

Report on the UN Climate Summit Forests Action Area Plenary Session

Multilateral and Multi-stakeholder Action Announcements

Tuesday 23 September 2014, 3.30-4.20pm | UN Headquarters, ECOSOC Chamber

Introduction

On Tuesday, 23 September 2014, Forests took center stage at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit where dozens of global leaders announced huge reductions to global warming pollution and presented a global timeline to slow, end and reverse deforestation - the first time in history that a critical mass of developed and developing country world leaders partnered around such a goal.

The [New York Declaration on Forests](#), which was generated by a vanguard of countries and companies with input from indigenous peoples and non-governmental organizations, and was unveiled at the Climate Summit, has now been endorsed by over 160 entities, including countries, states, indigenous peoples, NGOs and major companies. Together, they pledge to halve deforestation by 2020 and end it by 2030, to restore 350 million hectares of degraded forest landscapes, and express government buy-in to private sector supply chain goals.

Not just a commitment of words, the Declaration is backed up by specific commitments to action, announced at the Climate Summit. These include a **supply chain revolution** among major commodity traders; a **pledge by a global alliance of indigenous peoples** to protect hundreds of millions of hectares of tropical forests in the services of climate change mitigation and resilience; **new commitments from forest country governments** to reduce deforestation or restore degraded lands; **major new bilateral and multilateral programmes** to pay countries for reduced deforestation over the next six years; and **new procurement policies** for several of the largest forest commodity importer governments. [More details of each of the announcements are available here.](#)

The events of the past year have demonstrated new momentum and a growing global partnership to protect forests and enhance forest restoration, in ways that promote sustainable development. This historic collaboration of governments, governors, private sector companies, indigenous peoples, and civil society is adding up to something truly significant, and this was recognized at the Climate Summit by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, by world leaders, and by the wider public. This robust partnership was clearly evident in the formal Forests Plenary of the Climate Summit, where the message was heard loud and clear

that without decisive action on deforestation and forest restoration, it will not be possible to limit global warming to two-degree Celsius.

Chaired by **H.E. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia** and **H.E. Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway**, this session saw speakers from the range of sectors crucial to the forests issue outline what they, individually and collaboratively, will do to protect the world's forests, in front of an audience of over 300 world leaders and leading thinkers and policy-makers in the forests space. A panel format chaired by **Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator**, drew out the message that deforestation can be stopped, that there is a clear pathway to achieve this, and that it involves all stakeholders: **developing forest countries** must implement and enforce the necessary land-use reforms; **the international community** must include large scale economic incentives in any new climate agreement; **the private sector** must eliminate deforestation from its supply chains; and **indigenous peoples** must be empowered to continue to play the critical role that they have historically played in protecting forests.

Proceedings of the Forests Plenary 3.30-4.20pm

As participants and audience members entered the ECOSOC Chamber, screens showed a [rolling display of the many commitments to action made in association with the Forests action area of the Climate Summit](#). These included commitments from governments of developed and developing countries; states and provinces; major companies; and indigenous peoples. **H.E. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia** welcomed participants and outlined the structure of the session which would focus on forests and climate change and the urgent need for action on both.



Session Co-Leads: Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia



Participants at the Climate Summit Forests Plenary in the Ecosoc Chamber

H.E. Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway then spoke on the urgency of the climate change issue and the critical importance of exerting concrete effort to address the challenge without delay and with unprecedented determination. Officially launching the New York Declaration on Forests, she noted that science confirms that addressing deforestation is critical to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius. “Deforestation is an issue rgar can be solved” she said, “but we must all do our part”. Developing forest countries must implement and enforce the necessary land-use reforms to grow their economies without destroying their forests; the international community must deliver on its promise to include large scale economic incentives in the new

climate agreement due to be reached in Paris in 2015; and the private sector must take deforestation out of commodity supply chains. She pointed to these actors as essential pillars of an emerging political coalition for change, alongside civil society and indigenous peoples. This emerging coalition can create the political platform that will allow governments of tropical forest countries to act with resolve to enforce forest laws, protect the rights of indigenous peoples, and promote investment and innovation. She emphasized the importance of both government and private sector action, with government action needed to transform markets through regulation, enforcement and incentives. She praised the “groundbreaking” ambition of the New York Declaration on Forests, which, for the first time, brings about broad agreement on a timeline for halt forest loss. She pointed out that succeeding in the Declaration’s goals would see global carbon pollution reduced annually by three times as much as India’s current level of carbon emissions. Furthermore, she hailed the positive impact this global partnership would have on development, setting an example for other sectors to follow in tackling major global issues. The Prime Minister ended by introducing [a short video summarizing the forests challenge](#).

