

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS



UNFF

UNITED NATIONS FORUM
ON FORESTS



ILMUNC XLII



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Dear Delegates,

I am excited to welcome you to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) within the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of ILMUNC! My name is Naija Agarwal, and as one of the co-chairs, I look forward to guiding you through engaging and impactful discussions revolving around forest conservation. Often referred to as the functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the UNFF primarily focuses on advancing goals of conservation and environmental sustainability through the management of forests. With developing threats such as deforestation and climate change, it is increasingly critical that countries create adaptable frameworks to ensure the protection of biodiversity and land. I look forward to hearing your ideas and perspectives on the social and economic factors necessary to address these concerns, especially in ecosystems including the Amazon.

To introduce myself, I am a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences studying philosophy, politics, and economics. I'm from Secaucus, New Jersey and attended Secaucus High School, where I was a part of my school's debate organization for four years. I previously moderated the ECOFIN committee last year, and I am looking forward to chairing UNFF. As someone with an interest in sustainability and ESG, I hope this will be a valuable experience for you! At Penn, I am a part of Consult for America, the Daily Pennsylvanian, Penn Glee Club, and Wharton Women! I love listening to music and exploring new areas whenever I can!

Adam, Samara, and I are all looking forward to working with you in the UNFF. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!

Best,
Naija Agarwal



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 42nd Ivy League Model United Nations Conference! My name is Julie Sidana, and I am honored to serve as an Under Secretary General of Specialized Committees and an Under Secretary General of ECOSOC. Our secretariat has put so much effort into creating an experience that not only fosters insightful and impactful debate, but also encourages connections between participants from all over the world. It is such a pleasure to have you all here for the forty-second iteration of this conference.

A little bit about myself – I am a sophomore originally from Palo Alto, California. I study Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics at Penn. Outside of ILMUNC, I work at student research group building a rotating detonation rocket engine. I also love pilates, running, and going on walks. In my free time, I love checking out new restaurants and coffee shops in Philly, reading, and listening to country music. While I didn't participate in MUN during high school, ILMUNC has allowed me to join such a vibrant and meaningful community that I am honored to be a part of.

I am excited to oversee the various committee discussions that will occur during this conference. Particularly in specialized committees and ECOSOC, delegates will have the chance to explore specific topics and areas of interest in greater depth. The topics of our committees will allow you to do a deep dive into a new perspective or challenge and I can't wait to see what you come up with.

As we embark on this week's journey together, I want to encourage you to approach each topic with an open mind and a willingness to think critically. Whether you're a seasoned MUN (or ILMUNC!) veteran or a first-time delegate – we care about your unique perspective. Don't be afraid to speak up. I hope you will find this experience both enjoyable and enriching, as you not only hone your public speaking skills but also forge new, meaningful connections with your fellow delegates. We are looking forward to celebrating your accomplishments throughout the week and hope that you have a memorable experience here. Welcome to ILMUNC!

Warm regards,
Julie

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Overview of the Body

In October 2000, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations as a subsidiary body, an organization, committee, or working group established by a larger component of the UN.¹ Membership in the forum is universal, with all UN member states and specialized agencies participating. The UNFF is a functional commission that develops international policies for forest protection. Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, from Benin, has served as the Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat since January 2022.²

Objectives and Functions of UNFF

The primary objective of the United Nations Forum on Forests is to sustainably manage, conserve, and develop forests around the world through multilateral policies.³ During the 20th session of the UNFF, which met in May 2025, member states reaffirmed their commitment to upholding and furthering the Global Forest Goals and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030.⁴

(UNSPF)⁵ guides the forest-related work of the entire UN system and coordinates the efforts of all UN bodies in terms of forest conservation. It is composed of six Global Forest Goals and associated targets, to be reached by the global community by the year 2030.

The thematic priorities of the UNFF during its most recent session (UNFF20) were as follows:⁶

- Increase the reach of sustainable forest management methods, and widen areas of protected forests, to reduce the loss of forest cover
- Achieve this by employing practices such as reforestation, ecosystem restoration, and legal protections
- Make forest management a priority in the UN's general sustainable development goals, and draft governance frameworks to implement these goals

In the upcoming ILMUNC Conference, UNFF delegates will deliberate on approaches to combat deforestation in the Amazon (Topic A), and the evolution of forest financing options (Topic B).

