



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Topic 2: The question of international co-operation to address deforestation and environmental degradation.

Committee overview

Welcome, Delegates, to FLOMUN 2026! The Environmental Committee focuses on the environmental challenges the world faces, addressing issues such as climate change, pollution, loss of biodiversity and sustainability. The purpose of this committee is to empower young individuals to speak up about ecological issues, allowing them to discuss and develop solutions together.

Issues like climate change cannot be contained by borders. On the contrary, they affect all nations equally. Thus, the Environmental Committee is highly relevant to global governance, as it addresses transnational concerns and crises. We hope that you all bring innovative ideas and have a fruitful debate.

Background on the topic

According to the Global Forest Watch, between the years 2001 and 2024, 520 million hectares of worldwide tree cover was lost, 83 Mha of which was humid primary forest loss. The environmental and ecological impacts of such drastic deforestation cannot be overstated. Natural habitats, especially in Southeast Asia and the Amazon, have experienced a detrimental loss of biodiversity and degradation. Numerous factors contribute to this worsening ecological crisis, most notably slash-and-burn agriculture, climate change and pollution, natural and artificial wildfires, and natural resource exploitation efforts such as logging and mining. Thus, it is the purpose of this committee to provide the platform for global co-operation to mitigate the negative effects of this ever-present issue.

It is not the place of the UN to encroach on Member Nations' sovereignties, other than bodies with the transnational jurisdiction to do so, nor should it make black and white claims without nuance and thorough consideration. However, the effects of one country's actions are rarely limited to their borders; the effects of deforestation and environmental harm taking place in one country can directly and indirectly affect the rest of the world. Therefore, delegates are encouraged to have a lively discussion, collaborate with one another, and take many factors into consideration in order to agree upon the most effective and appropriate resolutions.

Deforestation has been present since the beginning of agriculture; however, since the industrial revolution it has increased exponentially before peaking in the 1980s. Despite the consistent need for lumber and space for agricultural exploits, there have been significant and successful attempts made to mitigate, and even, reverse some of its negative effects. According to the organization One Green Planet, the top three most successful projects have been the Borneo Initiative, Amazon Rainforest Restoration in Brazil, and the Great Green Wall in Africa. These innovative projects used various new and existing techniques in order to reforest and regenerate land; they can and should be used as models for future initiatives or resolutions.

The global stance of Member Nations are mostly unanimous with regard to deforestation and the negative impact it can have on the environment, that being that it ought to be at the very least diminished or, more controversially, eliminated. Nations must have their sovereignty and interest respected, thus deforestation is much more difficult among States whose economy is to a large part

logging or monocultural farming based. Based on previous conventions and forums in which this topic was present, it is clear that there is international support for this cause, what may differ is the extent to which measures are implemented.

Key terms and definitions

Agroforestry: Various and differing kinds of agricultural systems that include trees as an integral aspect; they are certainly more beneficial than slash-and-burn methods, but may have unintended ecological consequences.

Tree cover: This refers to how much land is covered by tree canopies; it does not only refer to natural forest cover; it is often used as a metric with which to quantify deforestation.

Deforestation / Reforestation: Deforestation refers to artificial or intentional destruction of trees and forest landscapes; reforestation refers to new effort to regrow trees en masse.

Hectare: A hectare is a metric unit of area equivalent to 10,000 square meters; it is the preferred unit to measure tree cover and amount of deforestation.

Primary forest: The primary forests are habitats with old-growth trees; they usually go hand in hand with rich biodiversity and thriving ecosystems; they are most present in Russia, Brazil, and Canada.

Desertification: The process by which land becomes a desert due to the climate or human actions; this often occurs because of soil degradation due to monocropping.

Slash-and-burn agriculture: A system in which large amounts of forest or tree cover will be systematically cut and burned to provide space and fertile land for agricultural or husbandry endeavors.

LEDCs: Less economically developed countries.

