

Forest Declaration Assessment 2026

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

The 2026 Forest Declaration Assessment, Tracking Progress on 2030 Forest Goals, reported a 15% decline in global deforestation in 2025.

Forest Declaration Assessment 2026

- **Title** - Tracking Progress on 2030 Forest Goals
- **Published by** - Climate Focus and a coalition of research partners.
- Despite this decline, the world remains off track to achieve the goal of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.

Forest Declaration Assessment 2026

Tracking Progress on 2030 Forest Goals

Indicator	Key findings
 Global deforestation (2025)	7 million hectares lost
 Annual decline	15% compared with 2024
 Cumulative shortfall	10.7 million hectares behind the required reduction pathway since 2021
 Forest degradation	3.5 million hectares of tropical moist forests degraded in 2025
 Decline in ecological integrity	65.4 million hectares downgraded in 2024
 Active forest restoration	11.8 million hectares
 Restoration potential covered	Nearly 6% of estimated global reforestation potential
 Commodity-driven deforestation	6.01 million hectares in 2025, against a 2018–2020 baseline of 7.24 million hectares
 Forest climate finance	\$6 billion in 2024, just 0.3% of global climate finance
 Terrestrial protected areas	17.33% of global land and inland waters
 Zero-deforestation corporate commitments	Only 29% of assessed Forest 500 companies had comprehensive commitments

 Conversion factor: 1 million hectares = 10,000 square kilometres.

Regional Trends in Deforestation

Region	Status
 Tropical Latin America and the Caribbean	Deforestation fell to 33% below the 2018–2020 baseline
 Tropical Africa	Deforestation continued to rise ; increasingly off track for 2030
 Tropical Asia	Deforestation remained broadly unchanged
 Temperate regions	Most remain broadly on track
 Boreal North America	Not on track

• Major Factors Contributing to Forest Loss

- **Agriculture** - Expansion of cropland and livestock grazing areas.
- **Commodity production** - Beef, soy, and other commodities that pose risks to

forests.

- **Mining** - Extraction of minerals and other materials.
- **Unsustainable land use** - Conversion of grasslands and natural ecosystems.
- **Weak governance** - Insufficient enforcement of forest laws and insecure community land rights.
- **Insufficient finance** - Limited funding for forest conservation and restoration efforts.

Global Biodiversity Framework and the 30-by-30 Target

- The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) was adopted in 2022 under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Target 3, commonly referred to as the 30-by-30 target, seeks to ensure that by 2030 at least the following objectives are met:
 - 30% of terrestrial and inland water areas are effectively conserved and managed.
 - 30% of marine and coastal areas are effectively conserved and managed.

Current status from the assessment

- Protected areas cover **17.33%** of the world's land and inland waters.
- Considerable expansion and effective management are needed to achieve the terrestrial component of the target.

***Note** - The **30-by-30 target** covers both land and sea. The reported 17.33% figure relates to land and inland waters, **not marine areas**.*

Other key findings

- **Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs)** - IPLCs hold customary rights over **5.5 billion hectares**, but only **1 billion hectares** enjoy clear legal recognition.
- The **Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment** seeks to recognize or strengthen IPLC rights over **160 million hectares**.
- **Corporate Accountability and Forest Conservation** - Only 29% of evaluated Forest 500 companies maintained comprehensive zero-deforestation commitments that addressed all relevant commodities.
- In 2025, fourteen major companies either weakened or withdrew their existing zero-deforestation commitments.
- The adoption of Science Based Targets initiative standards for Forest, Land, and Agriculture (SBTi FLAG) doubled in 2025, with 461 companies participating by June 2026.

Important Organisations and Agreements

Organisation / framework	Relevance
 Climate Focus	 Organisation involved in publishing the Forest Declaration Assessment
 UNFCCC	 Global framework for international climate cooperation
 Paris Agreement	 Climate agreement under which countries submit NDCs
 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	 International framework for biodiversity conservation
 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	 Global biodiversity targets, including 30-by-30
 Forest 500	 Initiative assessing the forest-related commitments of major companies and financial institutions
 Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)	 Framework supporting science-based corporate climate targets
 Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)	 Works on land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities

Reference

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