



Women Centered Climate Finance and Forest Governance

Practical Pathways for Deforestation Reversal

Contribution to:

A) Halting and Reversing Deforestation by 2030

Submitted by CE-Banking on Women in Africa (CEBOWA)
An initiative by Cullinan Edge (CE)



1. Introduction from Policy to Practice

Leading Into the Marathon: Our COP30 Commitment in Action

Cullinan Edge through its initiatives including **CE-Banking On Women in Africa (CEBOWA)** and the **Save Mt. Kenya Forest campaign** is committed to translating global climate commitments into tangible, locally grounded action.

In Kenya, forest cover stands at approximately 7.4% of total land area, with deforestation occurring at an estimated rate of 0.12% annually- posing significant risk to biodiversity, water systems and rural livelihoods. At the same time, women- who constitute nearly half of the smallholder agricultural workforce-face persistent structural barriers, including limited land tenure security and limited access to climate finance. These constraints reduce their ability to participate effectively in sustainable land management and climate solutions.

In response, CEBOWA is advancing a **Women centered, climate financed-enabled model** that integrates forest conservation, climate-smart agriculture and inclusive economic empowerment. This approach aligns with Gender-responsive climate action frameworks under the UNFCCC and contributes to Mitigation, Adaptation and Sustainable Development objectives across Kenya's forest and agricultural sectors.

A key implementation platform is **Save Mt. Kenya Forest Marathon**, which serves as a multistakeholder mobilization mechanism that connects policy commitments to community level action- demonstrating scalable pathways for climate finance, conservation and inclusive development.

By bridging policy commitment and grassroots implementation, we are fostering measurable change-enhancing forest conservation, increasing Women's financial inclusion and building resilient ecosystems that serve both people and the planet.

PART II : Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

2. Key Barriers

- Gender disparities in land ownership and resource access-Insecure land tenure and resource rights, particularly for women
- Limited access to sustainable financing for conservation and restoration
- Economic pressures driving unsustainable forest use- ongoing deforestation driven by agricultural expansion
- Weak integration of indigenous and local knowledge systems
- Gaps in enforcement, governance and cross sector coordination

3. Enabling Factors and Levers

- Strengthening policy implementation and local community-led forest governance models with strong participation of women
- Agroforestry and Climate-smart agriculture systems that reduce pressure on forests
- Blended finance and microfinance solutions for conservation-linked livelihoods
- Integration of indigenous knowledge into forest management practices- scaling community-led forest restoration and conservation models
- Strengthened policy alignment across forestry, agriculture and climate sectors

4. Experiences and Best Practices: Implementation in Kenya

Through its integrated model, CEBOWA is advancing:

- Forest conservation and landscape restoration initiatives led by local communities
- Women economic empowerment through sustainable livelihoods
- Access to green finance for conservation-linked enterprises, reforestation efforts and agroforestry initiatives
- Multi-stakeholder engagement across community, private sector and policy actors

The **Save Mt. Kenya Forest Marathon** serves as a replicable model that:

- a) Mobilizes public and private sector participation
- b) Channels funding into conservation efforts
- c) Raises awareness on forest protection and climate resilience
- d) Demonstrates how large-scale engagement platforms can support ecosystem restoration



5. Equity and Inclusion Considerations

Effective forest conservation must:

- Recognize and protect the rights of indigenous people and local communities
- Ensure women's full participation and leadership
- Align with local socio-economic realities
- Promote inclusive benefit-sharing mechanisms-addressing barriers to land tenure and financial access

6. Recommendations to the COP30 presidency Roadmaps

1. Integrate Gender-responsive climate finance mechanisms for locally-led restoration initiatives
2. Strengthen land and tenure rights frameworks, particularly for women
3. Strengthen accountability mechanisms for deforestation commitments
4. Promote fintech and digital innovation to scale gender-responsive forest financing mechanisms-expand access to climate finance
5. Support integrated models linking finance, livelihoods and ecosystem conservation
6. Scale community-led implementation approaches through global partnerships
7. Invest in data systems and evidence generation on gender-climate linkages
8. Enable locally adapted, differentiated transition pathways for developing economies

Conclusion

This submission highlights the importance of **bridging global climate policy with locally-led implementation to halt and reverse deforestation.**

CEBOWA's model demonstrates that integrating **gender equality, financial inclusion and community-driven approaches** can accelerate:

The halting and reversal of deforestation and forest degradation

CEBOWA stands ready to contribute to the operationalization of the COP30 Presidency Roadmaps through scalable, inclusive and impact -driven solutions.

