

Declaration Would End Billions of Tons of Climate Pollution per Year, Restore 350 Million Hectares of Forest; Backed by Tangible Private Sector Commitments

Governments, Business, Civil Society Pledge to End Loss of Forests

New York, 23 September — More than 150 governments, companies, civil society and indigenous peoples today endorsed the New York Declaration on Forests, pledging to cut the loss of forests in half by 2020 and, for the first time, to end it a decade later in 2030. It also calls for the restoration of more than 350 million hectares of forests and croplands, an area greater than the size of India, which would bring significant climate benefits and take pressure off primary forests.

Combined this could avoid between 4.5 and 8.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide each year by 2030. That is equivalent to removing the carbon emissions produced by the one billion cars that are currently on the world's roads. Deforestation is a frequently overlooked source of carbon dioxide emissions and a significant contributor to climate change as trees, which store carbon, release it when they are burned during slash-and-burn land clearing of forests.

At today's Climate Summit, this Declaration was endorsed by countries in the developed and developing world, multinationals from the food, paper, finance and other industries, civil society organizations and indigenous peoples from Peru to Nepal. The Declaration, a non-legally binding political declaration, aims to change the politics heading into next year's Paris climate talks and accelerate action by companies to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains.

"The New York Declaration aims to reduce more climate pollution each year than the United States emits annually. Forests are not only a critical part of the climate solution – they hold multiple benefits for all members of society," United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said.

To support the New York Declaration, several specific commitments to action were announced today. They, as well as others made over the past months, contributed to the Summit's objective to advance climate action in this area:

- More than 20 global food companies – most recently Dunkin Donuts and Krispy Kreme – committed to deforestation-free sourcing policies of palm oil. Three of these – the world's largest palm oil companies – Wilmar, Golden Agri-Resources and Cargill – also committed to work together on implementation, and joined the Indonesian Business Council in asking incoming Indonesian President Joko Widodo to support their efforts through legislation and policies. Taken together, the share of palm oil under zero deforestation commitments has grown from 0 to about 60 per cent in the last year, with the potential to reduce 400 million to 450 million tons of CO₂ emissions annually by 2020, or 2 billion tons in the period through 2020.

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- As a contribution to the Summit, the Consumer Goods Forum – a coalition of 400 companies with combined revenue of more than US\$3 trillion – also called on governments to pass a legally binding climate deal in Paris in 2015 that includes REDD+, including large-scale payments to countries that reduce deforestation. The global food companies are a part of the Forum.
- Major donors announced critical funding in the millions for projects aimed at halting deforestation and protecting forests. Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom are expected to announce they will push for large-scale economic incentives as part of the Paris climate talks in 2015.
- A global coalition of indigenous peoples spanning Asia, Africa, Central America and the Amazon Basin pledged to protect the more than 400 million hectares of tropical forests under their management. This represents the storage of more than 85 gigatons of carbon dioxide.
- Peru and Liberia presented groundbreaking new forest policies. Twenty-six governors from provinces covering a quarter of tropical forests, such as the Governors' Climate and Forest Task Force, pledged to do act on climate change -- to cut deforestation by 80 percent -- if developed countries create new economic incentives and provide support through results-based payments, with a substantial share of revenues going to indigenous groups and local communities.
- The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Uganda and several other countries are set to make national pledges to restore more than 30 million hectares of degraded lands, more than doubling the 20 million hectares already pledged to date under the Bonn Challenge.
- Several of Europe's largest countries committed to develop new public procurement policies to sustainably source forest-intensive commodities like palm oil, soy, beef and timber. This is expected to have a significant market impact by leveraging the buying power of some of the world's largest economies.

The Declaration's endorsement, and related supporting commitments, come as the forest sector is transformed by new policies and shifting demand from consumer goods companies and consumers, stronger land rights for indigenous peoples and greater advocacy by civil society. Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon is down 75 per cent since 2004. In the past nine months alone, 60 per cent of the world's highly carbon-intensive palm oil trade has come under commitments to go deforestation-free.

"The New York Declaration sends an unmistakable signal going into Paris 2015," said Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway. "Science tells us we won't limit global warming to two degrees without massive efforts on forests. Today, forward-thinking leaders in government, business and civil society together have begun the push to enact policies, change practices and put in place appropriate incentives to end deforestation."

"This is a serious commitment for a serious challenge," said Heru Prasetyo, head of Indonesia's REDD+ Agency. "With the strong partnership of key actors from governments, industry, indigenous and local

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communities, as well as the international community, I am confident we can achieve this ground-breaking vision."

"Our planet is losing forests at a rate of eight football fields every ten seconds," said Carter Roberts, President and Chief Executive Officer of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). "Today we've seen important commitments from companies, governments, civil society and indigenous peoples to halt this trend. Now it is time for urgent collaboration to see these commitments realized on the ground."

"The last few months have seen a welcome race to the top," said Paul Polman, Chief Executive Officer of Unilever, a consumer products company. "Consumers have sent companies a clear signal that they do not want their purchasing habits to drive deforestation and companies are responding. Better still, companies are committing to working in partnership with suppliers, governments and NGOs to strengthen forest governance and economic incentives. It can be done and this Declaration signals a real intention to accelerate action."

"Forests are not solely economic resources, but are the center of spiritual life and cultural integration for indigenous peoples," said Abdon Nababan, Secretary General of the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of Indonesia's Archipelago (AMAN). "The New York Declaration is a long-awaited show of political will by all countries to support indigenous peoples as we fight to defend our forests."

These announcements form part of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call for action to keep global temperature increases to less than two degrees Celsius by reducing emissions, moving money, pricing pollution, strengthening resilience and mobilizing new coalitions. Forests is one of eight areas identified as critical in the fight against climate change and that was further developed during the Abu Dhabi Ascent, a two-day meeting held in the United Arab Emirates in May 2014.

View The New York Declaration and supporting materials online

<http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/action-areas/>

or at:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/events/2014/september/23-september-united-nations-climate-summit/Land-Use-and-Forest-Action-Area-Online-Pressroom/>



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