Forest Declaration Assessment submission:

COP30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

Supporting near-term implementation of GST1 paragraphs 33–34

1. Introduction

The Forest Declaration Assessment welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap on halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. We commend the Presidency for launching an inclusive process to identify practical options for accelerating near-term implementation of the Global Stocktake outcome (paras. 33–34/GST1).

This submission draws on two recent publications developed under the 2030 Global Forest Vision, and coordinated by the Forest Declaration Assessment: *Priority Actions for Governments* and *Priority Actions for Deforestation- and Conversion-Free (DCF) Finance*. These synthesize the best available evidence and reflect a broad consensus across civil society, research organizations, and practitioners on the most critical systemic barriers that are impeding progress, and the corresponding levers that must be acted upon to accelerate progress toward the world's 2030 forest goals.

Developed through extensive expert consultation, the recommended actions are intended as practical levers that governments, financial supervisors, and financial institutions can advance immediately. Rather than introducing new frameworks, this submission highlights a curated set of high-impact, immediately actionable measures that directly respond to the Roadmap's objectives: overcoming key barriers, activating implementation levers, and scaling proven solutions.

2. Recommended priority actions to elevate in the Roadmap

The COP30 Presidency Roadmap can add value by concentrating political attention and resources on a limited set of system-level levers that unlock multiple benefits across countries and sectors. Based on the Forest Declaration Assessment's evidence base, we recommend elevating the following priority actions for governments, financial supervisors, and financial institutions across four key clusters of opportunity: (A) Ambition & planning, (B) Rights & governance, (C) Trade & real economy incentives, and (D) Finance & financial systems.

A. Ambition & planning

Why this is a systemic barrier:

National action plans under the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity are powerful tools to signal leadership and countries' willingness to change their governance arrangements to meet international goals. Yet many countries have yet to align their NDCs, NAPs, and NBSAPs with the 2030 forest goals — weakening implementation, limiting investment signals, and delaying the transition to sustainable land-use economies.

Corresponding actions:

- **Rally around forest goals with renewed ambition, integrating them into national climate and biodiversity plans.** Countries should strengthen NDCs by including emission targets for sectors linked to deforestation and ecosystem conversion — including agriculture and mining — and ensure that NBSAPs include national targets and measures that address the relevant drivers of deforestation. Building on the Global Stocktake decision and the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, COP30 outcomes should explicitly reaffirm commitments to phase out deforestation, forest degradation, and ecosystem conversion and name the levers and solutions to end deforestation by 2030.

- **Develop inclusive national roadmaps and sectoral strategies for implementation.** Countries with NDCs, NBSAPs, and NAPs already defined should develop or update national roadmaps and sectoral strategies based on inclusive multi-stakeholder processes, with time-bound targets and scientifically robust definitions and indicators. These must establish transparent and participatory monitoring systems to track progress against national targets and socio-economic impacts.

- **Align fiscal policy and economic planning with DCF goals.** Many fiscal frameworks still incentivize deforestation through harmful subsidies, tax misalignments, and investments in harmful practices. Reforming fiscal policy to align with deforestation and conversion goals — embedding forest-related risks and DCF targets into public spending, taxation, and borrowing — can redirect private investment toward sustainable activities, strengthen resilience, and support global climate and biodiversity targets.

B. Rights and governance

Why this is a systemic barrier:

Strong governance — encompassing equitable and clear legal frameworks, fair and effective law enforcement, inclusive decision-making, and mechanisms for

transparency and accountability — is essential for the sustainable management of forests and natural resources. Yet governance of land-use and forests has declined in many parts of the world, with resource constraints hindering enforcement, political shifts reducing civil society space, and increased attacks on environmental and human rights defenders.

Corresponding actions:

- **Secure land and resource rights and support the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant peoples, and local communities.** Lands where community rights are recognized tend to have more forest cover, richer biodiversity, and higher rates of carbon storage. In Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, for example, the vast majority (92%) of forested land managed by these communities are net carbon sinks — sequestering more than twice as much carbon per hectare on average as lands not managed by these communities. Governments should set time-bound national targets for rights recognition, ensure at least 30% of forest finance pledges are channeled directly to Indigenous and community organizations, and advance community-based and community-led conservation efforts.

- **Strengthen governance in the land-use sector, including legal frameworks, law enforcement, transparency, and accountability.** Governments must review and strengthen legal frameworks to ensure alignment with global forest commitments; enhance law enforcement by providing long-term funding for judicial, investigatory, and anti-corruption bodies; and mandate public disclosure of land-use policies, contracts, and revenue flows. The space for civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities to play a role in monitoring and enforcement should be established or protected, including through formal recognition of independent monitors. Environmental and human rights defenders must be adequately supported and protected.

Ensure fair and effective land-use planning and allocation. Governments must ensure the just and transparent enforcement of land-use planning processes, including recognition of customary land rights, implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and the establishment of accessible conflict-resolution mechanisms.

C. Trade and real-economy incentives

Why this is a systemic barrier:

International trade, subsidies, and other real-economy incentives still largely reward deforestation-driven production and undercut sustainable producers. A recent study found that less than one third of forest conversion for agricultural production complied with national laws — and illegal deforestation robs countries of billions of dollars in tax revenue each year. Meanwhile, governments annually spend roughly USD 470 billion on agricultural subsidies that harm forests and other natural ecosystems.

