



**International Peatland Society Congress**

May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

***Theme: Challenges - food security and what we can do about them***

**GPI Presentation: The great challenges of mankind, food security and what we can do about them**

**Abstract**

Although covering less than three percent of land surface area, peatlands store more than all of the world's forests combined.

However, the conversion of peatlands to other land uses, particularly agriculture, is responsible for and estimated five to six percent of total anthropogenic GHG emissions globally. Despite their critical importance to biodiversity, and ecosystem services such as pollution and flood control and water quality, peatlands continue to be degraded, drained and converted to other land uses across the globe. Conversely, peatlands protection, conservation and restoration provide a very cost-effective pathway to prevent ongoing release of GHG emissions while moving toward efforts to build back better and create green jobs.

In the current climate emergency, how do we balance the impacts of food production, with those associated with the loss of peatlands? What is the world thinking about for the future of food security? In order to address the long-term stability of our climate we need to prioritize the conservation and restoration of peatlands globally.

Only by acknowledging the incredible role that peatlands play in the carbon cycle, biodiversity, and ecosystem service delivery, and moving to prioritizing the benefits that conservation and restoration will we be able to safeguard food systems from the climate crisis and continue to improve the resilience of food systems for the health and wellbeing of future generations.