

To the COP30-Forest-Roadmap@unfccc.int



Input to the The COP30 Forest Roadmap

1 APRIL 2026

As a Professor in Forest Governance and 30 years+ experience in tropical forest management and conservation, I would like to submit the following for your consideration in developing the Forest Roadmap.

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- (a) What are the most critical barriers, whether physical, economic, financial, institutional, technological or social, preventing the halting and reversing of deforestation and forest degradation?

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Science has shown that the recognition of Indigenous lands and territories is the best protection against deforestation. Most intact and high value tropical forests are found on Indigenous lands. One of the most critical barriers in deforestation prevention in the tropics are the lack of recognition of Indigenous Peoples rights as enshrined in the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights (UNDRIP 2007).

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- (b) What potential levers, whether economic, financial, institutional, social or technological, exist for accelerating the implementation of the commitment to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation?

The direct support to Indigenous Peoples associations has proven an effective lever to slow and reverse deforestation and forest degradation and yet they receive less than 1% of the international funding to halt deforestation. For a comprehensive analysis and recommendations please see Rainforest Foundation Norway 2021, Falling Short. Donor funding for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to secure tenure rights and manage forests in tropical countries (2011–2020).

- (c) What country, regional or sector experiences, best practices, and lessons learned can be shared regarding forest conservation and restoration?

Indigenous Peoples inhabit and are the stewards of most of the World's sensitive ecosystems including tropical forests. See for example IPBES reports on how Indigenous knowledge can support environmental management and protection. The COP30 Forest Roadmap should recognize Indigenous Peoples as best allies across countries and regions and on par with sectoral importance. The UN has long recognized that their experience, practices and actions are of crucial importance to protecting forests. The COP30 Forest Roadmap should do the same.

(d) How can forest conservation, sustainable management, and restoration best reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development, the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, and different degrees of forest cover?

Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples' associations and organisations across forest-rich countries would help understand and address the contextual differences across countries and regions. See for example the Indigenous World 2023 that has a special focus on conservation and Indigenous Peoples' rights. <https://iwgia.org/en/resources/publications/5507-the-indigenous-world-2023.html>

Likewise, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework provided an example of an inclusive process and refers directly to the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights (UNDRIP 2007).

I hope the COP30 Forest Roadmap will make a strong case for the role of Indigenous Peoples in forest management and protection.

Yours sincerely,



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Professor