



Submission

Of the official children and youth constituency of the UNFCCC ("YOUNGO") for the COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

Part II — COP 30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

The Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030 is aimed at implementing paragraphs 33 and 34 of the outcome of GST1. It is sought to be an action-oriented document that offers guidance for the achievement of these efforts; identifies existing means of implementation and solutions being accelerated through the Action Agenda; and highlights obstacles and gaps to be addressed. It also showcases policies and measures that have been successfully implemented in real situations and can be replicated in other contexts. Contributors are invited to submit concise inputs on one or more of the following questions:

Protecting the world's forests as crucial stores of carbon and biodiversity is critical to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, with Article 5 enshrining the importance of conserving and enhancing sinks of greenhouse gases, including forests. This was cemented at COP26 with the signing of the Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use, where over 140 countries, accounting for over 90% of the world's forests, agreed to halting and reversing deforestation. This global commitment was also solidified in UNFCCC processes through the first Global Stocktake (Decision 1/CMA.5). With several calls over recent years to catalyse efforts towards halting and reversing global deforestation by 2030, there is still a gap between implementation and global commitments which must be bridged to achieve this goal and ensure collective action towards the objectives of the Paris Agreement remain on track. This roadmap process provides an opportunity to further leverage ongoing global efforts and pursue ambitious action as part of creating the wider conditions for substantial progress towards reversing and halting deforestation and degradation by 2030.

(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?

Economic & Financial:

- **The current economic system links development to extractive economies and industries.** The global economic system, through country debt, trade and other mechanisms, incentivises deforestation and forest degradation, and restricts the policy options a country can take to transition away from extractive sectors with forest-destructive practices. This often has acute impacts for developing countries and nations that are currently locked into trajectories of economic development that rely on extractive industries and deforestation. National economic priorities are often in conflict with the national policies and action needed to contribute to international environmental agreements that countries have signed up to, often economically subsidising and incentivising sectors that rely on deforestation, land use change and expanding into forest frontiers, such as industrial agriculture. Linked to this, positive tools for biodiversity, such as financial instruments to incentivise forest conservation, restoration and strengthening the land tenure of various rights/stakeholders, are underdeveloped compared to the extensive financial architecture attached to harmful economic subsidies for biodiversity.
- Current forms of climate and biodiversity finance remain inaccessible for many on-ground communities, failing to take into account the lived realities on-ground and in developing countries. The opportunity for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to participate and provide input into the design process of financial mechanisms and funding allocation is limited. Additionally, untransparent financial processes with limited financial accountability do not always ensure funds reach frontline communities, hence providing insufficient support to the diverse land practices of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other key rights/stakeholder groups.

Institutional:

- **Lack of harmonised definitions, standards, and accountability frameworks, particularly regarding forest degradation:** Standards, reporting, and monitoring processes are fragmented and poorly aligned both across countries and among UN processes (e.g., UNFF, UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD, FAO). Robust transparency frameworks are largely concentrated on tropical forests and results-based finance mechanisms, while major temperate and boreal forest nations often under-report or overlook degradation driven by large-scale forestry and other human activities, along with their associated emissions. As such, forest degradation persists as a largely hidden crisis, especially in the Global North, undermining efforts to build consistent and credible international frameworks. This misalignment across UN processes further creates inefficiencies and conflicting policy approaches, particularly at the intersection of forest, climate, and biodiversity strategies.
- **Weak regulatory frameworks and inconsistent enforcement undermines efforts to halt deforestation,** particularly in developing countries where institutional capacity, governance, and resources may be limited. Forest protection regulations are often weakly enforced due to insufficient monitoring systems, lack of funding, corruption, and unclear land tenure arrangements, which allow both legal and illegal forest conversion to persist. Illegal logging, especially in parts of the Amazon, Central Africa, and Southeast Asia, continues to drive large-scale forest degradation. Around 35% of tropical timber harvested in the Brazilian Amazon in 2022–2023 was of illegal origin¹. Weak oversight and enforcement gaps also enable illicit timber to enter international markets despite existing regulations. At the same time, regulatory frameworks often still permit extensive legal deforestation for agriculture, cattle ranching, and infrastructure expansion in line with national development priorities. Consequently, deforestation remains both economically attractive and inadequately regulated.

Physical & Technological:

- **Limited access to advanced monitoring tools and Earth observation (EO) data:** Access to high-resolution, timely, and actionable data remains uneven across countries, especially in the Global South. Tropical forest countries face persistent challenges related to technical capacity, infrastructure, and financial resources, which limit their ability to operationalise EO data for enforcement and reporting. For instance, approximately one-third of countries lack adequate national forest monitoring systems aligned with international reporting requirements². Lack of capacity to process and interpret publicly available satellite data (e.g., from NASA and the European Space Agency) results in delays in detecting deforestation and forest degradation, weakening enforcement responses and reducing the effectiveness of accountability frameworks.

