feed the world's population. It's really a "bad news/good news" story, says Eric Lambin, professor of environmental Earth system science and senior fellow at the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford; and professor of geography at the University of Louvain.

The bad news: The world might run out of productive agricultural land by 2050, thanks to rising global demand for food, biofuels, and forest products, along with land degradation and urbanization. The good news: A handful of [developing countries](#) – including Vietnam, India and Costa Rica – have actually increased their [forest](#) cover in recent decades while enhancing food production. The success of these countries suggests that innovation, sound land-use policy and good governance can actually prevent hunger and restore forestland, even in an era of economic globalization.

Lambin's findings will be presented on Friday, Feb. 18, at the symposium, "Telecoupling of Human and Natural Systems," at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) at the Washington Convention Center, Room 140B.

His AAAS talk, "Land-use changes in a globalization era," comes on the heels of his study, "Global land-use change, economic globalization and the looming land scarcity," published the week of Feb. 14 in the online edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Provided by Stanford University

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