



# FORESTS DAY UNFCCC COP 23

Bonn, Germany | Sunday, 12 November 2017 | 10.00h - 19.00h



“Forests Day,” the flagship event on forests at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), took place on 12 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany, providing a comprehensive look at recent progress and new commitments on protecting and restoring forests with a focus on advancements by non-Party stakeholders.

Building on initiatives of past UNFCCC COP Presidencies and Champions such as the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, days dedicated to the contribution of forests to climate action have been organized at UNFCCC COPs since COP 20 in 2014. At COP 21 in Paris, Decision 1/CP.21 formally recognized that commitments from all actors - non-Party stakeholders (i.e. business, NGOs, indigenous peoples, etc.) as well as Parties - are urgently needed to achieve both the Paris Agreement goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Global Climate Action Agenda was therefore created to be an interface between action on the ground and the UNFCCC negotiation process and to scale up ambitious climate action by all Parties and non-Party stakeholders in the period 2016-2010.

Forests Day was presided over by **Frances Seymour**, Distinguished Fellow at the World Resources Institute. Setting the scene, Seymour framed the event as a preview to the 2018 “stock take” designated under the Paris Agreement to reflect on collective progress on climate action,

and to commit to enhanced action. Although Global Forest Watch reports global tree cover loss spiked up in 2016, showing a 51% absolute increase compared to the previous year—reason for continued concern and concerted action—Seymour acknowledged the extent to which

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**Cover photos** (in order): *Presenters on the panel “New platforms for action and advocacy on forests: leadership from indigenous peoples and the world’s religions” from left to right: Bianca Jagger, Reverend Fletcher Harper, Juliana Splendore (interpreting) Sônia Guajajara, Coimbra Sirica (interpreting), Benki Piyāko, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim; Presenters on the panel “New Developments in Eliminating Deforestation from Key Supply Chains” from left to right: Fernando Sampaio, Jeff Seabright, Frederick Kugan, Cynthia Ong, Daan Wensing, Dr. Christopher Stewart, Darlington Tuagben, H.E. Vidar Helgesen, Kevin Rabinovitch, Laura Phillips; Moderator Frances Seymour, Distinguished Fellow at the World Resources Institute; Presenters on the panel “Enabling conditions to advance implementation and enhance Nationally Determined Contributions” from left to right: Roberto Espinoza, Charlotte Streck, Mario Boccucci, Juan Chang, Davyth Stewart; Keynote speaker H.E. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Fiji’s Minister for Economy and Climate Change; Presenters at the press conference for Forests Day at COP 23 from left to right: Nick Nuttall, Inger Andersen, Josefina Braña-Varela, Cannondale Drapac cyclist Pierre Rolland; Keynote speaker Mina Setra, Deputy Secretary General of the Indigenous Peoples’ Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN); The audience at Forests Day at COP 23; Presenters on the panel “Setting the Scene | Paris Agreement: Unlocking the potential of forests to achieve a 1.5 degree and climate resilient world” from left to right: Giacomo Grassi, Eva Muller, H.E. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Deborah Lawrence, Bronson Griscom; Closing keynote speaker Saïd Mouline, CEO of the National Agency for the Development of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency; Presenters on the panel “Progress on implementation of climate action in forest protection and restoration”: H.E. Marcelo Mena Carrasco, María Victoria Chiriboga, Inger Andersen, Lee White, Karin Kemper; Keynote speaker H.E. Jochen Flasbarth, German Secretary of State.*

**Forests Day Organizing Team:** *Josefina Braña-Varela (WWF), María García Espinosa (IUCN), Charles McNeill (United Nations Environment), Chris Meyer (EDF), Maryka Paquette (UNDP), Vedis Vik (Government of Norway), with special thanks to Emelin Gasparrini (WWF), Swati Hingorani (IUCN), Dearbhla Keegan (UNDP), and Breanna Lujan (EDF). Special thanks to CLUA and TFA 2020 for sponsoring travel of several Forests Day panelists.*

