

Submission by the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group (LDC Group) on open calls for the COP30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

Timor-Leste on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Group welcomes the opportunity to share views responding to the open call for submission for the COP 30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

1. Context

As per paragraph 22, Report of the CMA7 (FCCC/PA/CMA/2025/19) the President of COP30 informed Parties that the Presidency would create two road maps: one on halting and reversing deforestation and another on transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner that would be informed by science and would be inclusive.

The roadmaps provide an important opportunity to advance discussions on these key topics, both of which are highly relevant for least developed countries (LDCs) in achieving sustained economic prosperity and building a resilient world for present and future generations. The LDC Group believes that future activities and plans to advance the roadmap should place LDCs at the center and be guided by climate goals and the best available science.

This submission draws on information provided by half of the member countries in the latest version of NDCs submitted after 2025.

2. Physical and climate systemic risks

The IPCC confirms that stopping deforestation and enhancing afforestation and reforestation remain one of the most high confidence and effective mitigation options available. However, AR6 discusses that agricultural expansion continues to be a leading cause of deforestation.

Deforestation is further linked to the energy landscape of LDCs as well, who still rely on traditional biomass such as fuelwood to meet growing energy needs. Additionally, global consumption and supply chain needs further exacerbate deforestation in LDC countries whose natural resources are depleted in the interests of wealthier countries. Such structural and economic pressures exacerbate forest depletion and must be addressed alongside discussions on afforestation, including providing socioeconomic incentives for forest management and forest recovery.

Forests are also critical for adaptation. As LDCs are among the most climate vulnerable with the least adaptive capacity, forests are critical for adaptation as they provide natural protection and climate buffering against a variety of climate impacts.

3. LDCs forward looking approach

Forest-related provisions are prominently reflected across LDC NDC 3.0s, with many countries placing forests at the center of their climate strategies. These plans demonstrate strong alignment with the objective of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation, while recognizing the multiple roles forests play in mitigation, adaptation and sustainable development.

LDCs have framed forests as integral to broader development pathways, linking carbon sequestration with livelihoods, economic development, biodiversity conservation and resilience building, rather than treating them as a stand-alone sector.

4. LDCs - countries cases

In several cases, LDCs highlight forests as critical carbon sinks, while advancing actions to reduce deforestation, restore degraded lands, and promote nature-based, community-centered approaches.

- *For the Central African Republic, forest ecosystems absorb substantially more greenhouse gases than the country emits, emphasizing its role as a net carbon sink and an important contributor to global climate stability.*
- *In the Solomon Islands, extensive forest cover continues to provide significant carbon sequestration, forming a key pillar of its mitigation approach while supporting ecosystem services and local livelihoods.*
- *Nepal has committed to maintaining at least 46 percent of the total area of the country and advancing sustainable forest management, which would require US\$ 4.1 billion by 2035.*
- *Cambodia has committed to halving deforestation rates and expanding forest cover through afforestation and sustainable land-use measures.*
- *Ethiopia is advancing large-scale ecosystem restoration and forest development as part of its broader climate and development strategies.*
- *In Sierra Leone, mangrove restoration and community forestry are prioritized for their role in coastal protection, carbon storage, and livelihoods.*
- *Bangladesh integrates coastal afforestation and forest conservation into its climate plans, supporting both mitigation and adaptation objectives, particularly in vulnerable delta regions.*

These efforts reflect a forward-looking approach that addresses emissions while enhancing long-term ecosystem resilience and productivity, illustrating how LDCs are leveraging natural assets to contribute meaningfully to global mitigation efforts despite their relatively low emissions, while also aligning forest conservation with local development needs and delivering multiple co-benefits, including adaptation.

Many LDCs also emphasize sustainable forest management and alignment with frameworks such as REDD+, with a focus on strengthening monitoring systems, land-use planning, and institutional capacity.

5. Response to the questions

To respond to the questions from on call for submission:

- 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?

Key barriers include limited financial resources, weak institutional capacity and competing land-use pressures from agriculture and infrastructure. Inadequate land tenure systems, governance gaps and limited enforcement further constrain action. Technical challenges such as data availability persist, alongside social factors including reliance on forests for livelihoods and lack of viable alternatives.

- 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?

Accelerating action requires scaling results-based finance, strengthening governance and improving land-use planning. Nature-based solutions, community forestry and sustainable livelihoods provide strong entry points. Enhancing MRV systems, leveraging carbon markets and integrating forest goals into national development plans can further support implementation.

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

Integrated approaches linking conservation, restoration and livelihoods have proven effective. Successful practices include large-scale afforestation and reforestation, community-led forest management and ecosystem-based adaptation. Aligning forest actions with broader development strategies and ensuring measurable targets, monitoring systems, and financing pathways are key lessons.

- 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?

Forest actions must reflect diverse national contexts, levels of forest cover, and development needs. Recognizing the rights, knowledge and leadership of indigenous peoples and local communities is essential. Equitable approaches prioritize livelihoods, tenure security, and benefit-sharing, ensuring conservation and restoration efforts are inclusive, locally driven, and sustainable.

6. Conclusion

LDC NDCs demonstrate a clear and practical commitment to conserving and enhancing forest ecosystems as part of a just and equitable climate transition. While the terminology of “halting and reversing deforestation” may not always be explicitly stated, the combination of reduced deforestation, restoration, and sustainable management reflects strong alignment with this global objective. These efforts underscore the proactive role of LDCs in advancing forest-based climate solutions, while highlighting the need for scaled-up international support in finance, technology, and capacity building to fully realize this ambition.

The LDC Group expresses its appreciation to the COP30 Presidency for driving momentum on both Presidency-led initiatives, which remain central to achieving the commitments under the Paris Agreement.