The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030

1 <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/about-unff/index.html>

2 <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/unffs/index.html>

3 <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/about-unff/index.html>

4 <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/unff20-statements-and-presentations/index.html>

5 https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UNFF20_Policy-Brief-on-UNFF20_Thematic-Priorities.pdf

6 https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UNFF20_Policy-Brief-on-UNFF20_Thematic-Priorities.pdf

TOPIC A: COMBATING DEFORESTATION IN THE AMAZON

Introduction

According to the Forest Stewardship Council, deforestation is “the process of clearing away trees from forests. It often happens due to agriculture, urbanization, mining, or natural disasters.”⁷ Deforestation processes convert forested land into other land uses by removing large portions of trees. It contributes significantly to the global loss of biodiversity and the climate crisis.⁸

The Amazon Rainforest is the largest rainforest in the world, and there are countless reasons why protecting it is crucial for humanity. The diverse ecosystem spans across nine countries in South America, and totals over 5.5 million square kilometres.⁹ Tropical forests are key parts of both local and global ecosystems.¹⁰ While the Amazon is in a remote location far from the UN headquarters, its impact is global, shaping the climate, water cycles, and biodiversity. Rivers in the Amazon and their tributaries account for 20% of the world’s fresh water. The Amazon rainforest is responsible for 20% of the oxygen we breathe, and stores 80-120 billion tons of carbon, which

regulates our climate.¹¹ Deforestation releases carbon into the atmosphere, where it acts as a greenhouse gas. Greenhouse gases persist in the atmosphere and prevent the sun’s radiation from being reflected back to space, which speeds up global warming.¹² Additionally, the rainforest is a hotspot for biodiversity, as the Amazon serves as the habitat of millions of plants and animals. 30% of the planet’s biodiversity (meaning the diversity of species) comes from the Amazon.¹³ Local people also rely on the forest’s resources for their livelihood.

When trees are removed en masse, the forest is degraded beyond repair. This weakens its ability to regulate the climate and stabilize our atmosphere. Deforestation also means countless organisms lose their habitat, which endangers many species.¹⁴ This loss of biodiversity hurts species richness and diversity around the world.

For all of these reasons and more, conserving the Amazon rainforest is vital. Multilateral, cooperative action must be taken to regulate the mining, logging, and agricultural industries that are destroying the Amazon.

History

Since 1990, human activities have contributed

7 <https://fsc.org/en/blog/solutions-to-deforestation>

8 <https://www.green.earth/blog/top-10-causes-of-deforestation>

9 <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

10 <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

11 <https://www.amazonconservation.org/what-we-do/protect-wild-places/forests/>

12 <https://www.amazonconservation.org/what-we-do/protect-wild-places/forests/>

13 <https://infoamazonia.org/en/2023/03/21/deforestation-in-the-amazon-past-present-and-future/>

14 <https://fsc.org/en/blog/solutions-to-deforestation>

to the loss of 420 million hectares of forests around the globe.¹⁵ This has sped up the rate of species extinction, which is now 100-1000 times faster than the natural rate of extinction. In the Amazon rainforest, specifically, deforestation is driven by the livestock industry, cocoa farming, mining for gold and other precious metals, and road infrastructure projects.¹⁶

Current Situation

Deforestation is one of the most pressing issues in the climate crisis. Without forest ecosystems, there are no trees to sequester carbon, which leads to higher levels of greenhouse gases.¹⁷ Deforestation also means a loss in the rich biodiversity of plant and animal life. Many species are only found in the unique Amazon rainforest, so it must be preserved.

Today, widespread commercial logging cuts down trees for timber. This timber is used in furniture, building materials, and paper products. Wide swaths of forest are also cleared to establish mining shafts, which further degrade the soil and Amazonian rivers.¹⁸ Human infrastructure development, like hydropower projects and road and dam construction, also degrades forests. These

actions amount to the removal of 1.4 billion trees each year.¹⁹

A majority of deforestation in the Amazon takes place in Brazil. Specifically, it occurs in Undesignated Public Forests, which are government-owned forests lacking formal designation.²⁰ Deforestation here is illegal; however, it occurs at an alarmingly high rate. Brazil has not taken enough action to stop this illegal activity.

Tinigua National Natural Park in Colombia connects the Amazon and Andean ecosystems. The southern part of this reserve is composed of tropical forests, which are being fragmented as pastureland expands. Land has been illegally appropriated and used for illicit farming and pasture land, which speeds up deforestation.²¹

Each year, a portion of the world's forests the size of Portugal is ripped from the Earth.²² This extraordinary destruction has devastating effects on the world's ecosystems and biodiversity. The problem is especially salient in the Amazon region. While this problem is recognized nearly universally, not enough concrete action has been taken to reverse the issue.

15 <https://www.green.earth/blog/top-10-causes-of-deforestation>

16 <https://infoamazonia.org/en/2023/03/21/deforestation-in-the-amazon-past-present-and-future/>

17 <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

18 <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

19 <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

20 <https://infoamazonia.org/en/2023/03/21/deforestation-in-the-amazon-past-present-and-future/>

21 <https://infoamazonia.org/en/2023/03/21/deforestation-in-the-amazon-past-present-and-future/>

22 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/inside-global-effort-save-worlds-forests>

Past Actions

Over the past 50 years, numerous summits and conferences have been held to discuss the climate crisis. Each summit produces the same findings- the planet is being destroyed at an alarming rate by human actions. Countries have committed themselves time and time again to various pledges, attempting to build a more sustainable future. The following section lays out some of these multilateral actions.