Corresponding actions:

- **Partner to promote legal, deforestation-, conversion-, and degradation-free trade.** International partnerships are important mechanisms for decoupling commodity production from deforestation and supporting sustainable and vibrant rural economies. Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements should include provisions to support the conservation and sustainable management of forests, requirements for cooperation on law enforcement, and meaningful civil society engagement and monitoring. All countries — including major markets — share an interest in ensuring trade in legal, deforestation-free products.

- **Raise standards for legal and DCF supply chains in major markets.** Importing countries should accelerate the development and implementation of regulations and due-diligence systems that require forest-risk commodities to be legal and free from deforestation and conversion, while providing financial and technical support for producer jurisdictions and smallholders.

- **Identify and repurpose subsidies that harm forests and ecosystems.** Governments should screen and evaluate existing national subsidies and assess their impact on forests and other ecosystems, in line with the GBF Target 18 commitment to reduce harmful incentives by at least USD 500 billion per year by 2030. Subsidies that threaten forests should be repurposed to promote a just transition, including through measures supporting conversion-free agriculture and agroforestry, while centering equity concerns and prioritizing vulnerable groups. Repurposing these subsidies could lead to significant fiscal savings, greater food security, and more resilient, sustainable production.

D. Finance and financial systems

Why this is a systemic barrier: The ongoing loss and degradation of nature poses mounting risks to global economic and social well-being. Financial actors — from policymakers, to central banks and financial supervisors, to financial institutions — have yet to take the bold action needed to align private financial flows with deforestation- and conversion-free goals. Neither financial regulators and supervisors nor financial institutions have yet made sufficient progress on managing forest-related risks. Meanwhile, public finance for forests remains far below what is needed: current REDD+ payments are a fraction of the investments required and a drop in the bucket compared to the opportunity costs for alternative land uses.

Corresponding actions:

- **Deploy catalytic public finance for forests.** Achieving forest goals requires substantial investment in protecting, conserving, sustainably managing, and restoring forests. Concessional and risk-tolerant public finance is the catalyst that can close the investment gap — absorbing risks, lowering costs, and signaling long-term commitment. Donor governments should substantially scale

up funding for forests in line with the Forest and Climate Leaders' Statement on Forest Carbon Results-Based Payments and Credits, support the development of the Tropical Forest Finance Facility (TFFF), and increase the value of jurisdictional REDD+ payments to provide an incentive commensurate with the challenge.

- **Break the debt–deforestation cycle.** High debt burdens in forest-rich countries drive short-term revenue generation through resource exploitation, accelerating deforestation and reducing resilience. Multilateral Development Banks should spearhead efforts to restructure or cancel a portion of sovereign debt so countries can invest in human development and nature protection. MDBs and international financial institutions should assign value to forest countries' natural capital and incorporate them as assets in debt management and sustainability frameworks — recognizing forests as assets and essential components of long-term economic resilience.

- **Issue supervisory expectations and risk-management guidance on deforestation and conversion risks.** Deforestation and conversion drive climate change and nature loss, creating interconnected physical and transition risks that affect the broader economy. Voluntary action has fallen short; without clear supervisory expectations and technical guidance, institutions risk under-pricing these threats and contributing to systemic instability. Financial regulators and supervisors should establish time-bound expectations for financial institutions to develop and publicly disclose deforestation- and degradation-free targets, mandate integration of these risks into risk management and governance structures, and conduct environmental stress tests to evaluate banks' resilience to forest-related shocks.

- **Strengthen disclosure and transparency requirements on nature-related risks.** Transparent disclosures are the foundation of a DCF financial system, reducing investor uncertainty and allowing capital to be steered toward sustainable activities. Yet mandatory disclosure remains largely unimplemented: without legislation, voluntary approaches are slow and inconsistent. Policymakers should require companies and financial institutions to disclose dependencies, impacts, risks, and opportunities — including DCF-specific metrics — using frameworks like the TNFD and ISSB, ensuring double materiality.

- **Scale capital to sustainable agriculture, land use, and community-led solutions.** Sustainable agriculture and resilient land-use models are already improving productivity and resilience but remain undercapitalized — especially in high-risk regions and for community-led approaches. Financial institutions should assess and set time-bound DCF targets, embed DCF criteria into governance and client relationships, engage with public and philanthropic funding to make investment in sustainable agriculture commercially viable, and significantly increase direct, accessible finance for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant peoples, and local communities.

3. Closing

The Forest Declaration Assessment stands ready to further support the COP30 Presidency and UNFCCC Secretariat in developing a Roadmap that is concrete, time-bound, and implementable, including by sharing additional detail on the actions above and examples of effective policies and practices from diverse country contexts. The two Priority Actions publications referenced in this submission provide further specificity , evidence and rationale for each action and can serve as a menu for the Roadmap's design:

- 2030 Global Forest Vision: Priority Actions for Governments in 2025
- 2030 Global Forest Vision: Priority Actions for Deforestation- and Conversion-Free Finance
- Both available at: https://forestdeclaration.org/vision.

4. Contact details