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The Global Forest Goals Report 2026



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GLOBAL FOREST GOALS

The Global Forest Goals Report 2026



Foreword

Forests are among our planet's most vital natural assets. They sustain the livelihoods of billions of people, harbour most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity and play a critical role in regulating the climate.

But, as this report reminds us, our forests are under threat from deforestation, rising temperatures, economic uncertainty and geopolitical divisions.

The *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* and its six Global Forest Goals provide a framework for collective action to end deforestation, restore degraded landscapes and ensure that forests continue to deliver critical economic, social and environmental benefits.

Building on the first *Global Forest Goals Report* published in 2021, and drawing on the latest data and national experiences, this new report takes stock of progress made and highlights the efforts needed to achieve the Global Forest Goals by 2030.

This includes urgent measures to expand the area of protected forests worldwide, increase financial resources supporting sustainable forest management and science and strengthen partnerships and governance frameworks across all sectors.

The report also reflects recent international efforts to place forests at the centre of the global climate and development agenda through innovative financing mechanisms and policy pathways to protect forests.

Guided by the wealth of data and inspiring examples contained in this report, and by working as one, we can preserve these precious natural assets for future generations.

António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

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Preface

The Global Forest Goals Report 2026 comes at a pivotal moment for sustainable development. Since the release of the inaugural Global Forest Goals Report in 2021, the world has confronted unprecedented and compounding crises, ranging from intensifying climate impacts and biodiversity loss to widening inequalities and fiscal constraints. Yet this period has also witnessed renewed international resolve to protect, restore and sustainably manage the world's forests, reflected in major global commitments adopted since 2021 and in the strong engagement of Member States in the United Nations Forum on Forests.

The 2026 report offers an updated overview of progress towards the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* and its six Global Forest Goals. Drawing on voluntary national reports submitted by Member States and on other authoritative sources, it presents a detailed picture of national actions, innovations and persistent challenges. While many countries have strengthened forest governance, expanded restoration efforts, enhanced monitoring systems and deepened cooperation, forest loss and degradation continue in several regions. The findings remind us that achieving the Global Forest Goals by 2030 will require scaled-up ambition, significantly increased finance, stronger institutions and sustained political commitment across all sectors.

This report also arrives at a critical juncture for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). In 2026, DESA is intensifying its support to Member States to consolidate gains, sustain momentum, and accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the final stretch to 2030. Forests are central to this work. As DESA works to deepen data and analytical capacities, leverage digital innovation, and promote coherence, effectiveness and efficiency across intergovernmental processes, forests remain a vital focus of our efforts to protect the planet and promote sustainable development for all.

The findings of this report underscore the urgency of our collective task. They also highlight the breadth of national leadership and institutional and community-driven action underway, from large-scale restoration, reforestation, and afforestation programmes to strengthened participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and the expanding use of science, technology and innovation in forest management. These examples demonstrate that progress is possible, even amid global uncertainty, when countries align policies, mobilize resources, and work across sectors and institutions in an integrated and inclusive manner.

In a time of global uncertainty, forests remind us that our future is interconnected. DESA will continue to support Member States in translating commitments into results, strengthening multilateral cooperation, and ensuring that forests, and the people who depend on them, are at the centre of a fair, resilient and sustainable future.

Li Junhua
Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

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The report is based on voluntary national reports submitted to the UNFF in 2025: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

The report also draws on quantitative and biophysical data, and reproduces tables, charts and figures from the *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025* (FRA 2025) developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It incorporates substantive contributions provided by Anssi Pekkarinen, Anne Branthomme, Orjan Jonsson, Arvydas Lebedys, Chiara Patriarca and Bastian Stahl.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

C&I	Criteria and Indicators
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FRA	Global Forest Resources Assessment
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GCS	Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GFGs	Global Forest Goals
Ha	Hectare
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
MRV	Measurement, reporting and verification for REDD+
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NWFPs	Non-wood forest products
OECMs	Other Effective Conservation Measures
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable forest management
TFFF	Tropical Forest Forever Facility
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNFFS	United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat
UNSPF	United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030
VNRs	Voluntary national reports

Table of contents

Foreword ii

Preface iii

Acknowledgements iv

Abbreviations and acronyms v

Global Forest Goals viii

Sustainable Development Goals ix

Executive Summary x

Introduction 1

Global Forest Goal 1 5

Global Forest Goal 2 14

Global Forest Goal 3 25

Global Forest Goal 4 32

Global Forest Goal 5 42

Global Forest Goal 6 51

Conclusions and recommendations 58

Annex 1: Voluntary national reports to UNFF 60

Annex 2: The Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators, their classification tiers, and links to globally agreed goals and targets 61

Annex 3: Progress across the Global Forest Goals and targets 63

Endnotes 65

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List of figures, tables and boxes

Figures

1. Timeline of forest-related developments since 2021	1
2. Annual change in forest carbon stock, by region, 1990–2025	9
3. Global extreme poverty, 2018-2024	16
4. Forest contributions to food security (direct and indirect)	19
5. Global importance of non-wood forest product categories, by relative economic value, 2020	21
6. Proportion of total forest area in protected areas, by region and globally, 1990–2025	27
7. Proportion of forest area with long-term forest management plans, by region, 2025	29
8. Forest area under an independently verified certification scheme, by region	30
9. Sources of finance accessed for sustainable forest management	38
10. National Forest Inventory (NFI) status	40
11. Measures to prevent or reduce trafficking and illicit activities concerning forests	44
12. Sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote SFM	54

Tables

1. Forest area, by region and net change, 2015–2025	8
2. Area of primary forest and annual net change, by region, 2015–2025	8
3. Overview of restoration commitments and area restored, by region, 2025	11
4. Resilience-building activities in reporting countries	12
5. Industrial roundwood and woodfuel removals, by region (2015-2024)	21
6. Examples of cooperation	37
7. Forest contributions across multiple SDGs – key facts and figures	49
8. SFM criteria and indicators used by countries	55
9. Reported purpose of using SFM criteria and indicators	55

Boxes

Box 1. Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs)	24
Box 2. Technical assistance for the design of forest financing strategies and project proposals	39
Box 3. The Tropical Forest Forever Facility	39
Box 4. Forests and gender equality	47
Box 5. Forests and the SDGs	49

Global Forest Goals



GFG 1
Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change.



GFG 2
Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.



GFG 3
Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests.



GFG 4
Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships.



GFG 5
Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations Forest Instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



GFG 6
Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies of forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders.

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Sustainable Development Goals



End poverty in all its forms everywhere



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



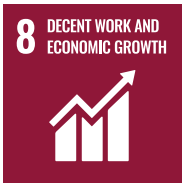
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



Reduce inequality within and among countries



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Executive Summary

The Global Forest Goals Report 2026 is the second report on progress towards achieving the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and their associated targets, as set out in the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* (UNSPF). Like the first report, published in 2021, it draws largely upon voluntary national reports (VNRs). These reports were submitted by 48 countries, representing 51 per cent of the global forest area, and they provide a rich source of data of a mainly qualitative nature. Where possible, other authoritative sources of information, including in particular FAO's *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025* (FRA 2025), have also been used to inform the analysis in *The Global Forest Goals Report 2026.*

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS ACROSS THE GFG TARGETS

Broadly met	Partially achieved	Off track
27%	65%	8%
TARGET 1.2	TARGET 1.3	TARGET 1.1
TARGET 3.1	TARGET 1.4	TARGET 2.1
TARGET 3.2	TARGET 2.2	
TARGET 3.3	TARGET 2.3	
TARGET 4.5	TARGET 2.4	
TARGET 5.1	TARGET 2.5	
TARGET 6.4	TARGET 4.1	
	TARGET 4.2	
	TARGET 4.3	
	TARGET 4.4	
	TARGET 5.2	
	TARGET 5.3	
	TARGET 5.4	
	TARGET 6.1	
	TARGET 6.2	
	TARGET 6.3	
	TARGET 6.5	

Across the 26 GFG targets, the report finds that two targets are off track (1.1 and 2.1), while seven targets are assessed as broadly met (1.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.5, 5.1 and 6.4). The remaining 17 targets are assessed as partially achieved, reflecting widespread but insufficient progress. Overall, the assessment underscores that while most targets are moving in the right direction, greater ambition and action are needed to bring off track and partially achieved targets closer to full attainment.

Despite persistent challenges, many countries, often supported by international and regional organizations, have made substantial advances in implementing the GFGs. The VNRs showcase a diverse array of policy reforms, programmes, projects and initiatives across all levels. Together, they reflect the dedication of forest practitioners, communities and policymakers who continue working to implement sustainable forest management under often difficult conditions.

Achieving the goals and targets set out in the UNSPF by 2030 will require accelerated actions to reverse the loss of forest cover and to eradicate poverty among forest-dependent people. There is an urgent need to strengthen cross-sectoral policy coordination and to develop deforestation-free supply chains. Other key priorities include enhancing access to markets, finance and skills and securing land tenure rights. Closing the significant financing gap for SFM will require mobilizing new sources of finance. Strengthened forest governance and law enforcement are needed to combat illegal logging. Effective data, monitoring and reporting systems, together with a clear process to assess progress in 2030 will be essential for defining future priorities.

As 2030 approaches, the challenge is no longer simply to recognize the value of forests but also to accelerate efforts to achieve the GFGs. Strengthened political commitment, increased financing and more effective cross-sectoral governance will all be critical.

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Global Forest Goal 1

REVERSE THE LOSS OF FOREST COVER WORLDWIDE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING PROTECTION, RESTORATION, AFFORESTATION AND REFORESTATION, AND INCREASE EFFORTS TO PREVENT FOREST DEGRADATION AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE GLOBAL EFFORT OF ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Despite progress towards this goal, the global loss in forest cover has not yet been reversed. Efforts are being made to expand the forest area and prevent deforestation and forest degradation, but these actions have not kept pace with the pressures on forests from climate change, drought, wildfires, pests and land-use change. **There has been mixed progress towards GFG 1 and accelerated action is needed, especially in relation to halting deforestation.**

TARGET 1.1 🔴

Forest area is increased by 3 per cent worldwide

Total forest area decreased by over 40 million ha (or close to one per cent) between 2015 and 2025, and these losses were most pronounced in South America and Africa. The global loss of forest between 2015 and 2025 included the loss of 16 million ha of primary forests, which are of particular importance for biodiversity. Much forest loss is attributable to pressures from agriculture. **GFG target 1.1 is off track and renewed efforts must be made to halt forest loss and, in particular, the loss of primary forests.**

TARGET 1.2 🟢

The world's forest carbon stocks are maintained or enhanced

Although global forest carbon stocks increased between 2015 and 2025, they are at risk from pressures such as wildfires and drought. In some regions, including South America and Africa, forest carbon stocks are falling. **GFG target 1.2 is broadly met, although carbon stocks remain at risk in some regions.**

TARGET 1.3 🟡

By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

There has been steady progress towards the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) practices, with institutional strengthening, improvements in forest-related law and regulations, long-term management plans and compliance systems. Nevertheless, there are continuing problems associated with weak institutional capacity, particularly in lower-income countries. **GFG target 1.3 is partially achieved, but deforestation has not been halted.**

TARGET 1.4 🟡

The resilience and adaptive capacity of all types of forests to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change is significantly strengthened worldwide

While there has been a strengthening of resilience frameworks and adaptive capacity, forests are facing increased threats from wildfires, heatwaves, drought, pests and diseases. Much of this is climate induced with projections pointing to worsening conditions in the future. **GFG target 1.4 is partially achieved, but there is a widening gap between response capacity and the scale of climate-driven risks.**

Global Forest Goal 2

ENHANCE FOREST-BASED ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS, INCLUDING BY IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOODS OF FOREST-DEPENDENT PEOPLE

Countries have reported many actions taken in support of this goal, but serious challenges still remain in relation to improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people. **There has been mixed progress towards GFG 2, and accelerated action is needed to eradicate poverty for all forest-dependent people.**

TARGET 2.1 🔴

Extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people is eradicated

While global extreme poverty is falling, progress is uneven between regions and there has been little change in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to many forest-dependent poor. Countries have reported on a wide range of challenges including weak market

access, gaps in business services, and financial and capacity constraints. **GFG target 2.1 is off track and renewed efforts must be made to eradicate extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people.**

TARGET 2.2

Increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets

While multiple actions have been taken in many countries to support small-scale forest enterprises that benefit local communities and forest-dependent people, there is a continuing need to address persistent challenges. **GFG target 2.2 is partially achieved, but further action is required to address challenges of access to markets, finance and skills, as well as insecure tenure.**

TARGET 2.3

The contribution of forests and trees to food security is significantly increased

Food from trees and forests plays a valuable role in promoting dietary diversity and offers an important safety net. In addition, trees and forests support food production through, for example, pollination and soil protection. Action is being taken towards this target, but there is still a lack of awareness about the importance of trees and forests for food security. **GFG target 2.3 is partially achieved, but continued effort is needed to build upon current momentum.**

TARGET 2.4

The contribution of forest industry, other forest-based enterprises and forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development, among other things, is significantly increased

Globally, the formal forest economy is worth some US$1.5 trillion annually and employs around one per cent of the working population. The forest industry is likely to continue to be a small, but locally very important, component of the wider economy. There is little data about the informal forest economy or about the value of ecosystem services from forests. **GFG target 2.4 is partially achieved, but further effort is needed to improve systems for assessing the value of the informal sector and of the ecosystem services provided by forests.**

TARGET 2.5

The contribution of all types of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation is enhanced, taking into account the mandates and ongoing work of relevant conventions and instruments

Significant efforts have been made to enhance the contribution of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation, but in order to meet this target it is essential to halt deforestation and the loss of all types of forests, including primary forests. **GFG target 2.5 is partially achieved, but there remains an urgent need to halt deforestation of all types of forests and in particular the loss of primary forests.**

Global Forest Goal 3

INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY THE AREA OF PROTECTED FORESTS WORLDWIDE AND OTHER AREAS OF SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS, AS WELL AS THE PROPORTION OF FOREST PRODUCTS FROM SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS

Much action has been taken to protect forests and increase the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests, although progress is uneven, with some regions and forest types receiving a disproportionate share of protection, long-term management and certification efforts. Constraints on progress include financial pressures, institutional capacity and issues of tenure insecurity. **Good progress is being made towards GFG 3, although further effort is required where this progress is uneven.**

TARGET 3.1

The area of forests worldwide designated as protected areas or conserved through other effective area-based conservation measures is significantly increased

There has been progress towards this target but with regional variations and uneven representation of different forest ecosystems. **GFG target 3.1 is broadly met, although progress is uneven across regions and forest types.**

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TARGET 3.2

The area of forests under long-term forest management plans is significantly increased

The area of forest covered by long-term management plans increased between 2015 and 2025. There is, however, a regional imbalance, with Europe reporting coverage of over 90 per cent while Africa, Oceania and South America remain below 30 per cent. **GFG target 3.2 is broadly met, although with significant regional imbalances.**

TARGET 3.3

The proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests is significantly increased

The proportion of forest products from sustainably managed sources, and the area of certified forests, has increased, although progress remains uneven across regions with certification concentrated in Europe and North America. **GFG target 3.3 is broadly met, although with significant regional imbalances.**

Global Forest Goal 4

MOBILIZE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED, NEW AND ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES FROM ALL SOURCES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND STRENGTHEN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The mobilization of financial resources for SFM has increased but still falls far below required levels. Although innovative approaches to financing are emerging, domestic public expenditure continues to be the main source of finance. **Positive progress is being made towards GFG 4 but the mobilization of financial resources for SFM still falls far short of requirements.**

TARGET 4.1

Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

Global finance for SFM in 2023 was US$84 billion, which is far below the required level of US$300 billion per year by 2030. Forest funding is especially lacking in low-income and lower-middle-income countries where the needs are greatest. **GFG target 4.1 is partially achieved, but there is a major gap between current financial resources for SFM and identified needs.**

TARGET 4.2

Forest-related financing from all sources at all levels, including public (national, bilateral, multilateral and triangular), private and philanthropic financing is significantly increased

There has been progress in developing more predictable and structured forest finance systems, but diversification beyond public funding remains limited and there is a need to make more use of innovative financing mechanisms. **GFG target 4.2 is partially achieved, but there remains an urgent need to unlock additional funding from all sources.**

TARGET 4.3

North-South, South-South, North-North and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation in the forest sector are significantly enhanced and increased

There have been substantial achievements in terms of international cooperation but there are regional imbalances and other shortcomings that stem from institutional weaknesses and a lack of funding. There is a need to develop more innovative partnerships to mobilize additional resources. **GFG target 4.3 is partially achieved, but there is a need to widen participation in cooperation initiatives and public-private partnerships.**

TARGET 4.4

The number of countries that have developed and implemented forest financing strategies and have access to financing from all sources is significantly increased

Although there has been widespread development of forest financing strategies, and some success in gaining access to funding for SFM, private and blended finance remain limited. **GFG target 4.4 is partially achieved, but access to finance remains a serious challenge.**

TARGET 4.5

The collection, analysis and accessibility of forest-related information is improved, through, for example, multi-disciplinary scientific frameworks

There have been significant but uneven improvements in forest information systems and in extending the coverage of updated National Forest Inventories. **GFG target 4.5 is broadly met, although further efforts are needed to achieve universal coverage and quality.**

Global Forest Goal 5

PROMOTE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS TO IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS FOREST INSTRUMENT, AND ENHANCE THE CONTRIBUTION OF FORESTS TO THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Countries have made steady, if uneven, progress towards this goal, with many reporting updated governance frameworks, stronger enforcement measures and expanded mechanisms for participation. **Positive progress is being made towards GFG 5, but implementation remains uneven across sectors and administrative levels.**

TARGET 5.1

The number of countries that have integrated forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies is significantly increased

There has been progress in integrating forests into national development frameworks, and improvements in coordination, but challenges remain, especially where there is misalignment of priorities, limited coordination between ministries and weak implementation capacity. **GFG target 5.1 is broadly met, although the depth of integration and the effectiveness of implementation vary considerably.**

TARGET 5.2

Forest law enforcement and governance are enhanced, including through significantly strengthening national and subnational forest authorities, and illegal logging and associated trade are significantly reduced worldwide

Enforcement capacity has been strengthened in many countries, but illegal logging pressures that are driven by weak governance, corruption and criminal networks remain high. These pressures often outpace developments in response capacity. Challenges, especially in low- and middle-income countries, include underfunding, fragmented institutional mandates and outdated legal frameworks. **GFG target 5.2 is partially achieved, but pressures from illegal logging and associated trade remain high.**

TARGET 5.3

National and subnational forest-related policies and programmes are coherent, coordinated and complementary across ministries, departments and authorities, consistent with national laws, and engage relevant stakeholders, local communities and Indigenous Peoples, fully recognizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Progress has been made towards more integrated governance and more effective stakeholder engagement. Nevertheless, significant weaknesses remain, especially where coordination platforms and consultation mechanisms have no authority to make decisions. **GFG target 5.3 is partially achieved, but there is a need to improve the effectiveness of cross-sectoral coordination and stakeholder engagement mechanisms and to extend UNDRIP-consistent participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.**

TARGET 5.4

Forest-related issues and the forest sector are fully integrated into decision-making processes of land use planning and development

There has been progress in integrating forests into land-use planning, but competing land pressures can take precedence over forest sector considerations when decisions are made. **GFG target 5.4 is partially achieved, but forest-related issues can still be subordinate to other land-use interests in the policymaking process.**

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Global Forest Goal 6

ENHANCE COOPERATION, COORDINATION, COHERENCE AND SYNERGIES ON FOREST-RELATED ISSUES AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND ACROSS MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP ON FORESTS, AS WELL AS ACROSS SECTORS AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

While there has been an increased commitment to coherent forest governance within the United Nations system and beyond, fragmentation, capacity gaps and uneven implementation persist at multiple levels. **Positive progress has been made towards GFG 6, but improved cooperation is needed to overcome persistent fragmentation.**

TARGET 6.1

Forest-related programmes within the United Nations system are coherent and complementary and integrate the Global Forest Goals and targets where appropriate

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) seeks to achieve a coherent approach to forest-related programmes within the United Nations system through its work plans, which explicitly link its activities to the GFGs. Nevertheless, fragmentation persists with organizations having their own independent governance and reporting frameworks. **GFG target 6.1 is partially achieved, but different mandates and governance frameworks impede progress.**

TARGET 6.2

Forest-related programmes across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are coherent and complementary and together encompass the multiple contributions of forests and the forest sector to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

While there is strong technical collaboration on such issues as climate and biodiversity, there are weaker links with other policy areas such as agriculture, food security, energy and social equity, and there is insufficient recognition of the full contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda. **GFG target 6.2 is partially achieved, but there are inadequate links with policy areas other than climate and biodiversity.**

TARGET 6.3

Cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation and forest degradation are significantly enhanced at all levels

Significant action has been taken to improve cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation at all levels, but there can still be serious gaps, including a lack of engagement with the private sector to address deforestation risks. **GFG target 6.3 is partially achieved, but more effective coordination and cooperation is needed to address key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.**

TARGET 6.4

A greater common understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management is achieved and an associated set of indicators is identified

The *United Nations Forest Instrument* and the criteria and indicators (C&I) processes provide a sound framework, but this is not always translated into operational tools. Some countries lack codified SFM standards and there can be difficulties in harmonizing definitions across sectors. **GFG target 6.4 is broadly met, although challenges remain in operationalizing C&I frameworks.**

TARGET 6.5

The input and involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and in the work of the Forum, including intersessional work, is strengthened

There has been significant progress in establishing mechanisms to engage stakeholders and to integrate gender and Indigenous perspectives into policymaking. However, participation is often limited to consultation, with limited influence over decisions, and problems can arise from inadequate funding, capacity gaps, different languages and accessibility issues. **GFG target 6.5 is partially achieved, but effective stakeholder engagement requires sustained support and capacity building.**

Introduction

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Forests are among the planet's most vital natural systems and serve as a bridge across the climate, biodiversity, land restoration and sustainable development agendas. They play a critical role in climate mitigation and adaptation, conserve the majority of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, sustain the livelihoods of billions of people, and support resilient landscapes and economies. In this context, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) provides the global policy platform where these interlinked priorities converge, fostering cooperation, coherence and collective action among its Member States and partners.

