

UNDP Submission of Inputs on the Contribution of Forests to Agenda 2030

6 December 2017

In response to the invitation contained in UNFF Resolution 12/1, UNDP is pleased to submit, as a United Nations system partner and a member organization of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its inputs on the contribution of forests to the issues under consideration by the HLPF in 2018. In addition, and also in response to Resolution 12/1, we include here programmes and initiatives that UNDP is undertaking which highlight the significance of forests to the 2030 agenda.

Contribution of Forests to Agenda 2030

UNDP recently launched a four-year Strategic Plan that aligns its work with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Strategic Plan 2018-2021 sets out direction for a new UNDP that is optimized to help countries achieve the Agenda. The new UNDP Strategic Plan identified six “signature solutions,” along which UNDP will align its resources and expertise. One of the six signature solutions is: *Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet.*

UNDP recognizes forests as being critical to these nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet and to delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is certainly not limited to SDG15 but rather forest ecosystems contribute to the broader agenda, given important linkages to water security, energy, livelihoods and production and consumption of agricultural commodities, as key examples.

One third of the world’s land surface is covered by forests, which support livelihoods and harbor half of the world’s land-based species of fauna and flora. As the most biologically-diverse ecosystems, forests provide a critical buffer to climate change and protect watersheds as sources for sustainable water supply. Forests are essential to ensuring water security. Protected forests supply a third of the world’s largest cities with 100% of their drinking water, forests provide irrigated water for more than 75% of all agriculture worldwide, and more than 3200 cities around the world could improve their water security with improved protection and restoration of forest ecosystems. In addition, forests are critical for providing a renewable source of fuel for rural communities, for sustaining food sources for forest-dwelling peoples, and sustaining some 50,000 medicinal plants. Forests also play a significant role in reducing the risk of natural disasters, such as floods and landslides.

Yet, more than 13 million hectares are deforested annually. Deforestation and forest degradation undermine the livelihoods of some 1.6 billion people, threaten biodiversity and critical ecosystem services, and contribute to climate change, leading to 12-15 per cent of annual global greenhouse gas emissions.

In particular, we’d like to highlight that the role of forests to mitigate climate change is strongly recognized in the UNFCCC Paris Agreement. The majority of countries’ nationally-determined contributions, or NDCs, which are considered the “backbone” of the Paris Agreement, include land-use and forests. Indeed, 77% of all countries’ INDCs refer to land-use or forests, while 54% explicitly include the land use sector in an economy-wide target. Assuming full implementation of the current round of NDCs, land-use and forests provide approximately a quarter of total emission reductions planned by countries and so, are clearly critical to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Additionally, the Paris

Agreement explicitly recognizes the importance of REDD+, including associated results-based payments, and strongly reinforces the significance of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ agreed by the COP.

It is evident that climate action under SDG 13 and all of the SDGs will be further enhanced and complemented by the implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Specifically, REDD+, in line with the guidance and modalities agreed under the UNFCCC in the form of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ and related COP decisions, as a core element of the Paris Agreement, has the potential to make a significant contribution toward the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

UNDP Programmes and Initiatives Highlighting the Significance of Forests to the 2030 Agenda

With an understanding of the vital role forests in achieving the SDGs, UNDP supports efforts to sustain resilient forest ecosystems to benefit local economies, protect biodiversity and address climate change by providing technical assistance, policy advice and governance support to developing countries, through several key programmes and initiatives. While the most direct and clear contribution of forests and UNDP's forest-related portfolio is to SDG15, there are also important contributions to highlight, in particular, to two of the other SDGs under review by HLPF 2018. These are Goal 6. *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all* and Goal 12. *Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*.

With the Paris Agreement in force, forest countries are moving from REDD+ readiness to implementation. To reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, UNDP assists countries to enact and implement policies and measures for REDD+, putting special emphasis on land, policy and governance reforms, on green commodities, as well as on social and environmental safeguards. These safeguards include, for example, the full and effective engagement of indigenous peoples and forest communities as well as conservation of ecosystem services, which could address maintenance of watershed integrity, contributing toward SDG6.

UNDP manages a US\$400 million portfolio of national REDD+ projects, working through a diverse network of institutions and partners, including: with FAO and UN Environment, the UN-REDD Programme in 64 countries; serving as delivery partner for the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility in 7 countries; supporting bilateral investment programmes for REDD+ in 5 countries; managing the Community-Based REDD+ initiative in 6 countries; and hosting the Secretariat of the Central African Forest Initiative (a financial platform with five donors) in 6 forest countries. UNDP also supports pioneer countries with leveraging REDD+ investments and finance — including through the Green Climate Fund.

Through the UN-REDD Programme, UNDP in partnership with UN Environment and FAO, applies a one-UN approach to provide comprehensive assistance to forested developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, in line with UNFCCC requirements. The UN-REDD Programme is well placed to accompany countries in achieving their REDD+ objectives while reinforcing synergies with the global climate architecture, including the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

Leveraging its in-country presence, UNDP has been integral to advancing REDD+ strategies and action plans in 32 countries as well as investment plans that provide a coherent framework within which domestic fiscal policies and finance, private finance, and international finance for REDD+, can be integrated.

A number of UN-REDD's 64 partner countries are well advanced but still require technical support to move into the implementation phase. For the period 2018-2020, the UN-REDD Programme will build on its foundational work carried out from 2008 -2017 and will apply a dual approach to REDD+ action through (a) technical assistance in nine countries (Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Mexico, Myanmar, Peru, Republic of the Congo, Viet Nam and Zambia), complemented by (b) a global knowledge component that will reach a broader set of countries and cover six key thematic areas for delivery, one of which is the contribution of REDD+ to the sustainable development goals and the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Countries will be supported in 2018-2020 to enhance synergies between national REDD+ agenda in the context of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs through guidance and associated technical support on the integration of REDD+ and NDCs with the SDGs.

