



CALL TO ACTION ON FORESTS & CLIMATE

We—signatories to the [Cities4Forests Declaration](#) and allied cities—are the leaders of more than 50 major cities on six continents. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of our interdependence with nature, that what happens in one place affects other places, the importance of adaptation and resilience, and the value of long-term planning. These reminders apply to our relationship to forests, as well.

Therefore, we respectfully call on governments, companies, and financial institutions to urgently ramp up policies and investments to support forest conservation, restoration, and sustainable forest management. In particular:

- **All governments (national and subnational)** should develop and implement strong domestic policies to protect, restore, and sustainably manage the forests within their territories.
- **Developed nation governments** should provide trade and financial incentives to support the protection and restoration of forests, particularly those within the tropics, and to support sustainable agricultural productivity improvements (which can relieve pressure on forests). Governments also should reform policies (e.g., agricultural and others) that are detrimental to forests.
- **Financial institutions** (e.g., development banks, commercial banks, investors, sovereign wealth funds) should avoid financing activities that cause deforestation and instead prioritize investment in Nature-Based Solutions involving forest conservation, forest restoration, and deforestation-free agricultural commodity production.
- **Companies** should ensure their commodity supply chains are deforestation-free and support Nature-Based Solutions to address climate change and other business challenges.

WHY NOW

Now is the time for action. The coming year provides several milestone opportunities for embedding these actions in local, national, and international agendas:

- As national governments allocate more than US\$13 trillion for pandemic-related economic stimulus, nations should invest in climate-friendly natural infrastructure—especially the conservation and restoration of forests—which can create large-scale employment, boost public health, and build resilience against future shocks.
- At the upcoming UN Convention on Biological Diversity negotiations, nations should prioritize halting tropical deforestation, supporting deforestation-free supply chains, and restoring biodiverse natural forests as 2030 Action Targets.

- At the upcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations, nations should integrate strong Nature-Based Solutions and city action on forests into enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), increase public and private financing for results-based REDD+, and support deforestation-free agricultural commodity supply chain implementation.

WHY FORESTS

Trees and forests are immensely valuable to cities and their residents:

- **Inner forests:** Trees within cities clean the air, lower energy bills, reduce heat islands, reduce urban flooding, and support human health.
- **Nearby forests:** Forests in the watersheds surrounding cities provide clean drinking water, reduce flooding, and offer a place for recreation.
- **Faraway forests:** Forests—particularly in the tropics—are indispensable to combatting and adapting to climate change, generate rain for the world’s farm belts, and host the majority of the world’s land-based biodiversity.

Combined, the inner, nearby, and faraway forests contribute to achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals, enhance urban resilience, and underpin Nature-Based Solutions to climate change.

But forests are under threat. Each year the world loses between 6-9 million hectares (15-22 million acres) of forests to deforestation and many millions more are degraded. And in the past several years, forests around the world have burned in devastating fires—putting numerous cities and their residents at risk of loss of property, health, and even life.

WE ARE TAKING ACTION

We have been investing in forests—inner, nearby, and faraway—to meet the needs of our residents. Many of us have been increasing tree cover in our cities. Some of us have been conserving and restoring forests in our watersheds. And some of us are starting to implement programs to ensure that the products cities and their residents consume do not lead to deforestation in faraway forests.

Our actions are building a productive partnership between urban and rural communities. Rural forests clearly benefit urban residents. Urban residents, in turn, can strengthen rural community ability to conserve and restore forests. It is a two-way urban-rural partnership.

BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP

Our city actions, however, will only go so far. While we can manage forests within our boundaries, our ability to influence the “nearby” and “faraway” forests is limited. Yet *all* forests are critical to our residents’ well-being. Successful forest conservation, restoration, and sustainable management requires supportive national government policies backed by domestic and international finance. Therefore, we need action by governments, financial institutions, and businesses.

Please help us realize a world where cities and forests can grow together. Cities—and all the residents, investors, consumers, and voters they represent—are counting on you.

If you have any questions, please reach out to:

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