

## Proposal for the COP 30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

It is our understanding that effective forest protection, and its validity as a mechanism to combat climate change, can only be achieved by recognizing the intrinsic link between forests and other ecosystems through the complex networks of interactions that form the biosphere as a single entity. In view of this fact, we, as members of organized civil society, believe that only integrated, synergistic, and multi-level governance, utilizing structures already established and ratified via pre-existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), can effectively ensure that the stated objectives of the COP30 Presidency's Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030 are met. This approach strengthens multilateralism without the need for creating new commitments that would require newer consensus.

Fragmented governance and a lack of synergy continue to undermine global efforts, often disregarding academic expertise, local knowledge, and established UN frameworks. These institutional gaps are exacerbated by harmful reforestation practices that ignore native ecosystem integrity and local communities, alongside the critical degradation of land, freshwater, and marine systems essential to the survival of all life. Effective forest protection requires a holistic perspective that acknowledges forests as part of a broader ecological network, interconnected with the biosphere's vital services and landscape and waterscape connectivity.

Reaffirming the commitment to the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement as a political and scientific imperative, we underscore the urgent need to conserve and restore nature. This proposal to the COP30 Presidency's Roadmap seeks to accelerate implementation through an equitable and ecological transition that harmonizes ecosystem connectivity with climate integrity. We urge the mobilization of enhanced means of implementation globally, emphasizing the critical importance of non-carbon benefits. To this end, we propose three targets to guide actions and global partnerships under the COP30 Roadmaps and International Cooperation agenda.

This proposal advocates for a holistic approach to environmental integrity through three key targets: the advancement of **synergistic multilateral governance**, aligning existing MEAs and ensuring coherent action among them; the implementation of **integrated ecosystem management and restoration** that moves beyond carbon-centric models to prioritize ecosystem integrity and prevent maladaptation; and the **safeguarding of hydrological integrity** as an essential foundation for forests and their people resilience and planetary health. By fostering international cooperation, these targets aim to strengthen multilateralism through effective, inclusive, and science-based implementation by 2030.

## Target 1: Promote Synergetic Multilateral Governance

a) **Strengthen** strategic and operational convergence between the Rio Conventions and other MEAs to overcome the fragmentation of global governance and optimize means of implementation, in full compliance with the varying institutional speeds, capacities, and sovereignties of each Party.

b) **Urge** Parties to promote policy coherence through integrated, participatory, and inclusive management across multiple levels of action, from national to local, and in partnership between Parties when necessary, aiming to maximize co-benefits between biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities and in respect of global targets and international cooperation mechanisms.

c) **Foster** the creation of incentive mechanisms that ensure priority access to means of implementation for Parties that demonstrate a high degree of adherence and effective compliance with the entirety of multiple MEAs, aiming to reward integrity and ambition in global environmental governance, especially for those Parties most committed to the ratification and implementation of such agreements.

d) **Ensure** that the integrity of traditional territories and the protection of the knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are secured across all regions, utilizing a rights-based approach and guaranteeing their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, to safeguard ancestral knowledge as a fundamental pillar for maintaining global ecosystem functions.

e) **Ensure** the full, equitable, and effective participation of indigenous peoples, local communities, people of African descent, women, youth, children, as well as research institutions, in decision-making processes. This measure aims to safeguard the fundamental right to an ecologically balanced environment from an intergenerational perspective, observing the intrinsic rights of each society segment and mitigating structural asymmetries in access to public policies.

## Target 2: Holistic Ecosystem Restoration and Prevention of Maladaptation

a) **Urge** Parties to move beyond strictly carbon-centric approaches, ensuring that restoration actions avoid the risk of maladaptation and negative impacts on local habitats, aiming to maintain ecological integrity, climate resilience, and the functional connectivity of ecosystems in compliance with the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).

b) **Ensure** that restoration and reforestation interventions prioritize the use of native species that are culturally and ecologically appropriate to the local context, prohibiting the conversion of high-integrity natural ecosystems, whether forest or non-forest natural formations, into monoculture of tree plantations, in order to safeguard biodiversity and essential ecosystem processes, such as species dispersal and the hydrological cycle.

**c) Promote** the use of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and/or ecosystem-based approaches that are technically grounded in the actual functioning of local ecological networks and the cultural practices of the populations that depend on them, aiming to optimize financial resources and generate sustainable socio-economic benefits in accordance with participatory spatial planning and national circumstances.

