WWF NEWS
ISSUE 2
2018

WWF FOREST AND CLIMATE

CANOPY

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM WWF'S INTERNATIONAL FOREST AND CLIMATE TEAM

Speaking Fijian in Peru

By Karen Petersen, WWF Forest and Climate

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The urgency of acting on climate change is clear. We know what must be done to slow global temperature rise. Yet endless questions remain with regard to *how* we can turn this knowledge into action and lasting emissions reductions.

This is one of the primary goals of the Talanoa Dialogue, a global conversation designed to spur discussion around how to increase ambition to act on climate change. The Talanoa Dialogue is a year-long process that is formally part of the Paris Agreement. Launched by the Fijian Presidency at COP23, it aims to take stock of efforts to meet global climate goals and is the first step toward increasing global climate ambition. The process is based on the Fijian custom of Talanoa, which seeks to facilitate inclusive and participatory dialogue through sharing stories and experiences.

The Talanoa Dialogue seeks to answer three main questions related to climate change: where are we; where do we want to go; and how do we get there? Anyone from countries to non-state actors like subnational governments, the private sector, and civil society can participate in these regional and local dialogues and can also contribute written responses to these questions.

A critical voice in this conversation is that of Indigenous Peoples. Not only are Indigenous Peoples important stewards of tropical forests, but they are also likely to be among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. For three days at the beginning of October, Indigenous Peoples organizations of the Amazon Basin participated in a Talanoa Dialogue in Lima, Peru. To date, it is the only registered Talanoa Dialogue to focus exclusively on Indigenous Peoples and the actions they are taking against climate change.

Participants were present from OPIAC and AIDESEP, representing Indigenous groups from Colombia and Peru respectively, as well as a representative of COICA, the regional coordinator of Indigenous organizations. With WWF facilitating, participants discussed and shared responses to the Talanoa Dialogue's guiding questions.

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NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM WWF'S GLOBAL FOREST AND CLIMATE TEAM

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Why we are here
WWF Forest and Climate works to ensure that the conservation of tropical forests as carbon stores is secured by green economic development that benefits people, the climate and biodiversity in transformational ways.

www.panda.org/forestclimate

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VIDEOS

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION TO CONSERVE THE AMAZON

The Capacity Building Program on Indigenous Territorial Governance (PFGTI) is a 12-month program, based on the alternation method, with the aim of strengthening community leadership in the complex challenge of governing large territories, often strongly threatened by various social and economic actors.

WATCH: http://bit.ly/2E4JWKE
MIRE: http://**bit.ly/2y8tELe**

EDUCACIÓN INDÍGENA PARA CONSERVAR LA AMAZONIA: TESTIMONIOS DE COLOMBIA

Durante un año, un grupo de líderes y lideresas de los pueblos indígenas Inga, Pasto, Yanacona, Quillasinga, Pijao y Siona, ubicados en Putumayo, en la Amazonía Colombiana, participaron del Programa de Formación en Gobernanza Territorial Indígena (PFGTI).

MIRE: http://bit.ly/2PmHeS2

FOREST AND CLIMATE NEWS

NEPAL'S NEW REDD+ PROGRAM TO PROTECT 2.4 MILLION HECTARES OF FORESTS

WWF-Nepal – A new REDD+ program in Nepal is poised to protect about 2.4 million hectares of forests between 2019-2024 thanks to the approval of Nepal's Emissions Reduction Program Document (ERPD) without conditions at the 18th meeting of the FCPF Carbon Fund last month in Paris.

MORE: http://bit.ly/2FjCa0j

1.5°C IS THE NEW 2°C

WWF Climate & Energy Practice – It's not only scientists warning us that temperatures rising 2°C or more is dangerous, it's also nature.

MORE: http://bit.ly/2QjoOBT

COLOMBIA'S CHIRIBIQUETE NOW WORLD'S LARGEST TROPICAL RAINFOREST NATIONAL PARK!

WWF-Colombia – The announcement marks the culmination of decades of efforts by environmental authorities and an alliance for the conservation of new protected areas in Colombia, supported by WWF.

MORE: http://bit.ly/2JHf1mK

THE CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTION UNDER OUR NOSES

WWF Climate & Energy Practice- Unfortunately, our use and misuse of land accounts for a significant proportion of our total annual greenhouse gas emissions, yet it accounts for a paltry amount of climate funding.