The *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* (UNSPF) is the global framework adopted by the General Assembly, on 27 April 2017, to provide a coherent, long-term vision for the world's forests.[1] It articulates six Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and 26 associated targets that aim to reverse forest loss, enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, increase the extent of protected forest area coverage, mobilize finance, strengthen governance, and improve cooperation and policy coherence across institutions and sectors. The GFGs are intentionally broad to accommodate national circumstances while supporting linkages with climate mitigation, biodiversity conservation, livelihoods, and sustainable development. The GFGs are voluntary and universal, designed as a means to assess collective progress, identify gaps, and signal areas requiring increased political and financial commitment. By advancing the UNSPF and its GFGs, the Forum is also strengthening the contribution of forests to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major international commitments.

Figure 1. Timeline of forest-related developments since 2021

2021	**Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use**: 145 countries pledged to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030.
2021–2030	The **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** has mobilized unprecedented global momentum for forest landscape restoration, emphasizing ecosystem integrity.
2022	**Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**: Established ambitious targets including protecting 30 per cent of terrestrial areas by 2030, reducing harmful subsidies, and increasing international biodiversity finance to developing countries.
2025	Launch of the **Tropical Forests Forever Facility**: Designed to provide long-term financing for tropical forest conservation, securing US$6.7 billion in pledges.
	The General Assembly proclaimed the period 2027 to 2036 as the **United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management** to raise global awareness, foster political will and mobilize action at all levels.

The first Global Forest Goals Report (*GFG Report 2021*) was published in April 2021.[2] It drew upon voluntary national reports (VNRs) and other authoritative sources, including publications by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).[3] The *GFG Report 2021* highlighted the consequences of underinvestment, weak cross-sectoral coordination and the persistence of drivers of deforestation outside the forest sector. It established a reference point for future reporting cycles, creating expectations for improved data, stronger national engagement, and clearer links between forest action and broader sustainable development outcomes.

This report is intended to provide an update on the status of the GFGs and identify what is necessary to reach as many targets as possible by 2030. As 2030 approaches, the challenge is no longer simply to recognize the value of forests but also to accelerate implementation in order to match the urgent need to address global climate and biodiversity realities. Strengthened political commitment, increased financing and more effective cross-sectoral governance will all be critical for achieving the GFGs.

FORESTS IN A CHANGING GLOBAL CONTEXT

Since the publication of the *GFG Report 2021*, several important developments have occurred within the international forest regime, including those listed in Figure 1.

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Collectively, these developments represent strong recognition that forests are essential for climate change mitigation, economic development and biodiversity conservation. They provide a foundation from which to translate ambition into tangible outcomes by 2030.

During this time, collective understanding of the importance of the world's forests has advanced in other ways that are relevant to the GFGs. For example, there is a growing recognition that simply measuring changes in forest area does not capture a number of important variables and changes taking place. The unique and irreplaceable value of primary and intact forests is increasingly well understood,[4] but is not reflected in data about net changes in forest area where the loss of high value forests is masked by expansion of other types of forest.[5] Furthermore, new methodologies have revealed that the biodiversity and carbon impacts of forest degradation have been significantly underestimated, calling attention to the need to monitor and report on the ecological integrity of forests, as well as their extent.[6]

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Much of this report is based upon an evaluation of the 48 VNRs submitted to UNFF during the 2024–2026 reporting cycle. A list of the countries that submitted VNRs is contained in Annex 1. These countries responded to 67 questions about actions they had taken since 2020 to help meet the GFGs and associated targets, results achieved, challenges and success stories. For many of the targets, countries were invited to report on up to three actions and to note any multiple cross-target contributions. In addition, countries were invited to note links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Responses were largely descriptive, providing qualitative information regarding policies, programmes, initiatives and projects.

The reporting format provided a rich amount of detail and demonstrated the interconnectedness of the GFGs, but it is difficult to summarize this material in a concise manner. Accordingly, this report focuses on the main themes emerging from the VNRs. Some country-specific details have been included in the form of illustrative success stories, but much country-level detail has had to be omitted. All the VNRs are available online and, to assist readers wanting further detail, indicative lists of VNRs relevant to particular themes are provided in the endnotes.[7]



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PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GFGs AND TARGETS

For the purposes of this report, progress towards the GFG targets is described using three qualitative categories: "broadly met", "partially achieved" and "off track". These categories are intended to provide an overall indication of global trends, based on the best available data, including VNRs and complementary global datasets, such as the FRA 2025.

"Broadly met" refers to targets for which global trends are generally consistent with the level of progress required to achieve the target by 2030. While some regional disparities or data limitations may persist, overall progress is substantial and aligned with the intended direction of the target.

"Partially achieved" refers to situations where measurable progress is evident, and actions are being taken by countries and other stakeholders. However, for reasons that are stated in relation to each of these targets, significant gaps remain and further action is required to achieve the target by 2030.

"Off track" refers to targets where current trends are clearly insufficient to meet the intended objective by 2030 and where accelerated efforts are required in order to improve progress.

The language used to describe progress at the goal level reflects the fact that each goal includes several targets. Where one target is "off track", as in GFG 1 and GFG 2, progress is said to be "mixed". Where all targets are "broadly met", as in GFG 3, progress is said to be "good". Where targets are either "partially achieved" or "broadly met", progress is described as "positive".

These assessments are based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence and should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive. They reflect global-level trends and may not capture important variations at regional or national levels.

The 48 countries that submitted VNRs represent 51 per cent of the global forest area. For comparison, the 52 countries that submitted VNRs during the 2019-21 reporting cycle represented 50 per cent of the global forest area. The 23 countries that submitted VNRs on both occasions represented 35 per cent of the global forest area. Major differences between reporting periods at the regional level were as follows:

- **Africa:** The VNR from the Democratic Republic of the Congo substantially increased regional forest coverage.
- **Asia:** The VNRs from India and Indonesia substantially increased regional forest coverage.
- **Europe:** Regional coverage is low for both periods.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** The VNRs from Colombia and Peru further improved regional forest coverage.
- There was a sharp drop in regional forest coverage in **North America** and a reduction of coverage in **Oceania**.

The partial extent of the coverage of the VNRs raises problems of non-response bias when attempting to draw firm conclusions about progress towards achieving the GFGs and targets. Furthermore, the limited number of countries submitting reports in both reporting cycles makes it difficult to assess trends over time. The analysis is further complicated by the fact that most targets are expressed in qualitative terms. In addition, many targets contain the imprecise term "significantly" and some targets include more than one objective.

To supplement the VNRs, this report also draws upon other authoritative sources of information including, in particular, the results of the FAO *Global Forest Resource Assessment* (FRA) 2025.[8] The Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators (GCS) is intended to provide information for monitoring progress towards the GFGs and targets but, as explained in Annex 2, robust methodology and appropriate data is currently available for only 12 out of 21 indicators.

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Key forest facts and figures

Overview

GLOBAL FOREST AREA

32%
of land area

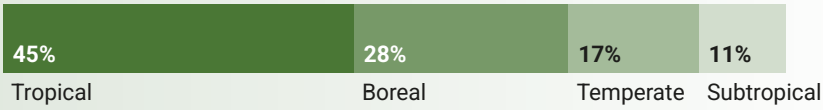
Forests cover **4.14 billion hectares (ha)**, equal to roughly 0.50 ha per person.



29% Primary forest

8% Planted forest

Global forest distribution is concentrated across **four main climatic zones.**



54% **of global forests are located in 5 countries**



Why forests matter

FOR CARBON CYCLE AND PLANETARY HEALTH

Forests store large quantities of carbon, with an estimated

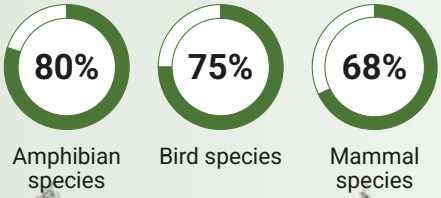
172 t/ha

Their role is central in climate regulation and planetary balance.



FOR BIODIVERSITY

Forest ecosystems host a major share of global terrestrial species.



FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING

- FOOD SECURITY
- INCOME AND JOBS
- ENERGY ACCESS
- HEALTH AND MEDICINE
- WATER SECURITY
- CLIMATE RESILIENCE
- CULTURAL IDENTITY

Multiple threats

489
million ha
of forest lost since 1990

Net forest loss has declined over time but pressure on forest ecosystems persists.

GLOBAL ANNUAL RATE OF FOREST EXPANSION AND DEFORESTATION
(million ha/ year)



DRIVERS OF FOREST LOSS

Main pressures

Deforestation
driven by agriculture and other land-use pressures

Climate change
increasing stressors such as wildfires

Sources: FAO, The State of the World's Forests 2024; FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025

Global Forest Goal 1



Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change

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OVERVIEW

GFG 1 focuses on reversing forest loss and preventing degradation as well as contributing to efforts to address climate change. The four targets associated with this goal are strongly interrelated with each other and with a number of other GFG targets. Progress towards this goal will also play a key role in achieving SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Countries have undertaken broad efforts to reduce forest loss, expand forest area, strengthen carbon management, promote sustainable practices, restore forests and improve resilience, but forest loss has not yet been reversed. The actions taken have not kept pace with rising pressures from competing land uses and threats from wildfire, drought, pests and diseases. In some regions, resilience measures remain fragmented and under-resourced.

Overall, there has been mixed progress towards GFG 1. Accelerated action is needed, especially in relation to halting deforestation.



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TARGET 1.1

Forest area is increased by three per cent worldwide

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Country actions in support of this target include measures aimed at preventing the loss of existing forest area, expanding forest cover and improving the condition of degraded land. Almost all countries reported one or more activities related to each of these areas.

The most widely reported cause of deforestation is agricultural expansion, which continues to outpace restoration and afforestation efforts across many reporting countries.[9] Measures to tackle deforestation include the establishment of new protected areas and the enforcement of existing controls, for example, by targeting areas facing strong deforestation pressures or specific problems of unlawful extraction.

Many VNRs reported actions to expand the forest area, highlighting policies, programmes and plans related to tree planting and to the rehabilitation of degraded land. Policy frameworks have continued to evolve, supported by strategies, laws and regulations that clarify objectives and responsibilities. VNRs also highlighted the importance of community engagement, together with the need for technical skills and detailed attention to such matters as nursery development and maintenance, fire break establishment and irrigation.[10]

CHALLENGES

The most widely reported barrier to increasing forest area is the conversion of forests to agriculture. Demographic trends, including population growth, rural-urban migration and changing consumption patterns influence pressures on forest landscapes through their effects on demand for land, food, energy and infrastructure. Demand for woodfuel (fuelwood and charcoal) is a major driver of forest loss and degradation, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. Urban growth and infrastructure development can also lead to forest loss, even where governance is otherwise strong. Some countries reported difficulties in identifying land that is both suitable and available for forest expansion.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

According to the FRA 2025, total forest area decreased by close to 1.0 per cent (from 4.18 billion to 4.14 billion ha) during the period 2015–2025. This rate of global forest net loss, averaging 4.12 million ha per year, compares with 10.7 million ha per year in the period 1990–2000 and 3.68 million ha per year in the period 2000–2015, when remote sensing demonstrated that the main drivers behind deforestation were cropland expansion, including for oil palm plantations, and livestock grazing.[11] The increase in the net forest loss during the 2015–2025 period is attributed primarily to a reduction in the rate of forest gain arising from afforestation and natural forest expansion.

South America experienced the largest net loss in forest area during the 2015–2025 period (4.10 million ha per year), although this was slightly less than the net loss in the 2000–2015 period (4.36 million ha per year). Asia had the highest regional net annual gain during the 2015–2025 period (1.62 million ha per year), but this was down from 2.40 million ha per year during the 2000–2015 period. Table 1 provides an analysis by region, both in terms of area and percentage change.

The FRA 2025 estimates that primary forests cover at least 1.18 billion ha or 29 per cent of the total forest area. Primary forests were lost at a rate of 1.61 million ha per year during the 2015–2025 period (see Table 2). This was a significant reduction compared with the previous period, 2000–2015, when the loss was 3.92 million ha per year.[12]

It is clear that GFG target 1.1 is off track and renewed efforts must be made to halt forest loss and, in particular, the loss of primary forests.

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Table 1. Forest area, by region and net change, 2015–2025

REGION	FOREST AREA (1 000 HA) 2015	2025	1 000 HA/YEAR	ANNUAL NET CHANGE (%)	2015–2025 NET CHANGE (%)
Africa	692 237	662 630	−2 961	−0.44	**−4.28**
Asia	613 786	630 029	1 624	0.26	**2.65**
Europe	1 024 558	1 038 911	1 435	0.14	**1.40**
North and Central America	778 758	776 162	−260	−0.03	**−0.33**
Oceania	182 499	183 898	140	0.08	**0.77**
South America	889 598	848 587	−4 101	−0.47	**−4.61**
WORLD	**4 181 435**	**4 140 217**	**−4 122**	**−0.10**	**−0.99**

Source: adapted from FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 (Table 5 and 6)

Table 2. Area of primary forest and annual net change, by region, 2015–2025

REGION	AREA OF PRIMARY FOREST TOTAL (1 000 HA) 2015	2025	ANNUAL NET CHANGE (1 000 HA/YR) 2015–2025
Africa	168 918	163 436	−548
Asia	80 492	82 251	176
Europe, excluding Russian Federation	*3 852*	*3 609*	*−24.3*
Europe	308 722	310 254	153
North and Central America	238 314	235 045	−327
Oceania	38 551	38 349	−20.2
South America	309 034	298 609	−1 042
WORLD	**1 144 032**	**1 127 945**	**−1 609**

Source: adapted from FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 (Table 21)

TARGET 1.2

The world's forest carbon stocks are maintained or enhanced

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Most countries reported actions directed at conserving and enhancing carbon stocks. Many referred to improved measuring, reporting and verification (MRV), including the use of inventories, reference levels or geospatial tools to track progress and inform programme design. Countries also pointed to links with international programmes and processes, and stressed the need for capacity-building, extension work and community-level support. Several VNRs noted that research and improvements in data and monitoring can strengthen efforts to demonstrate forest–climate linkages. Countries also explained how incentives, offset-related mechanisms and other market-based measures can influence behaviour and accelerate action.[13]

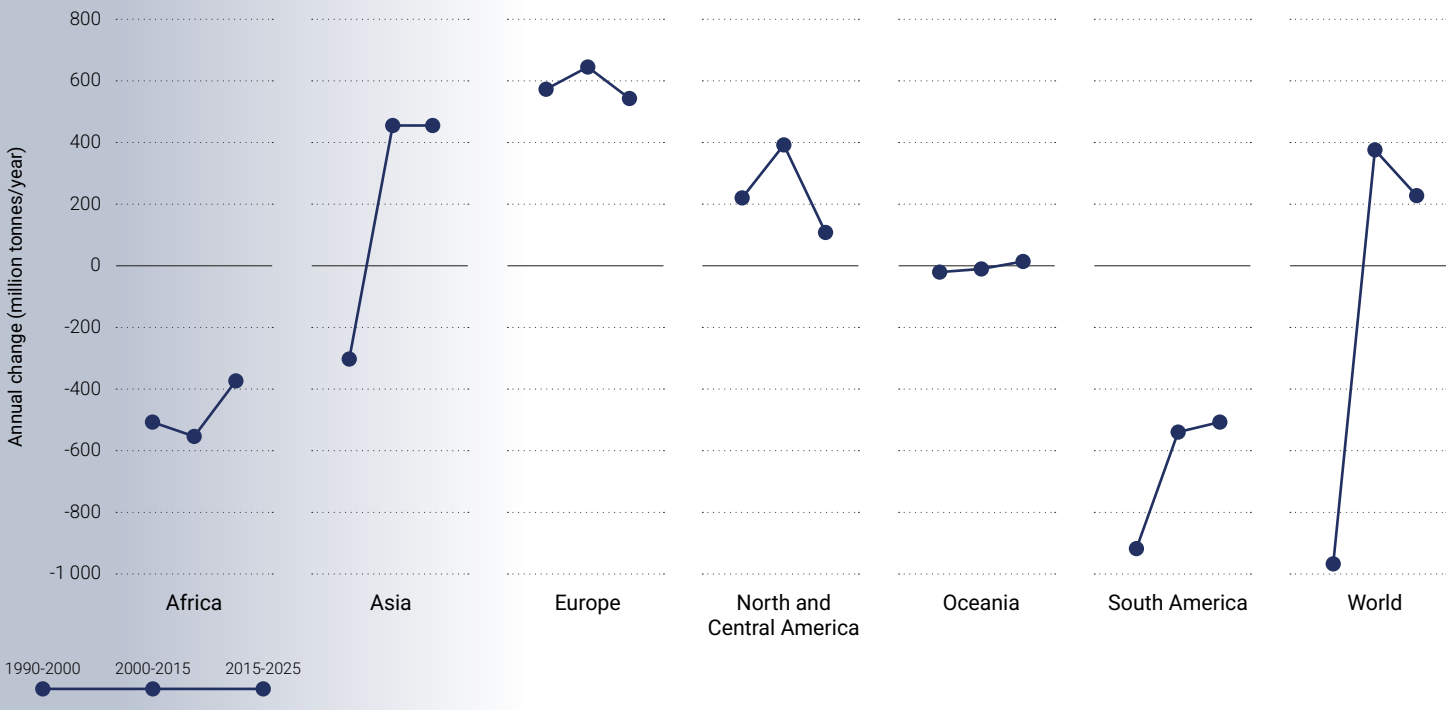
CHALLENGES

Even where forest cover is stable or growing, carbon stocks are at risk due to degradation and other factors. Carbon-storing capacity can be lost through undermanagement, which itself may be a consequence of poor financial returns from forests and negative public perceptions of logging. Other challenges include wildfires, drought, stand structures with low per-hectare carbon density, and pest and disease outbreaks.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Countries reported many actions designed to integrate forest carbon considerations into climate policy, linking forest management to mitigation and adaptation plans, but progress has been constrained by climate-related risks, land-use pressures, limited capacity and weak enforcement.