Following the video, President Yudhoyono, shared his reflections on Indonesia’s experience in dealing with climate change and deforestation. He pointed out that Indonesia has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 26 per cent unilaterally by 2020, or 41 per cent with international support, with these targets mainstreamed into Indonesia’s national and regional development plans. With deforestation contributing the largest share of Indonesia’s emissions, action in the forests sector is crucial. President Yudhoyono reflected on the success of Indonesia’s 2011 moratorium on new logging licenses in reducing deforestation, which has been extended until 2015. He also cited the One Map Initiative – an effort to develop accurate forest mapping for conservation and sustainable land use. He acknowledged the importance of involving local communities, indigenous peoples, and the private sector, in order to strengthen forest governance, and pointed to Indonesia’s recently created National REDD+ Management Agency as an institution that will help to coordinate and integrate efforts to reduce emissions from the land use and forest sectors. He also emphasized the importance of integrated safeguards as a defense against the potential negative impacts of REDD+ implementation – with these safeguards including the recognition and protection of customary communities. Finally, he emphasized the importance of striking a balance between nature conservation and people’s need for access to forests. Forests also hold the means for many people to improve their welfare and economic development and this cannot be ignored.



Helen Clark greets session participants



Panelists Left-Right: Teras Narang, Governor of Central Kalimantan; Edwin Vasquez, COICA, Kumi Naidoo, Greenpeace International; David MacLennan, CEO, Cargill, Franky Widjaja, CEO, Golden Agri-Resources; Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever

Next, **Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator**, took to the podium to moderate a panel discussion among prominent leaders of the private sector, indigenous peoples, civil society, and sub-national government.

She began by asking **Mr. Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever**, what has motivated businesses to get involved in tackling deforestation on such a large scale; what help companies need from governments in order to achieve their goals; and what he envisions as the next steps for companies fighting deforestation. Mr. Polman responded by outlining the main concerns motivating companies – first, that climate change threatens the stability of the global economy; and second, that the cost of inaction is now greater than the cost of action. He noted that natural disasters are already costing Unilever around €300-400 million a year, and that it was considerations such as this that led the 400 companies of the Consumer Goods Forum to pledge to achieve zero net deforestation by 2020. He emphasized the need for governments, business and NGOs to work together, and highlighted the Tropical Forest Alliance, as one successful example of this kind. He also underscored progress in the financial community to put their practices in line with sustainability goals, under the umbrella of the Banking Environment Initiative. However, he acknowledged that there are some necessary actions that can only be undertaken by governments. We need governments, he said, to set the right policy frameworks and to put the right incentives in place to stimulate even faster action. Companies need to deliver on their commitments under the New York Declaration, and follow the roadmap it lays out to eliminate deforestation by 2030. Addressing deforestation, he said, has the potential to be one of the first really big wins in the battle against climate change.



Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever



Franky Widjaja, CEO, Golden Agri-Resources

Next, Ms. Clark turned to Mr. Franky Widjaja, CEO, Golden Agri-Resources (GAR), which, along with a number of other major palm oil producers, has made ambitious commitments on deforestation, and asked him how we can be certain that companies like GAR will deliver on their commitments; what help companies like GAR need from governments to fulfil their commitments; and what role Mr. Widjaja sees NGOs playing in the process. Mr Widjaja began his response by highlighting the importance of the palm oil industry for Indonesia, where it employs about 5 million workers directly and about 12 million indirectly. But he also acknowledged the importance of advancing sustainability. GAR has worked towards eliminating deforestation from its supply chains since 2011, and recognizes the importance of involving many stakeholders in this process. In GAR's case, these stakeholders have included Greenpeace, and the Forest Trust for whose guidance he expressed appreciation. Mr. Widjaja praised the leadership of the Indonesian government in developing the One Map Initiative which has helped companies like GAR recognize which forests areas may be planted and which are to be preserved. Finally, he noted that in 2013 Indonesia supplied approximately 48 per cent of the

world's supply of certified sustainable palm oil – a testament to successful collaboration between countries, companies and NGOs.

Ms. Clark next asked **Mr. David MacLennan, CEO and President, Cargill**, to outline the motivations behind Cargill's new sustainable palm oil policy, and where he sees this course of action heading. Cargill wants to be known as a leading source of sustainable palm oil, said Mr. MacLennan, who went on to describe Cargill's new, more progressive palm oil policy and pledged to keep working on finding practical, economically sound solutions to make Cargill's palm oil supply chains fully sustainable. To achieve this goal, Cargill has worked with the Forest Trust to complete a High Carbon Stock (HSC) assessment at Cargill's own plantation in Indonesia to identify valuable tracts of forest that need to be preserved and he announced that Cargill will expand this work to help its suppliers carry out their own HCS assessments, in collaboration with the NGO Proforest. In Malaysia, Cargill has mapped its entire palm oil supply chain down to the individual mills, and plans to expand this work to map to the level of individual suppliers, so as to be able to guarantee 100 per cent sustainable palm oil in the next few years. This mapping process is also being undertaken in Indonesia. He emphasized Cargill's deliberate approach and the need for collaboration to achieve progress. Looking beyond palm oil, he noted Cargill's work on sustainable soy in Brazil, and plans to embark on a new initiative with the BioCarbon Fund in Zambia to work with cotton farmers to develop smarter land use practices.



