

IUCN statement 1 COFO28

Rome, 28 September – 2 October 2026 COFO 2026 | FAO Governing Bodies | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Session: State of the World's Forests 2026: Restoring forests and landscapes – the way forward for a sustainable future

Submitted: 25.09.2026

Thank you, Chair.

IUCN would like to express its appreciation to FAO for the preparation of the *State of the World's Forests 2026: Restoring forests and landscapes – the way forward for a sustainable future*. We welcome its clear focus on how restoration can contribute simultaneously to ecological integrity, human well-being and resilient, productive landscapes, and particularly its emphasis on translating global commitments into lasting impact.

We would highlight three points.

First, restoration is increasingly central to achieving multiple global commitments on biodiversity, climate, land degradation, food and water security and livelihoods. **SOFO 2026 usefully reinforces that these objectives need to come together at the landscape level and that restoration must address people, land, enabling policies and finance together.**

Second, **we should recognize the considerable progress already made in building global restoration ambition.** The Bonn Challenge, launched by the Government of Germany and IUCN 15 years ago, **has helped mobilize commitments covering 257 million hectares across 75 countries and has contributed to the emergence of regional restoration initiatives and wider global momentum.**

But the achievement in mobilizing commitments also makes the next challenge clear: we now need to accelerate high-quality implementation at scale. Successful restoration requires much more than putting trees in the ground. It requires **the right interventions in the right landscapes, inclusive governance, enabling policies, sustained finance, viable local economies and credible monitoring of ecological and social outcomes.**

IUCN welcomes the momentum generated through the **UNFCCC Brazil presidencies roadmap on halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 and sees strong opportunities to connect this agenda with FLR implementation and the broader restoration commitments,**

Third, **IUCN stands ready to help Members make this transition from ambition to implementation.** Through the FLR Implementation Hub, the Restoration Barometer, the Bonn Challenge and our wider country and regional programmes, we support countries with **restoration planning and prioritisation, policy and institutional frameworks, investment and finance, implementation partnerships, capacity and monitoring.**

SOFO 2026 provides an important evidence base and practical direction for this next phase.

The priority now is to use that evidence to accelerate country-led, locally grounded and measurable restoration at scale.