Figure 2. Annual change in forest carbon stock, by region, 1990–2025



Source: FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025, Figure 28. (Table 55 of FRA 2025 contains the sub-regional figures referred to in the text)

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The world's forests act as a net carbon sink and, as shown in Figure 2, global carbon stocks showed a modest increase during the 2015–2025 period. However, there is also growing recognition of the serious impact of increasing risks from wildfire and drought, and recent evidence indicates that the global land carbon sink fell to its lowest level in two decades in 2023.[14] The decline in the area of primary forests, which are generally more resilient than the rapidly expanding area of modified natural forests or plantations,[15] adds to this dynamic. There are also regional and sub-regional differences. While forest carbon stock is significantly higher in 2025 than in 1990 in East Asia, Europe and North America, as a result of forest-area expansion, it is considerably lower in South America, Africa and Central America.[16] **GFG target 1.2 is broadly met, although carbon stocks remain at risk in some regions.**

TARGET 1.3

By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

COUNTRY ACTIONS

All reporting countries referred to actions taken to strengthen sustainable forest management (SFM). Many countries have revised or updated forest laws, regulatory frameworks and institutional arrangements to reinforce the principles of SFM and to embed them in national strategies. Several countries described enforcement campaigns and the use of SFM tools, including management plans and harvesting rules. Countries also emphasized the need for financing to support SFM, and some referred to innovative approaches such as concession fees or payments for ecosystem services (PES), as well as international funding opportunities that can complement domestic resources.[17]

There were examples from all regions of large-scale afforestation, reforestation and restoration programmes, many of which are linked to global commitments. Measures to reduce forest degradation have included controls to prevent over-extraction and other unsustainable practices. Evidence-based management has been strengthened through the expanded use of geospatial tools that track deforestation.[18]

CHALLENGES

Competing land uses and climate-related disturbances are major constraints. Land-use pressures, including agricultural expansion for commodity production, woodfuel demand, settlement growth, infrastructure development and unconsented changes in land use continue to drive forest loss. Underlying causes include poverty, insecure tenure, illegal trade and conflict. Wildfires and drought also disrupt efforts to achieve this target. Some lower-income countries reported that weak institutional capacity and the lack of human and financial resources are major barriers to effective action. Lack of policy coherence can lead to forest loss, for example, where financial incentives favour agriculture or where the value of forest ecosystem services is not fully taken into account. Other challenges include fragmented forest ownership and unclear land boundaries.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

While deforestation has not been halted, countries reported a wide range of actions aimed at promoting the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests. Widespread efforts are underway towards restoring degraded forests and increasing afforestation and reforestation.

The FRA 2025 reported that during the 2015–2025 period the rate of forest gain arising from afforestation and natural forest expansion was 6.78 million ha per year, which was less than the comparable figure of 9.88 million ha per year for the period 2000-2015. The FRA 2025 also noted that 91 countries have made forest restoration commitments totalling 190 million ha, and that a total of 44 million ha is reported to have been restored (see Table 3). Reliable measurement of forest restoration is, however, hampered by a lack of internationally agreed definitions. **GFG target 1.3 is partially achieved, but deforestation has not been halted.**

Table 3. Overview of restoration commitments and area restored, by region, 2025

REGION	AREA COMMITTED (1000 HA)	AREA RESTORED (1000 HA)	PERCENTAGE OF AREA COMMITTED THAT HAS BEEN RESTORED
Africa	92 497	7 910	8.55
Asia	73 476	31 015	42.2
Europe[a]	3 536	2 093	59.2
North and Central America	6 835	1 861	27.2
Oceania[b]	18	18	99.1
South America	14 114	1 086	7.7
Total	**190 475**	**43 984**	**23.1**

Notes: [a] The Russian Federation reported 1.7 million ha of implemented forest restoration between 2018 and 2021, which exceeded the original restoration target of 1.55 million ha by 2024. The Russian Federation also reported implemented forest restoration of more than 18 million ha between 1990 and 2020. The figures reported here include only forest restoration that took place after 2018. [b] The results for Oceania reflect only figures reported by Fiji, New Caledonia and Samoa.

Source: FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025, Table 76



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TARGET 1.4

The resilience and adaptive capacity of all types of forests to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change is significantly strengthened worldwide

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Countries reported a range of measures to strengthen forest resilience. Wildfire management was the most common theme, with actions such as prevention campaigns, early warning systems, community training, equipment upgrades and strengthened response capabilities. Countries also referred to the importance of climate-adapted tree planting, and the value of geospatial tools for monitoring forest health and the impact of drought in order to prompt adaptive responses.[19]

Restoration and reforestation were identified as key resilience strategies. For example, large-scale planting with native species, and the rehabilitation of degraded areas have been used to stabilize landscapes and reduce vulnerability to extreme events. Some countries described strategies and regulatory instruments that integrate disaster preparedness and climate adaptation into forest governance, creating stronger mandates to address long-term risks.[20]

CHALLENGES

The increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires, resulting from climate change, is a major threat to forest resilience. Effective fire management requires good governance and awareness of social considerations. Other threats include drought, heatwaves, pest and disease outbreaks, landslides and flooding. Adaptive responses are constrained by the same problems of finance and capacity as affect SFM implementation more broadly.

Table 4. Resilience-building activities in reporting countries

ACTION THEME	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS	COUNTRIES
Wildfire management	Prevention campaigns, early warning systems, community training, equipment upgrades and strengthened wildfire response capacity to protect forests and recent restoration investments.	Algeria, Australia, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Venezuela.
Forest monitoring and inventory	Improved forest inventories, expanded monitoring coverage, and use of geospatial tools and remote sensing to track forest health, pests, drought and other stressors for earlier and more adaptive responses.	India, Kenya, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Switzerland.
Restoration and reforestation	Large-scale planting using native species, diversification of species composition and rehabilitation of degraded areas to stabilize landscapes and reduce vulnerability to extreme events.	China, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Peru.
Governance and policy integration	National strategies, regulatory instruments and planning frameworks integrating disaster preparedness and climate adaptation into forest governance.	Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Sweden.

Source: Voluntary national reports

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Most countries reported on at least one action related to this target and examples are provided in Table 4. These actions demonstrate that there is increased awareness of the need to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of such pressures. There are, however, capacity limitations and a lack of adequate long-term finance. Furthermore, pressures from wildfire, drought, pests and diseases are intensifying due to climate change.[21] As a result, current actions often fall short of what is necessary. **GFG target 1.4 is partially achieved, but there is a widening gap between response capacity and the scale of climate-driven risks.**

Success stories

PRIMARY FOREST PARTNERSHIP

At the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in October 2024, FAO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the UNFFS, Griffith University, and the Wild Heritage Foundation jointly launched a new Global Environment Facility (GEF) project: *"Strengthening Conservation of Primary Forests through Partnership Enhancement and Coordination of Support."* The initiative responds to the urgent global need to conserve remaining primary forests, as recognized under CBD Decision 14/30. The project will strengthen international cooperation and improve primary-forest data and monitoring. FAO will lead efforts to enhance national data systems, develop biome-specific guidelines and geospatial tools, and promote consistent reporting on primary forests.

SLOVAKIA: INCREASING FOREST AREA

Slovakia has maintained a long-term upward trend in forest area, with forest cover reaching 41.4 per cent in 2024 (an increase of 0.5 per cent since 2000) bringing total forest land to 2.03 million ha. The adoption of the National Forest Programme 2030 and its Action Plan 2025–2030 confirmed long-term policy objectives to support sustainable forest management, including an introduction of measures to formally reclassify agricultural land naturally colonized by trees into legally recognized forest land. Meanwhile sustained public funding, mainly through the EU Common Agricultural Policy, has actively supported sustainable management of existing forests and, to some extent, also intentional afforestation of agricultural land. A combination of deliberate policy and legal design and European and national financial instruments have created the conditions for Slovakia's forests to maintain and steadily expand their area.

CANADA: WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

Released in June 2024, Canada's Wildland Fire Prevention and Mitigation Strategy is a call to action to mobilize whole-of-society collaboration on wildland fire resilience. Developed by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, the Strategy draws on input from all regions and sectors. It establishes four shared goals: enhance whole-of-society collaboration and coordination; strengthening partnerships with Indigenous Peoples; increasing knowledge and understanding of wildfire; and expanding investments in prevention and mitigation. Together, these goals provide a framework for coordinated action that builds on existing work by partners nationwide. The overarching vision is that by 2030, communities and infrastructure across Canada will be significantly more resilient to the threat and impact of wildfires.

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Global Forest Goal 2



Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people

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OVERVIEW

GFG 2 recognizes the importance of forests in providing economic, social and environmental benefits that include, for example, clean water, soil protection, pollination and cultural and recreational values as well as wood and non-wood forest products (NWFPs). Progress towards this goal would ensure that forests contribute to achieving a number of SDGs, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). There is, however, no agreed definition of "forest-dependent people". In low- and middle-income countries, the term is often used to describe Indigenous Peoples and local communities living in or close to forests, as well as urban populations relying on forest products such as woodfuel; in high-income countries, the term can be used to describe those who rely on forest-related industries for employment.[22]

Collectively, the actions reported by countries demonstrate that forests are increasingly recognized not only for their ecological functions but also as a foundation for economic growth, rural development and poverty alleviation.

Overall, there has been mixed progress towards GFG 2. Accelerated action is needed to eradicate poverty for all forest-dependent people.

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TARGET 2.1

Extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people is eradicated

COUNTRY ACTIONS

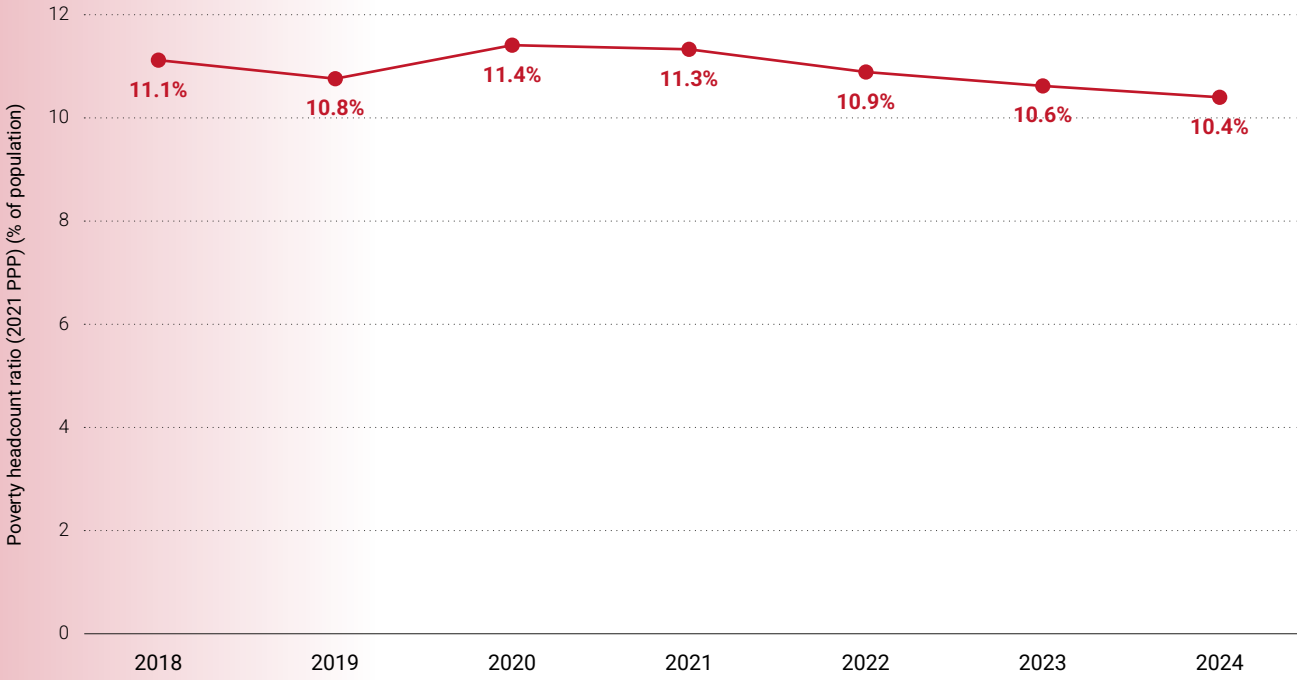
Many countries described forest-related actions aimed at reducing poverty and enhancing livelihoods. These included measures designed to increase employment, generate income and strengthen economic and environmental resilience for forest-dependent people. Such measures often involve community engagement and the development of community-based management plans. Some countries are forced to address particular challenges associated with post-conflict landscapes. A number of donor countries highlighted the role of international partnerships and the need to provide financial support for community forestry initiatives within their strategies for official development assistance.[23]

Several countries explained that action to alleviate poverty and promote SFM are mutually reinforcing and stressed the need to support forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples and local communities financially and through appropriate legal frameworks.

Some countries have national strategies and action plans that are specifically focused on forest-based poverty alleviation strategies. In one example, environmental protection was linked with poverty alleviation through the employment of forest rangers from impoverished households.[24]

While some VNRs noted the continued importance of economic activity generated by the forest and wood products sector, countries also highlighted the importance of NWFPs, and related value chains, for many community-based enterprises. Some of these enterprises have a strong gender focus. Efforts are also being made to formalize the NWFP sector through permit allocations and collection quotas.[25]

Figure 3. Global extreme poverty, 2018-2024



Source: World Bank (2026), Poverty and Inequality Platform

Several countries emphasized the benefits of agroforestry and gave examples of taungya[26] and other systems for integrating forest and agricultural practices and achieving land restoration.[27]

CHALLENGES

Many countries report that full realization of the economic and social benefits of forests is constrained by weak market access and limited opportunities for value-added processing and commercialization, especially for NWFPs. Other constraints include gaps in business services, inadequate development of standards and marketing problems which result in forest producers and communities remaining at the low-value end of supply chains. In addition, infrastructure and logistics bottlenecks can increase costs and isolate producers from markets.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Data from the World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform[28] indicate that global extreme poverty, defined as US$3 per person per day,[29] declined modestly after an initial spike caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, from 11.4 per cent in 2020 to about 10.3 per cent in 2024 (see Figure 3). Nevertheless, progress remains uneven. Sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to many forest-dependent poor, has seen little change, with extreme poverty still close to 46 per cent. In contrast, several Asian and Latin American countries show partial recovery. Overall poverty in Latin America fell from 5.6 per cent in 2020 to 4.5 per cent by 2024, driven by rural income gains and social transfers. Forest-linked livelihoods contributed marginally to this recovery, with community forestry, agroforestry and PES programmes generating modest, though localized, income gains for participating households.[30] Taken together, these data suggest that while forests continue to buffer rural livelihoods and contribute modestly to poverty reduction, there is no substantial global evidence of a significant post-2020 increase in the contribution of the forest sector to poverty eradication. **GFG target 2.1 is off track and renewed efforts must be made to eradicate poverty for all forest-dependent people.**

TARGET 2.2

Increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Many VNRs highlighted actions being taken to expand access to financial services and affordable credit for small-scale forest enterprises, together with policies aimed at helping this sector by increasing the competitiveness of small producers and enhancing their integration into formal value chains. Examples were provided of subsidies, loans and direct payments to rural smallholders in support of SFM; the promotion of fair and equitable value chains; expansion of access to credit; training in responsible fiscal management; and state support for community forestry initiatives.[31]

In many countries, support for community forestry is linked to direct financial support, with specific measures to help Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Other approaches have included the provision of market-based incentives for state-run afforestation schemes and forest-based ecotourism.[32] A number of donor countries have supported the development of small-scale forest enterprises by financing equitable value chains and market access initiatives, particularly where there is a focus on zero-deforestation value chains.[33]

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CHALLENGES

Constraints facing small-scale forest enterprises include the problem of unpredictable or insufficient finance and gaps in technical and human capacity. Some groups may lack the capacity to absorb available funds effectively. VNRs also highlighted land-tenure insecurity and unresolved rights, noting that this can limit investment, hinder planning and complicate fair benefit sharing. Some countries stressed the need for inclusive decision-making and to integrate Indigenous Peoples, women and youth into benefit-generating activities.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Country reports demonstrate widespread action in seeking to increase access for small-scale forest enterprises to financial services and their integration into value chains and markets. Other valuable initiatives have included the Forest and Farm Facility, which is a partnership between FAO, the International Institute for Environment and Development, IUCN and AgriCord; this provides direct financial support and technical assistance to strengthen forest and farm producer organizations that represent smallholders, rural women's groups, local communities and Indigenous Peoples' institutions.[34]

Despite this progress, there is, however, a continuing need to address the very real challenges identified in the VNRs. **GFG target 2.2 is partially achieved, but further action is required to address challenges of access to markets, finance and skills, as well as insecure tenure.**



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TARGET 2.3

The contribution of forests and trees to food security is significantly increased

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Countries reported diverse measures, including policy reforms, the promotion and marketing of NWFPs, and agroforestry developments aimed at increasing the contribution of forests and trees to food security. Some referred to a growing recognition of the nutritional value of edible NWFPs. There have been policy developments that explicitly recognize the contribution of forests to food security. In addition, there are programmes, many with a strong gender focus, that link SFM to nutrition and resilient food systems.[35]

Many countries support agroforestry programmes and agroecological approaches to food production. The concept of "food forests" is being promoted in some countries. Reference was also made to support for agri-business tree-based ventures within the context of plantation developments and to the use of restoration projects to increase production of tree-based foods.[36]

Countries have also incorporated climate-smart sustainable practices, such as integrated soil management, farm forestry, shelterbelts and tree planting for crop protection, into their agricultural programmes.[37]

CHALLENGES

Challenges include governance issues and policy gaps that ignore the food value of trees and forests; competition for resources with agricultural crops and commodity-driven deforestation; climate change impacts, such as wildfires and drought; tenure insecurity; and the marginalization of local communities and women.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Despite representing only one per cent of global food consumption, forest foods make a significant contribution to dietary diversity and nutrition, especially for rural communities. They also provide an important safety net when agricultural production is affected by economic or environmental shocks.[38] These contributions to food security and nutrition are becoming more widely recognized. Two major policy reviews have confirmed the direct and indirect value of

Figure 4. Forest contributions to food security (direct and indirect)

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	• Water regulation • Crop pollination • Soil erosion control
DIRECT PROVISIONING OF WILD FOODS	• Harvesting of wild fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc. • Hunting for bushmeat (also known as wild meat)
BIOENERGY	• Source of fuelwood and charcoal • 2.4 billion people around the world still rely on fuelwood as their main source of cooking fuel
SOURCE OF INCOME	• Selling wild foods, including bushmeat • Selling fuelwood and/or charcoal
HEALTH	• Safeguard against disease transmission • Help combat micronutrient deficiencies and child stunting

