UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

NDC Insights Series

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About Issue No. 8

This NDC Insights Issue will dive into the latest trends on submitted NDCs related to land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector and spotlights the latest NDC submission from Liberia.

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Cover Photo: UNDP Cambodia

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Latest trends and insights

As COP30 in Belem builds political momentum on climate action, the latest NDC analyses show progress towards long-term net-zero pathways, however, it is not proving fast enough. While it is now inevitable that there will be a temporary overshoot of the 1.5°C threshold, it is still possible to bring temperatures back down—keeping 1.5°C within reach—if countries step up and deploy all available solutions. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon sinks are among the most effective and viable solutions to accelerate action.

As of 15 November 2025**, a total of 117 parties, including 15 G20 countries, 16 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and 21 Small Island Developing States (SIDS), have submitted new NDCs for the 2025 cycle,** covering around 73 percent of total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

With COP30 in full swing, we have seen a surge of NDC submissions and announcements. These include long-anticipated submissions from G20 members, including China, the European Union, Indonesia and South Africa, which leaves five members (Argentina, India, Mexico, Republic of Korea and Saudi Arabia) remaining to submit.

As we dive into the new generation of NDCs, four key trends related to land use, land-use change and forestry sector (LULUCF) emerge:

1. Majority of NDCs (97 percent) include LULUCF sector, with 75 percent including as part of an economy-wide target and 68 percent having specified a discrete LULUCF sectoral-level target.
2. All NDCs now explicitly recognize the vital role of forests, referencing their contribution to mitigation, adaptation, or both.
3. Reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) has continued to gain momentum in developing countries, with 32 percent of new NDCs making direct reference to the role of REDD+ in NDC implementation.
4. There is a growing recognition of the leading role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities within the LULUCF sector.

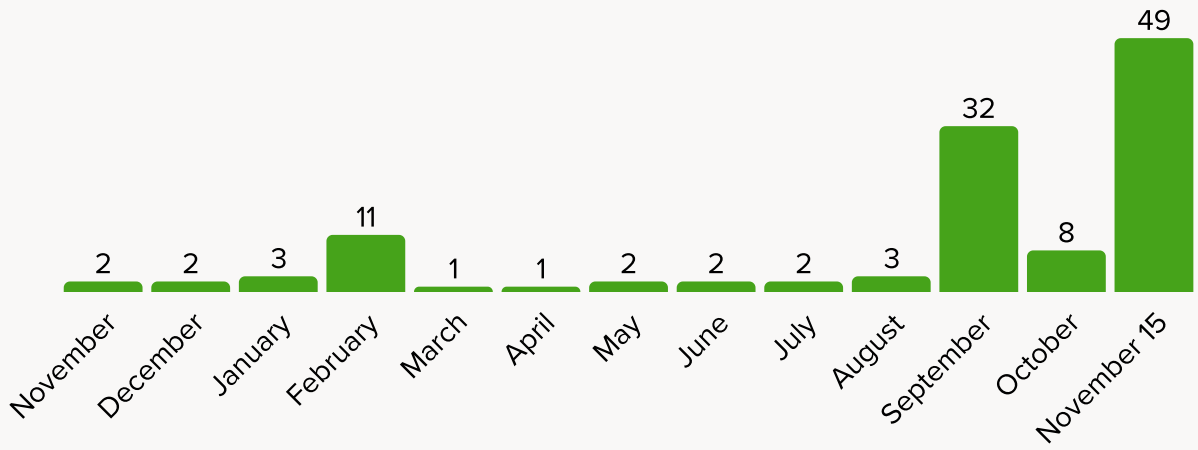
Country spotlight: Liberia

Liberia's third NDC aims to transition its forest from an emissions source to an emissions sink to deliver on its climate and development objectives. The new NDC commits to reducing the national deforestation rate by 10 percent and expanding protected areas by 200,000 hectares. It aligns with the first global stocktake, particularly on clean energy, and aims to reduce GHG emissions by 64 percent by 2035 against business-as-usual (BAU). The new NDC integrates gender, children, youth and local communities' engagement, policy coherence within the Rio conventions, and SDG linkages.

NDC submission status

As of 15 November 2025, a total of 117 parties[1] (15 G20, 16 LDCs and 21 SIDS), covering around 73 percent of total global GHG emissions,[2] have submitted new NDCs for the 2025 cycle. With COP30 in full swing, we have seen a surge in NDC submissions and announcements including long-anticipated submissions from G20 members, including **China, the European Union, Indonesia** and **South Africa**, which leaves five members (**Argentina, India, Mexico, Republic of Korea** and **Saudi Arabia**) remaining to submit. **Zambia** submitted a full NDC 3.0 in October replacing its provisional submission in March. Other countries with provisional submissions such as **Colombia, Jordan, Panama, Seychelles** and **Tunisia** are expected to follow suit.

