Environmental Defense Fund

Input to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

8 April 2026

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) welcomes the opportunity to share inputs on the COP30 Presidency's Roadmap on deforestation and forest degradation. The Roadmap has the potential to be a productive guide for identifying solutions and informing action, and can foster sustained momentum towards implementing the first Global Stocktake outcome of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 (paragraphs 33 and 34), and meeting the Paris Agreement's global temperature goals.

To effectively deliver on this outcome, the Roadmap must include clear and actionable steps for addressing catastrophic wildfire as a major driver of global tree cover loss and forest degradation. This submission focuses on barriers and levers of action drawn from EDF's work on wildfire, and is structured according to the questions provided in the call for submissions.

(a) Wildfire as a Critical Barrier to Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Catastrophic wildfire is one of the most significant global challenges towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation, and reducing forest-related emissions. Wildfire is one of the top drivers of global tree cover loss, responsible for 151 million hectares (Mha) of loss from 2001-2024. Recent years have seen intensifying trends in frequency and severity of global wildfire, with fire emerging as the largest source of tropical forest loss in 2024. These trends are visible across regions – in 2025, major wildfires garnered international attention in California, Canada, Spain, Australia, Turkey and more, resulting in loss of lives, livelihoods, ecosystems, and billions of dollars in damage.

The intensification of fire regimes is happening faster than humanity or natural ecosystems are capable of adapting to today. As a result, our current strategies for addressing fire are rapidly becoming much less effective. This is unsustainable and will result in ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions along with growing threats to nature and communities.

Deforestation, wildfire, and climate change are deeply interlinked and compounding challenges. Deforested areas can face increased fire risks, exacerbated by hotter air and drier weather. In turn, more fires result in greater emissions and forest cover loss, accelerating the effects of climate change and leading to even further fire risk within vulnerable regions. Strengthening forest conservation and management will require addressing these issues together.

The scientific literature indicates that the observed trends in wildfires are not anomalies, but rather a broader trend towards increasing intensity and severity of wildfire in part because of climate feedbacks**.** On a global scale - even under a low emissions scenario (RCP2.6) - future

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catastrophic wildfire incidence compared to the present is expected to increase by 14% by 2030, 33% by 2050, and 52% by the end of the century.

Given these alarming trends and expectations, efforts to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 must consider integrated fire management as a priority.

(b) Key Levers to Accelerate Implementation

Environmental Defense Fund, together with partners from 18 countries and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities organizations, launched the Wildfire Action Accelerator Pledge at COP30. This declaration builds upon existing global frameworks, including the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Kananaskis Wildfire Charter adopted by the G7, and Brazil's Call to Action on Integrated Fire Management and Wildfire Resilience. The Pledge aims to mobilize coordinated investment and technical cooperation on integrated fire management and wildfire resilience, and its four guiding pillars offer a useful framework for unpacking critical levers of action to inform the Roadmap.

Centering traditional knowledge and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

- Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples are stewards of fire-resilient landscapes. Their ancestral knowledge, gender roles, and territorial rights are vital to effective fire governance.
- Key actions to strengthen Indigenous leadership include formal recognition and integration of traditional fire knowledge into national policies and legal frameworks, securing recognition of customary practices, and co-designing inclusive governance mechanisms.

Mobilizing sustainable and equitable fire finance

- Given that the escalating costs of global wildfire resilience far exceed available budgets, global fire finance must shift from reaction to prevention. As an example, the damage from the Los Angeles wildfires in 2025 is estimated at $250-$275 billion, exceeding the GDP of many nations. We encourage further dialogue amongst countries to identify immediate opportunities for enhancing access to resources, such as dedicated earmarks under existing climate and disaster response funds.
- This can also extend to enabling eligibility for fire resilience activities, capacity building, and equipment provision under emerging forest climate finance instruments such as REDD+ results-based payments or the newly established Tropical Forest Forever Facility. Additionally, we encourage further dialogue on innovative financing instruments that can catalyze new investment sources, as current levels of investment are insufficient to proactively tackle the growing threats of catastrophic wildfire.

Embedding wildfire management into climate and forest policy

- Wildfire risk must be addressed as a systemic climate and development challenge. This can be achieved through strengthening integration of wildfire strategies within Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), REDD+ strategies, and other national climate and forest planning documents, and improving reporting of wildfire-related emissions under the Paris Agreement.

Advancing global and regional collaboration

- Global cooperation is essential to catalyzing greater action on fire through establishing shared goals, facilitating coordinated action, and building stronger governance frameworks. Recent international agreements and pledges which have demonstrated positive momentum include the COP30 Call to Action on Integrated Fire Management and Wildfire Resilience, and the 7th UN Environment Assembly's Resolution on Strengthening the Global Management of Wildfires, and the G7 Kananaskis Wildfire Charter.
- New technologies can support the speed and scale of fire response globally. Tools such as FireSAT, a global satellite constellation coordinated and run through the Earth Fire Alliance, can strengthen rapid wildfire detection and detailed fire monitoring, enabling enhanced coordination within and between countries.

As each year brings additional examples of record-breaking wildfires, increasingly in places where such fires have not been experienced with such severity before, it becomes ever clearer that wildfire is one of the greatest threats to forests and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and must be addressed as part of efforts to implement the first Global Stocktake. EDF stands ready to support the Presidency's efforts to translate the Global Stocktake commitments into actionable strategies for halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation.

Additional Resources

- Wildfire Action Accelerator
- FireSAT Constellation
- EDF Submission on Wildfire to the 5th Global Dialogue of the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme
- EDF Blog – Climate Change Demands a Global Paradigm Shift in our Relationship with Wildfires

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