In 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment convened in Stockholm, Sweden. This is recognized as the first global environmental summit.²³ They produced the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which recognized the significant, detrimental impact that humans have had on their environment.²⁴ They also established the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).²⁵ Since then, world powers have continued to collaborate on multilateral solutions to the climate crisis.

In 1980, the UNEP, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and the World Wildlife Fund collaborated to produce the World Conservation Strategy. This defined the concept of sustainable development- humans must meet their current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet

23 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/looking-back-50-years-environmental-multilateralism>

24 <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/dunche/dunche.html>

25 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/looking-back-50-years-environmental-multilateralism>

their needs.²⁶ This definition of sustainable development has guided much of the United Nations' environmental work.

In 1982, the UNEP established the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme.²⁷ This program supports the drafting and execution of sustainable environmental legislation in all member states. The Montevideo program teaches national governments best practices for implementing new environmental laws, and guides nations through promoting their new policies to the public. While environmental conservation is a global issue, this acknowledges that the burden of addressing the issue falls on individual state governments.

The Convention for Biological Diversity was signed by world leaders in 1992. It provides for the conservation of biological diversity and allocates funds to achieve this goal.²⁸ 196 countries have since ratified this convention. These parties have committed to expanding protected wildlife preserves and developing more sustainable agricultural practices.

A pivotal moment in multilateral climate action was the UN Conference on Environment and Development, also called the Earth Summit.²⁹ This conference was held in

26 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/looking-back-50-years-environmental-multilateralism>

27 <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/promoting-environmental-rule-law-1>

28 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/looking-back-50-years-environmental-multilateralism>

29 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/>

Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and resulted in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. The declaration aims to protect the integrity of the planet's ecosystem and global environment by building a sustainable future.³⁰ A key principle from the declaration says that states must take cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation and prioritize sustainable development over industrial growth.³¹ This established a precedent for future environmental legislation. This summit also launched a framework for achieving greater sustainability in global development in the 21st century.³²

In 1999, over 8,500 business leaders signed the UN Global Compact. This agreement binds them to employing sustainable and socially responsible policies across the board.³³ This is particularly important in the Amazon, where corporate activities have led to rapid deforestation.

In 2008, the UN Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) was established. This agency helps nations develop carbon sequestration strategies to reduce carbon emissions from forests.³⁴ The agency's work centers on the

30 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/ref/rio-declaration.shtml>

31 <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/dunche/dunche.html#4>

32 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/looking-back-50-years-environmental-multilateralism>

33 <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/looking-back-50-years-environmental-multilateralism>

34 <https://www.un-redd.org/>

lives of indigenous people, finding sustainable strategies that can coexist with communities that rely on the forest for their livelihoods. It is a voluntary approach to mitigating the climate crisis, and countries that choose to participate in the program receive financial assistance in reducing forest emissions.³⁵

In 2015, the UN launched the Sustainable Development Goals, one of its most notable projects. These 17 goals outline a vision of a better global future.³⁶ These DGs have served as the backbone for much of the UN's work over the past decade. Goal 15 is as follows: "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss".³⁷ the sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems and forests. As of 2020, 17.6% of land is now protected, and the UN aims to double that percentage by 2030. This is an ambitious goal that requires the partnership of all member states. ECOSOC forums and meetings are often guided by these Sustainable Development Goals, and the work of numerous agencies is calibrated towards meeting these goals.

2021 began the UN's declared decade of Ecosystem Restoration.³⁸ The goals of this symbolic decade are to "prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on

35 <https://www.un-redd.org/>

36 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

37 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15>

38 <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>

every continent and in every ocean”.³⁹ 2021 also marked the first time that the Human Rights Council addressed the impact of the climate crisis on inherent human rights. Access to a clean and sustainable natural environment is now recognized as a human right.⁴⁰

At the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in November 2021, over 100 world leaders pledged to end deforestation by 2021. Almost 20 billion dollars from the private and public sectors have been pledged to achieve this goal.⁴¹ A 2020 report from the UNEP found that 420 million hectares of forest have been destroyed and converted into other land uses. The report stated that “Deforestation and forest degradation continue to take place at alarming rates, which contribute significantly to the ongoing loss of biodiversity”.⁴² On a more positive note, the report noted the growing global awareness of deforestation and increased commitment to fighting it. This energy must be harnessed for ecosystem restoration projects to effectively meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Potential Solutions

- **Expand protected forest areas**

³⁹ <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/looking-back-50-years-environmental-multilateralism>

⁴¹ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/inside-global-effort-save-worlds-forests>

⁴² <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/inside-global-effort-save-worlds-forests>

- In the regions most affected by deforestation, governments should establish large protected areas. In these regions, commercial logging, mining, poaching, and hunting would be illegal. Additionally, it would be illegal to develop any infrastructure project in the protected forest. Many such forest reserves already exist, but they are too small to effectively combat mass deforestation.⁴³