Relevant UN bodies and resolutions

UN Bodies

- **United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)** - In terms of UN involvement in environmental causes the UNEP is the primary international organization. They implement programs, create sustainable development goals, and collaborate with other organizations to better the environment.
- **United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD)** - UN REDD, alternatively called REDD+ is a UN organization focused specifically on the topic of deforestation and environmental protection of forests; it often works in tandem with the UNEP.
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** - The FAO is a prominent UN body that specializes in alimentation and agricultural practices. In the context of this committee they are involved in illegal or unsustainable farming methods, such as slash-and-burn practices.

Conventions/Treaties

- **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** - The UNFCCC is one of the leading conferences on climate change that began in 1992. Regarding deforestation, they recognize not only the harmful effects it has on biodiversity, but also the climate. Fewer trees entails fewer receptacles for atmospheric carbon emissions, leading to increased greenhouse gasses and worsened climate change.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** - This convention is the primary UN convention regarding Biodiversity. They often collaborate with other organizations to combat deforestation due to the negative effects of biodiversity, especially in primary forests and rainforests.
- **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** - Desertification is largely a result of human damage on the environment namely deforestation and aquaphor depletion, thus the UN created this convention to mitigate harm and promote sustainable land use.
- **2021 - Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** - This initiative began in 2021 and will run until 2030, aiming to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.
- **2023 - Council of Parties 26 (COP26)** - The COP 26 pledge to severely limit or end deforestation by 2030 by more than 100 Nations is a prime example of global unity and co-operation for a necessary cause.

Major actors and their relevance

Countries

- **Brazil** - Brazil is a nation that has struggled immensely with Deforestation and environmental degradation due to the majority of the Amazon rainforest lying within its border. It is also the nation with some of the highest rates of tree cover loss globally. The nation has shown that their position is to curb deforestation rates and follow international sustainable development goals; this was evident in various conferences such as the COP26.
- **Indonesia** - Due to climate and agricultural practices such as oil palm tree monocropping, Indonesia is one of the nations with the worst deforestation especially on the islands of Jakarta and Borneo. Organizations such as the Borneo initiatives have worked collaboratively with the government to reforest parts of the country causing significant progress. On the other hand, the government has continued to allow large amounts of deforestation in the name of development, showing nuanced views on the subject.
- **Russian federation** - Russia is a nation that relies heavily on the exportation of their natural resources, in the context of deforestation the significant resource is lumber. Although, there has been some effort to conserve current tree cover and even promote reforestation.

Organisations

- **Rainforest Trust** - This NGO is an organization that focuses on preserving the rich and plentiful biodiversity present in the world's rainforests, that are currently at risk to both

deforestation and climate change.

- **World Agroforestry Centre** - This organization works to spread awareness and create opportunities for agroforestry with the goal of mitigating environmental impacts of agriculture while providing food security.
- **OneCanopy** - This private company employs methods to reforest especially after wildfires or periods of deforestation while claiming to focus on welfare rather than profit. It is one of many such companies who believe that the private sector is also needed alongside non-profit organizations in order to most effectively benefit the environment.

Guiding questions

- 1. How can Member Nations balance industrial or agricultural progress with sustainable forestry practices?
- 2. What methods and organizations can be employed in reforestation projects to ensure quality and biodiversity?
- 3. How can Nations and corporations be persuaded to practice sustainably rather than economically, such as with slash-and-burn agriculture?
- 4. In which ways can wealthy nations aid LEDCs to mitigate the harmful effects of deforestation?
- 5. How can desertification be reversed most efficiently?
- 6. What actions can international organizations take to hold non-complying Member Nations accountable without encroaching on their legal sovereignty?

Works cited

"About the UN Decade." UN Decade on Restoration, www.decadeonrestoration.org/about-un-decade.

"About Us." World Agroforestry | Transforming Lives and Landscapes with Trees, 2019, www.worldagroforestry.org/about.

Convention on Biological Diversity. "CBD Home." Cbd.int, 2011, www.cbd.int/.