Source: Vasquez and Sunderland (2023)

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forests and trees for food security and nutrition, and recommended further integration of wild foods into the global food security narrative.[39]

Forests and tree-based systems further contribute to food security through the provision of ecosystem services that benefit agricultural production, including through pollination, nutrient cycling, water provision, soil protection and pest control (see Figure 4).[40]

Policy integration has improved and the contribution of forests to food security is increasingly recognized. **GFG target 2.3 is partially achieved, but continued effort is needed to build upon current momentum.**

TARGET 2.4

The contribution of forest industry, other forest-based enterprises and forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development, among other things, is significantly increased

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Many VNRs highlighted the role of forest-based industries and enterprises in supporting employment, improving rural incomes, and driving broader economic development, while others emphasized the value of forest ecosystem services and NWFPs for household livelihoods. Many countries reported significant progress in expanding the output, productivity and value of their forest industries through modernization and diversification programmes, noting their valuable contribution to Gross Domestic Product and associated job creation. Efforts are also being made to facilitate the entry of community-based organizations into new markets.[41]

In some countries, downstream processing for export markets has been encouraged through tax incentives and reduced export duties. The importance of expanding timber production from plantations in order to secure future wood supplies and create rural jobs was also stressed. In addition, some countries emphasized the role of certification and the need to support small and medium enterprises in promoting sustainable timber and non-timber production.[42]

The commercialization of NWFPs through more productive and equitable value chains has led to an increase in revenue, livelihood diversification and gender empowerment. Some countries have generated income from NWFP permits and taxes to provide funding for SFM. Ecotourism can help capture the benefits of ecosystem services and also contribute to livelihood diversification. Many of these initiatives focus on supporting community-based organizations.[43]

CHALLENGES

VNRs referred to problems of coordination between government agencies; weak enforcement in remote areas; outdated policy frameworks that do not reflect current livelihood and market realities; problems with limited data, inventories and valuation systems; difficulties in tracking economic, social and environmental benefits, or valuing ecosystems services provided by forests; and the underdevelopment of frameworks for measuring the size of the informal sector.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

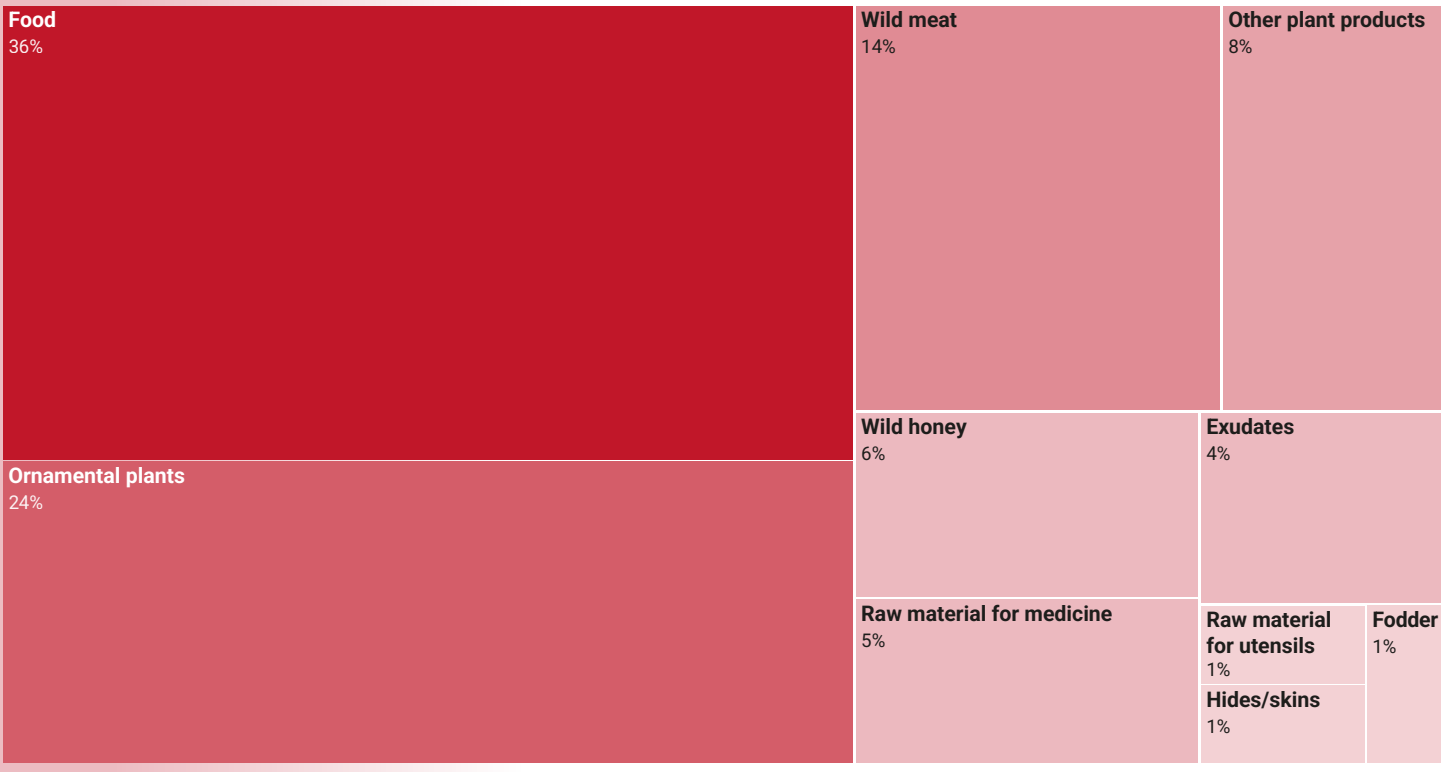
The global forest economy is worth some US$1.5 trillion annually[44] and the formal sector employs around one per cent of the global working population. This employment is a key indicator of the direct benefits derived from forest-related economic activities. FAO and the International Labour Organization estimate that in 2022 the forest sector globally employed at least 42 million people as their main job, with the manufacture of wood and wood products accounting

Table 5. Industrial roundwood and woodfuel removals, by region (2015-2024)

	WOOD REMOVALS (MILLION M³)					
	INDUSTRIAL ROUNDWOOD		WOODFUEL		TOTAL	
REGION	**2015**	**2024**	**2015**	**2024**	**2015**	**2024**
Africa	75	79	679	742	754	821
Asia	401	481	735	683	1 136	1 163
Europe	580	591	168	173	748	764
North and Central America	517	451	136	154	652	605
Oceania	64	64	10	10	74	74
South America	218	290	172	188	389	478
WORLD	**1 853**	**1 956**	**1 900**	**1 949**	**3 754**	**3 905**

Source: FAO (2026). FAOSTAT: Forestry production and trade

Figure 5. Global importance of non-wood forest product categories, by relative economic value, 2020



Source: FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 (Figure 61)

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for about 58 per cent of this total.[45] Despite a marginal rise in absolute numbers, the share of forest-sector employment declined by about 3.1 per cent between 2011 and 2022 because total employment across the economy grew faster than forest-sector employment. Although the forest sector is male dominated, there was an increase in women's representation (see Box 4). Although forests contribute to national economies and a substantial growth in timber production is predicted, the relative economic importance of the formal forest sector is likely to decline as other parts of the economy grow more rapidly.


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A number of VNRs predicted a substantial increase in the demand for wood in coming years. Global wood removals increased by about four per cent between 2015 and 2024, when total wood removals were 3.9 billion cubic metres. While half of this was industrial roundwood, the other was woodfuel (see Table 5).[46] Many communities, in urban and rural areas, rely heavily on woodfuel as a source of energy, although there are significant regional differences. The proportion of wood harvest used as woodfuel ranges from 90 per cent in Africa and 59 per cent in Asia to 39 per cent in South America and less than 25 per cent in Europe, North America and Oceania.

NWFPs are also important for many communities and forest-based enterprises. Despite the limited availability of information about them, especially in the informal sector, NWFPs bring significant economic and social value and benefits to large numbers of people. It is estimated that they are used by nearly three-quarters of the world's population.[47] According to the FRA 2025, the global value of NWFP removals in 2020 was around US$9.4 billion in 2020, with plant-based products contributing nearly 80 per cent of this total. Figure 4 shows the relative economic value of different NWFPs.

Such increases in both timber and NWFP production highlight the importance of forest resources to many communities globally and the need for supportive policies that help create equitable and sustainable value chains. **GFG target 2.4 is partially achieved but further efforts are needed to improve systems for assessing the value of the informal sector and of the ecosystem services provided by forests.**

TARGET 2.5

The contribution of all types of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation is enhanced, taking into account the mandates and ongoing work of relevant conventions and instruments

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Many countries have taken action to expand protected areas and restore degraded lands. Several referred to the role of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) in contributing to the CBD 30x30 commitments (see Box 1), as well as reporting on monitoring linked to biodiversity-related forest strategies.[48]

In relation to climate change, most VNRs focused on afforestation, carbon sequestration and climate resilience measures, while several referred to the integration of forests into national climate policies and strategies. Countries also described large-scale reforestation programmes aimed at enhancing carbon sinks and forest restoration initiatives driven by climate objectives. Reference was also made to forest finance mechanisms such as REDD+ and funding from donor countries.[49]

Countries in arid and semi-arid regions focused their responses on land restoration and erosion control to stabilize soils and reduce desertification, emphasizing that dryland restoration has a strong focus on biodiversity conservation, soil fertility, watershed protection and the provision of woodfuel.[50]

CHALLENGES

There can be difficulties in translating global goals into effective national action; in achieving policy coherence, especially where mandates, including those relating to trade, are not aligned; in securing resources; in addressing power imbalances between stakeholders; in respecting Indigenous Peoples' rights; and in monitoring and reporting.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The majority of VNRs highlighted actions aimed at enhancing the contribution of forests to biodiversity and to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Many of these actions also further progress towards other international commitments, including the CBD, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Nevertheless, continued deforestation affecting all types of forests, and in particular the loss of primary forests, undermines these efforts. **GFG target 2.5 is partially achieved, but there remains an urgent need to halt deforestation of all types of forests, and in particular the loss of primary forests.**

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BOX 1. OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECMs)

OECMs are geographically defined areas, outside formally designated protected areas, that are governed and managed in ways that deliver positive, long-term conservation outcomes for biodiversity. They range from Indigenous and community-managed territories and sacred natural sites to private lands and military zones. The concept gained formal international standing in 2018 when Parties to the CBD adopted a common definition and criteria. OECMs have since become integral to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's Target 3, which aims to conserve at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, coastal, and marine areas by 2030 ("30 by 30"), offering countries a mechanism to include a broader range of managed landscapes when reporting on their conservation commitments. Almost 6,500 sites have now been reported to the World Database on OECMs, covering nearly 200 million ha.[98] However, fewer than 2 per cent of these are under governance by Indigenous Peoples and local communities and over one-third of assessed OECMs show inadequate evidence of conservation outcomes.[99] Standardized assessment methodologies and stronger governance safeguards are widely seen as being essential if OECMs are to fulfil their full potential.

Success stories

KENYA'S INTEGRATED FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Kenya is rolling out a transformative forest restoration programme across eight counties, aiming at establishing 2 million ha of woodlots and rehabilitate degraded landscapes. This initiative is designed to tackle poverty among forest-dependent communities by creating over 1,250 nature-based enterprises and a 45 per cent increase in household income by 2027. The approach will strengthen financial inclusion and market access for small businesses, helping them integrate into sustainable value chains. By promoting agroforestry and diversified tree planting, the programme supports food security and nutrition. Investments in wood processing and enterprise growth will boost economic development and job creation, while large-scale restoration enhances biodiversity and carbon sequestration, contributing to climate resilience. Kenya's approach demonstrates how ecological restoration can be intersected with inclusive economic growth, delivering multiple social, environmental, and economic benefits at scale.

LIBERIA'S COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND VILLAGE SAVINGS & LOAN ASSOCIATIONS

Liberia has advanced a nationwide effort to empower forest-dependent communities through participatory forest governance and inclusive finance. More than 450 villages in priority landscapes have been engaged to shift from vulnerability to sustainable resource management. The programme formalized rights by approving five Community Forest Management Plans covering about 70,000 ha, ensuring long-term access and stewardship. To strengthen livelihoods, Village Savings & Loan Associations were established, enabling households to access credit and invest in small enterprises. These businesses have already generated over US$10,000 (2.2 million Liberian dollars), creating income streams and reducing poverty. By linking community forestry with financial inclusion, enterprise development, and tenure security, Liberia's approach delivers broad social and economic benefits while promoting SFM. It demonstrates how governance reform and local capacity building can drive poverty reduction, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability at scale.

Global Forest Goal 3



Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

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OVERVIEW

GFG 3 seeks to strengthen SFM by expanding the area of protected and sustainably managed forests and by increasing the share of forest products derived from sustainable sources. Progress towards this goal will help in achieving SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and the conservation and biodiversity targets of SDG 15 (Life on Land).

Although many actions have been taken to advance towards this goal, progress is uneven among different regions and forest types. Constraints include financial pressures, institutional capacity and issues of tenure insecurity.

Overall, good progress is being made towards GFG 3, although further effort is required where this progress is uneven.

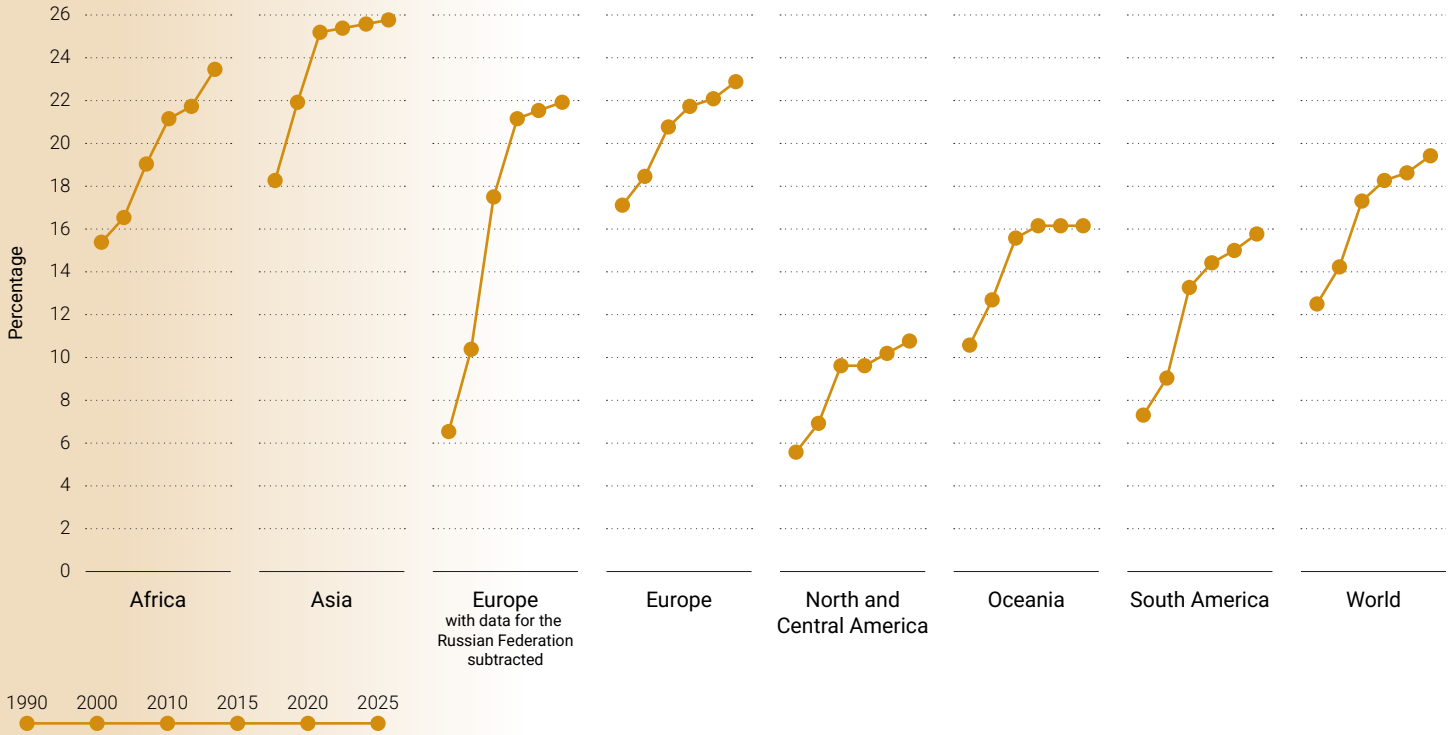


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TARGET 3.1

The area of forests worldwide designated as protected areas or conserved through other effective area-based conservation measures is significantly increased

Figure 6. Proportion of total forest area in protected areas, by region and globally, 1990–2025



Source: FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 (Figure 38)

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Most reporting countries noted an increase in the area of protected forest and a strengthening of conservation efforts, often through new designations or the establishment of national systems and networks. Many highlighted efforts to improve management quality, including reforms to administration, alignment with recognized designations and legislative updates. Community involvement in conservation was a consistent theme, reflected in collaborative action around forest reserves, community conservation programmes, concessions, and co-managed landscapes. Several countries highlighted integrated or landscape-level approaches that link forest protection, biodiversity conservation and improved livelihoods with revenue sharing, land-tenure formalization, and community-led projects.[51]

Some countries reported actions to restore connectivity among protected areas; to strengthen biodiversity corridors; to secure habitats for wildlife, including emblematic or threatened species; to conserve mangrove and coastal systems; and to undertake restoration-oriented projects in protected or other conserved areas. Country reports also described efforts to modernize and expand protected-area frameworks, including through the operationalization

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of OECMs, the endorsement of national OECM systems and the establishment or expansion of national park structures.[52]

CHALLENGES

Efforts to expand and effectively manage protected areas and OECMs remain constrained by limited financing, staffing and operational capacity. Governance challenges include overlaps in institutional mandates, notably within national ministries; addressing conflicts between conservation goals and livelihood needs; and putting in place participatory processes and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Many reports demonstrated progress towards broader, better-connected and more effectively managed protected and conserved areas. It is clear that OECMs are becoming an increasingly important tool for expanding effective conservation beyond formal protected areas.

