



Progress on the New York Declaration on Forests **Achieving Collective Forest Goals**

Executive Summary - Updates on Goals 1-10

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Executive Summary

Last year was one of diplomatic successes: The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change marked the successful conclusions of many years of negotiations. The former formulates ambitious goals for a sustainable, healthy, inclusive, and low-emissions future, while the latter establishes a framework for long-term climate action, including on forests. With these agreements in place, attention has to shift from talking to implementing. The new agreements reframe the context of the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF) and provide new impetus for the assessment of progress on the NYDF goals.

The 2016 NYDF Progress Assessment provides a comprehensive review on collaborative efforts to protect tropical forests. It does so by providing an update on the 10 goals formulated in the context of the NYDF (see text box below). Last year, the first edition of the NYDF Progress Assessment proposed a framework and respective indicators for measuring progress toward the NYDF goals and offered an initial assessment on the status of progress toward achieving these goals. The present report summarizes new data and findings around the established indicators. This general update is complemented by a focus report that provides an in-depth analysis of Goal 2, on eliminating deforestation from agricultural commodity supply chains.

Some NYDF goals relate directly to eliminating deforestation, including halting natural forest loss (Goal 1) and reducing deforestation from agricultural supply chains (Goal 2), other economic sectors (Goal 3), subsistence agriculture and woodfuel collection (Goal 4). The NYDF also formulates ambitious restoration goals (Goal 5). Other goals relate to the broader “enabling environment” that will make ending deforestation possible, including establishing a strong international framework (Goals 6 and 7), providing better financing (Goals 8 and 9), and improving forest governance and securing forest and land rights for indigenous peoples and local communities (Goal 10).

The 2016 NYDF Progress Assessment shows that while the annual net rate of forest loss appears to be slowing, there is no indication that the annual gross rate has changed (Goal 1). However, countries are recognizing the importance of forests for climate change mitigation. In a landmark development, the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change integrates action on land use, including REDD+ (Goal 7). A substantial number of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) include land use targets, and commitments to restore forests under the Bonn Challenge have doubled in recent years (Goal 5). In terms of financing, combined bilateral and multilateral official development assistance (ODA) as well as commitments for results-based finance for forest emission reductions have grown significantly in recent years, although disbursements continue to lag (Goals 8 and 9). Approaches to forest governance are improving in select countries, reflected in strengthened policy frameworks and legislation, though significant challenges still exist, including a rising number of killings of grassroots activists protecting forests (Goal 10).

Despite these positive developments, there is still much action that needs to be taken to ensure a lasting impact and successful achievement of the NYDF goals. The NYDF Assessment Coalition, a strong network of civil society and research organizations, is committed to supporting these aims and continuing to measure progress toward all 10 goals annually until 2020.

This analysis was conducted by the members of the NYDF Assessment Coalition with the support of the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 and the Climate and Land Use Alliance.

The 10 NYDF Goals



Goal 1. At least halve the rate of loss of natural forests globally by 2020 and strive to end natural forest loss by 2030



Goal 2. Support and help meet the private-sector goal of eliminating deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities such as palm oil, soy, paper, and beef products by no later than 2020, recognizing that many companies have even more ambitious targets



Goal 3. Significantly reduce deforestation derived from other economic sectors by 2020



Goal 4. Support alternatives to deforestation driven by basic needs (such as subsistence farming and reliance on fuel wood for energy) in ways that alleviate poverty and promote sustainable and equitable development



Goal 5. Restore 150 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2020 and significantly increase the rate of global restoration thereafter, which would restore at least an additional 200 million hectares by 2030



Goal 6. Include ambitious, quantitative forest conservation and restoration targets for 2030 in the post-2015 global development framework, as part of new international sustainable development goals



Goal 7. Agree in 2015 to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as part of a post-2020 global climate agreement, in accordance with internationally agreed rules and consistent with the goal of not exceeding 2°C warming



Goal 8. Provide support for the development and implementation of strategies to reduce forest emissions