**Forests Day Report:** *Maryka Paquette*

**Report accessed online here:** [unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/forests-day](https://unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/forests-day)

progress has been made on forests as a climate solution since they were formally integrated into UNFCCC negotiations at COP 13 in Bali in 2007. Ten years ago, national and international REDD+ infrastructure, which provides a financing mechanism for results-based payments, did not yet exist; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had only recently been adopted; forest monitoring technologies, critical tools to understand and address the causes of deforestation, were in early stages of development; initiatives for forest landscape restoration, including Bonn Challenge, had not yet materialized; the wave of powerful forest commitments across stakeholder groups had not yet been made, including corporate deforestation-free and sustainable supply chain commitments as well as the endorsement of the New York Declaration on Forests which catalyzes the powerful, cross-sectoral partnership needed to end loss of natural forests by 2030; and, finally, the world had yet to see the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Paris Agreement and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The presentations and discussions of the day provided context to the rapidly evolving set of activities driving the elimination of tropical deforestation and restoration of forests worldwide.

Powerful keynote statements delivered by leaders in the forests space were unequivocal in stating that tackling deforestation and forest degradation is necessary to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. Throughout the day, it was widely acknowledged that forests are a large part of the current climate problem through emissions from deforestation, but an even larger part of the solution in terms of ending those emissions, and enhancing the safe and natural carbon capture storage function of standing and re-growing forests. Speakers also

recognized that achieving the maximum climate potential of forests is only possible through partnerships and collaboration among state and non-state actors, as well as among forest countries and donor countries. The avoidance of deforestation and degradation has become a primary way in which many countries will meet their obligations under the Paris Agreement as identified in many NDCs, as well as their targets under the SDGs. Furthermore, forests deliver significant benefits to both communities and the environment by building resilience against the impacts of extreme weather events; providing critical ecosystem services such as clean water and air, soil protection; and contributing to healthy and sustainable livelihoods.

**H.E. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum**, Fiji's Minister for Economy and Climate Change, underscored the imperative to seek out innovative nature-based climate solutions and put in place the enabling mechanisms and innovative financing to support their success. Sayed-Khaiyum pointed out that despite the natural value of forests, investing in their conservation, protection and management does not yet offer a comparable financial return that can compete with exploitation and conversion to other land uses. Without well-established markets for forest carbon or the broader benefits forests provide, they have been unable to attract necessary private sector finance. He called on governments to enhance the profile of forests in the NDCs commensurate with their mitigation potential and potential to contribute to the SDGs as well.

In his remarks, **H.E. Jochen Flasbarth**, German Secretary of State, expressed alarm and concern for the as-yet unrestrained rate of deforestation that is claiming an area the size of Switzerland on an annual basis. As a leading donor committed to halting deforestation, Germany along with

Norway and the United Kingdom have committed US \$5 billion between 2016 and 2020 to accelerate the contribution of forests to solving the climate crisis. He outlined Germany's support to forests through initiatives and programs such as the NDC Partnership, the Bonn Challenge, and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative. While progress has been slow, emerging partnerships such as the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF) are catalyzing needed synergies among the range of forest stakeholders, from government, sub-national government, private sector as well as civil society and indigenous peoples. Flasbarth announced Germany's support to set up a new Global Platform and Secretariat for the New York Declaration on Forests to facilitate coordination among the various initiatives and actors working to conserve and restore forests, transform supply chains of major economic sectors impacting forests, and improve forest livelihoods, governance and tenure of forests at a global level. It is the hope of all engaged that this effort will enhance the impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships needed to accelerate action and deliver measurable results

that advance all aspects of the global forest agenda.

**Mina Setra**, Deputy Secretary General of the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) and representative of the Dayak people of Indonesia, spoke to the grim reality indigenous peoples face to maintain their way of life in the forest. Despite mounting evidence that indigenous peoples are making a globally significant contribution to preventing deforestation and mitigating climate change, they continue to be targeted and criminalized for their efforts to protect their lands. According to a 2016 Global Witness report, 200 environmental activists were killed worldwide, half of whom were indigenous leaders. Setra stressed the baseline imperative of governments and businesses to ensure the freedom and safety of indigenous peoples to defend their human rights without threat to their lives—there is no common ground for trust and cooperation without this, and until then no basis upon which partnerships can be built to unlock the mitigation potential of 25% of the world's tropical forests that fall on indigenous peoples' customary territories.