Green Commodities Programme and Good Growth Partnership

A cornerstone of the REDD+ strategies and action plans referenced above is addressing expansion of agriculture commodity production as the main driver of deforestation and forest degradation worldwide. Consumed by billions of people every day, palm oil, soy, beef and other global commodities are dominant economic forces in many national and local economies. With economic development, the demand for these products is ever-growing, but this cannot be at the cost of further pressure on our planet's finite resources. Addressing commodity production as a main driver of forest loss responds directly to both Goals 12 and 15 of the SDGs.

UNDP works closely with private sector and governments through the Green Commodities Programme (GCP). Established in 2009 to improve the national economic, social and environmental performance of agricultural commodity sectors, the GCP works to improve rural livelihoods, mitigate climate change, and maintain the ecosystem services and resilience of landscapes and seascapes. Through multi-stakeholder platforms, GCP works to strengthen the national enabling environments of key agricultural commodity sectors by promoting: 1) Improved extension systems; 2) Policy/legislation reform and enforcement in agricultural land use; 3) Improved economic incentives for sustainable production; 4) Intra- and inter-sector coordination. With the UN-REDD Programme, GCP promotes zero deforestation in commodity supply-chains. GCP is now also linking these national sustainably efforts with global ones by leading the Good Growth Partnership (GGP). The GEF-supported GGP was recently launched, in 2017, to focus on the root causes that lead to deforestation, environmental degradation and generally unsustainable commodity production and fully integrate this work in key countries and at the global level with global markets and financial systems for palm oil, beef and soy in Indonesia, Liberia, Paraguay and Brazil. The GGP was initiated by the GEF, and is now led by UNDP's Green Commodities Programme, in strong collaboration with Conservation International, IFC, UNEP FI and WWF.

Secretariat and Global Platform for the New York Declaration on Forests¹

The New York Declaration on Forests was endorsed at the 2014 Climate Summit by more than 150 governments, companies, indigenous peoples and civil society organizations committed to halving deforestation by 2020, and ending it by 2030.

¹ <https://nydfglobalplatform.org/>

Since its launch, the number of NYDF endorsers has grown to over 190 and new endorsers continue to sign-on to the Declaration. UNDP has played an informal “secretariat” role in managing new endorsements of the NYDF and convening the broad multi-stakeholder coalition of forests actors that are working towards achieving the NYDF goals. Now, as of 2017, UNDP is hosting a new Secretariat and Global Platform for the NYDF, through the support of the Government of Germany.

The Global Platform for the NYDF will fill an important gap in multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration necessary to achieve the goals of the NYDF—it will facilitate coordination among the various initiatives and parties working conserve and restore forests, transform supply chains of major economic sectors impacting forests, and improve forest livelihoods, governance and tenure of forests at a global level - to enhance the impact of multi- stakeholder partnerships needed to deliver measurable results that advance all aspects of the global forest agenda.

Equator Initiative

UNDP’s Equator Initiative identifies inclusive, nature-based solutions, including forest solutions, to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, and showcases best practices and examples from around the world demonstrating how communities can manage forests to achieve their own local development goals. Two examples from this year’s Equator Prize include an indigenous Pech community that is sustainably harvesting a non-timber forest product essential to the fragrance trade², and a coastal community in Thailand conserving mangrove forests to reduce their risks from coastal storms and to ensure food security in perpetuity³.

UNDP-GEF

UNDP-GEF supports 69 countries through 89 projects in safeguarding forest biodiversity and ecosystems with financing exceeding US\$449 million.

The UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) has supported more than 20,500 community-based projects with an estimated 35 per cent of those (approximately 7,200 community projects) related to the protection, rehabilitation and sustainable use of forests ecosystems across the world. This portfolio comprises of US \$200 million in grants and 268 million in co-financing. More broadly, UNDP’s overall work related to forests supports indigenous peoples and local communities to participate in global policy-making processes within the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD and highlights their contribution to forest conservation and sustainable management of forests.

² <http://www.equatorinitiative.org/2017/06/28/federacion-tribus-pech-de-honduras-fetriph/>

³ <http://www.equatorinitiative.org/2017/06/28/community-mangrove-forest-conservation-of-baan-bang-la/>

Country Example: Supporting Sustainable Supply Chains and REDD+ in Ecuador⁴

As a specific example of UNDP-supported work related to REDD+ strategies and commodities, the Ecuador GCF/GEF project to implement the National REDD+ Action Plan commenced in 2017 and represents the first GCF transfer of REDD+ finance. By pooling together resources from the Green Climate Fund (USD 42.1 million) and the Global Environmental Facility (USD 12.5 million) under one unique program, UNDP is supporting Ecuador in implementing its national REDD+ strategy, which aims at cutting natural forest loss in half by 2020, ending it by 2030, and achieving its NDC targets for the LULUCF sector. This program will strengthen the collaboration and coordination with the private sector, related mainly to palm oil, cattle, coffee, cacao supply chains. It will contribute to reorient the current 1.4 billion USD of existing government agricultural subsidies towards more sustainable practices. This is a clear example of a country-level approach that responds not only to the Paris Agreement and REDD+ framework but also contributes towards the SDGs, and Goals 12 and 15, in particular.

Cumulatively, the efforts described above position UNDP as a key international partner for implementing SDG 15, alongside other SDGs, in a way that systematically promotes policy reforms, the rights of indigenous peoples and forest communities, gender mainstreaming and social equality. This approach is in line with the ultimate development goals of UNDP and the UN System, and bolsters the critical role of forests toward achieving the SDGs.

⁴ <http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2017/07/04/ecuador-to-receive-over-us-80-million-to-curb-deforestation.html>