- **Prevent Illegal Deforestation**

- Governments have recognized the importance of conserving forests, which is why many have criminalized over-logging activities.⁴⁴ The driving cause of deforestation now comes from illegal tree removals. In fact, up to 90% of the logging activities that take place in the rainforest are illegal. If more countries act to criminalize logging in protected forests, they will naturally protect the species that inhabit that forest ecosystem. Countries with existing

⁴³ <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/ft/stopping-deforestation-what-works-and-what-doesnt#:~:text=Four%20Promising%20Approaches%20for%20Stopping,from%20demand%20for%20agricultural%20commodities.>

⁴⁴ https://rfcx.org/our_work?utm_source=google_cpc&utm_medium=ad_grant&utm_campaign=awareness&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20754584632&g-braid=0AAAAADdNZffjTnMIE63UX-w5at50JJ962q&gclid=Cj0KCQjw267GBhCSARIsAOjVJ4F8cS2_52HFUAEn25wLSMLfaGTaiJw-KNViSWXCqHBFw-oHwHE75ni4aArveEALw_wcB

laws against deforestation must strengthen their implementation. Stricter regulations on logging and land-use planning will act as barriers to illegal deforestation practices.⁴⁵ Technological advances like satellite monitoring can help governments ensure compliance with logging policies. National governments should rely on global frameworks and UN policies that condemn deforestation to legitimize state policy.

- **Promote reforestation and afforestation**

- Nature-based solutions remain among the most effective strategies for mitigating the climate crisis.⁴⁶ Reforestation is the practice of planting trees in already degraded areas. Afforestation involves establishing new forests in naturally barren or unforested areas.⁴⁷ Both of these practices increase forest cover while also helping with carbon sequestration. Growing forests helps to retain the biodiversity of these ecosystems, which is essential.⁴⁸

- **Provide financial incentives for sustainable forestry management**

- Financial benefits for preserving forests are

⁴⁵ <https://greenly.earth/en-gb/blog/ecology-news/deforestation-definition-effects-and-solutions>

⁴⁶ <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

⁴⁷ <https://greenly.earth/en-gb/blog/ecology-news/deforestation-definition-effects-and-solutions>

⁴⁸ <https://greenly.earth/en-gb/blog/ecology-news/deforestation-definition-effects-and-solutions>

especially important for developing countries that struggle economically. Many communities in the Amazon rainforest are part of the lowest socioeconomic class of South America. They would be greatly incentivized to amend their forestry practices for financial advantages. The UNFCCC REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) program does just this- offers financial rewards to developing countries that reduce emissions from deforestation.⁴⁹

Potential Blocs

Countries containing the Amazon rainforest ecosystem: Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, Ecuador, and French Guiana

Developed countries that rely on key resources such as timber, gold, and cocoa beans, which are exported from the Amazon.

Other Considerations

Logging, illegal settlement, cocoa farming, and land conversion endanger the lives of indigenous communities who live in the Amazon, like the Kakataibo people in Peru. These activities increase criminal activities in the region,

⁴⁹ <https://greenly.earth/en-gb/blog/ecology-news/deforestation-definition-effects-and-solutions>

which contributes to a loss of livelihood. Indigenous reserves comprise 20% of the Amazon rainforest, but they are infringed on by expanded logging operations.⁵⁰

Highways cut through these remote indigenous communities in Peru, which increases the risk of organized crime and land grabbing.⁵¹ The same is true for Interstate BR-319, a highway connecting Brazilian cities to Manaus, Amazonas. This highway is currently unpaved in parts, and the Brazilian government plans on restructuring it. However, this infrastructure project would speed up deforestation and infringe on the indigenous communities' rights.

The indigenous communities in the Amazon rely on the natural forest ecosystem for their livelihood. They have inhabited the rainforest for thousands of years, but their home is being destroyed by modern industry.⁵² Any solution to deforestation in the Amazon must take into account the humans most closely connected to this issue.

QARMA (Questions a Resolution Must Answer)

⁵⁰ https://rfcx.org/our_work?utm_source=google_cpc&utm_medium=ad_grant&utm_campaign=awareness&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20754584632&gbraid=0AAAAADdNZffjT-NMIE63UXw5at50JJ962q&gclid=Cj0KCQjw267G-BhCSARIsAOjVJ4F8cS2_52HFUAEn25wLSMLfaG-TaiJwKNViSWXCqHBFw-oHwHE75ni4aArveEALw_wcB

⁵¹ <https://infoamazonia.org/en/2023/03/21/deforestation-in-the-amazon-past-present-and-future/>

⁵² <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

Answer)

- What effective policies can the governments of South America pass to reduce deforestation?
- Which (if any) forest activities should be criminalized to curtail deforestation?
- Which (if any) forest activities should be promoted to support sustainability?
- How can the rights and human dignity of indigenous communities be preserved in the Amazon, amid expanding commercial operations?
- How can developed countries aid developing countries in promoting sustainable forest management strategies?
- What multilateral actions should be taken to reach the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030?