## **SETTING THE SCENE | PARIS AGREEMENT: UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF FORESTS TO ACHIEVE A 1.5 DEGREE AND CLIMATE RESILIENT WORLD**

The first session of the day contextualized the opportunities for forests from the scientific perspective and highlighted cutting edge forest-climate research. Moderated by **H.E. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal**, WWF Global Climate and Energy Lead, former Minister of Environment for Peru and COP 20 President, remarked on the importance and relevance of nature-based solutions such as eliminating deforestation, while protecting standing forests and restoring

degraded forests to address climate change. He emphasized the need to identify clear targets based on science as well as effective monitoring and governance systems to be able to track progress towards global forest goals. Until the explicit inclusion of forests in Article 5 of the Paris Agreement, and in many countries' NDCs, forests have not been considered among the main mitigation options, partly due to limited confidence in estimates and inherent

complexities of the sector. To help unlock the potential of forests to allow us to achieve the Paris goals, the IPCC is preparing a series of reports that will help identify the scale of forest mitigation required, the best mitigation options and synergies with adaptation, and to increase confidence in estimates.

**Giacomo Grassi**, Scientific Officer of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and IPCC author, provided a scientific overview of how forests and the land sector factor into the climate agenda. Within the global carbon budget, forests are a part of both the problem and the solution to climate change. While temperate forests are primarily carbon sinks, tropical forests are dominated by emissions from deforestation. The IPCC's 4th Assessment Report (AR4) argued for forest mitigation strategies focused on minimizing net emissions of the land sector by factoring in the interaction forests have with other land uses as well as energy and material "substitution effects," e.g. burning wood instead of oil, and building houses with wood instead of concrete. The carbon accounting of such substitution activities, typically recorded in the energy sector, need to be linked to carbon accounts from the forests sector. A truly effective mitigation strategy will consider the sum of these activities, while avoiding double counting across sectors. The IPCC AR5 highlighted the potential of forests, through eliminating deforestation, to dominate the land sector mitigation potential. Furthermore, Grassi noted new evidence for a larger magnitude of mitigation potential from forests than previously understood. Eliminating emissions from deforestation and increasing carbon removals by promoting forest restoration could reduce global net emissions by 24-30%, and over the next decade, forests could provide

as much as 50% of the cost-effective mitigation available.

**Deborah Lawrence**, Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia, elaborated on the less recognized carbon mitigation potential of forests and larger role in regulating global climate patterns. While forests hold massive amounts of carbon, they continue to accumulate carbon, which is stored in tree trunks and soil. Carbon uptake by forests is a proven, scalable negative emissions technology. Additionally, forests, especially tropical forests, provide a critical climate service. By mediating flows of water and energy, they control temperature and rainfall, which affects both local and global climate. Tropical deforestation could therefore also result in lower rainfall in the planet's key breadbaskets. The tropical forest belt absorbs and regulates the energy coming in from the sun and uses it to move water from the soil through roots and into the air as water vapor, effectively cooling the air above forests, across the region and beyond. Accompanying warming surface temperatures is the drying of the land, hastening the threats to food security. In sum, in addition to ensuring the carbon mitigation potential of forests are factored accurately into the global carbon budget, their climate stabilizing services need to be considered in national climate strategies.

Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division at FAO, **Eva Muller**, elaborated further on the non-carbon benefits of forests, noting that the success of sustainable forest ecosystems depends on the political and social dimensions that underpin them. To this end, the UNFCCC safeguards for REDD+ require the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in national policy processes, transparency and disclosure of countries' forests

and forest resources, and support of evidence-based decision making. Furthermore, landscape restoration (including forest, cropland, rangeland and other productive sectors) holds great potential to contribute to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. There are many promising approaches and measures being taken to achieve more climate resilient landscapes that will be an integral part of sustainable development. Scaling these up for impact will take political will, improved inter-sectoral collaboration, capacity development, public and private investment and technical support.

**Bronson Griscom**, Director of Forest Carbon Science at The Nature Conservancy, spoke to the potential of “natural climate solutions,” i.e. conservation, restoration and improved land

management actions, to enhance terrestrial carbon sinks in soils and biomass and avoid terrestrial emissions in landscapes across the globe. Griscom presented the results of a newly released study he co-authored by the same name, which identifies 20 concrete activities across forests, agriculture and grasslands, and wetland ecosystems that can maximize the mitigation potential of the land sector as a whole without reducing yields of food or wood, and damaging biodiversity. Collectively, these measures offer 37 percent of the solution for keeping global temperatures to 2 degrees Celsius or below if harnessed before 2020. The study recognizes that economic output may be a barrier to implementation, however forests can provide varied low-cost opportunities that are often significantly more cost effective when compared to technological solutions.

## PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CLIMATE ACTION IN FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

**Inger Andersen**, Director General of IUCN, introduced the second panel providing an overview of the status of forests in the NDCs and SDGs, recognizing the action already underway to fully exploit cost-effective mitigation opportunities forests provide. Countries are demonstrating significant progress through law enforcement efforts, advancing policy and technical arrangements for implementation of REDD+ results-based actions, and strengthening cross-sector and multi-scale coordination and policy implementation. Over 120 countries have included forests in their NDCs, yet a recent IUCN and Climate Focus analysis showed that only 8% have concrete and measurable targets in the forest sector. Many are now committing resources to support action to reduce deforestation and expand restoration, and to

develop and implement innovative plans for forest-based climate adaptation through forest protection and socioeconomic development – to increase the resilience of communities – in particular among vulnerable small island developing states. Despite this progress, enhanced ambition is urgently needed. Andersen remarked, “forests are the tapestry that weave together the SDGs,” demonstrating the opportunity for a ‘triple win’ to eliminate deforestation while boosting agricultural productivity and reducing poverty.

Leading off the discussion, **H.E. Marcelo Mena Carrasco**, Minister of Environment for the Government of Chile, described Chile’s recent approval of a National Strategy for Climate Change and Vegetation Resources, now soliciting

Green Climate Fund (GCF) resources to lay the groundwork for future results-based payments. He also mentioned two new national services coming up for approval, a National Forestry Service and a National Biodiversity Service, which will provide the tools and enforcement of the conservation of forests for carbon capture and ecosystem functioning. The forthcoming National Biodiversity Service will also approve indigenous peoples' reserves to help the administration of the country's national park system. He suggested that continued challenges include providing the carbon tracking evidence needed to prove results and gaps in defining non-carbon benefits, accounting for the health implications of forest fires, and curtailing the growth of invasive species.

**María Victoria Chiriboga**, Under Secretary of Climate Change in the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment, reported on a new national initiative – backed by the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility – to support activities in agriculture and the forest sector to reduce deforestation and, importantly, improve livelihoods, promising a reduction of 15 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the forest sector. Advancing the Warsaw framework to receive results based payments, Ecuador has established a national REDD+ Action Plan working with institutional actors such as the ministries of agriculture and livestock – to avoid increases in agriculture in forested areas, which drives deforestation. As part of this work Ecuador has established a committee of indigenous peoples advising the Ministry of Environment to ensure the plan is implemented effectively according to local priorities and challenges.

**Lee White**, Director of Gabon's National Park Service, described efforts underway in Gabon, a

country boasting 88% forest cover, to halt illegal logging operations and enhance enforcement in the forest sector. Over the past two decades, Gabon has transformed its forest sector from a raw timber export model to only allowing companies to export processed products. A ban on raw timber has resulted in increased national revenue, a doubling of jobs in the forest sector, watershed protection, alternative electricity generation, as well as increased incentives for sustainable management, planning, and monitoring. Recently, investigations of illegal logging operations led to the prosecution of 75 companies, and the seizing 200 million hectares of forestry permits, avoiding over 20 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and US \$150 million in evaded revenue. White argued, once it is understood that healthy lands are an important asset to countries, then it starts making sense to invest in and protect natural capital; and to recognize there are costs to degradation in both the country and the world.

Finally, **Karin Kemper**, Senior Director of Environmental and Natural Resources at the World Bank, spoke to the Bank's support of a "new forest economy" in which it is envisioned that by 2050 there will be a fourfold increase in demand for timber, encouraging markets for sustainable forest management. With increased demand comes an increase in the value of forest products, which will ultimately create jobs and reduce poverty in forest rich areas if the right incentives are in place. Through the Bank's Climate Action Plan and Forest Action Plan, it aims to catalyze the potential of forest climate action through integrated and coherent landscape policies to strengthen synergies between adaptation and mitigation and to enhance the resilience of ecosystems, societies and economies.

