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Submission by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in relation to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) welcomes the opportunity to share views on the COP30 Presidency *Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030*.

The Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 – 2 °C above pre-industrial levels will be out of reach without the world's forests. Protected, restored and sustainably managed forests store and sequester carbon, stabilize local and regional climate through biophysical processes, and provide a host of biodiversity benefits and other ecosystem services that help enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of people and ecosystems. Parties recognized the key role of forests in climate action in the first global stocktake (GST) of the Paris Agreement, highlighting the importance of 'enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030'[1].

State of the world's forests

According to the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2025[2], forests cover 4.14 billion hectares, or 32 percent, of the Earth's surface. Nearly half (45 percent) of the world's forest is found in the tropics. An estimated 489 million ha of forest has been lost globally through deforestation since 1990, but the rate of loss has slowed. Deforestation was estimated at 10.9 million ha annually in 2015-2025, down from 13.6 million ha annually in 2000-2015 and 17.6 million ha per year in 1990-2000. Forest expansion slowed from 9.88 million ha per year in 2000-2015 to 6.68 million ha per year in the decade to 2025.

Although deforestation has declined globally, forests face many disturbances that reduce their capacity to provide ecosystem services. On average, 261 million ha of land was affected by fire annually in 2007-2019; almost half (49 percent) of which was forest. Furthermore, insects, diseases and severe weather damaged about 41 million ha of forests in 2020, mainly in temperate and boreal domains. To meet the goal of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, multiple factors resulting in conversion of forest to other land uses and impacting their health and vitality should be addressed. There is a significant opportunity to scale up forest and landscape restoration efforts to recover ecosystem functions, enhance carbon sequestration, and restore productivity across degraded forests and landscapes.

The emerging bioeconomy will also impact forests and the forest sector. A forthcoming FRA Special Study indicates that increased urban adoption of engineered wood products in building construction could increase future demand for such products by 50-250 million m^3 globally, depending on the rate of adoption.

Barriers and integrated solutions to halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation

Despite important progress in reducing deforestation, it is still too high given the outsized importance of forests for climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable

[1] UNFCCC. 2023. Outcome of the First Global Stocktake. Decision 1/CMA.5. In: UNFCCC [online]. Bonn. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/1_CMA.5.pdf

[2] FAO. 2025. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025*. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd6709en

development. Deforestation persists because governance, economic incentives and social systems remain misaligned. It is driven largely by pressures outside the forest sector, including unsustainable agriculture. Critical barriers include: economic incentives that favour deforestation; rising demand for agricultural commodities; lack of finance for standing forests and the people who steward them; limited investment and enabling conditions for large-scale forest and landscape restoration; poverty and limited livelihood alternatives; fragmented policies and cross-sector misalignment; limited institutional and enforcement capacity; limited traceability of key supply chains; and power imbalances and exclusion, particularly of marginalized communities.

Furthermore, Indigenous Peoples and local communities are key stewards of global forests, managing and holding about a quarter of the world's forests. An estimated 1.1 billion ha of forests globally are managed and held under collective and customary governance systems., with Indigenous Peoples' territories accounting for a quarter of the world's forests. However, a significant portion of these forest lands and territories lack secure tenure rights, creating a critical barrier to effective forest governance and long-term sustainability[3].

Through a cross-sectoral approach to supporting countries, FAO recommends seven key systemic shifts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation[4].

1) Strengthening land and forest governance
   - Promote integrated landscape approaches to align policies across sectors and balance conservation and development objectives.
   - Enhance compliance with national legislation and international frameworks to prevent illegal deforestation and timber harvesting.
   - Secure and recognize local rights by fostering continuous strong local institutions, inclusive participation and decision-making, and transparent data for informed decisions and accountability.

2) Scaling sustainable forestry and agricultural production models
   - Design and implement integrated, landscape-level sustainable production systems, combining agroecology, agroforestry, and climate-smart practices.
   - Promote and scale sustainable wood and woodfuel value chains and the adoption of good agriculture practices and technologies through certification, training and extension services, and strengthening local production practices.
   - Restore and reintegrate degraded forests and agricultural lands into productive use to expand sustainable production without further forest conversion.
   - Optimize sustainable biomass use across agricultural systems by reducing waste, enhancing circularity, and creating off-farm economic opportunities.

3) Promoting the consumption and trade of responsibly produced forestry and agricultural commodities
   - Promote and enforce responsible business conduct for sustainably-managed timber and agricultural commodities decoupled from deforestation.
   - Align and integrate trade and demand-side policies to incentivize responsible commodity production and foster consumer demand.
   - Reduce food loss and waste across value chains.
   - Transition toward sustainable livestock diets and sourcing practices to reduce environmental impacts and land-use pressures.

4) Creating incentives for standing, healthy forests and related ecosystem services
   - Strengthen and scale sustainable forest management community-based forestry to enhance economic value of forests while maintaining ecosystem integrity.

[3] FAO, ILC, CIRAD. 2026. *The Status of Land Tenure and Governance*. Rome and Paris. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd8473en

[4] Adapted from Solutions-Tree: Halting deforestation through sustainable agrifood systems transformation (Francais, Español)

- Develop payment for ecosystem services and other innovative financial instruments to reward forest conservation and restoration.
- Mobilize and expand financial incentives—such as sustainable investment, credit schemes, environmentally conditioned cash transfers, and blended finance—to support forest protection and sustainable management.
- Reform and align fiscal policies, including repurposing agricultural subsidies, enhancing public expenditure analysis, and introducing ecological taxation.

5) Enhancing availability and use of data for better-informed decision-making.
   - Strengthen and scale data capacities and systems through improved monitoring and early warning systems, interoperable platforms, traceability systems, and open data approaches.
   - Enhance and ensure data transparency, availability, reliability, and relevance.
   - Sustain and invest in long-term data infrastructure and partnerships.
   - Strengthen community-led monitoring and data systems.