MORE: http://bit.ly/2PHrlDr

WOOD, WATER & MORE: VALUING THE SERVICES FORESTS PROVIDE

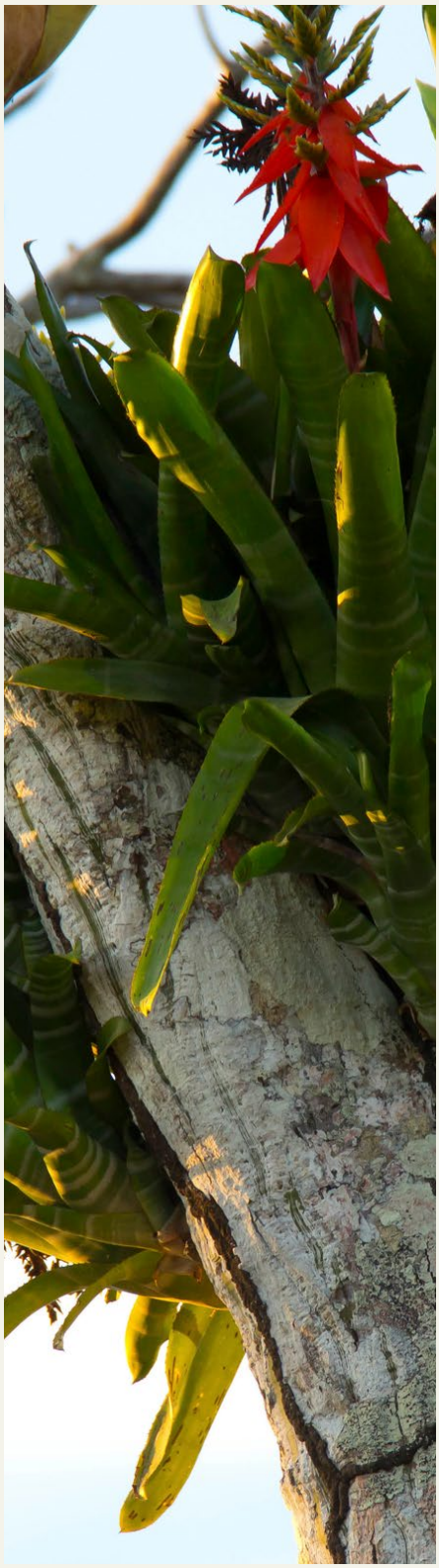
WWF Forest Practice – Building on the experiences of a community-owned forest in Lombok, among others, it's the first global standard for demonstrating that forest management is having a positive impact on ecosystem services.

MORE: http://bit.ly/2FfXGTE

WWF WELCOMES THE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF THE GENDER & ENVIRONMENT GROUP IN THE DRC

WWF-DRC – this group serves as a permanent monitoring framework for all recommendations of the national gender workshops, and is above all a strength advocating for effective mainstreaming of gender concerns in public policies and forest governance in the DRC.

MORE: http://bit.ly/2F7MqZn



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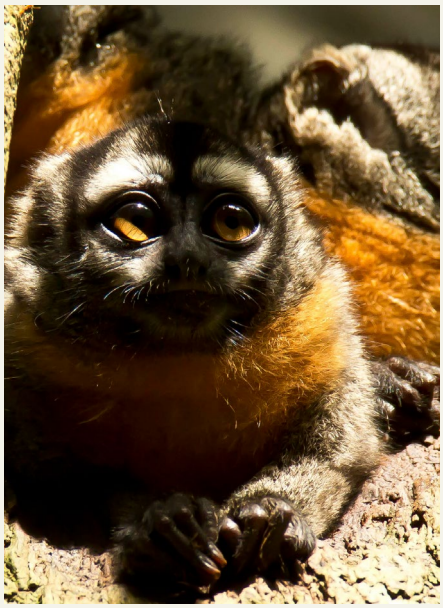
PUBLICATIONS

The community of REDD+ practitioners and experts from around the world grows every day, and WWF's global Forest and Climate team is working to ensure that the capacity-building and informational materials it produces are available to a diverse audience.

GLOBAL WARMING OF 1.5°C

An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.

MORE: http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/



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LIVING PLANET REPORT 2018: AIMING HIGHER

Through multiple indicators including the Living Planet Index (LPI), provided by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), the report shows us the urgent need for a new global deal for nature and people with clear, ambitious goals, targets and metrics, to reverse the devastating trend of biodiversity loss currently impacting the one planet we all call home.

