

# Sanctioning deforestation and other forms of forest degradation of tropical rainforests

## Background

Rainforests are a key ecosystem in the protection of biodiversity because they contain 40-70% of all living species on our planet. They are also essential factors in the fight against climate change. Worldwide, they suck up 2.4 billion metric tons of carbon each year, with the massive Amazon absorbing a quarter of that total. In principle, climate change should help forests take up even more carbon dioxide, as warmer temperatures and increased levels of the gas should encourage trees to grow. But the peak in the speed of growth is dangerous because this way trees grow weaker and more prone to diseases. The balance in the rainforest ecosystem is threatened by extensive logging directly connected to soil erosion and higher demand of agricultural land for growing soy.

Deforestation is a phenomena of tree coverage loss. 'The Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO, 1993](#)) of the United Nations defines *deforestation* as 'change of land use with depletion of tree cover to less than 10 per cent.' We started seeing massive deforestation in the last century when demand for both wood and agricultural land skyrocketed with the growth of the human population. Today's general knowledge of risks that deforestation is provoking is well spread but the pace of it is only growing.

## UN involvement

'The agreement on the first-ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests was forged at a special session of the UN Forum on Forests held in January 2017 and provides an ambitious vision for global forests in 2030. The plan was adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council on 20 April 2017, and was subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly

on 27 April 2017.’ This was the major act that the UN did for combating deforestation in general, but all of the targets are only voluntary and not concentrated on the rainforest.

## Questions to consider

- Has your government made any effort in slowing the pace of deforestation?
- What is the pace of deforestation in your country?
- Do you have any kind of rainforest?
- What percentage of industry in your country is dependent on Wood logging and agriculture?
- What percentage of your country's territory is covered by forests?
- Has your country passed any laws on saving biodiversity?

## Helpful Links

- Amazon rainforest ability to soak up carbon dioxide is falling [WWW Document], n.d. URL <https://www.science.org/content/article/amazon-rainforest-ability-soak-carbon-dioxide-falling> (accessed 1.12.23).
- Deforestation in the Amazon [WWW Document], n.d. . Mongabay. URL [https://rainforests.mongabay.com/amazon/amazon\\_destruction.html](https://rainforests.mongabay.com/amazon/amazon_destruction.html) (accessed 1.13.23).
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- Forests for a better world, 2022. . FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3427en>
- Heacox, K., 2021. The Amazon rainforest is losing about 10,000 acres a day. Soon it will be too late. The Guardian.
- How the Emerald Edge Rainforest Could Help Change the World [WWW Document], n.d. . The Nature Conservancy. URL <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/tackle-climate-change/climate-change-stories/emerald-edge-carbon-storage/> (accessed 1.13.23).

- UNEP, n.d. Nature Action [WWW Document]. UNEP - UN Environment Programme. URL <http://www.unep.org/explore-topics/ecosystems-and-biodiversity> (accessed 1.14.23).
- United Nations Forum on Forests » UN Strategic Plan for Forests [WWW Document], n.d. URL <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/index.html> (accessed 1.12.23).
- Wildlife of the Tropical Rainforests - Teachers (U.S. National Park Service) [WWW Document], n.d. URL <https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/wildlife-of-the-tropical-rainforests.htm> (accessed 1.12.23).
- Deforestation and Forest Degradation | Threats | WWF [WWW Document], n.d. . World Wildlife Fund. URL <https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/deforestation-and-forest-degradation> (accessed 1.14.23).