## ENABLING CONDITIONS TO ADVANCE IMPLEMENTATION AND ENHANCE NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS

Governance, corruption, limited capacities and scarce funding are challenges in the forest sector requiring leadership from forest countries, as well as enhanced international support to scale up climate action in forests. Moderated by **Mario Bocucci**, Head of the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat, the following panel took a close look at the financial and legal investments needed and underway to achieve global forest protection and restoration goals. Discussions included examples of collaboration with indigenous peoples who are taking action to protect their rights, promote their knowledge, and conserve their forests and lands. The most urgent priority emerging from discussions was the need to mobilize domestic and international finance for developing countries to support rapid implementation of NDCs, as well as national REDD+, low emissions and climate resilient development strategies aligned with the SDGs, Aichi Targets, the New York Declaration on Forests and the Bonn Challenge, among other global commitments and goals, in order to unlock the mitigation and adaptation potential of forest landscapes.

To provide context to the discussion, **Charlotte Streck**, Co-Founder and Director of Climate Focus, presented on the current state of finance for forests as outlined in the 2017 Progress Report on the New York Declaration on Forests Goals 8 and 9 which pertain to finance. The findings showed that the US \$20 billion in finance for forests in countries that are deforestation hotspots accounts for just over one percent of global mitigation-related development funding.

Comparatively, US \$777 billion in finance goes to the land sector as “grey finance,” i.e. finance that influences forests – for example development finance for agriculture or subsidies in key deforestation drivers – but is not aligned with the goals to protect and restore forests to address climate change. To meet the significant climate potential of the forest sector, dramatically increased finance is required not only for rewarding positive actions for reducing emissions from avoided deforestation but also for adaptation and mitigation activities across forest landscapes. At the same time, mainstreaming of zero deforestation targets and sustainable agricultural and forestry practices is needed in international development and climate investment flows as well as in domestic fiscal incentives.

**Juan Chang**, Senior Forest and Land Use Specialist with the Green Climate Fund, remarked on the Green Climate Fund’s role in bolstering support to the forest sector through funding for forests and forging partnerships with forest countries. To achieve this objective, the Green Climate Fund will allocate US \$500 million over 5 years (2017-2022) for results-based payments in the forest sector. Proceeds from payments will be geared towards activities in line with current or future NDCs, REDD+ strategies or low carbon development plans. It is hoped that the private sector will soon come on board as donors to the forest sector, as their bottom lines rely on healthy, productive landscapes. Despite this ambitious start, countries are encouraged to catalyse both private and domestic sources of



funding for implementing REDD+ since international climate funding will be insufficient to meet the need for large scale sectoral transformation.

**Davyth Stewart**, Head of Project Leaf at Interpol, described Project Leaf’s concerns about illegal logging and weak forest governance as they pertain to local, regional and international security and the enforcement of international laws. Specifically, the office works with local law enforcement to share intelligence and enhance investigative power to track violent conflicts between loggers, local communities and law enforcement, cross-border trafficking, as well as the involvement of organized crime and associated government corruption and fraud. Stewart underlined the criticality of law and policy makers to consult with law enforcement at both the international and national levels during the development and implementation of forest protection policies and NDCs. Consideration needs to be given to the conditions faced by law enforcement on the

ground to ensure they have sufficient resources and that the laws being enforced are clear and precise. Brazil, for example, has reaped a six-fold return from lost revenues for every dollar invested in law enforcement in the forest sector.

**Roberto Espinoza**, Technical Adviser of the Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (AIDSEP), spoke to the support and commitment indigenous peoples exert in increasing climate ambition and achieving the targets in NDCs. Espinoza asserted that greater ambition will be achieved through titling, community monitoring, safeguards, supporting Amazon indigenous REDD+ frameworks and community development plans based on local indigenous economies, as well as allowing direct access to funding for indigenous peoples. Addressing NDCs and the Sustainable Development Goals from the “social perspective,” in partnership with the indigenous peoples, can allow states to achieve – and exceed – their targets under the Paris Agreement.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ELIMINATING DEFORESTATION FROM KEY SUPPLY CHAINS

Setting the stage for the next panel, moderator **Jeff Seabright**, Chief Sustainability Officer at Unilever, highlighted the opportunity and challenge to advance progress toward zero deforestation through agricultural commodity production, given that beef, soy, paper and palm oil drive 70% of deforestation globally, with some estimates showing a possible 50% increase in demand by 2050. He emphasized the need for partnerships among multiple stakeholders at multiple levels and scales. Promising partnerships are being forged among companies and developing countries to align markets with good public policy, and their achievements need

to be broadcast widely to support necessary global policy transformation.

