Unlock the potential for Non-State Actors (NSAs) to **restore ecosystems and draw down carbon emissions**

Indigenous communities, smallholder farmers and small-scale producers manage two thirds or 65% of the world’s land. 1.6 billion people worldwide rely on the health of forest landscapes to survive. UNEP predicts the emission reduction potential from NSAs is instrumental in bridging the emissions gap and could be up to 23 GtCO2 per year by 2030[1].

To meet the Paris Agreement climate targets, deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and respond to the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework, every government must engage with Non-State Actors (NSAs). By working together, we can accelerate global ecosystem restoration and boost climate resilience.

**Invest in NSAs to conduct radical restoration and help us reach net-zero**

2030 is the critical deadline to prevent severe and irreversible biodiversity collapse, catastrophic climate change and irreparable land degradation. Nature-based Solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems in ways that benefit biodiversity, climate and human well-being. These Nature-based Solutions have the potential to contribute one-third of the climate mitigation needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C by 2030.

During this decisive decade, countries must prioritise a shift to unprecedented levels of implementation. NSAs are already mobilising implementation on restoration, but more action needs to be taken. Initiatives such as the Bonn Challenge; plus the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme are key to spurring ambition. To maximise impact, countries must engage NSAs as key implementation agents for Nature-based Solutions.

“You cannot restore a landscape without considering indigenous communities. The Bonn Challenge in Guatemala has provided benefits for the environment and the people.”

Ms. Samantha Figueroa, Congresswoman and Chair of the Frente Parlamentario Ambiental (Environmental Parliamentary Front), Guatemala.

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“Stopping deforestation and restoring the Amazon biome is urgent to prevent a climate tipping point that would transform the region into a savannah. Agroforestry is one of the clever ways to create alternatives to deforestation and at the same time promote forest restoration, especially with smallholder farmers. The Nature Conservancy Forest Cocoa Project in the Southeast Pará region has transformed the lives of over 250 farmers.”

Mr. Rodrigo Mauro Freire, The Nature Conservancy’s Restoration Deputy Manager, Brazil.

The opportunity: finding the synergies between planet and people

Nature-based Solutions provide multiple benefits, from sequestering carbon, to restoring fertility of working landscapes, promoting food and water security, to enhancing climate adaptation – while advancing human rights, through education, empowerment and job creation.

Land degradation through human activities negatively impacts the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people, and costs more than 10% of annual global gross product in loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services[2].

Forest landscape restoration (FLR): The vehicle to engage NSAs

The universal process of FLR creates unique opportunities to bring NSAs across landscapes together, to identify and implement restoration activities.

- FLR is the process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across large-scale degraded and deforested areas comprising overlapping ecological, social and economic activities and values.
- FLR strengthens the resilience of landscapes and supply chains and creates future options to enhance and optimise ecosystem goods and services.
- Restoring forest landscapes is more than just planting trees – a restored landscape should include natural regeneration, agroforestry, on-farm trees, mangrove rehabilitation, protected areas and more.

Next steps

1. Recognise that NSAs are key restoration actors and need a seat at the table for decisions on land-use.
2. Understand the specific challenges faced by NSAs and work with them to develop Nature-based Solutions to drive long-term benefit.
3. Direct public and private sector financial and technical investment into NSAs to benefit climate, biodiversity and economic productivity.
4. De-risk investments in NSAs through developing financial instruments, insurance schemes and flexible mechanisms that benefit communities as landscapes are restored.
5. Provide long-term stability, such as security of tenure and resource-rights, which are vital for introducing and maintaining FLR practices.
6. Forge alliances between NSAs and key stakeholders in the forestry and agricultural sector and beyond, such as development partners and civil society.

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