¹ Andrade & Carvalho (2024). O Papel Dos Mercados Internacionais Madeireiros Da Amazônia No Cumprimento Dos Requerimentos De Legalidade E De Desempenho Socioambiental. Available at https://admin.imaflora.org/public/media/biblioteca/boletim_timberflow_15_julho_2024.pdf

² FAO (2024). The State of the World's Forests. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1211en>

Social:

- **Indigenous peoples, local communities and other groups that rely on forest ecosystems experience land tenure insecurity and there is weak protection of Indigenous rights.** Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other groups are not rewarded as critical forest and biodiversity stewards, but rather face exclusion from their territories, and criminalisation and exclusion from participating in environmental decision-making processes. On the national level, weak legislation fails to recognise Indigenous and community land tenure/control. Often, policies are rooted in colonial forestry practices and fail to follow rights-based approaches, perpetuating land grabbing, community expulsion and unjust practices.

Cross-cutting issues:

- **Agricultural expansion, particularly industrial agriculture,** remains the main driver of global forest loss. The conversion of forests to agricultural land, especially for cattle ranching and the production of feed crops such as soy, accounts for the majority of deforestation in tropical regions. Approximately 90% of deforestation is associated with unsustainable agricultural expansion, with around 50% driven by expansion for cropland and 38-40% linked to livestock grazing³. Rising global demand for meat, dairy, and commodity crops further drives land-use change and directly contributes to emissions from the LULUCF sector and biodiversity loss.

(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?

Social:

- **Recognise Indigenous rights and knowledge, provide direct financial support for conservation, and integrate local ecological knowledge (LEK) into forest management.** All forest projects must be transparent, rights-based, and inclusive, with strong accountability to ensure funds reach the frontline communities. Implementation of projects must uphold social and ecological integrity and avoid land grabbing.
- **Recognising and supporting the tenure rights and community governance of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other frontline groups.** The roadmap must build upon the progress achieved at COP30 for Indigenous rights and community governance. Building on the Intergovernmental Commitment on Land Tenure launched at COP30, the roadmap must establish transparent mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other frontline communities to have direct access to the technical and financial tools and institutional support to empower community territory governance and tenure systems. Any projects or policies must ensure full respect for human rights and environmental safeguards and uphold Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other frontline communities also need to be meaningfully involved in decision-making

³ FAO (2022). FRA 2020 Remote Sensing Survey. [htdecision-makinghttps://doi.org/10.4060/cb9970en](https://doi.org/10.4060/cb9970en)

over solutions that are on their lands and that will impact them in order to ensure equitable and effective forest conservation.

Institutional:

- **Operationalise Article 5 of the Paris Agreement and align all forest-related workstreams** to build stronger connections between just transition, biodiversity & ecosystem integrity, climate mitigation & adaptation, food & agriculture, loss & damage, and finance to achieve the 2030 target.
- **Recognise the outcome of other relevant processes**, including the Sharm-El-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security, the GST Implementation Dialogue, the Mitigation Work Programme 5th Global Dialogue on Forests and adopted items from the sister Rio Conventions.
- **Identifying and ensuring strong collaborative efforts are made to foster policy coherence across the three Rio Conventions** to create synergistic solutions that concurrently tackle climate change and biodiversity loss in forest landscapes whilst minimising trade-offs.
- **Develop a globally applicable, scientifically grounded definition of forest degradation** by convening a multi-stakeholder expert working group (encompassing governments, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, scientists, NGOs, and industry). This definition should:
 - Integrate measurable biophysical indicators (e.g., canopy loss, carbon stock decline, reduced biodiversity, soil disturbance, etc).
 - Establish thresholds for what constitutes “degraded” versus “intact” forest conditions, enabling comparability across regions.
 - Align monitoring protocols with remote-sensing and ground-based data standards to ensure consistency. Facilitate harmonised reporting under climate, biodiversity, and land degradation frameworks.
- **Addressing agricultural-driven deforestation through inclusive, rights-based approaches** that recognise Indigenous Peoples and local communities as primary stewards of forests. Policies must ensure secure land tenure, equitable benefit-sharing, and meaningful participation in decision-making, while preventing land grabbing and ensuring just and sustainable transitions.
- Establish a **credible, transparent, globally standardised, and reliable method** of measuring, safeguarding, and monitoring native forest cover **with a diverse set of clear, robust indicators** for biodiversity and forest quality, through integration with assessments and best available science. This should be supported by interoperable, open-access monitoring systems using satellite data and standardised indicators to ensure comparability, transparency, and accountability across countries and prevent greenwashing⁴ (IPCC, 2022).
- **Address the persistent implementation gap by strengthening enforcement, accountability, and delivery mechanisms** to ensure that existing commitments to halt and reverse deforestation translate into measurable and time-bound outcomes.
- **Advance adaptive management that supports the resilience and conservation of forests**, meaning that policies and management plans should undergo regular revisions based on changing social, economic, and climate context to ensure adequate measures are employed for the current needs.

