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Input on the COP 30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

National Audubon Society
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In November 2026, the COP 30 Presidency announced its intention to develop a Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030 (“Forests Roadmap”), to support the implementation of paragraphs 33 and 34 of the [outcome of the first Global Stocktake \(GST\)](#). The collective goal to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation is clearly established, not only through GST1, but earlier through the 2021 [Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#), supported by 145 governments, and the 2014 [New York Declaration on Forests](#), which was endorsed by over 200 entities.

Approaches as diverse as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+), the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF), Country Packages for Forests and Nature, protected areas, and commodity certifications were developed to incentivize sound forest conservation and management and disincentivize clearing and degradation. Yet despite the clear collective intention to halt and reverse global deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, deforestation rates remain high globally and progress is uneven amongst countries. The National Audubon Society knows that conserving and restoring the world’s forests is critical for combating climate change, increasing resilience for ecosystems and communities, and protecting the strongholds birds will need to thrive in the face of a changing climate.

The Forests Roadmap is a unique opportunity to increase the political will needed to actually halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. The world knows what needs to be done. What is lacking is sufficient will to implement and resource the measures needed for conserving and restoring forests. Building this momentum will require a process that generates new momentum and political will at a challenging time—building on nearly three decades of efforts to generate new champions and mobilize new resources commensurate with the scale of the challenge. To this end, Audubon submits the following views in response to the Presidency’s invitation for input into the Forest Roadmap:

1) The process of drafting and finalizing the Forest Roadmap is a critical opportunity to increase momentum and commitment for forests.

The Presidency has a unique opportunity to build momentum around the goal of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. But this cannot be done through a report alone. It will require a comprehensive, collaborative process extending beyond COP30. And it will need an approach that excites and empowers all key constituencies and creates real champions for the effort. This would include:

- **A comprehensive set of consultations with diverse stakeholders.** The process of developing the Forest Roadmap should include dialogues in the margins of important global convenings (e.g. World Bank Spring Meetings, UN Forum on Forests, UNFCCC Subsidiary Body Meetings). It should also include focused meetings in key forest countries, from both the global North and South, and virtual consultations to ensure a diverse set of stakeholders and rights-holders contribute to the discussion—from farmers and foresters to scientists and financiers.
- **High-level champions.** The Presidency should seek to bring in high-level force-multipliers to build awareness, create enthusiasm, and generate new ideas. This could take the form of pairs of champions representing key constituencies, for example: heads of state, CEOs of major financial institutions, Indigenous leaders, heads of multilateral development banks, CEOs of major commodity companies, presidents of major non-governmental organizations, etc. In addition to mobilizing engagement within their constituency, these champions could form an advisory group for the Forest Roadmap. The Circle of Finance Ministers convened in advance of COP30 might serve as a model.
- **A series of events around the world.** This could include a series of curated events around the world, North and South, intended to refocus attention on the critical need to halt and restore deforestation and forest degradation, while also generating momentum amongst all stakeholders and rights-holders that shape land use. These events could be hosted by a range of institutions and tailored to different audiences.
- **A process beyond COP30.** The challenge of addressing deforestation and forest degradation will not end in Turkiye. The work of the high-level champions should continue past COP30, with a focus on catalyzing efforts to fill gaps identified through the Forests Roadmap process. Momentum-building events might even continue beyond COP31. Stakeholders may wish to design a coordinated process to synthesize and highlight information on progress towards existing forest-related commitments and pledges. This would increase the transparency of progress made to date, and accelerate efforts towards our collective goal.

2) Build on and support existing processes, tools and initiatives.

With more than three decades of experience, the community has developed a number of initiatives, processes and tools that generate lessons and results at scale, and could be even more impactful with additional support. There is no need to reinvent the proverbial wheel. The Forest Roadmap should build on these existing resources, drawing on the knowledge they generate and support the achievement of existing commitments. Examples include:

- The first Global Stocktake, Glasgow Leaders Declaration, and New York Declaration on Forests, all of which set goals to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030;
- The [Forest Finance Roadmap](#), produced in advance of COP30 by the Forests & Climate Leaders Partnership (FCLP) and Brazil and UNEP.
- The annual [Forest Declaration Assessment Report](#).

- The [Warsaw Framework for REDD+](#); and REDD+-related methodologies and analyses including those from the [Forest Carbon Partnership Facility \(FCPF\)](#), [BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes \(ISFL\)](#), and [Lowering Emissions through Advancing Forest Finance \(LEAF\) Coalition](#);
- Innovative financing and approaches including the [Tropical Forests Forever Facility](#), [Country Packages for Forests, Climate and Nature](#), forest bonds, payment for ecosystem services (PES), and debt for nature swaps.
- Technical assistance platforms including [UNREDD](#), the [Jurisdictional REDD+ Technical Assistance Platform \(JTAP\)](#), and many bilateral technical assistance programs.

3) Responses to proposed questions

Over its 120-year history, and through its work spanning ecosystems from boreal forests to tropical rainforests, Audubon’s work has generated important insights on effective approaches to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, conserve intact forests, and restore ecosystems. We do this not only because forests are important habitat for birds, but because our communities and our climate depend on healthy forests. Based on this, we submit the following points in response to the questions posed:

(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?