Goal 9. Reward countries and jurisdictions that, by taking action, reduce forest emissions—particularly through public policies to scale-up payments for verified emission reductions and private-sector sourcing of commodities



Goal 10. Strengthen forest governance, transparency, and the rule of law, while also empowering communities and recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples, especially those pertaining to their lands and resources

KEY MESSAGES: 2016 UPDATES ON NYDF GOALS 1-10

GOAL 1: At least halve the rate of loss of natural forests globally by 2020 and strive to end natural forest loss by 2030

- Globally, the annual net loss of natural forest area appears to be declining (a 25% decrease in 2015 compared with a 2000–10 baseline). However, there is no sign that the annual gross rate at which trees are being cleared or harvested is slowing (a 9% increase in 2011–14 compared with a 2001–10 baseline). This indicates that while there may be a significant increase in global regeneration, restoration, and reforestation, tropical forest clearing continues to grow (Figure 1).
- For the period 2001-13, deforestation emissions reached an annual average of 2,270 million metric tons of Carbon Dioxide (MtCO₂), which makes deforestation a larger source of emission than Russia's economy-wide emissions in 2012.

Gross and net forest loss relative to 2020 and 2030 targets



Source: Climate Focus analysis based on Hansen et al., 2013 (updated on GFW) and FAO FRA 2015

Figure 1. For the Hansen/GFW and FAO estimates, the line represents the default crown cover threshold of 30%.

GOAL 2: Support and help meet the private-sector goal of eliminating deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities such as palm oil, soy, paper, and beef products by no later than 2020, recognizing that many companies have even more ambitious targets

- Deforestation-related pledges have continued to grow since the NYDF was signed in 2014, with the number of companies making commitments increasing to 415 from 307 since last year's report. The majority of commitments address palm oil (59%) and wood products (53%). Soy and cattle are covered by significantly fewer commitments (21% and 12%, respectively), which is a matter of concern, considering their relevance as major deforestation drivers.
- Some progress has been made toward implementing corporate commitments to removing deforestation from agricultural commodity supply chains, with companies making headway in adopting policies to reduce their exposure to deforestation. But many companies with deforestation-related commitments continue to lack time-bound, actionable plans for how these commitments will be implemented, and the majority of companies do not publicly report on compliance with their own forest policies, making independent verification of progress difficult.
- Weak forest governance presents a major barrier to private-sector efforts. Although companies see limited or no overall global improvement in forest governance and public-sector support, they highlight specific incidents of improved collaboration and listed examples of successful public-private cooperation. There is a recognized need for collaborative and integrated approaches that result in an increased momentum behind programs that link landscape-level public programs paired with private-sector sourcing commitments.

GOAL 3: Significantly reduce deforestation derived from other economic sectors by 2020

- After agriculture, timber extraction, mining, infrastructure development, and human settlements are the most important activities driving the loss of tropical forests.
- However, a number of studies look at the deforestation of other economic activities and several industry initiatives are under development. We expect that these developments will start filling the data gaps in coming years.

GOAL 4: Support alternatives to deforestation driven by basic needs (such as subsistence farming and reliance on fuel wood for energy) in ways that alleviate poverty and promote sustainable and equitable development

- In the absence of data on interventions to tackle subsistence agriculture as a driver of forest loss, we have to focus our assessment on evaluating the reduction of use of fuel wood, for which limited data are available.
- There has been a steady increase in the global distribution of clean cookstoves in the past year, with nearly 20 million new cookstoves and fuels distributed in 2014. Of those, 12.1 million met the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstove's definition of clean and/or efficient. Financing for cookstove interventions remains flat.

