

Statement by the Russian Federation on the COP 30 Presidency's Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

The Russian Federation appreciates the opportunity to present its views on the development of the COP 30 Presidency's Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030.

Integrity of COP 30 Decisions

The development of a Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030 is not included in the activities mandated under decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC or the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA). Therefore, such initiatives should be discussed in an informal format and should not become part of the official negotiating agenda of the UNFCCC.

The inclusion of references to a "Roadmap" in the official or informal documents of the Subsidiary Bodies or the COP, as well as attempts to formalize such initiatives through universal benchmarks, indicators or timelines, would not be consistent with the agreed architecture of the international climate process and would go beyond previously adopted decisions.

General Approaches and International Framework

The Russian Federation proceeds from the understanding that issues related to forest conservation, sustainable forest management, reforestation, and the enhancement of the climate-regulating function of forest ecosystems are already addressed within the existing international framework and should continue to be dealt with through agreed processes.

The international architecture for preventing deforestation and forest degradation is already established under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Parties have recognized the importance of conserving and enhancing sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including forests. Decision 1/CMA.5 (first Global Stocktake) reaffirmed the need for efforts to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. These outcomes do not establish universal obligations or prescriptive measures and are implemented in accordance with the nationally determined nature of climate policy.

The Russian Federation reiterates its commitment to the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, including goals related to forest conservation and sustainable forest management. Implementation of these commitments takes into account national circumstances, the structure of national economies and the characteristics of forest ecosystems.

The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030, including its six Global Forest Goals, targets, review processes and voluntary reporting, is already functioning at the international level. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) conducts regular Global Forest Resources Assessments (FRA), and the Russian Federation provides the required forest-related information to the relevant FAO bodies.

In this regard, new roadmaps should not duplicate existing international planning, monitoring or reporting mechanisms.

The Russian Federation also underscores that the term “forest degradation” does not have a universally agreed, legally binding definition in international instruments, including under the UNFCCC. This lack of clarity creates risks of arbitrary interpretation and the use of inappropriate criteria for assessing national progress.

Consequently, the development of universal roadmaps prescribing specific measures or timelines is inconsistent with the agreed international climate architecture. States should independently determine their measures, approaches and timelines for forest conservation, taking into account national circumstances, development priorities and ecosystem characteristics.

At the same time, the Russian Federation emphasizes that forests play a crucial role in achieving global climate goals and should remain the subject of constructive, science-based international dialogue that reflects both their contribution to greenhouse gas removals and national forest management specificities.

Role of Forests as GHG Sinks

Within the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement frameworks, forests hold a uniquely important position as critical natural sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, without which achieving the temperature goal would be extremely difficult.

The Russian Federation underscores the essential role of forest ecosystems as major natural sinks and key elements in achieving a balance between anthropogenic emissions and removals by sinks.

According to the IPCC, terrestrial ecosystems, including forests, provide net removals of several billion tonnes of CO₂ annually. UNEP estimates that nature-based solutions could provide between 5 and 11.7 billion tonnes of CO₂-eq per year by 2030, with forests accounting for the majority of this potential.

The Russian Federation’s forest sector is of global significance: the country accounts for around 20% of the world’s forest resources, and according to national estimates, forest removals amount to approximately 1 billion tonnes of CO₂-eq annually.

International approaches should therefore consider not only the prevention of deforestation, but also the conservation of carbon stocks, the enhancement of sink capacity and the promotion of sustainable forest management.

Means of Implementation, Support and Barriers

The implementation of any international initiative in the forest sector requires adequate means of implementation—financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building.

Limited access to finance, modern technologies and investment remains a key barrier to forest conservation and restoration, particularly for developing countries.

Additional challenges arise from increasing external trade and regulatory requirements. In particular, the introduction of obligations relating to the verification of product origin and proof of non-deforestation involves complex and uncertain compliance procedures, including extensive traceability, geolocation and due diligence requirements.

The Russian Federation notes insufficient transparency and scientific justification for several of these measures, as well as risks of extraterritorial application whereby domestic regulatory practices of some jurisdictions are effectively imposed on third countries.

Concerns also arise from the use of broad or subjective assessment criteria, such as indicators of institutional development or enforcement practices that are not directly linked to environmental objectives and may undermine confidence in such measures.

Taken together, these measures may create new non-tariff barriers, restrict market access, increase costs and fragment global supply chains.

The implementation of new international initiatives in this area may also require additional resources for establishing new accounting, monitoring and reporting systems. Without agreed sources of finance and support, these requirements impose additional administrative and financial burdens on States.

In accordance with Article 3.5 of the UNFCCC, measures taken to address climate change, including unilateral measures, must not constitute arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or disguised restrictions on international trade. Measures in the forest sector must therefore be transparent, science-based and non-discriminatory.

The priority for international cooperation should be removing existing barriers, ensuring access to finance and technology, and supporting sustainable forest management in light of national circumstances.

National Context and Approaches

Universal approaches that rely on uniform quantitative benchmarks concerning forest cover dynamics do not take into account national specificities, including forest structure, legal frameworks and land-use patterns.

In the Russian Federation, forest degradation may occur in the context of infrastructure, industrial or socio-economic development projects, which are regulated under national legislation and include mandatory land rehabilitation requirements.

Therefore, priority should be placed not only on formal deforestation indicators, but also on preventing forest degradation, enhancing resilience and productivity, and restoring forest ecosystems.

Key drivers of forest degradation in the Russian Federation include forest fires—many caused by human activity—the spread of harmful organisms, and other natural and climatic factors. Significant attention is therefore given to early detection and monitoring systems for forest fires, including remote sensing, aerial and ground-based observations, as well as to improving fire prevention and suppression measures.

National policy includes a comprehensive set of measures for sustainable forest management: strengthening forest governance, improving forest protection and conservation practices, enhancing sanitation measures and pest control, expanding state forest monitoring systems, and scaling up reforestation and afforestation efforts. The focus is shifting from the formal fulfilment of reforestation targets to ensuring the sustainability, longevity and productivity of new forest stands and enhancing carbon stocks.

These measures are implemented under the State Programme “Development of Forestry” and the federal project “Forest Conservation” within the national project “Environmental Well-being”. By 2030, reforestation is expected to exceed forest loss.

The regulatory framework for forest climate projects aimed at enhancing sink capacity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions is also being strengthened. The national Forest Code includes provisions regulating such projects, including requirements for additionality, permanence and verification.

The national approach is therefore based on balancing socio-economic development needs, sustainable forest management and the enhancement of forests’ climate-regulating role—an approach that requires recognition of national specificities in shaping international policies.

Conclusion

The Russian Federation considers the conservation of forests, the prevention of forest degradation and the enhancement of forests’ climate-regulating role to be of critical importance and central to international climate cooperation.

At the same time, the Russian Federation does not support the development of a universal roadmap on halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation, as such initiatives are not mandated under the agreed international climate architecture and go beyond adopted decisions under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

These issues should be addressed through existing mechanisms, including the processes for implementing and further developing the outcomes of the Global Stocktake and the Mitigation Work Programme. As an alternative, a dedicated dialogue on forests could be established to facilitate the exchange of experiences, best practices and scientific approaches.

The Russian Federation reaffirms its readiness to engage constructively in international dialogue on forest-related issues, provided that national circumstances are respected and the agreed nature of the international climate process is upheld.