



**GOVERNORS' CLIMATE
AND FORESTS FUND**

RIO BRANCO DECLARATION AND INDCS STIMULATING EARLY ACTION AND CLOSING THE EMMISSIONS GAP

Now that nations have forged a global climate treaty at the 21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change, actions under the Rio Branco Declaration stand well-positioned to provide near-term, gigatonne-scale emissions reductions from deforestation while laying the foundation for national commitments post-2020.



GOVERNORS'
CLIMATE & FORESTS 2021

GCF
task force

BACKGROUND

In August 2014, members of the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force gathered in the Brazilian state of Acre to endorse the ambitious targets of the Rio Branco Declaration. Among other goals, the Rio Branco Declaration aims to: reduce deforestation 80% by 2020 if sufficient, long-term financial support is made available; develop key partnerships with private sector efforts to achieve deforestation-free supply chains; and channel a significant share of performance-based funds to indigenous peoples, smallholders, and other forest-dependent communities. The Rio Branco Declaration has been heralded as an example of ambitious subnational leadership and would result in an estimated 3.9 GtCO₂eq of avoided emissions from 2014-2020.

Since the signing of the Rio Branco Declaration, the international community has continued work to forge an international climate change agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). At the conclusion of the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Paris in 2015, 187 parties responsible for 95% of global greenhouse gas emissions submitted intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs). Submitted by national governments, INDCs detail domestic plans for reducing greenhouse gases post-2020 within the framework of a global climate agreement. While many countries mention the importance of addressing forest-based emissions in their INDCs, very few include quantified mitigation targets from land-use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF).

If fully implemented, INDCs would still fall short of the target to limit global temperature rise to less than 2°C as outlined in the Paris Agreement. Preliminary studies conclude that the commitments from national governments under INDCs will set the world on a 2.7°C trajectory by 2100. Additional ambitious short-term action is needed to close the emissions gap estimated to stand at 4-6 gigatonnes over the next decade.

RIO BRANCO DECLARATION – SUPPORTING INDCS, STIMULATING EARLY ACTION, AND ADDRESSING THE EMISSIONS GAP

Emissions from the forest sector are significant in all countries where tropical GCF members are present. In most cases, their emissions account for well over half of all national emissions. While addressing these carbon sources is of utmost urgency, implementation of INDCs will not begin until 2020. Immediate action is needed in the interim and activities under the Rio Branco Declaration can help bridge the gap and drive more ambitious targets in future climate negotiations.

A recent study from the United Nations Development Programme estimates that up to 80% of mitigation actions will occur at the subnational level, exemplifying the importance of subnational action to address climate change. Through the Rio Branco Declaration, GCF states and provinces are working with local stakeholders – civil society organizations, indigenous communities, and commodity growers and purchasers among others – to build scalable models that can provide a foundation for national strategies to reduce deforestation. Importantly, these actions are taking shape now, with aspirations to achieve significant reductions by 2020—the date when actions under INDC submissions kick in.

Several studies have concluded that while INDC targets are the most ambitious yet, even higher ambition is needed to limit global temperature rise to 2°C. According to a report from the United Nations Environment Programme, when INDC submissions are taken into consideration, there will still exist an emissions gap of 5 GtCO₂eq in 2025, growing to 12 GtCO₂eq in 2030. Addressing this gigatonne gap will require sector-specific action, and enhanced mitigation of forest-based emissions has been identified as an area of particular promise.

The roughly 3.9 GtCO₂eq of reductions that could be achieved under the Rio Branco Declaration would not only significantly reduce that gap but also increase future ambition. National governments are required to update their contributions every five years, meaning most governments will submit revisions in 2020. Early success from actions under the Rio Branco Declaration will lay the groundwork for updates to include stronger targets in the forest and land use sector. In fact, if GCF members achieve the Rio Branco Declaration targets by 2020, their countries will be much better positioned to achieve their INDC targets before implementation even begins. A cursory analysis demonstrates the significant potential the Rio Branco Declaration has to contribute to INDC targets:

MEXICO

Through its INDC, Mexico has set an ambitious target of eliminating deforestation by 2030. Based on Mexico's forest reference emission level (FREL) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2014, the average annual emissions from deforestation was 45 MtCO₂eq from 2000-2010. Initial estimates in the GCF states of Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, Jalisco, and Quintana Roo demonstrate that achieving Rio Branco Declaration targets would result in annual emissions reductions of 21 MtCO₂eq by 2020, equating to slightly less than half of the reductions targeted in the INDC.