MORE: panda.org/lpr

AIDESEP AND OPIAC JOIN IN THE TALANOA DIALOGUE: AMAZONIAN INDIGENOUS VOICES FOR CLIMATE ACTION

As important participants in the climate and environmental agenda, we are working to ensure the integration of the Indigenous vision into the climate change agenda; secure land tenure and the recognition of Indigenous rights; increase climate finance flows to support Indigenous climate efforts; and end oil, mining, and agricultural exploitation.

MORE: https://unfccc.int/documents/183826

FORESTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF SDG 15 IN DELIVERING THE 2030 AGENDA

This report highlights the importance of forests in achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda, with case studies showcasing how SDG 15 links with other SDGs under review at HLPF 2018 -- SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and protection) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

MORE: http://bit.ly/2OYfJSr

MISSING PATHWAYS TO 1.5°C: THE ROLE OF THE LAND SECTOR IN AMBITIOUS CLIMATE ACTION

Emphasizing climate solutions that put the needs of people and planet first, especially the role that forests and improved agricultural practices can play, this report proposes a series of tactical approaches and quantified carbon sequestration goals to address the intertwined crises of climate change and global biodiversity loss.

MORE: https://www.climatelandambition-rightsalliance.org/report

REDD+ CAPACITY BUILDING

WWF Forest and Climate learning sessions are free and are designed to leverage and share REDD+ knowledge and expertise. We invite experts to present on a key issue so that REDD+ practitioners can have access to the latest information relevant to REDD+.

To watch an archived learning lesson or to register for an upcoming webinar, please visit: **bit.ly/ForestClimateVideo.**

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR RESTORING TROPICAL FOREST LANDSCAPES

Dr. Eva Garen, ELTI Director, and Gillian Bloomfield, ELTI Online Training Coordinator, will share strategies and experiences of ELTI, a capacity development program of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (Yale F&ES).

WATCH: http://bit.ly/2Lkeu9u

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SOWING NEW GROUND FOR FORESTS AT THE GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

By Emelin Gasparrini, WWF Forest and Climate

For people who work in the REDD+ and forest and climate space, the importance of forests in climate mitigation and adaptation is a familiar truism. But venture into the wider climate community and that vital contribution is less widely known. Indeed, some claim that forests garner less than 1% of the overall climate conversation.

It was with this obstacle in mind that a coalition of over 100 NGOs, businesses, state and local governments, Indigenous groups and local communities, led by WWF, issued the 30X30 Forests, Food and Land Challenge, one of the five official challenges of the Global Climate Action Summit this September in San Francisco. The 30X30 coalition called on businesses, states, city and local governments, and global citizens to take action for better forest and habitat conservation, food production and consumption, and land use, working together across all sectors of the economy to deliver up to 30% of the climate solutions needed by 2030.

After months of coordination and organizing, the crucial role forests – and food and land – play in climate action was on full display all week, from the debut of the walking trees and *#TheForgottenSolution* at the Rise for Climate, Jobs & Justice March to the main stage of the Summit.

© LOU LEONARD

This elevation was important, not only to increase general knowledge about the importance of forests in the general climate sector but also to achieve one of the goals of the summit – to highlight non-state action and inspire national governments to step up their ambition in the face of dangerous climate change.

Non-state actors were keen to answer the call. 17 announcements were made under the umbrella of 30x30 from the main stage of the Summit, representing the diverse nature of climate action in forests. Walmart and Unilever made connected commitments to advancing jurisdictional approaches to transparent and deforestation-free supply chains. The Governors' Climate and Forest Task Force announced a new set of principles for subnational governments working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The Pulitzer Center launched the Rainforest Journalism Fund, which will be "focused on raising public awareness of the urgent environmental issues facing the world's tropical forests." 45 cities around the world launched the Cities4Forests initiative.

Though the Summit was focused on non-state action, one example of a coordinated effort by state and non-state actors took the stage at Forests, Food and Land Day: Meeting the 30X30 Challenge. Organized by WWF and several other 30X30 coalition members and nimbly emceed by WRI Distinguished Senior Fellow Frances Seymour, the event packed a full program of speakers, panels, and performances into the Herbst Theater.

On stage, the Government of Peru, along with the Global Environment Facility, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and WWF introduced their efforts to secure large scale, long-term climate investments for forest conservation in the Peruvian Amazon. This program, known as *Patrimonio del Peru*, will result in improved management of 16.7m ha in 38 protected areas in the Peruvian Amazon by 2028, safeguarding 23% of Peru's total Amazon carbon stock (6.7b tons of CO2eq), and sequestering more than 40m tons CO2e annually. The improved management includes activities to increase participation in management by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and 10 of the Protected Areas are Communal Reserves, which are areas designated for the conservation of flora and fauna specifically for the benefit of Indigenous communities.