The FRA 2025 confirmed that the area of forest protected is expanding (see Figure 6), although the rate of expansion fell from an average of 10 million ha per year during the 2000-2015 period to 4 million ha per year during the 2015–2025 period.[53] In addition to the regional differences, there is also uneven representation of different forest ecosystems.[54] **GFG target 3.1 is broadly met, although progress is uneven across regions and forest types.**

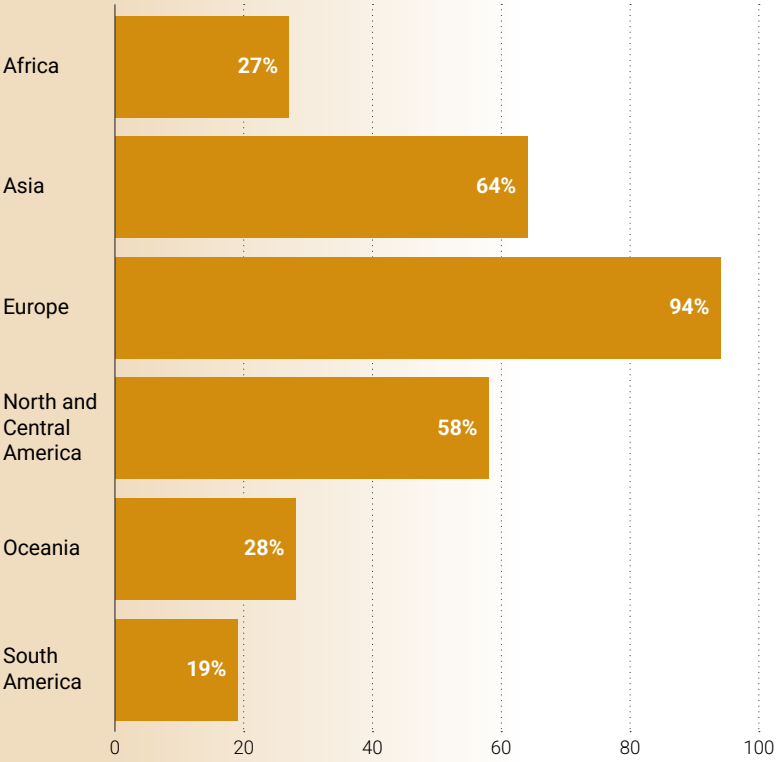
TARGET 3.2

The area of forests under long-term forest management plans is significantly increased

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Several countries reported measurable increases in the forest area under long-term forest management plans. They also described other actions, including institutional and policy reforms, updated planning procedures, tighter regulations, new funding schemes, community-led initiatives and integration with certification systems.

Figure 7. Proportion of forest area with long-term forest management plans, by region, 2025



Source: FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 (Figure 39)

A number of VNRs highlighted legislation that requires the use of forest management plans for harvesting or community forestry programmes. One country noted that the total area under management plans had not increased significantly because existing coverage was already high, although it reported on the strengthened participation of local or Indigenous communities and better incorporation of traditional knowledge into forest planning.[55]

CHALLENGES

While many countries have established planning frameworks, financial shortfalls, administrative burdens and shortages of trained personnel hinder the preparation, effective implementation and updating of management plans. Other problems include weak coordination among institutions, tenure uncertainty and inadequate monitoring and inventory systems.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

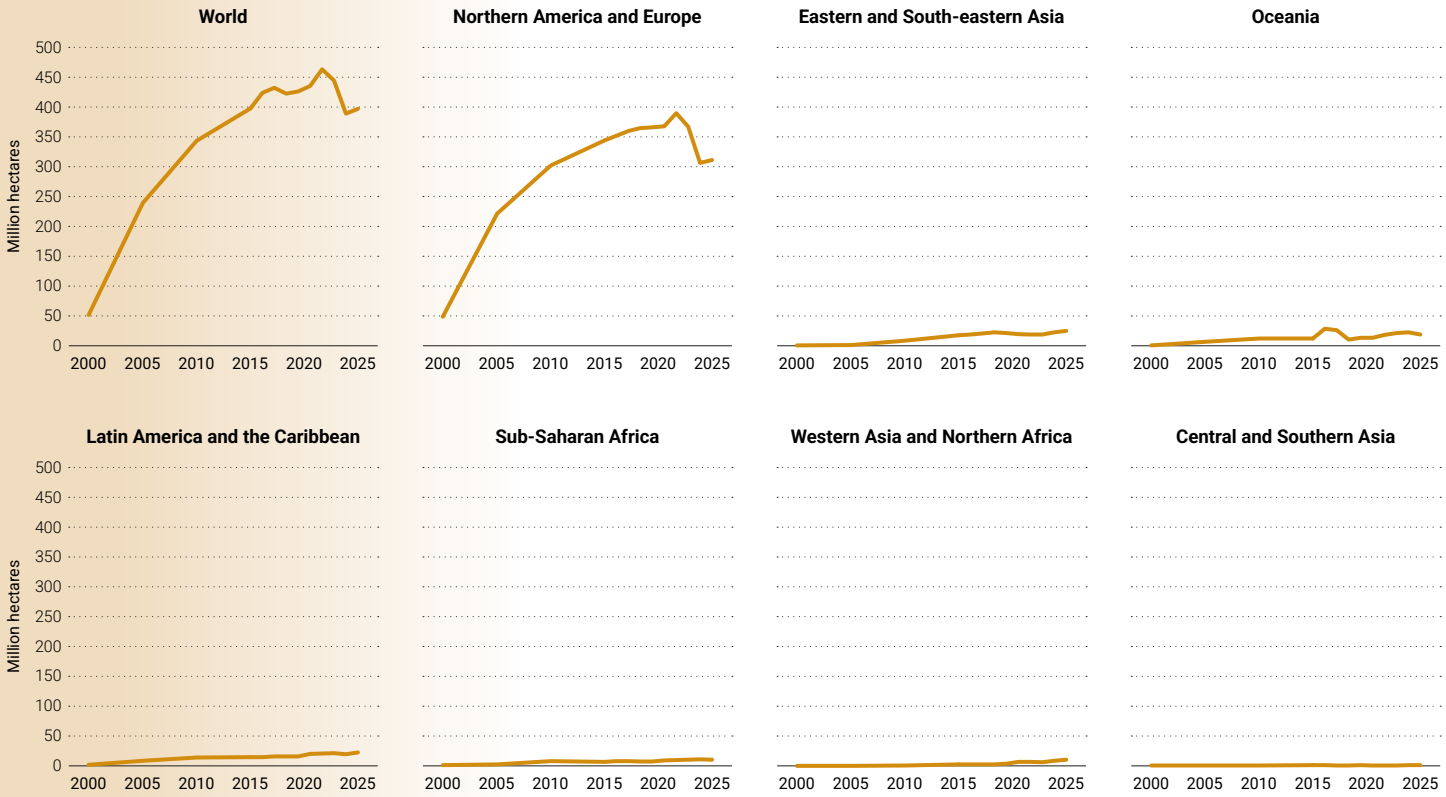
Almost all countries reported measures to strengthen forest management planning systems, with emphasis on institutional reforms, planning frameworks and monitoring improvements. Globally, the FRA 2025 reveals that approximately 2.13 billion ha of forest are now covered by long-term management plans, with an annual increase of about 8.4 million ha per year between 2015 and 2025. There are, however, regional differences, with coverage of over 90 per cent in Europe but coverage of less than 30 per cent in Africa, Oceania and South America. **GFG target 3.2 is broadly met, although with significant regional imbalances.**

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TARGET 3.3

The proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests is significantly increased

Figure 8. Forest area under an independently verified certification scheme, by region



Source: FAO (2026), SDG Indicators Data portal. Indicator 15.2.1.

COUNTRY ACTIONS

About half the VNRs described initiatives to increase the sustainable production of forest products through enhanced oversight of management systems, large-scale inspection of concession areas and certification schemes. Countries reported an increase in the area covered by global certification schemes, and in the use of certification for NWFPs, noting the benefits for improved market access and welcoming efforts to reduce certification costs. Countries also referred to work being undertaken to promote the use of sustainably sourced wood, for example, through building codes and public procurement policies; to improve legality verification and traceability; to offer subsidies for forest enterprises seeking certification; and to address illegal logging.[56]

CHALLENGES

Challenges include the complexity of certification requirements, the high costs of certification and compliance, and gaps in traceability, monitoring and legality verification systems. These can all hinder access to higher value markets. Willingness to make long-term investments in sustainable supply chains can also be undermined by weak or volatile market demand and tenure insecurity.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Much effort has been made to increase the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed sources. Globally, the area of certified forests under the schemes run by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification

(PEFC) has grown to over 397 million ha in 2024, according to the last SDG 15.2.1 report,[57] and the amount of certified wood is increasing in terms of volume, value and market share. Progress, however, remains uneven. Certification and long-term management planning are heavily concentrated in Europe, Asia and North America, while high costs, system complexity and limited implementation capacity can constrain certification uptake in tropical regions, which include some with the largest and most diverse forest resources.[58] It should be noted that the absence of forest certification does not necessarily indicate unsustainable forest management, as sustainable practices may also be implemented through national regulations, or other management practices. GFG target 3.3 is broadly met, although with significant regional imbalances.

Success stories


Udimir Jevtic / Adobe Stock

CHINA EXPANDS PROTECTED AREA SYSTEM

In 2021, China created its first five national parks, totalling 230,000 km^2, including Sanjiangyuan, Giant Panda, Northeast China Tiger and Leopard, Hainan Tropical Rainforest, and Wuyishan National Parks. This was guided by a National Park Spatial Layout Plan, and forms part of a larger effort to establish protected areas of various categories at all levels, now covering approximately 18 per cent of the terrestrial territory of China and 90 per cent of its terrestrial ecosystem types. This was accompanied by integrated ecosystem protection and restoration measures and has resulted in the significant recovery of key wildlife species.

BRAZIL EXPANDS FOREST CONCESSIONS UNDER LONG-TERM PLANS

Between 2020 and 2025, Brazil expanded the area of forest under federal concessions from 1.05 to 1.59 million ha and significantly increased the area of forest under long-term SFM plans. This has produced over 2.15 million cubic metres of timber with guaranteed origin and full traceability and generated more than US$ 41.6 million (BRL 217 million) in revenue. This was coordinated by the Brazilian Forest Service in partnership with the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation and is intended to ensure the rational use of forest resources, biodiversity conservation, maintenance of ecosystem services, and generate socioeconomic benefits for local communities.

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Global Forest Goal 4



Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships

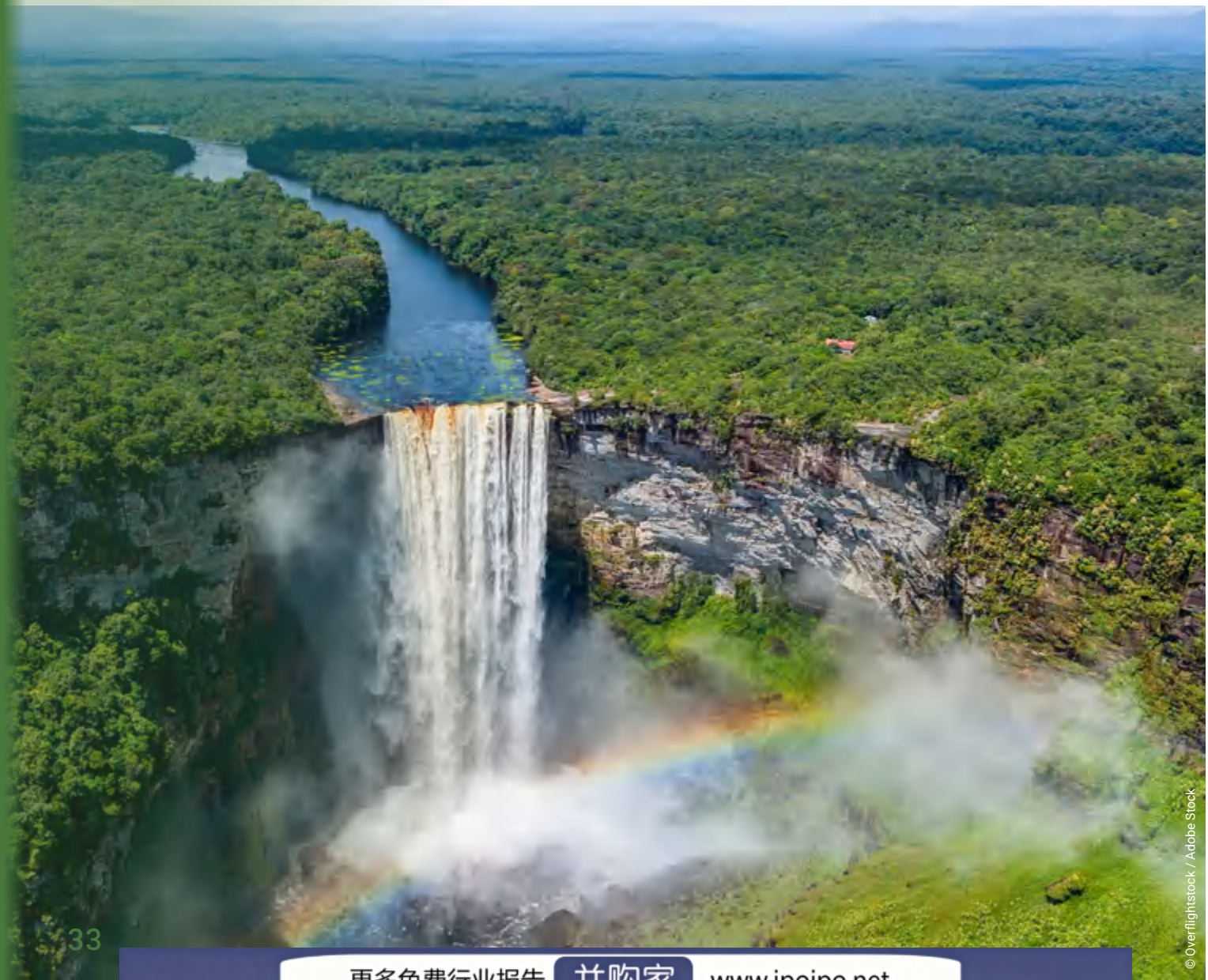
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OVERVIEW

GFG 4 addresses the critical gap between ambition and resources, including stable and predictable finance from domestic budgets, international cooperation, private investment and the potential of innovative mechanisms. It also highlights the need for capacity building, technology transfer, and the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Achieving this goal would unlock the financial and technical means necessary to implement the other GFGs and associated targets. It would also increase the contribution that forests make towards the SDGs.

Countries reported progress across all areas of GFG 4, but achievements are uneven and, although resource mobilization for SFM has increased, financing still falls far short of global needs. Forest finance continues to be dominated by domestic public expenditure although innovative approaches to financing are emerging. International cooperation is widespread but varies in depth and durability. Information systems continue to improve, yet significant capacity gaps persist.

Overall, positive progress is being made towards GFG 4, but the mobilization of financial resources for SFM still falls far short of requirements.



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TARGET 4.1

Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

COUNTRY ACTIONS

A number of developing countries reported steady progress in mobilizing resources for SFM, drawing on climate finance, donor programmes, and domestic incentives. Their VNRs reveal wider use of blended finance, increased alignment with national planning processes and improvements to financial architecture.[59]

Several developed countries noted that their public budget allocations provided funding for strengthening SFM, research and innovation, support for farmers and farm forestry, and efforts to secure deforestation-free sustainable supply chains. These reports also demonstrated a continued willingness to provide official development assistance, with an increasing focus on broader climate and bioeconomy objectives.[60]

CHALLENGES

Constraints that undermine predictable resourcing for SFM include an absence of operational financing strategies, fragmented budget structures, weak institutional capacity for managing funds, difficulties in identifying accredited entities and limited mechanisms for channelling investments. Forest programmes often lose out to sectors that are deemed to be of higher priority. There can also be problems associated with unstable funding, and inconsistent commitments from partners. Uncertainty about future funding hinders long-term planning.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Both developing and developed countries report progress in mobilizing access to a range of financing sources for SFM, but progress remains uneven. UNEP's *State of Finance for Forests 2025* estimates that global finance for SFM of US$84 billion in 2023 remains far below the required level of US$300 billion per year by 2030. Around 90 per cent of current funding comes from domestic government spending with less than 4 per cent coming from official development assistance. There is limited private-sector engagement. Funding for SFM is highest in advanced economies or higher income countries, while the greatest needs occur in low- and lower-middle-income countries with limited public spending. There is growing momentum behind emerging mechanisms and instruments, such as results-based finance and debt for nature swaps, but structural gaps remain and adequate mobilization of resources is still far from being achieved. **GFG target 4.1 is partially achieved, but there is a major gap between current financial resources for SFM and identified needs.**

TARGET 4.2

Forest-related financing from all sources at all levels, including public (national, bilateral, multilateral and triangular), private and philanthropic financing is significantly increased

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Several countries reported a gradual shift towards more predictable and structured financing arrangements, reflecting efforts to reduce reliance on fragmented project cycles and short-term grants. Countries described the establishment or expansion of national environmental funds, ecological compensation systems, multi-year budget allocations, and integrated financing frameworks that support long-term forest programmes and restoration initiatives. Countries also highlighted the growing use of mixed or blended mechanisms that combine public allocations, climate finance and credit at below market rates of interest to support forest-sector reforms and create entry points for private capital. [61]

For smaller economies, partnerships with multilateral and bilateral donors remain essential, with grant-backed initiatives being increasingly used to build steady financing streams for community forestry, local enterprises, and climate-resilience measures. Countries also outlined mechanisms, including green bonds and PES schemes, that complement public budgets and align investment with national forest and climate strategies.[62] Several countries reported on funding for wood product innovation and bioeconomy development.[63]

CHALLENGES

Access to finance is restricted by weak project preparation capacity, limited familiarity with donor requirements, difficulties in complying with eligibility rules and limited availability of national counterparts to manage partnerships. Fragmented financial frameworks can complicate coordinated resource mobilization and deter investors. Private investment remains marginal and is further constrained by perceived risks and inadequate mechanisms for sharing risk. There can also be inadequate capacity for monitoring financial flows and meeting reporting requirements. This makes it harder to build confidence with financing partners and to provide justifications for further funding.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Countries reported building more predictable and structured forest-finance systems, including establishing national funds, PES schemes, multi-year budgets and some blended tools, but diversification beyond public funding remains limited. Private and philanthropic investment is still marginal, and weak project preparation and fragmented financial frameworks slow the evolution of robust, multi-source forest finance. The *State of Finance for Forests 2025* assessment explains that private finance flows to SFM of US$7.5 billion represent only a small proportion of the total funding. Private finance flows to forests were mostly channelled through certified commodity value chains (US$2.9 billion), impact investing (US$1.7 billion) and emerging asset classes such as forest carbon markets (US$1.3 billion). Despite the introduction of tools such as green bonds, blended finance platforms and biodiversity credit pilots, total flows remain below requirements. **GFG target 4.2 is partially achieved, but there remains an urgent need to unlock additional funding from all sources.**

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TARGET 4.3

North-South, South-South, North-North and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation in the forest sector are significantly enhanced and increased

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Nearly all the VNRs cited at least one form of international cooperation. The most commonly reported form was South–South cooperation, especially in Africa and Asia, much of which involved exchanges of knowledge and experience within regions. Meanwhile, North-South cooperation typically focused on financial assistance, technology transfer or technical support flowing from developed to developing countries. About half the countries reported participation in triangular cooperation, where a South-South partnership was supported by a North or multilateral facilitator. North-North cooperation was cited in about a third of the VNRs.

Most reporting countries stated that cooperation included working with another government, with intergovernmental organizations or with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). About half the countries referred to cooperation with the private sector, including public-private partnerships, usually in the context of plantation development, certification schemes, or investment in wood processing. Much cooperation was scientific or technological, or related to innovation. Table 6 provides a summary showing key focus areas for cooperation identified in the VNRs.

The VNRs made frequent references to financial support from multilateral organizations, including CPF member organizations such as FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, highlighting their role as key brokers of both technical and financial support. Many VNRs also highlighted the role of regional platforms, such as the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and the Central African Forestry Commission, reflecting the importance of cooperation anchored in shared ecological and political contexts.

CHALLENGES

Institutional and technical barriers that limit participation in cooperation initiatives and science- or technology-focused partnerships include reporting and fiduciary requirements that put a strain on limited administrative capacity and weak coordination across ministries. Cooperation is also constrained by irregular funding and the absence of effective platforms for collaboration. Public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation remain rare, and are held back by unclear incentives, problems with risk sharing and limited industry engagement.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Although international cooperation is widespread, diversified and reported by most countries, institutional weaknesses, administrative burdens, limited platforms for exchange and infrequent public–private partnerships reveal important shortcomings.