Speaking to the case of the “Produce, Conserve, Include” (PCI) initiative in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil, **Fernando Sampaio**, Executive Director of PCI Strategy for Mato Grosso, described the jurisdiction-wide effort to reduce deforestation while increasing agriculture and livestock production. Hosting Brazil’s largest commodity production and leading states in commodity exports, Mato Grosso was a prime location for focused collaboration among state government, private sector and civil society

organizations to develop a landscape approach for “triple win” outcomes. The coalition developed indicators to monitor goals, mapped relevant programs extensively throughout the region, and have begun to mobilize public and private finance to support low carbon systems development, intensification of agriculture and implementation of the Brazilian forest code. Preliminary results show the initiative’s promising contributions to reducing deforestation in the state, and in the country.

Partnering in the Mato Grosso PCI strategy, **Daan Wensing**, Program Director for Global Landscapes & Deforestation Commodities with IDH, spoke to IDH’s role in framing the structure of the PCI since its inception. IDH is a public-private-partnerships facility operating globally to leverage private sector to green inclusive growth. He commented that a key factor is trust-building among parties. Enhancing the role of smallholders and indigenous peoples in these partnerships can bring real benefits in terms of protecting production systems, and supporting market participation and development. Building on its work with Mato Grosso, IDH will explore opportunities to expand the PCI model in other municipalities across Brazil with the highest rates of deforestation.

The province of Sabah, Malaysia is another case in which multi-stakeholder action is achieving real progress towards deforestation free palm oil. **Frederick Kugan**, Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests for the Sabah Forestry Department, introduced the collaboration emerging in the resource-rich tropical forested region responsible for producing 10% of the global palm oil supply. Currently, 59% of the region is forested, with 52% protected in reserves and parks while the rest are going into sustainable forest management and certification. To

decouple increased productivity of oil palm and deforestation, and initiate conservation based economies, the initiative has focused its strategy around smallholders. They see this partnership as necessary to meet their goal of 100% RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) certification by 2025 while building a trusted, zero-conflict brand that supports community livelihoods. The partnership plans to adopt a credible voluntary standard, integrated and grounded into the state policy and legal framework.

**Cynthia Ong**, Executive Director of Forever Sabah, a civil society group participating in the Sabah initiative, attributed the success of the partnership’s collaboration to the focus on inclusive governance and decision-making through major relationship and behavioral change. In 2016, the Sabah Jurisdiction Certification Steering Committee was formed with equal parts government, private sector and civil society to drive the RSPO certification process. Since that time, the initiative has started a statewide mapping of High Conservation Value-High Carbon Stock areas to guide go/no-go areas for palm; begun integration of Free Prior and Informed Consent into Sabah’s legal and institutional landscape; organized smallholders and built support systems and processes to address land legalities, farm management training, and health and safety. Their lessons are currently guiding other jurisdictional certifications across Central Kalimantan.

Importantly, deforestation-free palm oil is being advanced across African forested landscapes. As **Darlington Tuagben**, Managing Director of Forest Development Authority for the Government of Liberia, described, Liberia is initiating sustainable palm oil development

through a concerted effort to adopt best practices of previous palm oil development initiatives from other regions. As a signatory to the Marrakesh Declaration for Sustainable Development of Oil Palm in Africa and working regionally under the auspices of the Africa Palm Oil Initiative, Liberia is also a founding member of TFA 2020. These affiliations have supported the development of Liberia's nine Guiding Principles for Sustainable Oil Palm Development as well as a framework for implementation. Inter-sectoral collaborations such as these have ensured that realistic and achievable policies and practices are developed for sustainable and deforestation-free palm oil production in Liberia.