David MacLennan, CEO, Cargill



Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director, Greenpeace International

Ms. Clark then invited **Mr. Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director, Greenpeace International**, to share his perspective on the announcements and commitments being made by countries and companies, and to reflect upon what still needs to be done. Mr. Naidoo welcomed the renewed commitment to halting deforestation, but warned that voluntary commitments alone cannot replace government action. While he welcomed the new announcements being made, he warned that the imminent threats facing forests and forest peoples must be averted if we are to live up to the spirit of the New York Declaration. He then appealed to key actors, including those present in the room, to take specific actions. He praised President Yudhoyono's leadership on forests, but warned that Indonesia's current regulations don't protect peatlands sufficiently, and implored the President to pay specific attention to this issue in handing over to his successor. He warned that Brazil's hard-won victories are under fierce attack by industrial agriculturalists, and pleaded with the Brazilian government to resist efforts to reduce indigenous peoples' lands and forests, and commit instead to strengthening governance in the Amazon and increasing protected areas. He praised Cargill's contribution to Brazil's Soy Moratorium, which

has helped to dramatically reduce Amazon deforestation, and called upon Cargill to firmly state its support for keeping the moratorium in place while permanent solutions to Amazon deforestation are agreed. He praised Norway’s visionary leadership on forests and held up today’s partnership agreement between Norway and Liberia as an example for other nations to follow. In conclusion, he noted that forest protection must come in addition to drastic cuts in fossil fuel burning. “We cannot accept so-called ‘forest offsets’ that allow the fossil fuel industry to continue polluting.” Even at the 0.8 degree temperature rise we are already experiencing, he warned, we are seeing drastic impacts of climate change in the parts of the world that have been least responsible for emissions. In closing, he called upon all actors to bring to this issue an urgency and political will to match the ambition that science and extreme weather events call for.

Acknowledging indigenous peoples’ generations of forests stewardship and their struggles to continue playing that role, Ms. Clark next invited **Mr. Edwin Vasquez, Coordinator-General, Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (The Indigenous Coordinator of the Amazon Basin – COICA)** to outline the role of indigenous peoples, and to reflect on the support they need from other sectors in order to support their efforts. Mr. Vasquez, speaking on behalf of a global coalition of indigenous peoples, noted the historic role that indigenous peoples have played in protecting and sustainably managing the world’s forests, even putting their lives on the line, and called for a response to the climate change crisis that recognizes this role as well as indigenous peoples’ rights. On behalf of indigenous organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), Indonesia (AMAN); the Congo Basin (REPALEF) and Mesoamerica (AMPB) whose forests, managed by indigenous peoples, have the highest levels of carbon storage on the planet, Mr. Vasquez announced their collective commitment to holistically manage more than 400 million hectares of tropical forest in the service of climate change mitigation and adaptation. This area of tropical forest, roughly equal to the size of the European Union, stores close to 70 Gt CO₂, equivalent to some 11 years of the United States’ greenhouse gas emissions. He also extended an offer to share traditional indigenous knowledge. In return, he requested that countries that have ratified ILO Convention 169 comply with it, and outlined three key needs of indigenous peoples from countries and from the 2015 climate change agreement: respect and reconstitution of ancestral territoriality; territorial climate financing - international and national commitments for financial support for holistic management channeled through indigenous organization; and self-determination and binding Free, Prior and Informed Consent.