Figure 1: Number of NDC submissions for the 2025 cycle, by month (November 2024 to 15 November 2025)[3]



Analyses from UNFCCC's 2025 NDC Synthesis Report reveals that the emissions trajectories set out in new NDCs are broadly consistent with a linear trajectory from the Parties' 2030 targets to their long-term net-zero targets, with total global GHG emissions (with LULUCF) in 2035 are projected to be around 12 percent below 2019 levels, compared to an increase of 20 to 48 percent before the adoption of the Paris Agreement. This shows that Parties are laying out clear stepping-stones towards net zero, although acceleration of action is still needed. According to UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2025, full implementation of NDCs will result in 2.3-2.5°C of warming, a notable reduction compared to 2.6-2.8°C from last year's projections. While this demonstrates the Paris Agreement's rachet mechanism is working, progress has not been fast enough to keep 1.5°C within reach.

It is now clear that keeping global warming below 1.5°C within this century is still possible but with a temporary overshoot, which means global average temperature will rise slightly above 1.5°C before being reduced again. This does not mean that we are condemned to live in a world that warms beyond a 1.5°C rise in the long run. With strong, science-based policies and urgent, bold action, we can still bring temperatures back down. Echoing this sentiment, the UN Secretary-General recently highlighted that *"the path to a livable future gets steeper by the day. But this is no reason to surrender. It's a reason to step up and speed up. 1.5 degrees by the end of the century remains our North Star."* He made a strong plea to world leaders at COP30 that *"we need a paradigm shift to limit this overshoot's magnitude and duration and quickly drive it down."* As such, forests are essential—both in terms of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as through the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon sinks—to stay on a 1.5°C pathway with limited overshoot.

This NDC Insights Issue will dive into the latest trends on submitted NDCs related to land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector and spotlights the latest NDC submission from Liberia.

Photo Credit: UNDP

Emerging trend: Forests

The global stocktake (GST) decision emphasized the need to conserve, protect and restore nature and ecosystems to meet the Paris Agreement temperature goal. This important decision also, notably, includes reference to enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of GHGs. It also references conserving biodiversity, as well as ensuring social and environmental safeguards and alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Meanwhile the world remains off track to meet the 2030 global forest goals. The Forest Declaration Assessment 2025 and the World Resource Institute's State of Climate Action Report 2025 both indicate that, despite notable progress in some countries, global rates of deforestation and forest degradation remain alarmingly high and, in some regions, continue to increase. To align with the 1.5°C pathway, global deforestation would need to decline by approximately 10 percent annually through 2030, yet, current trends show losses occurring at more than double that rate.

While ambitious global and national goals are demonstrating political commitment both at the country and international levels, it is clear there is still an essential need to continue addressing deforestation and forest degradation by scaling up ambition and implementation.

As we dive into the new generation of NDCs, four key trends emerge.

Photo Credit: UNDP Ecuador

Trend 1

Majority of countries reflect LULUCF in their NDCs, with many strengthening or expanding coverage since the previous cycle.

Based on analysis of all new NDCs submitted through 31 October, **nearly all (97 percent) include the LULUCF sector and/or related activities,** whether as part of an economy-wide target (75 percent) or with a specified LULUCF sector target (68 percent).

Several countries have introduced LULUCF targets and measures to their NDCs for the first time. The **Bahamas** has included a new target for the LULUCF sector, aiming to reach net-zero emissions in LULUCF by 2050, in line with its long-term strategy. The **Marshall Island's** NDC 3.0 has aligned its newly introduced LULUCF mitigation targets with the country's Forest Action Plan, focusing efforts on replanting and preservation of native varieties of local food trees, some of which are currently endangered.

The **United Arab Emirates** is the first country in the Middle Eastern region to submit an economy-wide NDC, and commits to mitigation through advanced nature-based solutions, such as extensive mangrove afforestation (aiming to plant up to 160 million mangroves by 2030). **Andorra's** updated NDC incorporates new data on the carbon sink capacity of forest emissions projections by using its first National Forest Inventory (NFI). It also strengthened the inclusion of forests in its mitigation measures, prioritizing the conservation and enhancement of forest ecosystems to maintain their role as carbon sinks. **Zambia** has also expanded its sector coverage by recalibrating its base-year emissions to incorporate additional sectors (including LULUCF), with specific LULUCF mitigation measures focused on reforestation as well as broader ecosystem restoration efforts.

Photo Credit: UNDP Costa Rica

Trend 2

The role of forests in contributing to both mitigation and adaptation has been expanded with all NDCs now including explicit recognition.

While 97 percent all new NDCs thus far include the LULUCF sector, the role of forests specifically has a clear, primary recognition within the sector vis-à-vis other land-use categories. **All NDCs explicitly reference forests**. Not only is it evident that more countries have integrated forest measures into their mitigation targets but a wider scope of forest-specific contributions is being reflected in the new NDCs, such as wildfire measures. In addition to the increased specificity and scope, there is improved and strengthened information on costing and financial needs to implement these activities.

