



PHOTO: ©Haroldo Palo Jr_Location: São Félix do Xingu, Brazil

NYDF: ENDING DEFORESTATION ONCE AND FOR ALL

DECLARING WAR ON A TROPICAL DISEASE

If you are a tropical tree, the most laudable international goal in your world sits squarely with Goal 1 of The New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF): Halve global deforestation by 2020 and end it by 2030.

The NYDF contains 10 goals for ending the unconscionable statistic that hangs over us humans and our woody companions: 10 billion trees are felled every year, or 27 football fields every minute. For NYDF endorsers, it is about sending this statistic packing. To get there, priorities include eliminating deforestation from agricultural commodities (Goal 2), providing finance for forest action (Goal 8) and strengthening governance and empowering indigenous communities (Goal 10). Goal 5 – in effect, a reiteration of the 2011 Bonn Challenge aspiration – aims to restore 350 million hectares of forests by 2030. Whether you're a tree or a human, the NYDF is nothing if ambitious.

According to an analysis by the Tropical Forest Alliance, the NYDF goals helped spark an immediate supply chain revolution; the number of corporate commitments to address deforestation caused by agricultural commodities, for example, grew 132% between 2013 and the end of 2015. But fast forward a few years and collective progress remains slow, for deforestation is a tropical disease that has myriad causes. Every year the NYDF Assessment Partners

commissions an in-depth report that assesses progress on a selected goal (or set of goals) and updates on all goals. Last year's assessment, which zeroed in on Goal 10, warned NYDF endorsers that the world is not on track to meet NYDF goals, including goal 1 of halving of natural forest loss globally by 2020. Much progress has been made, especially in governance and transparency, but the world continues to lose natural forests at an unnerving rate.

Still, there are a few positive examples of progress to note. For example, Indonesian deforestation continues to plummet and recent progress on forest landscape restoration (Goal 5) provides hope for climate mitigation at the scale the world needs. An attempt to restore "an area larger than India" through the forest landscape restoration approach (FLR), Goal 5's first milestone has now been surpassed: national pledges have ticked over the 170 million hectares mark, comfortably clearing the 150 million hectares sought by 2020. With the help of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system implementation, tangible progress will soon be measurable and will help move pledges to actions.

The NYDF is perhaps best thought of as the deforestation mothership to which other international initiatives like the Tropical Forest Alliance, which concentrates on commodity-driven deforestation (Goal 2), and the Bonn Challenge, which tackles land restoration (Goal 5), report into. The Tropical Forest Alliance, for example, complements NYDF by turning commitments into action, and coordinating the mutually-reinforcing actions of private-sector and national commitments. It usefully tracks action-oriented results against its 2017 'Commodities and Forests Agenda 2020'.

NATURE'S CLIMATE STATISTICS

Deforestation has myriad causes, including weak governance, policy incoherence, market failure and, especially, the incessant consumer demand for agricultural commodities. In the absence of a robust market that values the full suite of services forests provide – i.e. carbon storage, climate regulation, water provision and biodiversity – forests are generally considered more valuable for their timber, cropland, or pasture than they are as standing, healthy, climate-protecting ecosystems.

Yet the climate benefits of protecting forests are immense. According to Project Drawdown, protecting tropical and temperate forests are the 5th and 12th most effective climate mitigation solutions, respectively. Protecting peatlands

ranks 13th and restoring forests comes in at 15th. Because deforestation has a double impact – it releases stored carbon into the atmosphere and reduces the planet's ability to lock carbon emissions away via photosynthesis – preventing it is has a double benefit. Estimates predict that avoiding further deforestation could reduce CO₂ emissions by three to four billion tonnes per year – the equivalent of taking half the world's cars off the road.

Regional examples show that if policies and political will are strengthened, more progress can be made. In Indonesia, for example, a 2016 moratorium on the drainage of peat forests led to a 60% drop in deforestation in the space of a year, which is an emissions reduction of 200 million tonnes of CO₂e. Since 1997, nearly a million hectares of forest in Costa Rica have been part of Costa Rica's 'payments for ecosystem services' (PES) schemes.

KEY FIGURES

Stopping deforestation, restoring forests and improving forestry practices could cost-effectively remove

7 BILLION TONNES
OF CO₂ ANNUALLY,

or as much as eliminating 1.5 billion cars – more than all of the cars in the world today.

200
ENDORSERS

Halting deforestation could boost the global economy by as much as

\$80 BILLION PER YEAR

as well as make it more resilient to a changing climate.

If NYDF goals realised

4.5-8.8 BILLION TONNES

of CO₂e could be reduced every year.

Commercial agriculture is responsible for

MORE THAN HALF

of the deforestation globally.

40
Countries

20
Subnationals

53
Corporations

63
NGOs

16
Indigenous Groups

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The voluntary and non-legally binding NYDF was established at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit held in New York in 2014. It grew out of dialogue among governments, companies, indigenous peoples associations and civil society.

EXECUTING ENTITY

The NYDF Secretariat is coordinated by UNDP, Meridian Institute, and Climate Advisers. The annual NYDF Assessment Report is coordinated by Climate Focus.

SDGs



VIDEOS & STORIES

<https://youtu.be/NX8HByqA4aE>

https://youtu.be/w0uRoe6W_Uc

NYDF resources

NYDF Progress Assessment (2018)

CONTACT

nydf@undp.org