Conclusion

Deforestation can occur naturally through wildfires and insect diseases. However, human activities in the last century have sped up deforestation. Trees in the Amazon are now being cut faster than forests can be replenished, which means vital forest resources are being drained.⁵³ This is driven by the agricultural sector, which clears forests to build new expanses of crop land. Timber is

⁵³ <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

also harvested for large infrastructure projects. Rapid urbanization has also sped up deforestation. As people move into previously uninhabited areas, they clear natural habitats to build settlements and cities.⁵⁴

To combat the mounting climate crisis, sustainable forest management must be prioritised. To achieve this goal, both South American states and developed countries must pledge to support the reforestation of the Amazon. Delegates should focus on the feasibility of approaches to combat deforestation and the regulatory opportunities present to ensure that initiatives to protect areas such as the Amazon are maintained, especially with growing threats of climate change and resource depletion.

TOPIC B: SUPPORTING FOREST FINANCING

Introduction

Forests play a critical role in sustaining Earth's ecosystems, contributing to biodiversity, the maintenance of various habitats, and the production of valuable resources. The human impact of deforestation affects the users of land resources but also a significant Indigenous population, who rely on the forests for their survival.⁵⁵

Forests cover 31% of the global land area, yet more than half of the world's forests are present in five countries (the Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United

⁵⁴ <https://www.green.earth/blog/deforestation-in-the-amazon-rainforest-causes-effects-solutions>

⁵⁵ <https://www.un-redd.org/post/indigenous-peoples-see-importance-protecting-forests-can-rest-world-follow>

States, and China). Two-thirds of forests are found in ten countries.⁵⁶ Forests are also significant economic contributors, generating approximately \$250 billion in economic activity each year, according to the United Nations, providing a monetary incentive to ensure their protection and maintenance. "Forest finance" is defined by the UNFF as all forms of financing for sustainable forest management,⁵⁷ with a primary focus on encouraging the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems. Funding may be executed through private and public channels, providing varied means of sourcing funding for the conservation and protection of forests. With rising threats from climate change, human intervention, and other factors contributing to the eradication of forests, it is critical that action be taken to support forest conservation, particularly through financial incentives that provide a concrete foundation for countries to enact sizable change and protect their forests. Without a change in current approaches to climate change, countries will likely fail to meet their goal of halting and reversing forest loss by 2030.

Background

Since the last ice age, the world has lost over a third

⁵⁶ <https://www.fao.org/state-of-forests/en/#:~:text=animals%2C%20and%20fungi-,Plants,forest%20plants%2C%20animals%2C%20and%20fungi>

⁵⁷ https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Forest-Finance_UNFF_IATF-Issue-Brief.pdf

of its forests, accounting for an estimated one billion hectares of forest globally. The loss in forest coverage has only accelerated in the past century. Between 8,000 BCE and 1900, half of the coverage lost occurred, but the other half that was lost occurred in the last 100 years. As you prepare to engage in valuable discourse on the subject of forest financing, it is essential to understand that the feasibility of solutions will vary depending on a range of factors, from the resources possessed by individual countries to the willingness of countries to allocate additional resources towards forest maintenance. The debate on forest financing is multifaceted and will involve arguments from countries with developing economies, those housing forests in danger, and those who have been carrying much of the initiative to protect these forests. A thorough solution balancing funding and differing perspectives will be critical in discovering a path forward. It will be up to the committee to explore solutions to bridge the gap between countries, helping to finance conservation efforts without harming countries in other ways. Delegates should focus on both allocating resources towards forest financing and also developing long-lasting frameworks to adapt to increasing threats to forests, which call into question the balance between resource necessities and forest protection. We encourage delegates to come prepared with an understanding of their country's economic standing, as well as any prior knowledge about their interaction with both the climate crisis and forest

conservation. We anticipate seeing innovative resolutions that combine economic, social, cultural, and even technological considerations for this topic.

Forest cover refers to the measure of any gains in forest cover subtracted by deforestation. Between 2010 and 2020, the net loss in forests globally was estimated to be 4.7 million hectares per year. According to Our World in Data, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimated that 10 million hectares of forest will be eradicated each year⁵⁸ if action is not taken to slow the rate of deforestation in the world through adequate funding.