⁴ IPCC (2022). Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability Summary for Policymakers. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryVolume.pdf

Economic & Financial:

- **Reforming economic governance to ensure that countries are not economically incentivised or compelled to rely on extractive sectors and forest-destroying industries for economic stability and short-term growth.** For financial flows to be aligned with Article 2.1(C) of the Paris Agreement to ensure consistency with low-emission and deforestation-free development, harmful subsidies and financial incentives that encourage conversion of forest ecosystems, such as in the case of industrial agriculture, should be diverted towards regenerative, sustainable practices such as financial support for agroecology, smallholder agricultural practices, incentivising habitat regeneration and community stewardship. **They should support diverse and cultural practices for forest conservation.**
- **Mobilise and scale up public and donor finance** to support implementation through the deployment of various financial mechanisms, such as grants and debt-for-nature swaps, that uphold social safeguards to achieve the Global Forest Finance Pledge target of US\$12 billion for forest-related climate finance from 2021 to 2025, whilst maintaining social safeguards by ensuring funds are accessible for frontline communities and avoiding false solutions such as monocultures and non-native species plantations that perpetuate human rights abuses.
- Strengthen supply chain transparency and traceability systems for high-risk commodities (e.g, soy, palm oil, timber), including mandatory due diligence frameworks, to ensure global trade does not contribute to deforestation and forest degradation (UNEP, 2021).
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms for private sector actors, including mandatory disclosure, due diligence, and liability frameworks to ensure corporate commitments to deforestation-free supply chains are credible and enforceable.
- Establish **guidance to prevent greenwashing by companies investing in all forestry-related funding,** by aligning investment safeguards with broader ESG standards, and prohibiting the manipulation of carbon capture, CO₂ reduction claims, or biodiversity protection for self-serving net-zero or nature credit goals.

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

Country:

- The Caiman Ecological Refuge in Brazil serves as an example of how the private sector can lead forest conservation and ecosystem restoration by making intact nature more valuable than destroyed nature. Farms and ranches that traditionally focused on cattle production have started investing in ecotourism as a new source of income. Visitors are often willing to travel from abroad to see wildlife thereby boosting the country's tourist sector and transforming restoration from cost into investment.

- The Bailiwick of Jersey provides a finance-driven, collaborative model for ecosystem restoration through the Greening Jersey Trust, where private financial institutions pool long-term funding, partner with conservation NGOs, and support landscape-scale rewilding. This demonstrates how aggregating private capital, ensuring cross-sector governance, and focusing on whole-ecosystem restoration can overcome fragmentation and deliver scalable conservation outcomes. The model delivers incidental benefits in terms of mental health benefits by engaging financial services workers in outdoor conservation activities, helping reduce stress and improve well-being in a high-pressure sector. As such, it shows how forest conservation initiatives can generate both environmental and workforce well-being co-benefits.

Regional:

- Regional cooperation platforms should be strengthened to enable coordinated action across transboundary forest ecosystems (e.g., Amazon Basin, Congo Basin, Southeast Asia), including shared monitoring systems, aligned policy frameworks, and joint financing mechanisms
 - An example of regional cooperation platforms include Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Science Panel for the Amazon, Congo Basin, Borneo initiatives.

Sectoral:

- The UNFCCC Oceans and Climate Change Dialogues stressed that separating ocean, climate, biodiversity and sustainable development is artificial. Thus, the deforestation roadmap shall follow the same logic to be designed as a practical implementation platform rather than just a political declaration by breaking policy silos (NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs, etc). There is also emphasis on coordination across ministries and frameworks with dedicated planning and financing alignment as well as reporting cycles with common indicators to reduce duplication and improve coherence
- The Sharm-El-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security includes:
 - Landscape approach
 - IPLC and smallholders are central implementers
 - Focusing on enabling conditions
 - Establishing a continuous learning platform
 - Nationally determined pathway
- The GST Implementation Dialogue
 - Close the implementation gap rather than ambition gap by removing barriers
 - Ensuring scaled, predictable, and accessible finance including reform of harmful subsidies
 - As the GST is designed in 5-year cycle, the roadmap should be a living process with regular stocktakes and adjustment
- The Mitigation Work Programme 5th Global Dialogue on Forests

(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?

- All decision-making should **respect, strengthen and uphold the rights of Indigenous People and local communities** across all forest biomes in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) through proper safeguards and consultations, **respecting FPIC as a key priority, not a symbolic gesture**. It should also respect and include the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, local and other frontline communities.
- **Promoting the full inclusion and participation of children and youth, and all vulnerable groups, including women, and all gender-diverse peoples, as well as most affected communities, ensuring equitable representation of the Global Majority in any mechanisms**
- All decisions must be led by the best available science and evidence, referring to both the scientific outcomes of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**, taking into account Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and local knowledge systems in **such mechanisms and scientific bodies**.