

Climate change briefing

Biofuels, nature and people

Implications for environments and livelihoods

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While developed countries need to reduce their energy use to limit greenhouse gas emissions, 1.6 billion people still lack access to modern energy sources. To meet the rising energy demand while limiting the use of fossil fuels, many countries are promoting the production and use of biofuels.

However, biofuels, particularly those leading to deforestation or land degradation, can result in increased greenhouse gas emissions as well as severe consequences for biodiversity and livelihoods.

- Biofuels are liquid fuels derived from biomass, which are being promoted as a substitute for petroleum-based fuels in powering machines, including transport vehicles.
- Whether biofuels have a positive or negative impact on greenhouse gas emissions, ecosystems and livelihoods,



- Greenhouse gas emissions over the full "root to tank" lifecycle of a biofuel increase substantially with the use of fossil-fuel powered machinery, the application of fertilisers or damaging farming practices. Deforestation and other land use changes increase greenhouse gas emissions even more significantly.

- Production of first generation biofuels is increasing in tropical