Simply put, from an immediate financial lens forests are not worth as much standing as they are cut. Until this approach changes, the success of efforts to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation will be limited. Shifting this paradigm requires recognizing the multiple services healthy forests provide—carbon sequestration and storage, ecosystem resilience, climate regulation, habitat, timber, water provisioning, recreation, spiritual connection, and so much more. And it requires valuing and incentivizing these services, with benefits reaching Indigenous Peoples, local communities and rights-holders who steward forest lands. Reaching this point requires education, coordination, and, above all, the high-level will across government and society to integrate forests and nature into core policy, financial, and social priorities.

(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?

Over more than 30 years, the international community has developed a series of tools to help reverse deforestation and forest degradation, especially focused on tropical forests. Some approaches, like PES, have been adapted to a wide variety of contexts. Some, like REDD+, are finally being implemented at the scale originally envisioned, with both multilateral and private sector support. Others, like TFFF, are only now moving towards implementation. In all cases, sustained political will, clear and sustained resource streams, and an adaption to local contexts are key. Amongst the levers Audubon experience has shown to be effective are:

- **Integrate nature into broader political commitments, strategies, and investment plans.** As one example, Panama integrated its national biodiversity goals into its nationally determined contribution (NDC), making clear that forests would form a key part of the implementation of the NDC strategy and its corresponding investments. Audubon worked with the government of Panama to fully incorporate mangroves—amongst the most threatened of forests—into this plan. By treating forests as a core implementation strategy for a political priority, rather than a niche issue,

it is possible to ensure efforts to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation receive the policy attention and investment needed.

- **Generate value for forest conservation and restoration.** Historically, the services provided by healthy forests are undervalued. More recent efforts to recognize and pay for the services forests deliver are changing this paradigm, but remain insufficient. Complementary approaches are needed. Audubon is working with local partners throughout the Americas to generate livelihood options that promote ecosystem conservation along with community-well-being. One example: bird tourism. By training representatives of local communities as bird guides and facilitating the development of related hospitality services, Audubon and partners have helped grow bird tourism in forest ecosystems. The revenue generated by bird tourism—estimated at \$279 billion annually in the United States alone—is creating new incentives to conserve forests, while improving the lives of people living in and around these forests.
- **Conserve and restore forests in productive landscapes.** While agriculture is the largest driver of deforestation globally, sustainable production and standing forests do not have to be at odds. Audubon is working with partners in Latin America to implement silvopastoral systems—integrating forest areas into livestock ranches, and the use of these systems are included in NDC implementation plans. Silvopastoral systems are shown to increase livestock productivity, even as they sequester carbon, enhance water quality, and provide bird habitat. Audubon uses a science-based curriculum to train foresters across the United States on best management practices that safeguard forest health and bird habitat—while producing high-quality timber. Similar results are seen from forest mosaics in agricultural landscapes.

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

- The [Conserva Aves program](#) works across Latin America to create and consolidate subnational protected areas, including many focused on forest ecosystems. Conserva Aves works with partners including Indigenous peoples, state governments, and communities, as well as the Latin American Network of Environmental Funds (REDLAC) and NGOs including Audubon, American Birds Conservancy, Birds Canada, and BirdLife International, to identify habitats important for birds, design and demarcate protected areas, build management capacity, and develop and implement financing plans. Each of these elements is key to long-term success. To date Conserva Aves has supported the creation of more than 40 subnational protected areas covering 1.1 million hectares.
- In Canada, Indigenous governments and communities have long stewarded the critical ecosystems within their traditional territories including forests, peatlands, wetlands, tundra, and grasslands. Working with the government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and NGO partners like Audubon, dozens of Indigenous governments and organizations are leading efforts to protect vast forested landscapes as **Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas with overlays of national and provincial/territorial protected areas** and to secure financing to support the long-term conservation and management of these protected areas. This collaboration between Indigenous governments and organizations and national and sub-national government

support has led to the protection of some of the largest intact ecosystems (and carbon stores) remaining on Earth.

(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?

Audubon works across 11 countries, and hundreds of local communities—reflecting a wide range of cultures, ecosystems, and contexts. Our experience has shown it is critical to recognize national and local priorities, capacities, and priorities; and to encourage flexibility respecting these diverse circumstances in designing strategies to achieve collective goals. While countries may have collectively set out a goal to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, the approach each uses to achieve this goal will be that most appropriate for its specific circumstances.

Indigenous Peoples have long stewarded forests in a manner that recognizes the interconnected nature of ecosystems and human wellbeing. As noted above, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in Canada are one example of how Indigenous governments and organizations are conserving and sustainably managing some of the largest intact ecosystems remaining in the world; and Conserva Aves provides another model for Indigenous, Afro-descendent, and community-led protected areas throughout Latin America. In these cases, and many more, Indigenous knowledge of forest ecosystems and experience with conservation and sustainable management, combined with groundbreaking new science and innovative financing models, is creating new opportunities to safeguard some of the most important ecosystems on earth for the benefit of these communities and the world.