While many aspects of protected areas often fall under the purview of national governments, Hon. Fabiola Muñoz Dodero, Peru's Minister of Environment, explained the motivation for collaborating with non-state actors to realize this program. "Working with partners is an opportunity for us to identify new options, it's the best way to move forward and show what's possible."

The realm of the possible has taken on new urgency since the closing of the Summit. The release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on global warming 1.5°C and the conclusions it draws have been more widely covered than any report on climate science in recent memory. Climate action has a new deadline.

Speaking from the stage at the Herbst Theater about *Patrimonio del Peru*, WWF-US CEO Carter Roberts also described our collective path forward. "What I've learned through this work is that every country is different, every version is different, but every case relies on leadership and partnership."

The Global Climate Action Summit highlighted the leadership of non-state actors like Indigenous Peoples, businesses, cities, and civil society to mitigate and adapt to climate change by improving the way they use and manage forests and land. Now, countries will have the opportunity to step up to meet them at COP24.

"National governments can arrive in Poland with the wind at their backs, giving them the courage to commit to even greater emissions reductions that move us closer to a 1.5-degree future," said Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, leader of WWF's Global Climate and Energy Practice.

To meet those commitments and achieve a 1.5°C world, we'll need everyone – national governments, the private sector, farmers, Indigenous Peoples, cities and states – working together to enact ambitious, collaborative, and immediate climate action. Forests and land must be at the forefront of that action.

Our very world depends on it.

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GUYANA'S FUTURE IN BLACK AND GREEN

By Emelin Gasparrini, WWF Forest and Climate

It is, without a doubt, the most prestigiously attended graduation ceremony I have ever seen.

It's the rainy season on the Amazonian savannah, so the proceedings are periodically interrupted by the drum of rain on the open-air building's metal roof. The Bina Hill Institute Youth Learning Centre's ceremony features familiar elements – speeches from the valedictorian and the school principal, caps and gowns in bright school colors, songs performed by the students – and some that are less common – like remarks from four Ministers of the Government of Guyana.

How did I find myself at such a high-level event? My colleague, Maria Fernanda Jaramillo, and I had traveled to Annai for a workshop with a group of Indigenous community monitors. That morning we flew south from Georgetown in a plane the size of a cargo van, planning to speak with a few monitors who weren't going to be able to join the workshop the next morning. We just happened to arrive on graduation day.

From the stage, each student's accomplishments are highlighted individually – a successful work study at a rice farm, perseverance while mastering difficult subject matter, or a job offer in their area of specialization.

Seated together towards the back of the room are Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs Sydney Allicock, Minister of Business Dominic Gaskin, Minister of Social Cohesion Dr. George Norton, and Minister of Public Affairs Dawn Hastings-Williams. In turn, each one steps up to the stage to congratulate the graduates, and as they speak I notice a common theme. They are all talking about development.

It seems an odd subject for a secondary school graduation, but the preoccupation with development makes sense given the national context. Huge oil reserves were discovered off the coast of Guyana in 2015, and Exxon Mobile announced that they were starting post-exploratory off-shore drilling just a few weeks before our arrival. The Guyanese economy, long dependent on volatile commodities like sugar, gold, and bauxite, is poised for a $20 billion fossil fuel windfall. How so much oil money will impact this small rainforest nation is a looming question.

Development and its impacts are also on the minds of the community monitors, but they aren't talking about oil.

These women and men have become both creators and keepers of a particular type of knowledge, one that complements their traditional approaches to natural resource management. They measure carbon stocks to prepare their communities for potential climate finance, but they also track other resources each community has identified, ranging from fish stocks to public health. This data helps the community be better informed as they make decisions regarding the management of their resources and to take action when those resources are threatened.

Their work is having real impact. One community has made changes to their hunting and fishing practices, another used the data when choosing new leadership, and all have established new rules and regulations based on the information gathered.

Being able to support their communities' decision-making and planning processes is a clear source of pride in the group. "All of us are resources, or assets, for our community now. So, anything they need us to do concerning data or monitoring, we are their asset," says Caroline Jacobs, from Surama.

It's a source of pride for their communities, too. Sherwin Moses, from Kwatamang, describes his community's reaction, saying, "We had a meeting in our village, and I told the villagers how I am working in the [data] lab, and they were so happy for me. They said I was a village asset."

