

## **Inputs to the COP30 Presidency Roadmaps**

### **II. Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030**

Azerbaijan supports the development of the COP30 Presidency roadmap aimed at accelerating progress toward halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. In Azerbaijan's view, the roadmap should prioritize practical and implementation-oriented pathways that recognize the diversity of national forest conditions and respective national circumstances, while supporting countries in expanding and improving forest ecosystems through conservation, restoration and sustainable management.

This approach should complement ongoing efforts to halt deforestation and forest degradation, particularly in countries with significant forest resources and potential.

Recent global initiatives, including the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use (2021), have played an important role in mobilizing political commitment toward halting and reversing deforestation. The COP30 roadmap provides an opportunity to build on existing efforts and further support countries in translating global outcomes into practical and nationally determined actions.

The roadmap could also refer to the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, which sets out the Global Forest Goals and promotes afforestation and ecosystem restoration, in a manner that complements actions under the UNFCCC, including nationally determined contributions and land-use sector measures.

At the same time, particular attention should be given to countries with limited forest cover, where priorities should include afforestation, landscape restoration and sustainable land management.

#### **Barriers and challenges**

Efforts to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation face multiple structural challenges that vary significantly across regions and national circumstances.

In many regions, forests are subject to competing land-use pressures, including agricultural expansion, infrastructure development and urbanization. In such contexts, economic incentives for land conversion may exceed the short-term benefits associated with forest conservation and sustainable management.

At the same time, a number of countries have demonstrated that it is possible to slow, halt and even reverse deforestation through a combination of improved land-use policies, increased agricultural productivity and targeted forest protection measures. In this context, the roadmap could promote more targeted and context-specific approaches that support sustainable agricultural systems and efficient land use.

Climate change is also increasingly acting as a driver of forest degradation, through droughts, rising temperatures, wildfires and pest outbreaks, placing additional stress on forest ecosystems and reducing their resilience.

Limited access to finance, as well as gaps in institutional and technical capacity, and lack of awareness, continue to constrain the ability of many countries to implement large-scale restoration programmes, strengthen forest governance and develop effective monitoring and reporting systems.

In addition, challenges related to data availability, monitoring methodologies and long-term land-use planning can further affect the effectiveness and transparency of forest-related actions.

For countries with limited forest cover, achieving measurable increases in forest area presents specific challenges, as afforestation and ecosystem restoration require sustained investment, appropriate land management and long timeframes before delivering full ecological and climate benefits.

### **Opportunities for accelerating forest action**

Accelerating progress on halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation will require integrated and landscape-based approaches that link climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation, water resource management and sustainable land use.

Expanding afforestation and ecosystem restoration initiatives can make a significant contribution to raising awareness, enhancing climate resilience, strengthening carbon sinks and improving ecosystem services, while supporting biodiversity objectives.

Strengthening national forest monitoring systems, including through the use of digital tools, remote sensing technologies and transparent reporting mechanisms, will be essential to improve forest governance and support the tracking of progress under nationally determined contributions and land-use sector reporting. The roadmap could promote the supporting of countries to develop national forest monitoring systems, including through the use of modern technologies such as satellite observation, digital forest inventories and transparent reporting platforms.

This will also support countries to develop strong legislative systems that effectively regulate deforestation while promoting sustainable afforestation aligned with local, social and environmental conditions.

Promoting sustainable forest-based economic activities, including agroforestry, sustainable timber production and non-timber forest products, can create long-term economic incentives that support forest protection while contributing to rural development and livelihoods.

Integrated land-use planning that aligns forestry, agriculture, biodiversity and climate objectives will be critical to addressing the underlying drivers of deforestation and land degradation.

Global deforestation is also linked to international trade and global supply chains, where demand for agricultural and forest-based commodities can drive land-use change in producing countries. In this regard, addressing deforestation requires not only action at the national level, but also greater efforts to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns across global markets.

### **Importance of restoration and afforestation**

Azerbaijan considers that the roadmap should reflect the diversity of national forest conditions, including differences in forest cover, ecological characteristics and land-use pressures.

For countries with limited forest cover, expanding forest ecosystems through afforestation and ecological restoration represents an important and necessary contribution to global climate and biodiversity objectives. Such efforts can enhance carbon sequestration,

strengthen natural sinks, improve soil protection and water regulation, and increase overall landscape resilience, while also supporting sustainable rural development and livelihoods.

At the same time, afforestation and restoration initiatives require long-term investment, technical expertise and sustained international cooperation. Their outcomes often materialize over extended timeframes, requiring consistent policy support and predictable financing.

These efforts are aligned with the objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly targets related to ecosystem restoration and the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems. They also contribute to achieving land degradation neutrality under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

### **Strengthening international cooperation and finance**

Achieving the global objective of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation will require strengthened international cooperation and enhanced support for implementation.

In this context, the roadmap could emphasize the importance of scaling up financial resources, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building to support countries in implementing forest conservation, restoration and sustainable management programmes.

Strengthening partnerships among governments, international organizations, research institutions and local communities can further support the development and dissemination of innovative approaches to sustainable forest management.

The roadmap could also recognize the value of linking forest protection and restoration efforts with sustainable development, inclusive rural transformation and sustainable agricultural and land-use practices.

Finally, the roadmap could underline that progress will heavily depend not only on additional pledges, but also on the effective delivery of existing financial commitments.