In the case of Gabon, **Dr. Christopher Stewart**, Head of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability for OLAM, remarked on the company's efforts to support sustainability and certification across key commodities in the country. OLAM has recently entered a joint venture to deliver 50,000 hectares of palm oil plantations to create jobs and build national expertise on agricultural development. The venture will take a landscape approach and target sites least susceptible to disturbance and best suited to meet RSPO certification. They will also be contributing actively to forest protection and monitoring, feeding data back to the government to improve land use planning. The company has entered into social contracts with 92 villages to aid efforts to stem illegal logging and trade of bush meat and to protect species of global importance. The company seeks to develop a new paradigm in social and environmental business through their work in Gabon, and wants to replicate this model elsewhere.

**H.E. Vidar Helgesen**, Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment, spoke to a new

initiative launched in 2017 to leverage public and private agriculture investments for inclusive economic growth and forest protection. The AndGreen.Fund was instituted, with support from the Government of Norway and others, to absorb risks that private finance would be otherwise unable to absorb, starting in jurisdictions with progressive policies. Helgesen underlined the need for innovation in policy and business models; it is good that financing institutions are taking on zero-deforestation commitments but we need more finance for this to be successful, and approaches that protect forests, including support to smallholders. The fund seeks to attract private capital, to combine profit and welfare of smallholders, and elevate standards to qualify for funding. Helgesen invited contributions by donors and collaboration among governments and private sectors to implement forest projects on the ground.

Concluding the panel, representatives from both Mars and Walmart announced new deforestation free policy initiatives focused on partnerships to reduce deforestation from commodity supply chains. **Kevin Rabinovitch**, Global Vice President of Sustainability for Mars Inc., announced Mars' adoption of quantitative greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets in the land sector and new corporate policy to reduce their carbon footprint 27% by 2025 and 67% by 2050 by addressing deforestation throughout their corporate value chain. He remarked on the power of aligning approaches and rethinking the opportunities of collective action to reach zero deforestation—through initiatives such as the Accountability Framework, Consumer Goods Forum, and the Cocoa & Forests Initiative. He also commented on the power of new ideas to drive change, such as building science-based GHG accounting for

land use change (such as deforestation) more strongly into the corporate GHG space, and avoiding land use expansion and engaging in jurisdictional approaches to drive larger impact and reduce transaction costs of very granular supply chain traceability work.

Speaking on behalf of Walmart, **Laura Phillips**, Senior Vice President for Global Sustainability, presented the company's policy—as a leading buyer of commodities globally—to remove deforestation from supply chains. Beginning, but not ending, with Walmart's own private brands, the company is instituting new requirements for mapping data of beef sourced from Brazil to

ensure products are not coming from areas under high threat of forest loss. The company is also engaging in jurisdictional approaches, working with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to help smallholders increase productivity while avoiding expansion onto new lands. Walmart is also working with the Consumer Goods Forum to promote the Soy Moratorium, which has since caused a reduction in soy coming from deforested areas from 30% to 1%, according to the journal *Science*. Additionally, Walmart is working across its supply chains to achieve the objectives of the Cerrado Manifesto to halt deforestation and native vegetation loss in the Cerrado caused by cattle and soy expansion.

## **NEW PLATFORMS FOR ACTION AND ADVOCACY ON FORESTS: LEADERSHIP FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS**

Moderated by **Bianca Jagger**, Founder, President and Chief Executive of the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, the final session highlighted new mechanisms through which indigenous peoples' and forest communities' voices are being amplified in the fight against climate change. Indigenous peoples' territories are increasingly being recognized as areas containing the best protected, healthiest, and highest carbon content forests; meanwhile, 90% of deforestation is occurring outside indigenous peoples' territories. Despite this, indigenous land titling was underscored as the core issue impeding indigenous peoples' ability to deliver on forest protection and climate action. The launch of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' & Local Communities' Traditional Knowledge Platform under the UNFCCC, and progress on the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility are all geared to respond to the urgent call of indigenous peoples to recognize and formalize

indigenous and local community land tenure and use rights.

The session was opened with a powerful, traditional invocation by **Benki Piyãko**, spiritual and political leader of the Ashaninka community of the Amônia River, Brazil, and representative of the Equator Prize 2017 winning community-based initiative. The session was also attended by **Chief Raoni**, distinguished leader and advocate of the Kayapo indigenous people of Brazil.