Working as a community monitor brings technical training as well, including specialized computer and analytics skills. In addition to collecting their community's raw data, some monitors are also trained to run the lab, hosted at Bina Hill. They take the information collected by each community monitor and analyze it locally, ensuring community ownership of their own information. Crucially, analyzing their own information means that they avoid chronic dependence on external consultants as well as barriers that stem from unreliable internet access.

Employment as a community monitor is a source of pride, new skills, and also income. For a few of the younger monitors, other job options were slim - on an industrial rice farm or in a bauxite mine – and would require them to move away from their communities or travel long distances over unreliable roads.

Monitoring their natural resources then, positively contributes twice to development. First, by supporting communities to make more informed decisions when managing their natural resources, and second, by providing employment to those who live in places where there are few other options. Unlike industrial agriculture or mining, natural resource monitoring provides the additional benefits from ecosystem services like carbon sequestration.

It's impossible to know how oil will impact Guyana. But my conversations in the hinterland reminded me that forests can and should continue to play a leading role in the country's development because the impacts and benefits and of forests are just as diverse as the communities and species who call them home. They're worth the investment.

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CONTINUED FROM COVER

There were many poignant responses as participants described their new realities in a changing climate, with no shortage of lived experiences to draw from. Their communities are attuned to the changes in natural cycles that are already negatively impacting things like crop production and food security. These negative impacts are creeping into other parts of their lives as well, including an increase in exposure to diseases like malaria and damaged infrastructure from more frequent natural disasters.

Amazonian Indigenous Peoples are already taking action to confront – and change – this new reality.

The Indigenous communities represented by OPIAC and AIDESEP are actively participating in regional and national processes to stop the drivers of deforestation that threaten their territories and that threaten to destroy critical carbon sinks. For example, both groups are working to ensure the success of REDD+ and other conservation programs, such as payments for ecosystem services, by advocating for the robust consideration of Indigenous Peoples in the design and implementation of these programs. They are also taking steps to improve the ability of Indigenous communities to monitor and report on deforestation threats within their territories.

First and foremost, OPIAC and AIDESEP are striving to gain recognition for territorial sovereignty and land-tenure rights. This is critical for keeping remaining forests standing, as legally-recognized Indigenous Territories have been shown to have lower rates of deforestation on average. As one participant noted, "where there are no assigned rights, deforestation advances."

Indigenous territorial rights could produce significant climate benefits - according to OPIAC and AIDESEP, enforcement of Indigenous tenure rights has the potential to help protect around half of the Colombian Amazon and about a quarter of the Peruvian Amazon.

Moving forward, both groups pledged to continue to play an important role in mitigating climate change. OPIAC, for example, is committed to maintaining forest cover on nearly 25 million hectares, containing around 11,900 $MtCO_2$. Similarly, in addition to forest protection, AIDESEP is striving to transition Indigenous territories in the Peruvian Amazon to renewable energy. These actions will not only have positive impacts for the climate but will also have enormous benefits for biodiversity and human livelihoods.

Actions like these by Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon are central to achieving the NDCs of Amazonian countries and the global temperature goals. Measures to protect and restore forests between now and 2030 have huge potential to contribute to limiting global temperature rise to 2°C. However, both groups acknowledged that achieving their long-term visions of sustainability will depend on adequate climate finance and political support to develop alternative, Indigenous economies.

One more thing was very clear from the Talanoa Dialogue between OPIAC and AIDESEP: this is only the beginning of the conversation. Even after the Talanoa Dialogue officially concludes at COP24 in December of this year, more effort must be put into developing answers to how we will roll back emissions and limit the worst impacts of climate change. And a concerted effort must be made to make sure the voices of Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups are heard and that their role as allies in the effort to slow global temperature rise is fully recognized and supported.

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AN OPEN GOAL: WHY FORESTS AND NATURE NEED TO BE AT THE CENTER OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

© EQUIPO TÉCNICO INDÍGENA LA CHORRERA

By Alistair Monument, WWF Global Forest Practice Leader, and Hermine Kleymann, WWF Global Forest Practice Policy Manager

In fewer than 900 days, the world will have halted deforestation, taken urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity, and ensured that ecosystems are being conserved, restored and sustainably used.

That, at least, is part of what the governments of the 193 countries of the United Nations agreed to in 2015 with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The above commitments are just a few of the targets due to be achieved by 2020 under SDG 15, 'Life on Land.'

