

WWF sets out blueprint to save forests as new data reveals 'devastating' increase in global deforestation

WWF warns that the world is 'failing our forests' and sets out action plan to get world back on track to reduce deforestation and meet global goals

Gland, Switzerland (24 October 2023) - Alarming new data from new reports shows that the world is off track to protect and restore forests by 2030 and failure to meet global forest targets will have catastrophic impacts for our world. WWF's *Forest Pathways 2023* report argues that if leaders and businesses keep their promises to take action, it is still possible to reverse this trend and secure a future with more thriving forests that benefit humanity and our planet.

Data from the new Forest Declaration Assessment shows that deforestation reached 6.6 million hectares in 2022, with primary tropical forest loss at 4.1 million hectares. An alarming 96% of global deforestation takes place in tropical regions. Tropical Asia is the only region that is close to the pathway for achieving zero gross deforestation.

WWF warns tropical forests are beginning to act as a carbon source, not a sink, under the pressures of a warming, drying and increasingly extreme climate. Widespread and increasing deforestation and degradation in the planet's three largest tropical forest basins, the Amazon, Congo and Southeast Asia, could deliver a global climate catastrophe.

Fran Price, WWF Global Forests Lead, said: "The world is failing forests with devastating consequences on a global scale. It is impossible to reverse nature loss, address the climate crisis and develop sustainable economies without forests. Since the global pledge to end deforestation by 2030 was made, an area of tropical forest the size of Denmark has been lost. We are at a critical juncture. Governments and businesses have a huge responsibility to set us on the right pathway. We do not need new forest goals: we need uncompromising ambition, speed and accountability to fulfill the goals that have already been set. It is time to step up."

The *Forest Pathways* report shows that globally, at least 100 times more public funding goes to environmentally harmful subsidies than to finance for forests. The Forest Declaration Assessment reveals that globally, only US \$2.2 billion in public funds are channeled to forests every year – a negligible fraction compared to other global investments. Indigenous Peoples and local communities receive a small fraction of the finance they need to secure their rights and effectively manage their territories, even though where tropical forests are

under their stewardship, forests are better protected and deforestation and degradation are lower.

The reports come ahead of the [Three Basins Summit](#) (26-28 October), which presents an important opportunity for governments to present a robust, action-oriented agenda that demonstrates accountability and transparency, in the timeframe that is needed to meet the scale of urgency. This includes increasing and channeling finance in a transparent and equitable way to high-integrity tropical forests, and for governments and businesses to get back on track, make good on their public commitments to halting forest loss, protecting, sustainably managing and restoring forests and to start making continuous and meaningful annual progress towards global forest goals.

In addition to calling for financial promises to be met, the WWF *Forest Pathways 2023* report sets out a blueprint to save forests by 2030, with essential measures, including:

- End forest-harming investments and subsidies such as agricultural subsidies responsible for the loss of 2.2 million hectares of forest per year
- Reform the rules of global trade that harm forests, cutting deforesting commodities out of global supply chains, and removing barriers to forest-friendly goods
- Accelerate the recognition of land rights to Indigenous peoples
- Make the shift towards nature-based economies

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The Forest Declaration Assessment data, the WWF Forest Pathways report and supporting images and videos are available in our [online press room here](#)

****An online media briefing will be held on Thursday 19 October at 16:00 CEST****

Speakers include: **Fran Price**, Global Forest Practice Lead, WWF; **Mary Gagen**, Chief Advisor on Forests, WWF-UK; **Edegar Oliveira**, Director of Conservation and Restoration of Ecosystems, WWF-Brazil; **Erin Matson**, Senior consultant at Climate Focus and coordinator for the Forest Declaration Assessment; **Darragh Conway**, Lead on rights & governance for the Forest Declaration Assessment

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About WWF

WWF is an independent conservation organization, with over 30 million followers and a global network active in nearly 100 countries. Our mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. Visit panda.org/news for the latest news and media resources; follow us on Twitter @WWF_media

About the Forest Declaration Assessment:

A coalition of civil society organizations will release an assessment of the world's progress towards global goals of halting deforestation and restoring 350 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 as set out in the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use (2021) and the New York Declaration on Forests (2014). With the support of a wide group of research organizations, think tanks, NGOs (including WWF), and advocacy groups, the Forest Declaration Assessment provides new and comprehensive data on the status of forest protection efforts by countries and companies; finance for forests; and the strength and enforcement of forest laws and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.