

GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF LAND USE

Introduction: Land-use activities-whether converting natural landscapes for human use or changing management practices on human-dominated lands-have transformed a large proportion of the planet's land surface. By clearing forests, practicing subsistence agriculture, intensifying farmland production, or expanding urban centers, human actions are changing the world's landscapes in pervasive ways (1, 2) (Fig. 1). Although land-use practices vary greatly across the world, their ultimate outcome is generally the same: the acquisition of natural resources for immediate human needs, often at the expense of degrading environmental conditions. Several decades of research have revealed the environmental impacts of land use throughout the globe, ranging from changes in atmospheric composition to the extensive modification of Earth's ecosystems (3-6).\

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