Financial incentives have been utilized in order to shift consumption and production habits in society, helping to meet the strict requirements for positive results necessary to combat climate change.⁵⁹ While the economic contributions of forests have not been as substantial in incentivizing lasting change in global conservation efforts, financial incentives through forest funding address two central concerns in the economic market—market failure and short-term focus. Specifically, forest financing serves to incentivize long-term economic gains as opposed to allowing businesses and individuals to prioritize short-term gains, which often serve as a detriment to the environment through more affordable and less sustainable options. Another indicator of the economic values of businesses and individuals can be seen in the international pledges

58 <https://ourworldindata.org/deforestation>

59 <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/economic-incentives-are-key-to-driving-sustainability-at-scale/>

recorded to support the reforestation of forests, a topic more colloquially known as green finance. During the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2021, over 140 leaders called for the reversal of forest loss, but the total contribution towards forest finance was only \$12 billion, a fraction of the funding allocated towards supporting and enabling deforestation.⁶⁰ According to the BBC, current deforestation costs between \$2 and \$5 billion globally per year,⁶¹ highlighting the financial losses that accompany resource depletion on a daily basis. Grey finance, or investments by governments in activities driving deforestation, is fueled by an inherent link to the global market for commodities. Notably, these commodities include beef, palm oil, timber, and soy.⁶² This results in competing incentives for businesses and individuals, driven by both mandates to address the global climate crisis by 2030 and their economic priorities relating to maximizing their foothold in the global market. The UNFF, its Members, and third-party organizations must be at the forefront of providing

reasonable incentives to increase financial flows from harmful activities towards sustainable alternatives. The UN Environment Programme has indicated support for various financial mechanisms, including payments for reduced deforestation and carbon markets, to boost large-scale forest production without negatively impacting existing biodiversity, advocating for an evolution in forest finance to protect forests.

History

Since its inception in 2000, the UNFF and several prominent organizations have taken action to both combat climate change and incentivize actions in the interest of forest conservation through mandating strategic initiatives to support forest financing. In October 2009,⁶³ the Special Session of the ninth session of the UNFF resulted in the Resolution on Means of Implementation for Sustainable Forest Management. This resolution established both the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing (AHEG), meant to propose strategies for channeling financial resources into sustainable forest management, and reach climate objectives set by countries. This event signified the creation of the UNFF Facilitative Process,⁶⁴ mandating that the AHEG meet twice and submit a preliminary report then a final set

⁶⁰ [https://forestclimateleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CCS0523480542-001_PN7164575_The-Global-Forest-Finance-Pledge-2022_Web-Accessible.pdf#:~:text=Under%20the%20Global%20Forest%20Finance%20Pledge%20\(G,of%20climate%20finance%202021%2D2025%20towards%20forest%2Drelated%20activities.](https://forestclimateleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CCS0523480542-001_PN7164575_The-Global-Forest-Finance-Pledge-2022_Web-Accessible.pdf#:~:text=Under%20the%20Global%20Forest%20Finance%20Pledge%20(G,of%20climate%20finance%202021%2D2025%20towards%20forest%2Drelated%20activities.)

⁶¹ <https://www.nrdc.org/bio/jake-schmidt/deforestation-coists-worldwow-big>

⁶² <https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/ecosystems-resources/world-still-failing-to-fund-forest-protection>

⁶³ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Information-Note-AHEG2.pdf>

⁶⁴ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/capacity-developm,ent/forest-financing/facilitative-process/index.html>

of recommendations for the Forum's consideration. As a result of the first AHEG meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, and the UNFF adopted the Resolution on Forests for People, calling specifically for intersessional activities taken in support of forest finance. This includes contributions from national governments, CPF members, regional processes, and other major groups.. The second meeting of the AHEG in 2013 resulted in decisions for forest financing in both UNFF10 and UNFF11, identifying decisions for the future of forest financing.

In particular, the goals of the UNFF Facilitative Process were to assist in mobilizing new and additional financial support for sustainable forest management, assist countries with mobilizing already-possessed resources, identify and address obstacles, and share examples of good practices with other countries. This process provided the foundation for an upgraded approach, developed in 2015, which would come to be known as the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN).

Since its creation in 2015, the GFFFN has contributed to scaling efforts to implement sustainable financing by facilitating access for countries to financial resources. For example, it has helped 13 countries mobilize resources for forest financing, including Cameroon, Ecuador, Iran, Nigeria, and Ukraine.⁶⁵ Other initiatives catalyzed by the formation of the GFFFN

⁶⁵ https://archive.pfbc-cbfp.org/news_en/items/Global-Forest.html

include organized training workshops helping countries access financing mechanisms and the accumulation of over 300 representatives of government to further forest financing efforts.⁶⁶ Since its inception, the GFFFN has fostered collaborations with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and other partners such as the Green Climate Fund and African Forest Forum.⁶⁷ Outside of solely facilitating access to financial resources, the GFFFN makes its considerations contingent on demonstrated need and current circumstances. For example, special considerations are given to low forest-cover countries, small island developing states, and countries with economies in transition, providing for a more flexible basis for funding to be allocated.