**Reverend Fletcher Harper**, Executive Director of GreenFaith, remarked on the increase in political engagement among the world's religions, particularly around environmental activism, as demonstrated by the array of religious and interfaith pronouncements on climate in the lead up to the 2015 UN Climate Conference in Paris. He cited the leadership of faith based institutions in fossil fuel divestment as well as

the spiritually symbolic activism by monks in Thailand, who ordain trees to ensure their protection. He introduced the launch of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, which he participated in at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo in June 2016. While previous faith-based efforts focused on issues like climate and water, this initiative is the first coordinated, multi-faith effort specific to the forests agenda. Participants at this gathering committed to engage within their own faith traditions to educate leaders and followers on the importance of protecting tropical forests and defending the rights of indigenous peoples that safeguard them. They also committed to activate their moral influence in the political sphere as a matter of urgency to shift policies and public opinion in favor of rainforest protection.

Also a participant in the launch of this new faith-based initiative, **Sônia Guajajara**, National Coordinator of the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB), saw an acknowledgement for the first time among the religious community of the emotional, spiritual and environmental contribution of indigenous peoples in maintaining the equilibrium of the world. Despite ongoing friction between religious communities and indigenous peoples worldwide, she saw promise in this new alliance to advance respect for indigenous peoples' rights and land rights, and their leadership in forests and climate mitigation and adaptation.

## **RIDE FOR CLIMATE**

The UN-REDD Programme, in collaboration with **<2°** – a climate initiative of the professional cycling team Cannondale-Drapac – and UNFCCC launched the “Ride for Climate” at COP 23, covered by IISD here: <http://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop23/un-redd/12nov.html>

**Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim**, Co-Chair of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change, presented on the progress indigenous peoples are making in defining the Indigenous Peoples' & Local Communities' Traditional Knowledge Platform called for in the Paris Agreement Decision 135. The platform is being designed to reinforce the capacity of indigenous peoples to exchange knowledge to inform better policy at national and international level, and to do so through direct access to finance. She remarked on the progress of indigenous peoples in redefining their role in the UNFCCC process, namely in securing a position for an indigenous representative to co-chair, with a Party representative, a subsection of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) under the UNFCCC. Ibrahim called for indigenous peoples to have a formal and legitimate role in the UNFCCC negotiation process, proclaiming, “we're not negotiating for power or economy; we're negotiating for our survival and for our planet.”

Another platform gaining momentum is the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility, backed by a new US \$20 million pledge from the Government of Norway to help indigenous peoples secure title to their forests and protect their cultural and environmental services to indigenous and forest dependent peoples and to the global community.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Speaking on behalf of the Morocco Climate Champions, **Saïd Mouline, CEO of the National Agency for the Development of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency**, reflected on innovations in the forest space, such as new concerted leadership among the world's regions and subnational governments, and emphasized the need to scale up these efforts. He highlighted the value of the Marrakech Partnership to deliver lessons from the ground to the negotiation space, to inspire action, increase ambition, and strengthen catalytic forest policy and initiatives.

Moderator Frances Seymour concluded the event reflecting on a number of priorities for forest climate action expressed over the course of the day's event, which include the need for: (1) enhanced domestic political will in forest-rich countries, including the will to address issues such as the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights; (2) market transformation prompting the normalization of deforestation free supply chains; and (3) increasing finance for forests commensurate to their climate change mitigation and adaptation potential.

Specific recommendations for governments include: enhancing NDCs to enable cost-effective mitigation opportunities related to forest conservation to be fully exploited, including through law enforcement efforts (which often offer a high return on investment by restoring state revenues previously lost to corruption and theft of state assets), and recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to customary forest territories. Additionally, governments should mobilize domestic and international financial support for the forest agenda in their countries, including by shifting mainstream international investment flows and domestic fiscal incentives such that they avoid supporting deforestation and instead reward forest conservation. The private sector is recommended to accelerate implementation of commitments to deforestation-free commodity supply chains through preferential sourcing from jurisdictions making progress in reducing deforestation. In closing, Seymour remarked, "**Let's all step up our work to raise awareness of the value of the world's forests since after all *forests are less than 10% of the climate problem, and up to 30% of the solution, so why do they receive only one percent of the finance?***"