Edwin Vasquez, Coordinator-General, COICA



Teras Narang, Governor, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Finally, **Mr. Teras Narang, Governor of Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia**, shared some of the steps being taken by governors and other sub-national leaders to advance the forests agenda. Speaking on behalf of the governors of the Governors Climate and Forest (GCF) Task Force, a collaboration among 26 states that together govern 25 per cent of the world's tropical forests, Governor Narang introduced the Rio Branco Declaration, which was agreed in August 2014. The Rio Branco Declaration commits GCF member states and provinces to reducing deforestation in their jurisdictions by 80 per cent by 2020 if adequate results-based funding is made available. As of the day of the Climate Summit, 21 of the GCF's 26 members had endorsed it with the remaining members expected to endorse before 2014's UNFCCC COP in Lima. Governors are on the front lines of efforts to reduce deforestation, address climate change and enhance livelihoods, said Mr. Narang, but they cannot achieve the targets set out in the Rio Branco Declaration alone. He called on the international community to provide predictable and sufficient results-based payment to help meet the 80 per cent target. States and provinces are willing to do more than their fair share to tackle climate change, he said, but in exchange they need the international community to make REDD+ a reality in Paris. He also called for a portion of results-based financing to be shared directly with communities and indigenous peoples, recognizing their's as the most successful approaches to protecting forests. He declared the governors' readiness to join with other stakeholders to realize the goals of the New York Declaration on Forests. Closing with a plea to all stakeholders to gather hand in hand to save people and to save our planet, he asked "If it's not us, then who will it be?"

Closing the panel discussion, Ms. Clark offered a few thoughts on the achievements of the Forests action area and on what needs to happen next. She praised the energy and vision of the emerging global coalition on forests and expressed her confidence that this partnership marks a turning point for the world's forests. She thanked all those who endorsed the New York Declaration on Forests for their leadership, and called on them to put their ambitious words into action. She assured endorsers of the multilateral system and the UN system's commitment to the forests agenda and readiness to support them in delivering on their shared vision of a world free from deforestation. President Yudhoyono thanked Ms. Clark and the panelists for their participation and handed the floor back to Prime Minister Solberg to present her views on the way forward and to close the session.



Helen Clark moderates the panel discussion



Kumi Naidoo addresses fellow panelists

Reflecting on the messages heard today, Prime Minister Solberg acknowledged that much work remains to be done, especially regarding the recognition of indigenous peoples' concerns. However, she said, the tide is turning. The private sector is taking a leading role and both developing and developed country governments need to match that leadership. Developing countries need to pursue land reform and improve laws, and developed countries must step up with economic incentives for emission reductions. In the medium and long

terms, she acknowledged that tackling deforestation would be in the interests of forests countries themselves, but in the short term, it will entail significant political and financial burdens and it is vital that the international community share that burden. To this end, she announced that Norway has joined forces with Germany and the UK to issue a joint declaration on their future contribution, and their support for the inclusion of ambitious REDD+ provisions on the new climate change agreement due to take effect in 2020. Between now and 2020, she said, Germany, Norway and the UK will scale up payments for emission reductions and work closely with the private sector in establishing deforestation free supply chains, and she called on other donor countries to join them in this effort. In closing, Prime Minister Solberg noted that the next 15 years provide a historic opportunity to end deforestation, and expressed her optimism that the robust global partnership displayed today can make that happen.

Resources

[Live Recording of the Forests Plenary at the Climate Summit](#)

[UN Climate Summit website](#)

[The New York Declaration on Forests – Action Statement and Action Plan](#)

[List of Endorsers of the New York Declaration on Forests \(as of 13 October 2014\)](#)

[Forests Video](#)

[Summary of announcements made under the Forests action area](#)

[UNDP Climate Summit Forests Action Area Online Resource Room](#)

List of Speakers

H.E. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia

H.E. Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway

H.E. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator

Mr. Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever

Mr. Franky Widjaja, CEO, Golden Agri-Resources

Mr. David MacLennan, CEO and President, Cargill

Mr. Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director, Greenpeace International

Mr. Edwin Vasquez, Coordinator-General, Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (The Indigenous Coordinator of the Amazon Basin – COICA)

Mr. Teras Narang, Governor of Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

Rapporteur: Dearbhla Keegan (UNDP)

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Governments

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- Government of Germany
- Government of Indonesia
- Government of Japan
- Government of Liberia
- Government of Mexico
- Government of Norway
- Government of Peru
- Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Norway's International Climate and Forests Initiative (NICFI)

Companies

- Asia Pulp and Paper
- Barclay's
- Cargill
- Golden Agri-Resources
- Mondelez
- Nestlé
- Unilever
- Wilmar
- World Economic Forum (WEF)
- We Mean Business
- Burness Communications

Indigenous Peoples Organizations

- Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN - Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago)
- Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques (Mesamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests)
- Indigenous Coordinator of the Amazon Basin - COICA
- Interethnic Development Association of the Peruvian Rainforest – AIDSESP
- Réseau des Peuples Autochtones Pour la Gestion et des Local Écosystèmes Forestiers – REPALF

Civil Society Organizations

- Climate Advisers
- Meridian Institute
- Center for Global Development
- Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA)
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Ford Foundation
- Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

- World Resources Institute (WRI)
- Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Multilateral Organizations

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- United Nations Environment Programme
- The UN-REDD Programme
- The World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
- The Global Environment Facility
- UNICEF