In 2024, the UNFF adopted a declaration pledging high-level commitment to forests going forward and reaffirming the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) as a global framework for action.⁶⁸ It commits Members to taking urgent and accelerated action to meet the established goals of halting and reversing deforestation by the year 2030. In conjunction with the declaration, it produced a resolution known as the Mid-Term Review (MTR). The MTR serves as a mandate for specific future actions by UNFF Members, the UNFF Secretariat, the

⁶⁶ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/capacity-development/forest-financing/index.html>

⁶⁷ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/capacity-development/forest-financing/index.html>

⁶⁸ <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-forum-resolves-to-protect-forests-while-contributing-to-2030-agenda/>

Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), the GFFFN, and the UNFF Trust Fund. This resulted in the omnibus resolution, including the Mid-Term Review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests, and sets the mandate for specific future actions by UNFF Members, Secretariat, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and the GFFFN, and the UNFF Trust Fund⁶⁹ based on the assessment of their action related to forest financing.⁷⁰

Current Situation

Several challenges and obstacles obstruct the goals of forest finance, ranging from compromised use of funds to unsustainable mechanisms. Recent reports indicate that there is a significant gap between the funds necessary to halt deforestation and the current financial support. For each dollar that is allocated towards forest finance, \$6 is directed towards industries driving deforestation, such as industrial agriculture and logging.⁷¹ While several organizations and countries have made steps towards advancing forest finance efforts, the competing contributions of private financial institutions and governments to deforestation eclipse the effects of these sustainable initiatives. In 2023, private financial institutions invested \$6.1 trillion

69 <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-forum-resolves-to-protect-forests-while-contributing-to-2030-agenda/>

70 <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/MTR-Assessment-A-UNFF-Member-January2023.pdf>

71 <https://jiceias.com/upsc-current-affairs-billions-needed-to-save-forests-but-funding-fuelling-their-destruction-reveals-undp-report/>

in sectors linked to deforestation. Governments have provided billions in subsidies that encourage destruction as opposed to conservation, contradicting the goals of the REDD+ program.

Financial incentive programs have also been undercut through the actions of nations that have been compelled to exploit resources. This primarily affects developing nations, burdened by a debt of approximately \$11 trillion. The tendency to prioritize short-term economic gain for developing countries, constrained by debt, often prioritizes short-term economic gain, perpetuating a financial system ill-suited for long-term sustainability..

The REDD+ Program has endured criticism from countries, with data arguing that its financial incentives are not sufficient to support sustainability initiatives. To date, these payments range between \$5 and \$10 per tonne of carbon dioxide reduction, which does not align with the actual cost of reducing emissions at \$30-\$50 per tonne. The difference in payment for executing reduction undercuts the incentives present to prioritize conservation over economic growth.

Outside of these challenges to resolving the climate crisis, the topic of forest finance contributes to a nuanced and challenging state of foreign affairs and diplomacy. While there are increasing funds endorsed by international donors and organizations, the use of these funds and their allocation is highly contested, often creating conflict between countries. This issue also has the

ability to align countries with similar interests, particularly countries who are home to biodiversity and populations that rely on forest coverage on their land. Producers also hold a vested interest in the health of emerging markets, where deforestation provides defined economic promise, and deforestation incentives such as poor land tenure protections and high compliance costs will often sway the actions of these actors in the supply chain.⁷²

Solutions and Recommendations

Idealistically, there are several solutions to combating the global climate crisis that would be accomplished through the increased allocation of funding by countries, governments, businesses, and individuals to help meet the cost threshold to reverse deforestation by 2030. The reality of this solution is that it comes into conflict with various economic, social, cultural, and other factors that complicate countries' ability to translate forest finance into tangible change in their conservation efforts. Potential solutions can be drawn from existing recommendations and frameworks, such as the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation framework, where the + serves to be an encompassing symbol of conservation and sustainability as a responsibility for all. The REDD+ has helped countries develop quantifiable values of the carbon and

ecosystem services their forests provide to formulate financial incentives to reduce deforestation.⁷³ In the past two decades, the REDD+ has contributed to educational initiatives, financial incentives, and other research-based projects that enhance financial stability in relation to environmental and socioeconomic outcomes.⁷⁴

Another viable solution is providing upfront and results-based financing from different financial sources, channeling concepts such as green bonds (fixed-income instruments to fund projects with evident environmental benefits), impact investing (turning private investment into projects with social and environmental impacts), and transitioning funding from private sources used to support deforestation, and reallocating them towards sustainable initiatives. In a world that is increasingly developing its technological capacity and increasingly turning towards innovation, providing assistance and capacity building to countries with demonstrated need for financial mechanisms may alleviate the financial burden felt in developing economies without the flexibility to allocate needed resources towards conservation.