GOAL 5: Restore 150 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2020 and significantly increase the rate of global restoration thereafter, which would restore at least an additional 200 million hectares by 2030

- There has been a significant increase in new pledges committing to restore forests, bringing us closer to the goal of 150 million hectares by 2020:
 - Nineteen more government and non-governmental entities have made restoration commitments under the Bonn Challenge, doubling the number from the previous year and reaching a total of 38 entities.
 - The area covered by these commitments has also doubled. In total, entities have committed to restoring 124.3 million hectares of forest landscapes. And with 90.3 and 34 million hectares pledged for 2020 and 2030, the Bonn Challenge is 60% and 35% respectively on the way toward reaching its milestones.
- Since early 2015, some 114 parties to the UNFCCC have submitted intended NDCs containing land sector targets. The cumulative restoration and afforestation pledges are estimated to amount to 161.6 million hectares—equal to 46% of the 350 million hectare 2030 restoration target set by the NYDF.

GOAL 6: Include ambitious, quantitative forest conservation and restoration targets for 2030 in the post-2015 global development framework, as part of new international sustainable development goals

- The official indicators proposed to measure the forest conservation targets formulated in the Sustainable Development Goals would not directly measure forest conservation (that is, gross forest loss) or restoration.
- Instead, they address a forest conservation and restoration focus on total forest cover, forest cover change, change in carbon stocks, and areas designated for biodiversity conservation and under forest management plans. This may lead to the ambitious forest conservation goal adopted as part of the SDGs being given little attention in practice.

GOAL 7: Agree in 2015 to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as part of a post-2020 global climate agreement, in accordance with internationally agreed rules and consistent with the goal of not exceeding 2°C warming

- The text of the Paris Agreement anchors action on land use, including REDD+, within the overall mitigation framework of the agreement, providing a long-term signal that clarifies the central role of forests in climate change mitigation efforts.
- An analysis of 162 NDCs finds 114 countries have proposed a quantified emission mitigation target that includes land use, while 60 countries have proposed a non-emissions target on land use, including goals related to overall forest cover, forest conservation and afforestation, reforestation, and restoration.

GOAL 8: Provide support for the development and implementation of strategies to reduce forest emissions

- Combined bilateral and multilateral ODA committed to climate change mitigation and the forestry sector in developing countries increased from US\$548 million in 2013 to US\$739 million in 2014. This increase was due to the doubling of bilateral ODA commitments, while multilateral ODA saw a small decrease.
- We lack satisfactory datasets to track public finance flows among developing countries, domestic spending in industrial and developing countries to reduce forest-related emissions, or private investments in strategies to reduce forest emissions.

GOAL 9: Reward countries and jurisdictions that, by taking action, reduce forest emissions—particularly through public policies to scale up payments for verified emissions reductions and private-sector sourcing of commodities

- At the Paris Climate Summit, Germany, Norway, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom announced a collective aim to provide over US\$5 billion from 2015 to 2020, if forest countries demonstrate measured, reported and verified emission reductions.
- Since 2014, pledges and commitments for results-based finance for forest emissions reductions have grown by more than US\$6.4 billion. Disbursements continue to lag behind, amounting to just US\$440 million, as many countries are still in the process of preparing large-scale REDD+ programs in line with donor requirements. Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative is responsible for the majority of bilateral commitments and disbursements.
- Between 2013 and 2015, the forest carbon market grew from US\$152 million to US\$762 million, according to Forest Trends data. Carbon volumes also increased from over 25 MtCO₂e emission reductions transacted in 2013 to just under 88 MtCO₂e in 2015.

GOAL 10: Strengthen forest governance, transparency, and the rule of law, while also empowering communities and recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples, especially those pertaining to their lands and resources

- New data on killings of land and environment defenders show 2015 was the worst year on record, with 181 killings recorded—an average of 3 every week.
- There have been relevant developments in strengthening policy frameworks to strengthen forest governance, including the adoption of legislation to promote legal timber in Japan; enforcement of existing legislation in Australia, the European Union and the United States; and the launch of a voluntary initiative to promote legal timber in China.
- While implementation of many Voluntary Partnership Agreements agreed under the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan of the European Union (EU) continues to face hurdles, Indonesia looks set to be the first country to issue FLEGT licenses for exporting to the EU at the end of 2016.

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