The *Forest Declaration Assessment* report highlights multiple cooperation models driving innovation in forest finance.[64] North-South partnerships include the LEAF (Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance) Coalition, which mobilized US$1 billion in advance purchase agreements for jurisdictional REDD+ credits,[65] and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative platform, which has secured the participation of 33 African nations with 129 million ha of land to be restored.[66] Examples of South-South collaboration include Brazil–Mozambique cooperation on forest restoration and real-time, satellite-based deforestation monitoring.[67] Public-private partnerships are growing around biodiversity credits, such as a new initiative by the International Advisory Panel on Biodiversity

Table 6. Examples of cooperation

COOPERATION THEME	KEY FOCUS AREAS	COUNTRIES REPORTING
Monitoring and data systems	Forest monitoring, inventories, geospatial information systems, remote sensing, deforestation alerts	Brazil, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Côte d'Ivoire
Climate change and forest carbon	Mitigation, adaptation, REDD+ readiness, carbon credits, net-sink strategies	Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Spain, Sweden
Capacity building	Training, technical assistance, institutional strengthening, knowledge exchange	Botswana, Canada, Chad, China, Georgia, Guatemala, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Slovakia, South Africa, Timor-Leste
Forest health	Wildfire control, pest and disease management, early-warning systems	Canada, Georgia, Guatemala, Kenya, Lebanon, Slovakia, South Africa
Governance and policy frameworks	Forest law, policy development, institutional frameworks, national forest programmes	Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Slovakia, Spain, Venezuela
Certification and legality verification	Timber traceability, Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreements, sustainable sourcing, market recognition	Brazil, Guatemala, Indonesia, Liberia
Restoration and rehabilitation	Afforestation, reforestation, landscape restoration, agroforestry	Argentina, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Malawi, Sweden
Biodiversity conservation	Wildlife management, transboundary conservation, big cat alliance, cheetah reintroduction, seed conservation	Botswana, India, Pakistan, Republic of Korea
Socio-economic issues	Livelihoods, NWFPs, charcoal production, biomass energy, rural communities	Malawi, Mozambique, Timor-Leste
Ecosystem services	Valuation, PES and related mechanisms	Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico
Community and Indigenous forestry	Participation, benefit-sharing, community-based forest management, local rights, traditional knowledge systems	Liberia, Malawi, Sweden

Source: Voluntary national reports

Credits and the Sustainable Forest Coalition in Southern Africa.[68] While such partnerships demonstrate progress, regional distribution has not been even. For example, a report from the OECD finds that 62 per cent of private finance for biodiversity was mobilized in upper middle-income countries.[69] **GFG target 4.3 is partially achieved, but there is a need to widen participation in cooperation initiatives and public-private partnerships.**

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TARGET 4.4

The number of countries that have developed and implemented forest financing strategies and have access to financing from all sources is significantly increased

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Most countries confirmed that they had developed or implemented financing strategies to achieve SFM. Some had integrated SFM into broader national financing strategies such as national investment plans or climate-finance frameworks. Meanwhile, three-quarters of the countries stated they had accessed financing for SFM and to implement the *United Nations Forest Instrument*. In general, countries with financing strategies were more likely to have accessed SFM finance, but this was not always the case. Six countries with forest financing strategies had not mobilized funding while six countries without strategies had mobilized funding. Figure 9 indicates that public domestic funding was the most common source of finance for SFM cited in the VNRs.

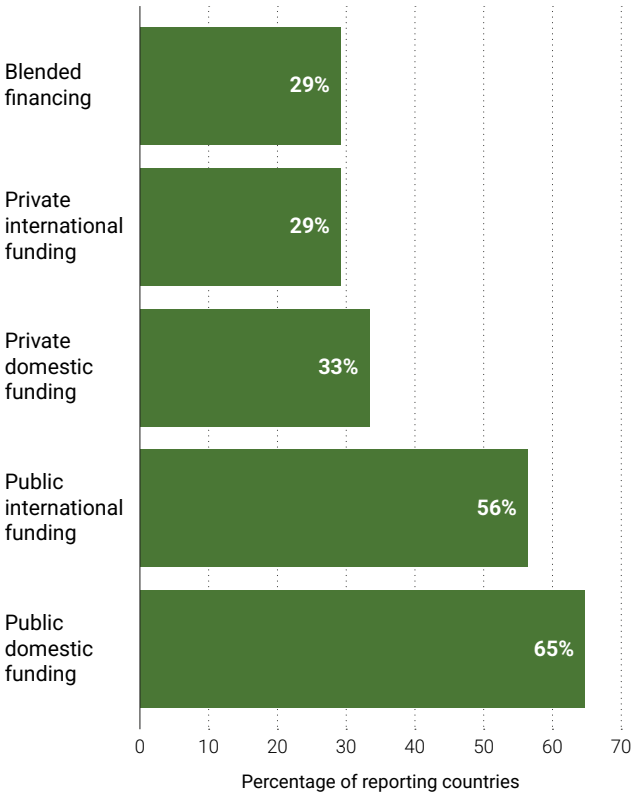
CHALLENGES

Difficulties in developing, implementing and updating forest financing strategies arise from poor coordination, unclear institutional mandates and weak analytical capacity. Even where strategies exist, access to finance may be constrained by problems with meeting eligibility requirements, weak project management capacity and inadequate development of further projects for the pipeline. Slow disbursement of funds also restricts progress. Such challenges prevent countries from establishing predictable, multi-source financing systems capable of supporting their long-term ambitions for SFM.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Most reporting countries have developed financing strategies, and many have accessed SFM funding, but private and blended finance remain limited and some countries with financing strategies still fail to mobilize resources. These disparities suggest that full and equitable access to financing has not yet been achieved. Noting that traditional funding mechanisms alone are insufficient, the *State of Finance for Forests 2025* stresses that financial innovation through government leadership is essential to scaling up finance for SFM, adding that the use of blended finance is critical to mobilizing private sector funding. It notes that instruments such as sovereign green bonds, debt for nature swaps, carbon markets and biodiversity credits can diversify sources of forest financing and refers to emerging initiatives, such as Brazil's Tropical Forest Forever Fund (see Box 3). **GFG target 4.4 is partially achieved, but access to finance remains a serious challenge.**

Figure 9. Sources of finance accessed for sustainable forest management



Source: Voluntary national reports

BOX 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE DESIGN OF FOREST FINANCING STRATEGIES AND PROJECT PROPOSALS

In 2015, the UNFF established the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) to assist countries in mobilizing, accessing and enhancing the effective use of financial resources for SFM. Between 2020 and 2025, the GFFFN supported the design of national forest financing strategies in 21 countries (13 in Africa, five in Latin America and the Caribbean, two in Eastern Europe, and one in Asia Pacific).[100] Since 2020, the GFFFN also provided assistance to 19 countries[101] (11 in Africa, four in Latin America and the Caribbean, two in Eastern Europe and two in Asia Pacific) with the development of project proposals to facilitate the mobilization of financial resources from multilateral funding mechanisms, notably GEF and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). In addition, the GFFFN has provided support to three subregional organizations,[102] through requests from their member countries, in the design of regional forest financing strategies and/or project proposals.

BOX 3. THE TROPICAL FOREST FOREVER FACILITY

The Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), launched by Brazil at the 30th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP30) in 2025, represents one of the most ambitious emerging mechanisms for long-term tropical forest finance. With a target of raising US$125 billion from sovereign wealth funds and institutional investors, the TFFF aims to deliver predictable, multi-decade financing. If fully capitalized, the TFFF could support protection of over 1 billion hectares of tropical forests across more than 70 developing countries. To date the TFFF has secured US$6.7 billion in sponsor capital. The World Bank has agreed to manage the funds as trustee and interim host, while legal and operational mechanisms remain to be finalized. A new Country Access Platform, co-led by UNDP and partners including the World Resources Institute, the World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy and others was launched at COP30 to help eligible countries meet TFFF eligibility criteria.[103]



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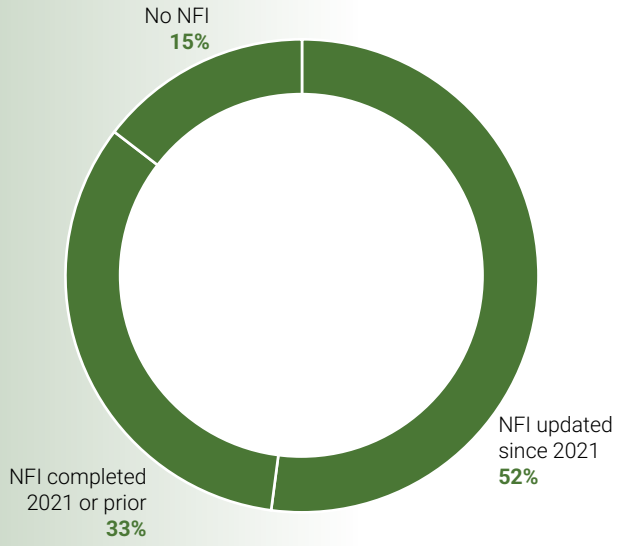
TARGET 4.5

The collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information is improved through, for example, multi-disciplinary scientific assessments

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Most countries reported improvements in the collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information, including through the creation or upgrading of national databases and digital platforms, advances in national monitoring systems and increased use of remote sensing, satellite imagery and geospatial technologies.[70] In addition, many countries strengthened the openness and usability of forest information through improved dissemination tools and more accessible data portals. Most countries reported that they had a National Forest Inventory (NFI) in place, with many indicating new assessments since the *GFG Report 2021* and a smaller number stating that their current NFIs predated that report.[71]

Figure 10. National Forest Inventory (NFI) status



Percentage of reporting countries

Source: Voluntary national reports

CHALLENGES

There are significant challenges related to resource constraints. These include inadequate capability for regular inventories or remote-sensing activities, incomplete or inconsistent datasets and outdated tools as well as staff limitations. The absence of centralized platforms makes it difficult to integrate ecological, social and economic data. Such shortcomings reduce reporting accuracy, weaken evidence for funding requests and restrict participation in collaborative scientific assessments. They also limit transparency and impede effective long-term planning.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Most countries report improvements in forest information systems, including enhanced monitoring, digital platforms, geospatial tools, and increased data accessibility. Nevertheless, many still face challenges, with outdated tools, staffing shortages, inconsistent datasets and incomplete integration. Although widespread, NFIs are still uneven in coverage and frequency. Roughly two-thirds of countries have completed at least one NFI, with regular cycles concentrated in Europe and Latin America and significant gaps persisting in parts of Africa, West Asia, and small island states. Global capacity has improved, yet many countries still depend on external support to update inventories and maintain consistent, nationally owned monitoring systems. The FRA 2025 benefitted from a notable increase in reporting coverage through national forest inventories as compared with FRA 2020. **GFG target 4.5 is broadly met, although further efforts are needed to achieve universal coverage and quality.**

Success stories

BOTSWANA: NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION TO BUILD MONITORING CAPACITY

Botswana received a major upgrade to its forest and land monitoring capacity, generating real-time data on land degradation, with technical support from the UNCCD and the FAO. This represents a transition from slower, manual reporting to continuous environmental monitoring. Real-time capabilities strengthen detection of forest and land-use changes, improve evidence-based planning and enhance accuracy in national reporting. In addition, Japan's International Cooperation Agency has provided support for updating Botswana's Forest Distribution Map, wildfire monitoring system and a National Forest Master Plan to provide strategic guidance for the sustainable management of forests.



AO / Luis Tato

CHILE: RESULTS-BASED FOREST FINANCE FOR SFM

Chile's National Strategy on Climate Change and Vegetation Resources is a public policy instrument designed to meet Chile's commitments to address climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought. It includes results-based forest finance as a core instrument for scaling SFM, allowing the country to receive payments tied to verified emission reductions, creating a predictable revenue stream for restoration, forest protection and community-level interventions. Supported by the GCF, it strengthens long-term funding and embeds measurable performance as the basis for continued resource mobilization.

RIGHTS-BASED FOREST FINANCE

In 2021, governments and philanthropic donors pledged US$1.7 billion at UNFCCC COP26 to strengthen the forest tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, addressing the historic problem that less than one per cent of finance reached those managing forests. By 2024 the target was met early, with funding reaching 112 Indigenous and community organizations, up from 22 at the outset. Donors, coordinated through the Forest Tenure Funders Group, adapted mechanisms to support community tenure security, mapping and territorial governance, embedding rights-based approaches in climate and biodiversity strategies, and influencing policies well beyond its original scope. A 2024 study found that the Group's contributions have been largely responsible for the 36 per cent increase in overall funding for tenure rights and forest guardianship since 2020.[72] At COP30, the Forest Tenure Funders Group announced a renewed US$1.8 billion pledge to support Indigenous Peoples and local communities in securing land rights and protecting forests.[73]

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Global Forest Goal 5



Promote governance frameworks to mplement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations Forest Instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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OVERVIEW

Effective governance is needed to underpin progress towards all GFGs. GFG 5 focuses on promoting governance frameworks to implement SFM and help deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through policy integration, forest law enforcement, cross-sectoral coordination, stakeholder engagement and the integration of forest-related issues into wider decision-making processes.

Many countries reported on updated governance frameworks, stronger enforcement measures and expanded mechanisms for participation. These developments show a clear shift towards more coordinated and inclusive forest governance, but implementation remains inconsistent across sectors and administrative levels.

Overall, positive progress is being made towards GFG 5, but implementation remains uneven across sectors and administrative levels.

TARGET 5.1

The number of countries that have integrated forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies is significantly increased

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Almost all reporting countries stated that forests are now integrated into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies, reflecting alignment between forest policies and broader national development frameworks. About half the VNRs noted that forests had been integrated into both national sustainable development plans and poverty reduction strategies. Countries also referred to the contribution of forests to rural livelihoods, community resilience and climate adaptation in ways that suggest indirect links.

CHALLENGES

Countries frequently noted misalignment between forest policies and national development or poverty reduction strategies. About one third of reporting countries indicated that forests remain peripheral to broader development considerations, with examples being given of agricultural or infrastructure pressures taking precedence over SFM requirements. A number of low- and middle-income countries identified coordination and implementation gaps that limit integration.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

There has been widespread progress in integrating forests into national development frameworks and/or poverty reduction strategies. There is also evidence of better coordination through cross-sectoral committees or other mechanisms to provide links with other sectors, as well as more effective use of integrated planning tools. Nevertheless, challenges persist, with some countries still facing misalignment between forest and development priorities, having limited mechanisms for policy coordination and weak implementation capacity. **GFG target 5.1 is broadly met, although the depth of integration and effectiveness of implementation vary considerably.**

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TARGET 5.2

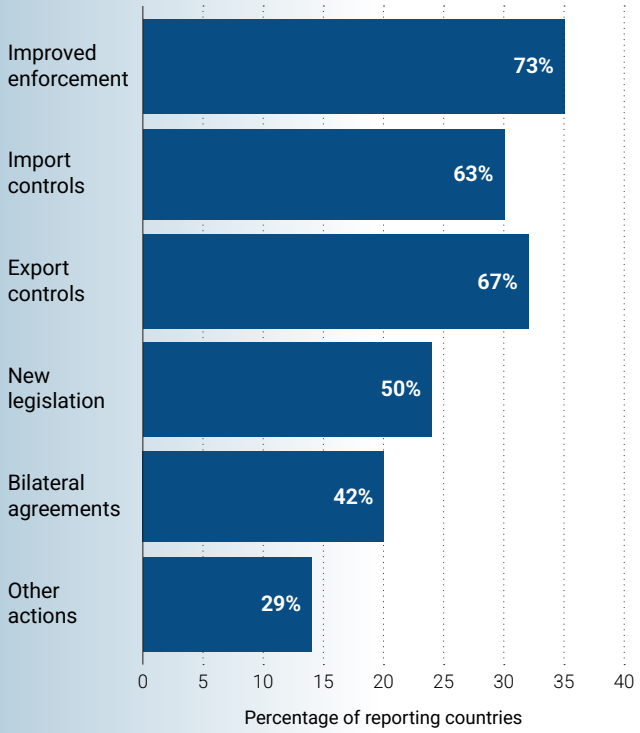
Forest law enforcement and governance are enhanced, including through significantly strengthening national and subnational forest authorities, and illegal logging and associated trade is significantly reduced worldwide

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Many countries reported measures to prevent or reduce trafficking and illicit activities concerning forests (see Figure 11). In addition to those listed, other actions included inter-agency coordination mechanisms, technical tools for species identification, specialized anti-trafficking initiatives and public awareness efforts.

Many countries described measures to strengthen their forest agencies, expand enforcement powers, increase resources for patrols and enhance community involvement in law enforcement. Several reported the use of new technologies such as drones, satellite imagery and electronic permitting for timber-legality systems. Digital enforcement has expanded, with some countries establishing cyber-monitoring units to track online trafficking of wildlife and forest products. Some VNRs highlighted closer cooperation with police and customs services and the formalization of specialized security units for monitoring forest use and transport. Some countries have revised their legal frameworks to clarify mandates, strengthen penalties or decentralize in order to improve the coordination of enforcement responsibilities.[74] Importing countries reaffirmed their commitment to combatting illegal timber trade through updated regulatory frameworks, with EU member states referring to the European Union Deforestation Regulation. In addition, some countries have reinforced the use of Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora regulations to control trade in endangered timber species.