INDONESIA

In its INDC, Indonesia commits to reducing emissions in 2030 by 29%, and by up to 41% with international support. The submission does not contain specific mitigation targets for deforestation, however, and the country has not submitted a FREL. While this makes it difficult to quantify what Indonesia's INDC means for forests, the INDC does call for a strong role of subnational jurisdictions in addressing deforestation. The Rio Branco Declaration's target of reducing deforestation by 80% would result in substantial emissions reductions estimated at 41MtCO₂eq annually by 2020. Furthermore, the Rio Branco Declaration's call to forge partnerships with local communities and indigenous peoples is strongly aligned with Indonesia's INDC, which emphasizes stronger participation of these vulnerable groups.

BRAZIL

Brazil's INDC pledges to reducing emissions by 37% in 2025 and 43% in 2030 compared to 2005 levels. While there are no emissions reduction targets specifically for the forest sector, the INDC does outline plans to implement the Forest Code, eliminate illegal deforestation, and restore 12 million hectares of forestland. With over 40% of its emissions originating from the forest sector, the commitment of Brazilian states to reduce deforestation by 80% through the Rio Branco Declaration will significantly advance Brazil's INDC efforts. Preliminary estimates show Brazilian GCF states could avoid emissions amounting to more than 3.6GtCO₂eq by achieving the goals of the Rio Branco Declaration.

PERU

Peru's INDC pledges to reduce emissions 20% unconditionally by 2030 and 30% conditionally using 2010 as a base year. The submission projects emissions from LULUCF to grow to 159 MtCO₂eq by 2030 and to 298 MtCO₂ for the entire economy. While roughly half of Peru's emissions originate from the LULUCF sectors, the submission does not include mitigation targets for forestry. However, a previous draft anticipated 70% of all reductions would come from this important sector which would result in reductions of 42-63 MtCO₂eq annually by 2030. By 2020, the Rio Branco Declaration aims to reduce emissions in GCF Peruvian member states by 42MtCO₂ over six years.

NIGERIA

Nigeria's INDC calls for a 20% unconditional reduction in emissions and up to a 45% conditional reduction based on international support. Though it lacks targets for mitigation from forests, the submission does highlight the importance of forests and land-use and mentions several strategies for improving forest management. Home to over half of Nigeria's remaining forests, Cross River State will unquestionably be a focus for these actions. Cross River State could achieve early reductions of 2MtCO₂eq between 2014-2020 under the Rio Branco Declaration framework.

CONCLUSIONS



Actions under the Rio Branco Declaration can **increase ambition, lay the groundwork for NDC implementation, close the emissions gap, and help maintain forests on the international climate change agenda.** Reaching the Rio Branco Declaration targets by 2020 in GCF member states will provide a strong foundation for achieving post-2020 goals under national determined contributions and demonstrate that ambitious targets for reducing deforestation are feasible. Strong sector-specific initiatives are needed to close the gigatonne emissions gap—by current estimates, the Paris Agreement will set us on a pathway for a global temperature rise of nearly 3°C. Early-action initiatives such as those within the Rio Branco Declaration’s framework are well-positioned to provide the momentum needed to address this disparity and limit global temperature rise to 2°C or lower.

The Rio Branco Declaration also helps entrench international action on forests within negotiations surrounding climate change. With the exception of Mexico, no country that encompasses GCF states and provinces has laid out quantified targets for reducing deforestation or associated emissions in their INDCs. Early success in halting deforestation will ensure forests stay on the climate change agenda and provide a basis for stronger future sector-specific targets at the national level.

ABOUT US

The Governors’ Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF-TF) is a unique subnational collaboration between 29 states and provinces from Brazil, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Spain, and the United States. More than 25% of the world’s tropical forests are in GCF states and provinces, including more than 75% of Brazil’s and more than half of Indonesia’s. The Governors’ Climate and Forests Fund (GCFF) is a financial entity established to support the Governors’ Climate and Forests (GCF) Task Force. It provides strategic financial support to multi-stakeholder approaches in GCF jurisdictions which create local pathways for reducing tropical deforestation and promoting transitions to low emissions, sustainable rural development. www.gcffund.org

Photo credits

Cover photo: Gabriel Suarez Maceiras - Lacandon Rainforest, Mexico

Interior photo: Neil Palmer - Rio Negro, Manaus, Brazil