Debanjan. "Countries with the Highest Deforestation Rates in the World." [Www.green.earth](http://www.green.earth), 14 Mar. 2021, www.green.earth/blog/countries-highest-deforestation-rates.

"Deforestation Fronts in the World Were Revealed by Organization." InfoAmazonia, 7 May 2015, infoamazonia.org/en/2015/05/07/deforestation-fronts-in-the-world-were-revealed-by-organization/.

Global Forest Watch. "Global Deforestation Rates & Statistics by Country | GFW." [Www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org), 2023, www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/global/.

---. "Indonesia Deforestation Rates & Statistics." [Www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org), 2023, www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/IDN/.

"Greenpeace Southeast Asia." Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 12 Dec. 2024, www.greenpeace.org/southeastasia/press/66739/plan-makes-mockery-of-climate-biodiversity-commitments/.

<https://investforesight.com/author/formica>. "How and Why Companies Invest in Reforestation in Russia." Investforesight, 5 Feb. 2026, investforesight.com/how-and-why-companies-invest-in-reforestation/.

"Key Terms and Definitions | World Resources Institute Research." Wri.org, 2022, [gfr.wri.org/key-terms-definitions](https://www.wri.org/key-terms-definitions).

onecanopy. "The Crucial Role of Private Industry in Reforestation." OneCanopy, 12 Dec. 2024, one-canopy.com/the-crucial-role-of-private-industry-in-reforestation/.

"Our Work." CIFOR-ICRAF, www.cifor-icraf.org/our-work/.

"Primary Forests around the World." Kloranebotanical.foundation, 2021, www.kloranebotanical.foundation/en/primary-forests-around-world.

Rainforest Trust. "Rainforest Trust Saves Rainforest." Rainforest Trust Saves Rainforest, 7 Nov. 2019, www.rainforesttrust.org/.

Rannard, Georgina, and Francesca Gillett. "COP26: World Leaders Promise to End Deforestation by 2030." BBC News, 2 Nov. 2021, www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-59088498.

Ritchie, Hannah. "Global Deforestation Peaked in the 1980s. Can We Bring It to an End?" Our World in Data, 19 Feb. 2021, ourworldindata.org/global-deforestation-peak.

Sparke, Trinity. "10 Most Successful Reforestation Projects Worldwide." One Green Planet, 29 July 2024, www.onegreenplanet.org/environment/10-most-successful-reforestation-projects-worldwide/.

Sustainability Directory. "What Are the Drawbacks of Agroforestry? → Question." Climate → Sustainability Directory, 17 Apr. 2025, climate.sustainability-directory.com/question/what-are-the-drawbacks-of-agroforestry/.

Team, LiveEO. "The History of Deforestation in Europe: Past Trends and Current Challenges." Live-Eo.com, LiveEO, 2 Dec. 2025, www.live-eo.com/blog/the-history-of-deforestation-in-europe-past-trends-and-current-challenges.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Slash-And-Burn Agriculture." Encyclopædia Britannica, 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/slash-and-burn-agriculture.

"The Geopolitics of Deforestation: How Foreign Influence Shapes Forest Policies." BSE Focus, 16 Jan. 2025, focus.bse.eu/the-geopolitics-of-deforestation-how-foreign-influence-shapes-forest-policies/.

Un-Redd P R O G R A M M E. Technical Considerations for Forest Reference Emission Level And/or Forest Reference Level Construction for REDD+ under the UNFCCC.

UNCCD. "United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification." Unccd.int, 2010, www.unccd.int/.

UNEP. "Inside the Global Effort to Save the World's Forests." UNEP, 1 Nov. 2021, www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/inside-global-effort-save-worlds-forests.

---. "UNEP - UN Environment Programme." UNEP - UN Environment Programme, 2021, www.unep.org/.

World Population Review. "Deforestation Rates by Country 2026." Worldpopulationreview.com, 2023, worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/deforestation-rates-by-country.

Unfccc.int, 2024, unfccc.int/news/protecting-our-forests-collective-progress-and-innovation.