Figure 11. Measures to prevent or reduce trafficking and illicit activities concerning forests



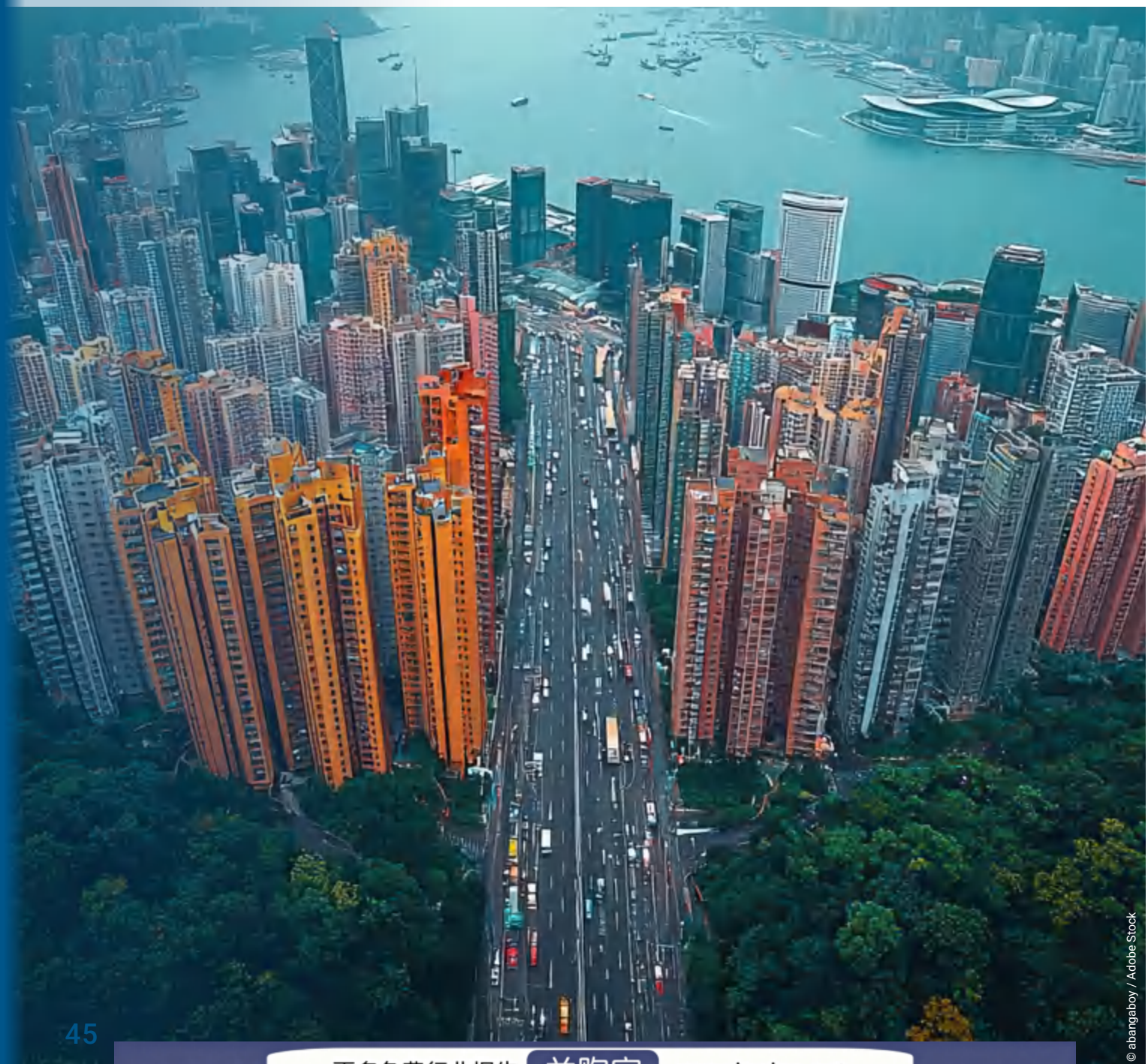
Source: Voluntary national reports

CHALLENGES

About half the VNRs, mostly submitted by low- and middle-income countries, cited limited institutional capacity or weak subnational presence as obstacles to strengthening forest law enforcement and governance. About one third pointed to illegal logging pressures driven by commercial demand, insecure tenure or weak oversight. Countries also noted problems with coordination where responsibilities are split across agencies, outdated laws, inadequate funding and limited monitoring technologies.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Much action has been taken to strengthen forest law enforcement and improve compliance, but the depth and scope of these actions vary widely and illegal logging pressures remain strong. A 2019 World Bank report highlighted problems of weak governance, corruption and underfunded enforcement systems and called for the strengthening of justice institutions, better tracing of financial flows, and increased transparency.[75] The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) estimates that forestry crime accounts for 15 to 30 per cent of the global timber trade, and values it at US$51–152 billion annually. [76] Highlighting the links between the illegal timber trade and cross-border money laundering, corruption, tax evasion, and violence, INTERPOL calls for stronger international cooperation, supply-chain transparency and more use of forensic timber-tracking technologies. **GFG target 5.2 is partially achieved, but pressures from illegal logging and associated trade remain high.**



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TARGET 5.3

National and subnational forest-related policies and programmes are coherent, coordinated and complementary across ministries, departments and authorities, consistent with national laws, and engage relevant stakeholders, local communities and Indigenous Peoples, fully recognizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Action to improve coordination between ministries, subnational governments and agencies responsible for forest and land-use planning has included the alignment of national and subnational planning instruments; clarification of institutional roles; and improved collaboration between forestry, environment, agriculture, land management and enforcement authorities. Several countries highlighted reforms to governance frameworks that formalize mechanisms for joint planning and decision-making, while others created or strengthened inter-agency committees and coordination bodies in order to improve links between national mandates and regional or local implementation.[77]

Many countries reported actions in support of stakeholder engagement, including formal councils, committees, platforms or other structured bodies relevant to forest policy, planning, and implementation. Several countries highlighted the role of civil society organizations or NGOs in advisory bodies, consultation processes or policy dialogues. In addition, countries stressed the need for structured involvement of local or rural communities in policy discussions, consultations and decision-making processes.[78]

Some VNRs made explicit reference to engagement with Indigenous Peoples, First Nations or other rights-holders in policy processes or in dedicated mechanisms for dialogue and consultation.[79] Reference was also made to the importance of upholding constitutional or statutory rights of free, prior and informed consent or prior consultation procedures, the framing of participation in explicit rights-based terms and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

CHALLENGES

Achieving coherent and coordinated forest governance is often constrained by fragmented, and sometimes contradictory, mandates, with about half of respondents reporting difficulty aligning national and subnational programmes with legal requirements. Mechanisms for cross-ministerial coordination and joint planning can be weak. While stakeholder and local engagement is extensive, only a few countries reported formal involvement of Indigenous Peoples or explicitly recognized rights consistent with UNDRIP.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

While countries reported on actions to achieve more integrated governance, fragmented mandates, inconsistent roles across ministries and weak cross-sectoral planning processes continue to impede alignment. Coordination platforms vary in depth and consistency and often lack authority or operational capacity.

FAO's State of the World's Forests 2016 report analysed the national policies of 35 countries, and found that although most countries acknowledge the importance of coordinating land-use policies, just under half explicitly addressed the issue of land-use change in their main policy documents, and only 28 per cent of the policy documents assessed provided

clear evidence of inter-sectoral coordination.[80] A report presented to the 26th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry urged the promotion of greater and inclusive policy coherence between the agriculture and forest sectors.[81]

A report by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Secretariat in 2022 found broad rhetorical endorsement but uneven national implementation of UNDRIP, with only a small number of countries reporting legal or policy reforms aligned with free, prior and informed consent principles.[82] Meanwhile, in 2023, the Rights and Resources Initiative reported a modest post-2020 improvement in tenure recognition and participatory governance.[83] A 2025 UNDP report emphasized that meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women is central to achieving equitable forest governance, but noted that participation often remains procedural, with communities being consulted, but rarely being granted meaningful decision-making authority.[84]

While there has been an expansion of institutional frameworks for policy coordination and stakeholder engagement, challenges remain and UNDRIP-consistent participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities has only been achieved in a few countries.

GFG target 5.3 is partially achieved, but there is a need to improve the effectiveness of cross-sectoral coordination and stakeholder engagement and to extend UNDRIP-consistent participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

BOX 4. FORESTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The forest sector is largely perceived as male-dominated, especially as relates to the production and marketing of high-value forest products. According to the FRA 2025, an estimated 10.6 million women worldwide are employed in the forest sector and related industries, representing about 25 per cent of total forest-sector employment. Still, women play an important, if often invisible and unrecognized role in forest management, and their participation is essential for sustainable forest governance.[104]

Most countries reported actions to promote gender equality in the forest sector. Actions were largely aimed at enhancing women's effective participation and representation in forest management institutions, access to the control and use of forest resources, and their effective participation in decision-making at the household and community levels. Some countries reported specific measures to increase women's employment in the forest sector, including through the adoption of gender action plans or strategies within national forest agencies. Countries also reported education, awareness-raising or capacity-building initiatives targeting women and support to economic empowerment of women through their involvement in forest-based enterprises and income-generating activities.

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TARGET 5.4

Forest-related issues and the forest sector are fully integrated into decision-making processes of land use planning and development

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Nearly all countries reported that forests and forestry issues were, to some degree, being integrated into decision-making processes concerning land-use planning and development. About half the VNRs cited specific examples, including measures to align forest governance with spatial or territorial planning frameworks, to integrate forests into national development or land-use policies, to harmonize sectoral plans across ministries, and to embed forest considerations into zoning, watershed management or rural development programmes.



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CHALLENGES

Barriers to integrating forests into land-use planning include weak coordination between forest authorities and development planning bodies, and competing land pressures that take precedence over forest considerations. In addition, gaps in spatial data and monitoring systems hinder integrated planning, and outdated land-use legislation can restrict the systematic inclusion of forests in development processes.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Nearly all reporting countries indicated that forests are integrated into land-use planning and development decision-making to some degree. While many highlighted specific measures, such as spatial planning frameworks, zoning systems and harmonized sectoral plans, there was also frequent reference to weak inter-agency coordination, with competing land pressures taking precedence over forests in development planning processes. In addition, there were examples of outdated legislation, inadequate monitoring systems and gaps in the availability of spatial data. While most countries have embedded forests into planning frameworks on paper, forests can remain peripheral to land-use decision-making, particularly in the face of intense economic development pressures. **GFG target 5.4 is partially achieved, but forest-related issues can still be subordinate to other land-use interests in the policymaking process.**

BOX 5. FORESTS AND THE SDGs

In 2015, 193 countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs as a shared vision for progress across economic, social and environmental dimensions. Forests and trees have an important role to play in contributing to the achievement of all 17 SDGs and are explicitly mentioned in two, namely SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). SDG 15 focuses on the protection, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable management of forests, combatting desertification, halting and reversing land degradation, and halting biodiversity loss. Under its target 6.6, SDG 6 calls for the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems, including forests.

There is considerable evidence that forests and trees contribute to several other SDGs. This was analysed in FAO's State of the World's Forests 2018, and more recent assessments,[105] as set out in Table 7.

Table 7. Forest contributions across multiple SDGs – key facts and figures

SDG	FOREST CONTRIBUTIONS
SDG 1 – No Poverty	• 1.6 billion people depend on forests for livelihoods • provide up to 22% of household income in developing countries
SDG 2 – Zero Hunger	• provide safety nets in times of crisis • wild foods supply key nutrients • support pollination and soil fertility
SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being	• up to 80% of people in developing countries rely on traditional medicines, half of which originate from tropical forests
SDG 5 – Gender Equality	• gathering of food, fuel, and materials forms a significant component of women's livelihoods in rural areas
SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation	• provide water storage systems that supply an estimated 75% of usable water globally
SDG 8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth	• global forest economy is worth some US$1.5 trillion annually • employ around 1% per cent of the global working population
SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities	• urban forests cool the environment, provide valuable habitats for birds and small animals, and shield against severe weather
SDG 13 – Climate Action	• act as major carbon sinks, absorbing 3.6 Gigatonnes CO2 annually • reduce risks and impact of extreme weather events (floods, droughts, etc.)
SDG 15 – Life on Land	• house 80% of terrestrial biodiversity • prevent land degradation by stabilizing soils, maintaining nutrient cycling and reducing erosion

Source: CIFOR, "Think Forests: Facts and Figures"; FAO, *The State of the World's Forests 2018;* FAO, *The State of the World's Forests 2024*; FAO, *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025*; UN DESA, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025.*

In 2025, the United Nations found that only 35 per cent of SDG targets were on track or making moderate progress, whereas 48 per cent showed insufficient progress, including 18 per cent that had regressed below 2025 baseline levels.[106] Policy and investments that enhance SFM and forest restoration and protection have the potential to enhance forest contributions across multiple SDGs. On the other hand, there is a danger that developments in other sectors, such as agriculture, transport, mining and energy, that may in themselves also represent progress towards achieving SDGs could, perversely, lead to further deforestation and forest degradation. This potential conflict highlights the importance of cross-sectoral coordination and policy coherence.

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Success stories

MEXICO: COMBATING ILLEGAL LOGGING

Mexico has made sustained progress in strengthening forest governance and addressing illegal logging, including new legal tools and improved enforcement, supported by the 2022 creation of the Interinstitutional Group Against Illegal Logging and Deforestation, which coordinates inspections and oversight across national and state agencies. These actions include the development of an early-warning system for deforestation implemented by the National Forestry Commission which provides information to law-enforcement institutions to support efforts to combat illegal logging and deforestation in some critical areas. Governance advances were reinforced by legal amendments that recognize the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples, uphold the principles of free, prior and informed consent, and promote participation and traditional knowledge. Mexico also updated technical criteria for forest management plans across diverse ecosystems. Together, these measures combine enforcement, legal reform and community rights to support more sustainable forest use.

INDONESIA: SOCIAL FORESTRY ACCELERATION TASK FORCES

In 2023, Indonesia strengthened forest governance by adopting an integrated planning framework for accelerating social forestry. The policy aligns national and subnational institutions around targets for the period 2023–2030, including expanding legal access to 7.99 million ha (as of June 2025), forming thousands of Social Forestry Groups and deploying facilitators to support community-based management. These steps promote more coherent policies, better coordination and stronger local participation, backed by Social Forestry Acceleration Task Forces.



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Global Forest Goal 6



Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders

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OVERVIEW

The interaction of forests with other sectors and interlinkages with such issues as climate, biodiversity and livelihoods mean that greater cooperation and coordination are required to develop a coherent approach and realize opportunities for synergies. GFG 6 seeks to achieve this and progress towards this goal will support the achievement of the other GFGs as well as forest-related SDGs.

Countries and international institutions have strengthened coordination mechanisms, formalized stakeholder engagement, and adopted SFM frameworks. These developments reflect growing institutional commitment to coherent forest governance across the United Nations system and beyond, even as fragmentation, capacity gaps, and uneven implementation persist at multiple levels.

Overall, positive progress has been made towards GFG 6, but improved cooperation is needed to overcome persistent fragmentation.

TARGET 6.1

Forest-related programmes within the United Nations system are coherent and complementary and integrate the Global Forest Goals and targets where appropriate

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIONS

In 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General called for scaled-up action to "turn the tide on deforestation". The CPF, which provides the main mechanism for securing a coherent approach to forest-related programmes within the United Nations system, subsequently launched a joint initiative aimed at scaling-up the ambition of global actions aimed at reversing deforestation. Through another of its joint initiatives, CPF members seek to mainstream biodiversity in forestry and help countries understand the role of SFM in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework goals and targets.

Meanwhile, the UN-REDD programme seeks to reduce forest emissions and enhance forest carbon stocks by supporting countries to mobilize finance and advance the implementation of REDD+. The vital role of forests is also recognised within the framework of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. In addition, the General Assembly has invited FAO, UNEP and the UNFFS to facilitate activities relating to the observance of the United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management (2027-2036).[85]

CHALLENGES

Achieving coherence and complementarity across forest-related programmes within the United Nations system is constrained by structural and operational factors. Different bodies have their own mandates and resourcing challenges. While the UNSPF provides a common framework for forest-related action, decisions relating to other sectors, such as climate, biodiversity, agriculture and development, may be taken in other forums and opportunities for much-needed synergies may be lost. Problems can also arise from different approaches to monitoring and evaluation, and different reporting cycles.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Through its work plans, CPF has taken steps to improve coordination and explicitly link its joint initiatives to the GFGs. At their 2025 retreat, CPF members discussed options for more coherent engagement with the Rio

Conventions and the interlinking of forest agendas.[86] While this demonstrates an institutional intent to better integrate the GFGs across United Nations programmes, fragmentation persists. There are many intergovernmental agreements and international organizations that have some relationship with forests[87] but they operate within independent governance and reporting frameworks and do not necessarily reference the GFGs. The UNFF has repeatedly called for strengthened coherence, demonstrating that this remains a work in progress.[88] **GFG target 6.1 is partially achieved, but different mandates and governance frameworks impede progress.**

TARGET 6.2

Forest-related programmes across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are coherent and complementary and together encompass the multiple contributions of forests and the forest sector to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIONS

The CPF is a voluntary inter-agency mechanism and its strategic priorities and current programmes are set out in the *CPF Strategic Vision 2030* and in the regularly updated CPF Work Plans.[89] The CPF conducts regular evaluations to review progress and identify areas where additional efforts were required.[90] A comprehensive assessment of the CPF's work was performed in 2023 as part of the Midterm Review of the International Arrangement on Forests, following which it was invited to participate more actively in the GFFFN.[91]

CHALLENGES

As each CPF member organization operates under its own governance structures, priorities given to the various global commitments may differ. Resource constraints may limit the ability of individual CPF member organizations to participate in particular joint initiatives or other activities. Communication of outcomes from CPF activities can be inconsistent.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

CPF member organizations coordinate programmes and activities through regular meetings, joint initiatives and joint technical inputs within the framework of the *CPF Strategic Vision 2030* and its updated work plans. While there is strong technical collaboration on such issues as climate and biodiversity, there are weaker links with other policy areas such as agriculture, food security, energy and social equity. There is inadequate recognition of the full contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda. **GFG target 6.2 is partially achieved, but there are inadequate links with policy areas other than climate and biodiversity.**

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TARGET 6.3

Cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation and forest degradation are significantly enhanced at all levels

COUNTRY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIONS

Nearly all reporting countries confirmed that they have mechanisms in place for cross-sectoral coordination (see Figure 12). Other country actions to support this target include dedicated multi-ministerial or inter-agency mechanisms to integrate forest policies with other policy areas; legal and policy reforms that embed coordination principles into national frameworks; and partnerships that link government agencies, communities and international organizations. At the international level, countries actively participate in multilateral platforms and regional initiatives to harmonize forest policies and share best practices. Digital innovations such as portals and traceability systems are used to operationalize coordination, streamline processes and enhance transparency.[92]

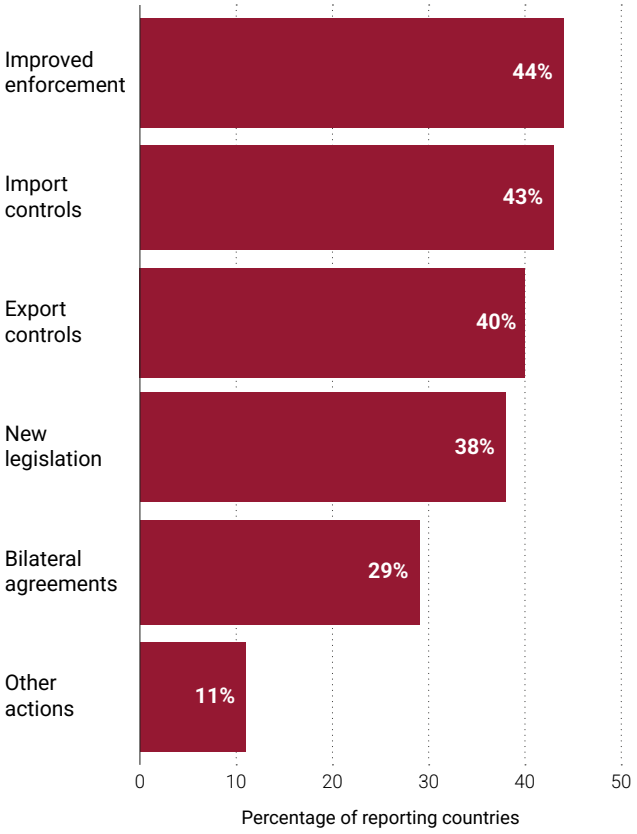
CHALLENGES

There are still examples of gaps in inter-agency coordination, leading to weak cooperation, and resulting in fragmented policies that undermine coherent planning. There can also be problems in making data and monitoring systems interoperable. In addition, there is a need for deeper engagement with the private sector in supply-chain partnerships in order to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Countries have a range of mechanisms in place at different levels to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation. Institutional platforms and governance bodies have been strengthened in ways that help to align forestry with other agendas, including climate and biodiversity.

Figure 12. Sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote SFM



Source: Voluntary national reports

Nevertheless, persistent challenges include fragmented mandates, inter-jurisdictional gaps, limited inter-agency synergies, inadequate financing and the need for deeper engagement with the private sector. **GFG target 6.3 is partially achieved, but more effective coordination and cooperation is needed to address key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.**

TARGET 6.4

A greater common understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management is achieved and an associated set of indicators is identified

COUNTRY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIONS

The UNFF has played a central role in shaping a global understanding of the concept of SFM. The *United Nations Forest Instrument* recognizes SFM as a "dynamic and evolving concept, intended to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental value of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations" and operationalizes it through the seven thematic elements of SFM.[93]

Countries have taken action towards this target by developing national SFM standards and indicator frameworks, some of which are aligned with international criteria and indicators (C&I) processes. Other actions have included work to strengthen forest monitoring and inventories, harmonize reporting, integrate remote sensing and geographic information systems, and improve transparency by using digital platforms and open-data publication.[94] Nearly all countries reported on the use of C&I (see Table 8 and Table 9).