So how is it going? Not too well, unfortunately. Recently released figures show that, far from being halted, global tree cover loss actually increased by 51% in 2016; for tropical tree cover loss, 2017 was the second-worst year on record. And with wildlife abundance projected to decline by two-thirds between 1970 and 2020, dramatic changes will be needed to reverse the long-term trend.

This should set alarm bells ringing. Failure to meet these targets wouldn't simply be a setback towards achieving SDG 15. It would also threaten our ability to meet the other SDGs – which are closely linked to targets set out for Life on Land – and undermine the very foundation of sustainable development.

Today, protecting the environment may seem like a luxury. But this is a short-sighted attitude, and a false dichotomy.

Ultimately, nature underpins every aspect of our societies and economies: our health, wealth and well-being

depend upon the goods and services that ecosystems provide. We cannot achieve the 2030 Agenda if we don't act now to halt deforestation and conserve and restore forests, biodiversity and the other aspects of life on land set out in SDG 15.

Healthy forests and ecosystems play a critical role in delivering many of the other SDGs – from food security (SDG 2), clean water (SDG 6) and decent work (SDG 8) to sustainable cities (SDG 11), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and climate action (SDG 13). Around 1.6 billion people globally – including more than 2,000 indigenous groups – rely on forests for their livelihoods, for shelter, food, fuel and medicines.

This week, government ministers are meeting in New York to review progress on SDG 15 and five other goals at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. They must grab the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to conserving life on land and to turn words into action by redoubling efforts to halt deforestation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

Importantly, conserving nature shouldn't be an add-on. It needs to be an integral part of national development strategies. From food and water to energy and climate, nature – and forests in particular – is central to our well-being. National policies must reflect this.

Neither our planet nor its people can risk setting one target against another.

The SDGs are closely interlinked, and coordination is needed across policy areas, across sectors, and across related international agendas like the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Targets.

Neither our planet nor its people can risk setting one target against another – increasing food production by clearing forests, or improving energy access at the expense of biodiversity. We must unlock potential synergies – like restoring forests to secure water supplies, or the importance of trees in sustainable cities.

These solutions exist. At the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), we've seen many examples of how working to protect forests and other ecosystems can have multiple benefits across several SDGs. The motivation behind our Ecomakala project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for example, was to reduce the pressure of charcoal production on Virunga National Park – but it's also contributing to poverty reduction, energy access, decent work and more. Similarly, in Nepal, installing biogas stoves is reducing carbon emissions, improving food security and empowering women while helping to protect wildlife-rich forests.

One promising approach is forest landscape restoration – bringing deforested and degraded landscapes back to health by restoring the functions that forests provide to people and nature. From our work in Madagascar and elsewhere, we've seen how this not only benefits biodiversity and the climate, but can also improve agricultural productivity and incomes for local people.

Under the Bonn Challenge, countries are aiming to bring 150 million hectares under restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. But much greater urgency is needed to put these pledges into action and realize the benefits for climate, for biodiversity and for sustainable development.

Equally important is halting deforestation and conserving existing forests. Again, this links closely with other SDGs. Agriculture is the major driver of deforestation and biodiversity loss, so SDG 15 must be prominent in efforts to achieve SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production).

The commitments are there. Under the New York Declaration on Forests, national and subnational governments, indigenous groups, companies and NGOs have made pledges to protect forests. Some 470 companies in the food and agriculture sector have pledged to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains by 2020, while a number of European countries have offered their support by signing the Amsterdam Declaration 'Towards Eliminating Deforestation from Agricultural Commodity Chains with European Countries'.

But much greater action and collaboration is needed. Governments need to create an enabling environment for better production and consumption, including strong legislative and policy frameworks that promote the circular economy, and halt deforestation, destruction and conversion of natural habitats. They should set public procurement policies that include criteria to exclude all commodities contributing to deforestation, conversion and pollution of natural habitats.

There should be no illusions about the scale of the task ahead of us. Deforestation and the loss of nature have been the pattern throughout human history. Turning this around in 30 months is an enormous ask.

But it's what we need to do. Because this isn't about ticking off some targets: it's about the future of our planet and all of us who live on it.

This piece originally ran in IISD's SDG Knowledge Hub on 9 July 2018

REDD+ PEOPLE

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JOSEFINA BRAÑA-VARELA

If you have participated in one of our webinars on global forest and climate policy, you've already learned from Josefina Braña-Varela's expertise. We sat down with her to get a snap-shot of her involvement in the sector and what she thinks about where it's going.

What is your role at WWF?