The Tropical Forest Finance Facility (TFFF) is a pay-for-performance mechanism that would provide net returns that are awarded to tropical forest countries that take the initiative in protecting their natural forests. This

⁷² <https://www.systemiq.earth/supply-chains-finance-and-the-future-of-forests/>

⁷³ <https://www.conservation.org/blog/what-on-earth-is-redd>

⁷⁴ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/climate-action/what-we-do/redd>

flagship incentive was created by Brazil for COP30, and may generate upwards of \$4 billion annually for tropical forest nations, recognizing the value and importance of local communities and wildlife that rely on forests to live and contribute to the protection of Earth's biodiversity.⁷⁵ This program utilizes additional considerations to determine the allocation of national payments to different channels, including a proposed 20% to Indigenous people and local communities. While this idea has not been executed, it currently serves as the next anticipated act in furthering forest finance and making it more accessible to diverse countries, ecosystems, and communities in need.⁷⁶

Bloc Positions

1. Developed Economies

International forest finance has historically been donor-driven, reflecting the financial flexibility of external actors who may not necessarily be individual governments. Developed economies, such as the United States and Europe, have a greater capacity to mobilize public and private capital as necessary to support forest finance mechanisms. While not absolute, these countries have contributed a large monetary sum towards sustainable financial incentives, specifically developed economies have

allowed for the growth of the green bond market, which rewards environmentally sustainable projects and initiatives with financial support. The U.S. has issued approximately 600 billion dollars worth of green bonds in 2023, accounting for 10% of the total, second to China and Germany. Europe has also utilized a mix of public and private forest finance to support climate change mitigation, similarly undertaking a part of the financial responsibility associated with forest finance. Developed economies generally have greater flexibility in mechanisms and financial options available to them to undertake sustainable initiatives, emphasizing the need for financial pathways for less-developed economies and communities to have greater access to financial resources to incentivize change. These nations are often subject to the conflict between economic priorities and conservation responsibilities, as they rely on the unsustainable utilization of resources.

2. Emerging Economies

Forests such as the Amazon Basin and Congo Basin are located in countries with emerging economies, emphasizing their understanding of the salience of forest conservation and their position in combating deforestation. These forests are home to critical biodiversity and Indigenous communities who rely upon the existence of forests in these countries. These countries, while possessing a fundamental

⁷⁵ <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/forests/5-things-to-know-about-the-tropical-forest-forever-facility/>

⁷⁶ <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/forests/5-things-to-know-about-the-tropical-forest-forever-facility/>

investment in forests on their land, often have economic growth that is tied to industries associated with deforestation. In conjunction with these economic limitations, their financial capacity is comparatively limited compared to more developed economies, which have the means to reallocate funds as necessary to meet mandated goals. These countries are likely to support policies that promote equitable distribution of funds for sustainable initiatives, and would likely be proponents of further developed efforts to support countries holding the remaining amount of forest coverage. These states would be strong proponents of expanded and sustainable efforts to reverse the loss of forest cover.

3. High Deforestation Rate Countries

Countries with particularly high deforestation rates, which may overlap with countries in the aforementioned blocks, perpetuate the concerns of deforestation. Some countries with high deforestation rates include Honduras, Nigeria, North Korea, and Haiti.⁷⁷ These countries similarly face a conflict of interest between responsibilities to reduce climate change and expand their economies, and due to the nature of their growing economies, will require further financial and economic support in order to amplify conservation efforts.

Through frameworks such as REDD+ and other performance-based initiatives that support variable instances of reductions in emissions, these countries can receive financial and technical support for their efforts. These countries do tend to receive additional consideration under existing guidelines for forest finance, but with additional support, can further commit themselves towards consistent efforts to reduce emissions beyond the 2030 goal.

QARMA (Questions a Resolution Must Answer)

- How can financing mechanisms be established in coordination with the needs of those reliant on forest ecosystems, such as existing Indigenous communities, flora, and fauna?
- How can private sector actors be held accountable for deforestation-related contributions while simultaneously being given incentives to support forest finance?
- How can funds for forest financing be equitably distributed to ensure that countries with demonstrated need receive adequate financial support and utilize it in accordance with conservation needs?
- What mechanisms will need to be implemented to ensure that forest finance policies and tools are both effective and maintained beyond the

⁷⁷ <https://www.green.earth/blog/countries-high-est-deforestation-rates>

- 2030 goal of halting and reversing deforestation?
- Ending deforestation is estimated to cost at least \$130 billion annually. How can forest finance be executed to ensure the goals of conservation are carried out while reducing the estimated financial burden of combating deforestation?
- and forest protection. We anticipate seeing innovative resolutions that combine economic, social, cultural, and even technological considerations for this topic.

Conclusion

As you prepare to engage in valuable discourse on the subject of forest financing, it is essential to understand that the feasibility of solutions will vary depending on a range of factors, from the resources possessed by individual countries to the willingness of countries to allocate additional resources towards forest maintenance. The debate on forest financing is multifaceted and will involve arguments from countries with developing economies, those whose lands are home to forests in peril, and those who have been amplifying initiatives to maintain and protect these forests. The journey towards reversing deforestation will require a solution beyond the reallocation of funds towards environmental budgets. It will be up to the committee to explore solutions to bridge the gap between countries, helping to finance conservation efforts without harming countries in other ways. Delegates should focus on both allocating resources towards forest financing and also developing long-lasting frameworks to adapt to increasing threats to forests, which call into question the balance between resource necessities