The CPF has developed a Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators (GCS) to help measure progress on SFM and forest-related global commitments. In 2022, an assessment of the uptake of GCS concluded that this could be a useful and flexible tool for reducing reporting burdens, but it found low uptake and stated that further development was needed for the GCS to achieve its full potential.[95]

Table 8. SFM criteria and indicators used by countries

CRITERIA AND INDICATORS	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES
National or subnational	39
Regional or international	27
Other	8

Source: Voluntary national reports

Table 9. Reported purpose of using SFM criteria and indicators

REPORTED PURPOSE OF USING C&I	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES
To monitor and assess forest conditions and management	39
To generate information for national reports on forest conditions and management	38
To review and develop national forest policies and tools for SFM	38
To communicate with society and carry out dialogue with stakeholders	29
To report on forests to regional and international organizations	30

Source: Voluntary national reports

CHALLENGES

Some countries lack nationally codified SFM standards and definitions, which can undermine policy coherence and practical implementation. Where C&I frameworks are weak or underused, monitoring remains fragmented and inconsistent. Institutional silos and overlapping mandates further complicate efforts to develop unified approaches. In addition, financing and capacity gaps can limit the ability to build robust data systems and maintain indicator reporting.

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ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

While much has been achieved in developing C&I frameworks for SFM, these are not always translated into operational tools and some C&I frameworks are underutilized, partly because of data and capacity gaps. Some countries lack codified SFM standards and there can be difficulties in harmonizing definitions across sectors. **GFG target 6.4 is broadly met, although challenges remain in operationalizing C&I frameworks.**

TARGET 6.5

The input and involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and in the work of the Forum, including intersessional work, is strengthened

COUNTRY ACTIONS

Most countries reported activities that support this target, emphasizing the importance of inclusive stakeholder participation to ensure broad engagement in forest governance. Specific actions included the establishment of formal platforms, advisory councils or participatory processes to provide a voice for a broad spectrum of actors, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, the private sector and civil society organizations. The VNRs also revealed an increased use of data systems to improve transparency and to help inform engagement. In addition, countries highlighted the need for capacity building and training in order to strengthen institutional skills and support communities. Gender equality and social inclusion featured prominently in the VNRs, with actions to promote women's participation in decision-making and forest governance, alongside youth engagement.[96]

Of the nine UNFF Major Groups, NGOs, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, and workers and trade unions featured most prominently in VNRs. There were fewer references to small forest landowners and farmers, or to local authorities.

CHALLENGES

There can be under-representation of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and consultations may remain concentrated at the national level. Where there are no structured platforms for participation, opportunities for meaningful engagement in policy formulation are restricted. Language barriers, limited access to information and inadequate communication channels further constrain inclusive participation. Financing and capacity gaps compound these problems, as many stakeholders lack the resources to attend meetings or to contribute effectively to technical processes.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Countries report significant progress towards this target, including the establishment of mechanisms to engage stakeholders and to integrate gender and Indigenous perspectives into policymaking. However, participation is often restricted to consultation, with limited influence over decisions. Inclusivity can be hampered by funding and capacity gaps. While there is growing recognition of the value of inclusive governance, the effectiveness of mechanisms for stakeholder engagement is variable. **GFG target 6.5 is partially achieved, but effective stakeholder engagement requires sustained support and capacity building.**

Success stories

UNITED KINGDOM: CROSS-SECTORAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING A NATIONAL APPROACH TO SFM

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) provides a shared framework for SFM that is adopted by the four governments of the UK. The UKFS is developed and periodically revised through structured engagement with representative organizations from the environmental, economic and social sectors, across the public and private spheres, supported by strong scientific input to ensure a robust evidence base. This collaborative approach ensures that diverse interests are balanced and that the Standard reflects shared priorities for resilient, wellmanaged forests. The UKFS is aligned with internationally agreed criteria and indicators developed through the Forest Europe process, ensuring coherence with wider regional commitments. It also underpins the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), the single audit protocol for voluntary independent certification to FSC and PEFC in the UK. UKWAS is developed and managed by a multi-stakeholder and chamber-balanced partnership.

INDIA: DIGITAL INTER-AGENCY INTEGRATION

India has operationalized three digital platforms at the national level, designed to coordinate among stakeholders and related efforts. The PARIVESH portal is single-window system integrating the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change with State forest departments and other stakeholders for all environmental and forest clearances. The National Transit Pass System ensures seamless movement of forest produce across 33 States and Union Territories, thus ensuring traceability. The Van Agni fire monitoring portal uses satellite sensors to automatically detect wildfire hotspots six times per day, sending alerts to all stakeholders. Together, these three platforms demonstrate how digital integration across agencies and stakeholders can translate cross-sectoral coordination from policy commitment into measurable operational reality.



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Conclusions and recommendations

When the *GFG Report 2021* was published, the world was grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges. Since then, the world has continued to face global challenges including climate-related disasters such as wildfires, floods, and droughts. There have also been geopolitical tensions and an increase in armed conflicts. All this has put a strain on multilateral commitments related to the environment.

Nevertheless, there has been solid progress towards achieving the GFGs and many of their associated targets since the UNSPF was adopted in 2017. Public and private finance for forests reached a record US$84 billion in 2023.[97] While this is far short of the roughly US$300 billion per year estimated to be needed by 2030 to achieve the GFGs, it nevertheless demonstrates continued strong commitment to SFM.

Many countries, often supported by international and regional organizations, have achieved much in their efforts to implement the GFGs. The VNRs reveal a wide range of policy reforms, programmes, projects and initiatives at all levels. This is a testament to the dedication of forest practitioners, communities and policymakers worldwide who have worked hard to secure the sustainable management of forests, despite the many challenges they face.

Vigorous efforts have been made in many countries to protect, restore and expand the area of their forests. These forests are increasingly recognized as contributors to livelihoods, food security, and resilience. SFM is more strongly embedded in climate and biodiversity agendas.

There is broader adoption of community forestry and social programmes, and wider recognition of the valuable role of NWFPs. The proportion of forests located within protected areas has increased, OECMs are more prevalent and the area and proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests has also increased.

Innovative financing mechanisms have emerged. Governance frameworks have strengthened and transparency has been improved. There are signs of better policy coherence, more inter-agency and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels and more effective stakeholder engagement.

Despite this progress, serious challenges remain. There is little prospect of achieving GFG target 1.1 on forest expansion at the global level. Deforestation has not been halted and there is continued forest degradation in several regions. Underlying drivers of these negative trends include pressure to convert forest to other land uses, escalating climate impacts, a lack of resources, and insufficient political will to prioritize the effective protection of forests.

Much needs to be done to deliver the GFGs, and the benefits they bring, in a universal and equitable way by 2030. Areas of concern include the continued poverty among forest-dependent people, failure to recognize rights and insecure tenure, and difficulties in obtaining access to markets and finance, especially for the poor and marginalized. Weak governance should be addressed and renewed efforts made, where necessary, to strengthen institutions that promote and secure SFM, including through enforcement measures. There is a need to do more to improve cross-sectoral cooperation in order to understand and tackle the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Critically, there is also the need to scale up access to finance for SFM.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendations address key priorities for enhanced action by governments, CPF member organizations and regional organizations in order to achieve the GFGs and their targets by 2030:

1. Accelerate progress in reversing deforestation, with a particular focus on reducing the loss of primary forests through improved coordination of agriculture and forest policies and further development of deforestation-free supply chains for agricultural commodities.

2. Take revitalized actions to eradicate poverty for forest-dependent people by improving access to markets, financial resources, and technical skills for small-scale producers, while safeguarding access to land through equitable tenure systems.
3. Identify and mobilize new and innovative sources of finance to close the current gap between financing for sustainable forest management and assessed needs.
4. Strengthen forest law enforcement by enhancing institutional capacity, improving transparency and accountability and combating illegal logging and associated trade.
5. Promote policy coherence across sectors and strengthen coordination among institutions to ensure that forest policies and plans are fully reflected in integrated land-use planning.
6. Invite the CPF to take forward its work on the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators (GCS) and to report to the UNFF on options for making the tier 2 and tier 3 indicators operational.
7. Establish a streamlined process to assess the extent to which the GFGs have been achieved by 2030, to evaluate the contributions of forests to the SDGs, and to identify priorities for action beyond 2030.



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ANNEX 1
Voluntary national reports to UNFF

Monitoring, assessment and reporting are core functions of the UNFF. Through these functions, the Forum reviews progress in implementing the UNSPF, the *United Nations Forest Instrument* and voluntary national contributions, and also supports accountability and informs policy dialogue and decision making at all levels. The VNR reporting cycle for 2019–2020 focused on early implementation of the UNSPF and informed the preparation of *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*.



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This publication relies heavily on the VNRs gathered in the context of the 2024–2026 cycle of voluntary national reporting, which introduced an amended format and online reporting platform. The Advisory Group on Reporting to the UNFF provided guidance on the reporting format and tools, related capacity-building activities, as well as the scope and content of the present report. The following 48 countries submitted voluntary national reports for the 2024–2026 cycle; countries that also submitted VNRs in 2019-2020 reporting cycle are indicated with an asterisk (*):

Algeria*
Argentina*
Australia*
Botswana*
Brazil*
Burundi
Canada*
Chad
Chile
China*
Colombia
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire*
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Georgia
Ghana*
Guatemala
India
Indonesia
Jamaica*
Japan*
Kenya*
Lebanon
Liberia*
Malawi
Malaysia
Mexico*
Mozambique
Namibia
New Zealand*
Niger*
Nigeria*
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines*
Portugal
Republic of Korea*
Saudi Arabia
Slovakia*
South Africa*
South Sudan
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland*
Timor-Leste
Uganda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

ANNEX 2
The Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators, their classification tiers, and links to globally agreed goals and targets

NO.	TITLE	TIER	LINKS TO GLOBAL GOALS AND TARGETS
1	Forest area as a proportion of total land area	1	Measures progress towards GFG 1 and SDG target 15.1 (SDG indicator 15.1.1)
2	Annual forest-area change rate	1	Measures progress towards SDG target 15.2 and UNSPF target 1.1. A sub-indicator of SDG 15.2.1
3	Net greenhouse-gas emissions (source)/ removals (sink) of forests, and carbon balance of harvested wood products	2	Measures progress towards SDG 13 and UNSPF targets 1.2 and 2.5. Relevant to measuring, reporting and verifying requirements under the UNFCCC
4	Proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas	1	Measures progress towards SDG 15.2, UNSPF targets 2.5 and 3.1 and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A sub-indicator of SDG 15.2.1
5	Change in area of primary forests	1	Measures progress towards SDG 15.3, UNSPF target 1.3 and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework
6	Proportion of forest area disturbed	2	Measures progress towards UNSPF target 1.4
7	Area of degraded forest	3	Measures progress towards SDG 15.3 and UNSPF target 1.3. There are linkages with SDG target 15.3, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, UNCCD Strategic Objective 1, and the UNFCCC
8	Aboveground biomass stock in forest	1	Measures progress towards SDG 15.2, UNSPF target 1.2 and 2.5 and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A sub-indicator of SDG 15.2.1
9	Volume of wood removals	1	Measures progress towards UNSPF target 2.4
10	Share of wood-based energy in total final energy consumption	2	Measures progress towards SDG target 7.2 and SDG 15.2

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NO.	TITLE	TIER	LINKS TO GLOBAL GOALS AND TARGETS
11	Forest area with a designated management objective to maintain and enhance its protective functions	1	Measures progress towards UNSPF target 1.4
12	Employment related to the forest sector	2	Measures progress towards UNSPF target 2.4
13	Number of forest-dependent people in extreme poverty	3	Measures progress towards GFG 2 and its target 2.1
14	Contribution of forests to food security and nutrition	3	Measures progress towards GFG 2 and its target 2.3
15	Financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management	3	Measures progress towards GFG 4 and its targets 4.1 and 4.2. There are linkages with SDG targets 15a and 15b
16	Existence of national or subnational policies, strategies, legislation, regulations and institutions which explicitly encourage sustainable forest management	1	Measures progress towards GFG 5
17	Existence of national or subnational forest assessment process	1	Measures progress towards UNSPF target 4.5
18	Existence of national or subnational stakeholder platform for participation in forest policy development	1	Measures progress towards UNSPF target 4.5
19	Proportion of forest area under a long-term forest management plan	1	Measures progress towards SDG 15.2, UNSPF targets 1.3 and 3.2 and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A sub-indicator of SDG 15.2.1
20	Forest area under an independently verified forest management certification scheme	1	Measures progress towards SDG 15.2 and UNSPF targets 1.3 and 3.3. A sub-indicator of SDG 15.2.1
21	Existence of traceability system(s) for wood products	2	Measures progress towards UNSPF targets 3.3 and 5.2

Note: Tier 1 = methodology and data available; tier 2 = methodology in place, data challenges; tier 3 = methodology needs to be determined, data are generally lacking, and data collection poses significant challenges.

Source: FAO and CPF. Status of, and trends in, the global core set of forest-related indicators (Rome, 2022)

ANNEX 3
Progress across the Global Forest Goals and targets

GFG 1. Mixed progress, and accelerated action is needed, particularly to halt deforestation.
Target 1.1 is off track, with continued forest loss, especially of primary forests.
Target 1.2 is broadly met, although carbon stocks remain at risk.
Target 1.3 is partially achieved, with progress in SFM but deforestation not yet halted.
Target 1.4 is partially achieved, with a widening gap between response capacity and climate-related risks.
GFG 2. Mixed progress, with insufficient progress in improving livelihoods.
Target 2.1 is off track, and renewed efforts must be made to eradicate extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people.
Target 2.2 is partially achieved, with persistent constraints related to markets, finance, skills and insecure tenure.
Target 2.3 is partially achieved, with gradual but insufficient progress.
Target 2.4 is partially achieved, with significant gaps in valuing the informal sector and ecosystem services.
Target 2.5 is partially achieved, with continued deforestation, including loss of primary forest, undermining biodiversity and climate contributions.
GFG 3. Good progress, although uneven across regions and forest types.
Target 3.1 is broadly met, although with disparities in protection across regions and ecosystems.
Target 3.2 is broadly met, although with significant regional imbalances in forest management planning.
Target 3.3 is broadly met, although with significant regional imbalances.
GFG 4. Positive progress, but finance for SFM still falls far short of needs.
Target 4.1 is partially achieved, with financing far below required levels.
Target 4.2 is partially achieved, with limited diversification of funding sources.
Target 4.3 is partially achieved, with a need to widen participation in cooperation initiatives and partnerships.
Target 4.4 is partially achieved, with progress in strategies but continued barriers to accessing finance.
Target 4.5 is broadly met, although gaps remain in coverage and data quality.
GFG 5. Positive progress, but implementation remains uneven.

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Target 5.1 is broadly met, although depth of integration and effectiveness of implementation varies.
Target 5.2 is partially achieved, with illegal logging and associated trade still widespread.
Target 5.3 is partially achieved, with weak cross-sectoral coordination and limited stakeholder influence.
Target 5.4 is partially achieved, with forest considerations often secondary in land-use decisions.
GFG 6. Positive progress, but improved cooperation needed to overcome persistent fragmentation.
Target 6.1 is partially achieved, with institutional fragmentation limiting coherence.
Target 6.2 is partially achieved, with weak integration beyond climate and biodiversity sectors.
Target 6.3 is partially achieved, with gaps in cross-sectoral coordination.
Target 6.4 is broadly met, although operationalization remains limited.
Target 6.5 is partially achieved, with stakeholder engagement constrained by inadequate consultation frameworks, capacity and resources.

Endnotes

1 E/RES/2017/4

2 UN DESA. *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021* (New York, 2021).

3 CPF members are the Centre for International Forestry Research–World Agroforestry (CIFOR–ICRAF), CBD, CITES, FAO, GCF, GEF, ITTO, IUCN, IUFRO, UNCCD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFFS, UNFCCC and the World Bank Group. The respective functions of UNFF, UNFFS and the CPF are set out in an Economic and Social Council resolution on the "International arrangement on forests beyond 2015" (E/RES/2015/33).

4 IUCN. *IUCN Policy Statement on Primary Forests including Intact Forest Landscapes*, 98th Meeting of the IUCN Council, 8-11 February 2020, Annex 22 to decision C98/16.

5 Luke Gibson and others, "Primary forests are irreplaceable for sustaining tropical biodiversity", *Nature*, vol. 478, issue 7369 (2011), pp. 378–381.

6 C. Bourgoin and others, "Human degradation of tropical moist forests is greater than previously estimated", *Nature*, vol. 631, issue 8021 (2024), pp, 570-576; Dominick DellaSala and others, "Measuring forest degradation via ecological-integrity indicators at multiple spatial scales", *Biological Conservation*, vol. 302, article 110939 (2025).

7 See https://forests.desa.un.org/our-work/monitoring-assessment-and-reporting/2024-2026.

8 FAO. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025* (Rome, 2025).

9 Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Indonesia, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Timor-Leste.

10 Australia, Brazil, Botswana, Canada, China, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Pakistan, Portugal, Uganda.

11 FAO. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025* (Rome, 2025); FAO. *FRA 2020 Remote Sensing Survey*. *FAO Forestry Paper No. 186* (Rome, 2022).

12 For FRA 2025, 168 countries representing 77 per cent of the global forest area provided data on primary forest cover.

13 Argentina, Botswana, Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden.

14 Piyu Ke and others, "Low latency carbon budget analysis reveals a large decline of the land carbon sink in 2023", *National Science Review*, vol 11, issue 12, nwae367 (2024).

15 Ian Thompson and others, "Forest resilience, biodiversity, and climate change: A synthesis of the biodiversity/resilience/stability relationship in forest ecosystems", *CBD Technical Series No. 43* (Montreal, 2009).

16 Pedro Rodríguez-Veiga, "Loss of tropical moist broadleaf forest has turned Africa's forests from a carbon sink into a source", *Scientific Reports* vol. 15, article 41744 (2025); Hannah Carle and others, "Aboveground biomass in Australian tropical forests now a net carbon source", *Nature* vol.646, issue 8085 (2025).

17 Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Switzerland.

18 Australia, Botswana, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, and Switzerland.

19 Algeria, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Venezuela.

20 Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Peru, Sweden.

21 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *2025 Forest Profile for Europe, North America, Caucasus and Central Asia* (Geneva, 2025).

22 FAO and CPF. *Status of, and trends in, the global core set of forest-related indicators* (Rome, 2022).

23 Algeria, Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Venezuela, UK.

24 Algeria, Brazil, China, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda.

25 Algeria, Australia, Botswana, Canada, Chad, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Sweden, UK.

26 Taungya is a farming system where people grow annual crops between young trees for a few years until the trees mature.

27 Botswana, Burundi, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda.

28 World Bank. Poverty and Inequality Database (2026). Available at: https://pip.worldbank.org/home (accessed on 1 March 2026).

29 The international poverty line was updated in 2025 from a previous threshold of $2.15, based on 2017 purchasing power parities. See https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2025/06/05/june-2025-update-to-global-poverty-lines.

30 Reem Hajjar and others, "Levers for alleviating poverty in forests", *Forest Policy and Economics*, vol 132, (2021).

31 Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Slovakia, Switzerland, Sweden, Uganda.

32 Canada, Costa Rica, Ghana, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, Malaysia, Namibia, Niger, Peru, Slovakia, Timor-Leste, Venezuela.

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33 Australia, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, UK.

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