I am the Senior Director for Forest and Climate. In that role, I lead WWF's Forest and Climate team, which works to build a world where stronger national and landscape-level action to conserve and restore forests ensures the key role of forests in averting the worst impacts of climate change, safeguarding livelihoods, and protecting invaluable natural habitats.

My job is to ensure that we are supporting countries, companies, and civil society to develop and implement increasingly ambitious and scientifically-robust commitments to keep forests standing, permanently reducing forest emissions while benefitting people and biodiversity. In order to achieve this, I engage actively in global policy negotiations, discussions, and initiatives; but I also work on the ground empowering key agents of change (such as Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities or subnational and national governments) in a variety of geographies, such as Colombia, DRC, Guyana, Indonesia, Nepal, and Peru.

What are you currently working on?

This year I spent a considerable amount of time aiming to bring the efforts and actions of state and non-state actors closer together, aligned towards the same common climate goal: getting onto a 1.5-degree world pathway.

Earlier this year, we saw the beginning of very important and strong movement from non-state actors – such as cities, subnational governments, businesses, investors, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities – all of whom are standing up to do their share in tackling climate change. The Global Climate Action Summit, the first summit focusing on non-state action, took place in September in California, and we got to see a groundswell of ongoing efforts coming from different sectors and stakeholders getting ready to contribute at a greater scale.

WWF was asked to coordinate the Forest and Land segment for the summit and I was part of the team working together to showcase the important contribution that this sector can bring in the fight against climate change. Now, I'm getting ready to bridge these conversations to the ones that will take place in the next UNFCCC Conference of the Parties, COP24, in Katowice, Poland.

How did you get involved in this kind of conservation work?

I grew up in Mexico City, and during my childhood me and my family often looked for any opportunity to escape from the noise, the pollution, and the fast-paced life of one of the largest cities of the world. We did so by visiting nearby forests during the weekends. From a very early age I valued nature and all the services it provides us with, and I believe this set me on to my professional pathway.

But it was later on, during my undergraduate studies, where I found amazing people who inspired me and taught me how to channel all that love

for nature into action to change the behavior of people and nations. After obtaining my degree in International Relations, with a specialization in environment and sustainable development, I pursued a master's degree in Environmental Policy, in order to be able to connect the global with the local and vice versa.

The importance of forests and the role they play in climate mitigation and adaptation has been highlighted in prominent ways in the last few years, from Article 5 of the Paris Agreement to corporate deforestation-free commitments to GCAS. What advice do you have for people who have been focused on other aspects of the climate conversation who want to bring forests into their work?

The first step is to understand why taking action in this sector is key. The way we use land for food, forestry, and other purposes contributes almost a quarter (24%) of our total annual greenhouse gas emissions. That's the second largest source of climate pollution after energy. But trees also pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and keep it rooted in the ground. When we slash, burn, and cut down forests and mangroves, drain wetlands, convert grasslands, or till soil, the greenhouse gases that cause climate change escape from the land back the atmosphere and heat the planet. And we also reduce the ability of forests and land to absorb those emissions overall. So, there's plenty of work to do, both in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and in restoring forest landscapes and conserving the forests that are still standing.

Whether you are a concerned citizen, a private sector company, an investor, or a representative from a city or subnational government you can help by making a conscious decision to cut waste, reduce excess consumption, and improve efficiency in our food systems, while also taking action to conserve our natural lands, habitats, and soils. Every effort counts and if we are all in, we can deliver up to 30% of the climate solutions needed by 2030 to tackle the climate crisis and help implement the Paris Agreement.

Activist burnout and feeling overwhelmed by the threat of climate change converge in the climate space. How do you find inspiration/motivation when a good portion of your job involves drawing attention to deforestation and the impacts of climate change?

I try to keep my eyes on what's important despite the complexities of the sector. Stopping deforestation and forest degradation is not only crucial for climate, but also for people's livelihoods and for nature. I also try to connect with nature as much as I can because it helps me recharge my battery and maintain my focus. I try to be outside as much as I can in general, whether is a visit to a nearby park or forest over the weekend, as I did when I was a child. Sometimes I get lucky and I get to visit the mountains or the rainforest.

Do you have a favorite forest fact?

Well, there are so many forest facts that come into my mind. The obvious one is that forests are the lungs of our planet, as I implied before. Forests are also a key source of medicines (around 25% of the medicines we use come from rainforest plants), although only around 1% of plants have been studied to understand their medicinal properties.