### **Target 3: Hydrological Integrity for Forest Resilience**

**a) Reaffirm** the inseparable interdependence between the integrity of inland water ecosystems, coastal, and marine ecosystems and the maintenance of the ecological integrity of forests and other terrestrial biomes, recognizing that the loss of wetlands compromises the regulatory functions of water regimes vital for the survival of terrestrial flora and fauna and the sustenance of peoples.

**b) Foster** the conservation and sustainable management of aquatic biodiversity as a central strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation, aiming to strengthen the resilience not only of human populations but also of adjacent terrestrial ecosystems, ensuring that natural water infrastructure acts as a buffer against extreme weather and climate events.

**c) Ensure** the implementation of integrated and participatory management plans that incorporate riparian and coastal zones as high-priority conservation areas, in compliance with the Ramsar Convention and the KMGBF, aiming to halt the destruction of aquatic ecosystems and ensure the equitable provision of ecosystem services essential for planetary health.

**d) Encourage** transboundary cooperation between Parties sharing the same river basins, as well as the common management of the High Seas and the international seabed, ensuring access to water for all peoples and their diverse uses of water resources, aquatic biodiversity, and inland and marine ecosystem services, while safeguarding these irreplaceable resources.

Target 1 reinforces the imperative of achieving the long-sought synergy between the Rio Conventions (the UNFCCC, UNCCD, and CBD) and other biodiversity-related conventions, including the World Heritage Convention, CITES, CMS, Ramsar Convention, IPPC, ITPGRFA, and the IWC. This alignment has been a longstanding requirement of both the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) between the secretariats of the CBD, the UNFCCC, and the UNCCD, and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG), both of which were established under the international cooperation agenda throughout the history of these conventions.

This proposal is grounded in the Terms of Reference and Modus Operandi for the Joint Liaison Group between the Three Rio Conventions and the 2025 Updated Modus Operandi for the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions. Both documents describe the previous agreements and principles that recognize their respective mandates. Furthermore, it reinforces the importance of the elements already recognized by the COP30 Presidency in the 'Mutirão' Decision, the Gender Action Plan, and the goals on Adaptation and Just Transition.

Target 2 is instrumental in ensuring that ecosystem restoration is driven by integrated and inclusive biodiversity spatial planning, thereby mitigating the risks of maladaptation arising from strictly carbon-centric perspectives. Under the idea of Prevention of Tunnel Vision and Maladaptation, this approach urges Parties to implement restoration actions that uphold structural and functional connectivity, prioritizing the use of native species in ecologically appropriate locations, respecting safe criteria for reforestation and conservation of native species. Such measures are essential to safeguard the integrity of diverse ecosystems while ensuring that climate-related interventions do not compromise biodiversity outcomes.

Furthermore, in alignment of economic efficiency and climate action, Target 2 promotes NbS to maximize financial efficiency and the systemic resilience of territories. By leveraging the inherent power of healthy ecosystems to protect communities and optimize infrastructure, these solutions safeguard a stable and biodiverse future while ensuring the full and effective participation of traditional knowledge holders. This framework is in full consonance with the Sustainable Development Goals, the targets of the UN80 Initiative, IUCN standards, and the recommendations of the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance Forum on Financing Nature-based Solutions.

We believe it is highly important to the Roadmap that the COP30 Presidency decides, as mandated by our Target 3, to strengthen the protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystems, recognizing them as critical natural infrastructure for the stability of forests and terrestrial biomes. To this end, we urge Parties to adopt approaches that integrate aquatic biodiversity into climate resilience strategies, ensuring hydrological connectivity and the wise use of wetlands.

We emphasize that action in this direction ensures alignment with the recent IPBES Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health, the decisions of the Ramsar Convention, the United Nations Ocean Conference, and the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction. Furthermore, it reinforces the understanding of the role of water resources in achieving real and just climate resilience, aimed at protecting this critical natural infrastructure.

Consequently, these represent vital steps toward incorporating synergies between those MEAs directly related to the climate crisis and other agreements addressing various forms of pollution and ecosystem degradation. The Triple Planetary Crisis we face leaves no room for delay in awaiting new agreements or further consensus. Leveraging existing structures and mechanisms, even those ratified by a limited number of countries, will yield benefits consistent with sustainable development and enhance the effectiveness of diplomatic frameworks and multilateral negotiating fora.