6) Improving rural livelihoods and promoting equity and inclusion, especially for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
   - Recognize and secure community tenure rights through legal and policy reforms, boundary demarcation, and strengthened land and forest registries.
   - Enhance community-led governance and management of forests by supporting representative and accountable local institutions with appropriate technical capacities.
   - Bolster livelihoods and forest-based economics by promoting sustainable use, local enterprises and integration into national bioeconomies.
   - Facilitate local access to finance by addressing regulatory, fiduciary and access barriers, strengthening financial inclusion and enabling equitable participation in climate finance mechanisms.

7) Addressing forest disturbances, such as wildfires and pest and disease outbreaks, by promoting a shift from reaction and response to prevention and preparedness.
   - Implement integrated fire management[5] and integrated pest management[6], which prioritize early warning, risk reduction and community-led approaches.
   - Invest in post-disturbance forest restoration and recovery to rebuild ecosystem resilience.
   - Bolster international cooperation through regional networks and global initiatives, such as the Global Fire Management Hub[7], hosted by FAO.

Undertaking all actions will require long term predictable finance at a scale and speed well above current levels. Bridging the forest finance gap requires a strategic mix of domestic and international sources, both public and private. Domestic public funds and supply-chain finance remain central to supporting forests and rural livelihoods. International climate and biodiversity finance is essential to enable and catalyze the transition from unsustainable land-use practices towards sustainable management and conservation. In this context, initiatives such as the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) and Jurisdictional REDD+ are complimentary solutions, which together can address many barriers to halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.

Opportunities for the Roadmap

The COP30 Presidency strategically leveraged the first GST to underpin its Action Agenda related to forests, and the *Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation* provides an important avenue for taking this forward. Keeping the *Roadmap* anchored in the UNFCCC process would ensure that forests remain

[5] FAO. 2024. *Integrated fire management voluntary guidelines – Principles and strategic actions*. Second edition. Forestry Working Paper, No. 41. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1090en

[6] FAO. 2024. *Guide to implementation of phytosanitary standards in forestry.* Second edition. FAO Forestry Paper, No. 164. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3046en

[7] https://www.fao.org/partnerships/fire-hub/en

high on the global climate agenda, while linking to other relevant international processes, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and areas of collaboration between the Rio Conventions on Integrated Land Use Planning[8]. The *Roadmap* can be used to guide development of the second GST by: synthesizing the latest science on the critical role of forests in climate action; highlighting the role of forests in national climate and biodiversity policies and plans; and drawing concrete lessons from countries, including Brazil, which have made meaningful progress towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation through innovative policy mixes, strong political will and multistakeholder engagement.

The *Roadmap* can also support acceleration of the COP30 Presidency's forestry flagship initiatives, namely the TFFF and the Call to Action on Integrated Fire Management and Wildfire Resilience[9]. It can underpin Plans to Accelerate Solutions developed in the context of the Global Climate Action Agenda, including on REDD+, the Global Fire Management Hub, TERRA – Together for the Expansion of Resilient and Restorative Agroecology and Agroforestry[10], Resilient Agriculture Investment for Net Zero Land Degradation (RAIZ)[11], and Building for Forests: Accelerating Wood-Based Construction for Climate, Forests and Livelihoods.

Building on the COP30 Intergovernmental Land and Tenure commitment[12], there is an opportunity to leverage the *Roadmap* to recognize, support and reward Indigenous Peoples and local communities as key allies in forest-based climate action, with the understanding that the goal of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 cannot be achieved without the stewards of the world's forests.

Finally, links can be made between the *Roadmap* and the United Nations system-wide response to the United Nations Secretary-General's 2019 call for "Turning the Tide on Deforestation," which is led by FAO and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and has benefited from collaboration among UN entities, including through: 1) the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and its Joint Initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation (UNFCCC, UN Development Programme-UNDP, FAO and UNEP)[13]; 2) the UN-REDD Programme (UNEP, UNDP and FAO), which recently released its updated 2026-2030 Strategy[14] to support ambitious and concerted actions to halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030; 3) the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, a global movement and action on the ground to help prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems; and 4) vertical funds like the Green Climate Fund (GCF), including its REDD+ results-based payments, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) impact programs for forest regions.

Regional examples to scale solutions for decoupling agricultural production from deforestation, such as the Addis Action Roadmap[15], recently developed through an inclusive, country-led process facilitated by FAO and the Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative (ASCI) and adopted by 10 African countries, can serve as an important input for this process. Similar roadmaps are under discussion in Latin America and Asia and the Pacific.

Final remarks

Drawing on its technical and operational expertise, FAO stands ready to support the COP30 Presidency in the development and implementation of the *Roadmap* to support practical and scalable solutions that enable countries to translate commitments on halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 into effective and lasting action.

[8] Integrated Land Use Planning | Rio Conventions
[9] https://www.fao.org/partnerships/fire-hub/resources/call-to-action-on-integrated-fire-management-and-wildfire-resilience/en
[10] https://www.fao.org/forestry/newsroom/news-detail/cop30--flagship-terra-platform-to-upscale-global-agroecology-and-agroforestry/en
[11] https://www.fao.org/food-agriculture-sustainable-transformation-partnership/flagship-programmes/raiz/call-to-action/en
[12] Intergovernmental Land and Tenure commitment
[13] Turning the tide on deforestation
[14] https://www.un-redd.org/about/our-strategy
[15] From Vision to Action – Roadmap for Sustainable Forests and Agriculture in Africa (Addis Action Roadmap): https://arcg.is/09L9y91