But my current favorite fact is one that has to do with people: in recent years, the scientific community has produced different studies that confirm that some of the best protected forests in the world are those where there is presence of indigenous peoples - these areas present a lower deforestation rate in comparison to other areas. Now, do you know how tall the tallest tree in the world is? Something for you to research in your free time!

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PANDAS IN THE WILD

Maria Fernanda Jaramillo, WWF Forest and Climate's Knowledge Sharing and Learning Manager, and Emelin Gasparrini, WWF Forest and Climate's Communications Associate, spent the first week of July in Guyana collecting lessons learned from partners in Georgetown and Annai. You can read more about their trip in this and future issues.

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WWF's engagement in the Global Climate Action Summit was a network-wide endeavor, and Josefina Brana-Varela, Senior Director of WWF Forest and Climate, was in San Francisco in September to join the delegation as part of the core team working on the 30X30 Forests, Food and Land Challenge. Josefina's engagement spanned the full week of events, and she kicked it all off by joining the 200 members of the WWF community who joined the the Rise for Climate, Jobs & Justice March.

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The end of September brought Naikoa Aguilar-Amuchastegui to Paris, to contribute WWF forest carbon science expertise in back-to-back workshops: the First User Workshop of European Space Agency's Climate Change Initiative BIOMASS Project, and the Fourth Expert workshop on Lessons Learned from Accuracy Assessments in the Context of REDD+, organized by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, Global Forest Observations Initiative, and Global Observations of Forest and Land Dynamics. Joining his peers from academic, multilateral, and government institutions, Naikoa was the only scientist in attendance representing a conservation NGO. Ever the pragmatist, Naikoa summarized his perspective on generating the best forest emissions data succinctly, "You have to make sure that science has a practical application, and that the needs on the ground are known so science can advance to meet them. But, sometimes that means that the best science to apply is the boring one."

REDD+ SPECIES

INDIAN PANGOLIN

Common Name:
Indian Pangolin

Scientific Name:
Manis crassicaudata

Location:
India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Status:
Endangered

It only took five years for the Indian Pangolin to move from Near Threatened to Endangered assessments on the IUCN Red List due to hunting and poaching, both for local consumption and international trade.

Sometimes known as scaly anteaters, these armored creatures are primarily nocturnal and insectivorous. Long claws, powerful forelimbs, and a sticky tongue that is longer than its body are all adaptations that facilitate a diet made up almost entirely of insects. When threatened, pangolins will roll up into a ball, using sharp scales on their tail to lash out as needed. The name pangolin comes from the Malay word 'penggulung,' which means roller.

Read more:
IUCN Red List
WWF-India
WWF-US

IUCN © Gerald Cubitt

VIEWPOINTS

On the Global Climate Action Summit

"NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS CAN ARRIVE IN POLAND WITH THE WIND AT THEIR BACKS, GIVING THEM THE COURAGE TO COMMIT TO EVEN GREATER EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS THAT MOVE US CLOSER TO A 1.5-DEGREE FUTURE."

– Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, leader of WWF's Global Climate and Energy Practice.

On Non-State Actor Potential

"WE'RE LAUNCHING OUR OWN DAMN SATELLITE."

– Jerry Brown, Governor of California.

On Timelines

"GLOBAL WARMING IS LIKELY TO REACH 1.5°C BETWEEN 2030 AND 2052 IF IT CONTINUES TO INCREASE AT THE CURRENT RATE. (HIGH CONFIDENCE)"

– Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, SR1.5 Summary for Policy Makers.

On Indigenous Commitments

"INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES ARE PLACES OF CONSERVATION IN AND OF THEMSELVES, AND IT IS THE TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE HELD AND PRACTICED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AND WHICH IS AN ACTIVE PART OF OUR CULTURE, THAT CONTRIBUTES TO CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE."

– OPIAC and AIDESEP, AIDESEP and OPIAC join in the Talanoa Dialogue: Amazonian Indigenous voices for climate action.

On Unacknowledged Value

"TODAY, PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT MAY SEEM LIKE A LUXURY. BUT THIS IS A SHORT-SIGHTED ATTITUDE, AND A FALSE DICHOTOMY. ULTIMATELY, NATURE UNDERPINS EVERY ASPECT OF OUR SOCIETIES AND ECONOMIES: OUR HEALTH, WEALTH AND WELL-BEING DEPEND UPON THE GOODS AND SERVICES THAT ECOSYSTEMS PROVIDE."

– Alistair Monument, Leader of WWF's Forest Practice, and Hermine Kleymann, WWF's Forest Practice Policy Manager.

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WWF

Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/forestclimate

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