Photo Credit: UNDP Cote d'Ivoire

Of the more recently submitted NDCs, **Canada's** updated NDC prioritizes implementation of the 2030 Nature Strategy, which includes strong commitments to forest conservation and restoration. Having experienced a high level of wildfires in recent years, Canada's updated NDC also cites its National Adaptation Strategy, which provides a framework for disaster resilience and infrastructure. **Côte d'Ivoire's** economy-wide NDC not only explicitly includes the LULUCF sector in its BAU mitigation scenario and its ambitious mitigation targets. The new NDC also includes a particular focus of turning its forest back into a carbon sink. Mitigation targets, developed through inclusive stakeholder consultations, include increasing forest area by 1.5 million hectares by 2035 and converting agricultural value chains into sustainable agroforestry systems spanning across 2,500,000 hectares of land. **Cabo Verde's** economy-wide GHG emissions reduction target of 18 percent below the BAU scenario fully incorporates the LULUCF sector and includes ambitious, specific afforestation and reforestation targets, with LULUCF anticipated to contribute up to 21 percent of the country's emissions reduction target.


Photo Credit: UNDP Viet Nam

Trend 3

REDD+ is gaining momentum in developing country NDCs.

Around **32 percent of new NDCs directly reference REDD+** as critical to NDC implementation. In new NDCs, developing countries generally referenced their REDD+ action with a greater level of detail than previous rounds of NDCs. These NDCs now explicitly refer to their national REDD+ strategies as well as the application of social and environmental safeguards for REDD+, and ongoing implementation of REDD+ as central to their climate action. REDD+ results-based payments (RBPs), along with the associated inclusive governance and necessary national systems, are broadly recognized as a key lever to mitigation in the forest sector, which is critical for turning forest ambition into action.

Photo Credit: UNDP Indonesia

Indonesia has long included forest and peatland mitigation in its climate goals, and in its NDC 3.0, the country has ramped up its ambition with goals of restoring 2 million hectares of peat lands and rehabilitating 8.3 million hectares of degraded land. The NDC 3.0 also sends a clear political signal on the role of forests and REDD+ in climate action. Having successfully accessed RBPs from both Norway and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Indonesia has reinvested the proceeds into strengthening its REDD+ architecture for the UNFCCC Warsaw Framework for REDD+ as well as direct interventions on the ground, including social forestry and training for fire prevention in forests and land. The GCF RBP project, with UNDP acting as the Accredited Entity, has also advanced deeper institutionalization and more coordinated implementation of safeguards and gender at subnational levels. **Ecuador's** second NDC highlighted the importance of how its national REDD+ results-based finance supports NDC implementation. The country has reinvested GCF RBP into its REDD+ Action Plan, supporting Indigenous communities, strengthening forest monitoring and promoting women's empowerment. These examples highlight how REDD+ finance can serve as a catalyst for sustained national mitigation within the sector.

Trend 4

There is a growing recognition of the leading role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities within the LULUCF sector.

Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant and local communities, including women, men and youth among them, are key actors in the design and implementation of NDCs, particularly within the LULUCF sector. **Their leadership in shaping forest restoration and monitoring, as well as strengthening climate resilience, is increasingly being recognized in the context of NDCs.** The role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in achieving climate goals, specifically within the forest sector, is acknowledged in the text of multiple NDC 3.0 submissions.

Cambodia's updated NDC is heavily informed by its National REDD+ Strategy and includes mitigation measures specifically targeting Indigenous Peoples in forest-based eco-tourism, sustainable farming and conservation efforts. This builds on ongoing NDC implementation, through which direct grants were provided to Indigenous communities, benefiting 9,222 people including 4,939 women and with increased youth involvement, leading to the protection of over 6,000 hectares of community forests. Achievements include regular community patrols, the adoption of agroecology and agroforestry practices, and the establishment of community-managed protected areas. UNDP-supported funding has further strengthened Indigenous land rights and sustainable livelihoods, with communities securing legal boundaries, reducing illegal logging and preserving sacred sites.

As part of implementing its REDD+ Action Plan, **Ecuador** has embedded ancestral knowledge and intercultural planning into forest governance, supported women-led community-based tourism and forest protection, and enhanced market access for traditional forest-based products. Ecuador also included an intercultural approach to update its second NDC, conducting differentiated consultations by sector and geography.

In **Bangladesh**, Indigenous Peoples are recognized as a source of traditional ecological knowledge for adaptation, with the updated NDC prioritizing research in this area as one of its adaptation measures. **Belize** and **Angola** further highlight inclusive forest management, with Indigenous Peoples engaged in climate-smart agriculture, reforestation and ecosystem restoration. **Brazil's** NDC highlights the goal of promoting productive inclusion in economic activities with the objective of promoting restoration and decarbonization, as well as an inclusive and sustainable socio-economic transition. Ongoing initiatives currently supported by UNDP already speak to a focus on local and Indigenous women and men entrepreneurs being equitably capacitated to develop projects and innovative businesses focused on conservation, recovery and sustainable use of native vegetation in the Amazon. These examples underscore the critical role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in advancing equitable, effective and culturally grounded climate action through the LULUCF sector.


Photo Credit: UNDP Ecuador

“As a woman entrepreneur in Brazil, the journey is daunting, especially in the Amazon. We grapple with challenges that extend far beyond mere commerce; it’s about supporting the Indigenous communities in their battle to preserve the forest and their sustainable way of life. True entrepreneurship isn’t just about profit; it’s about embodying our beliefs. We navigate these waters with dedication, inclusivity, and empathy—qualities inherent to women.”

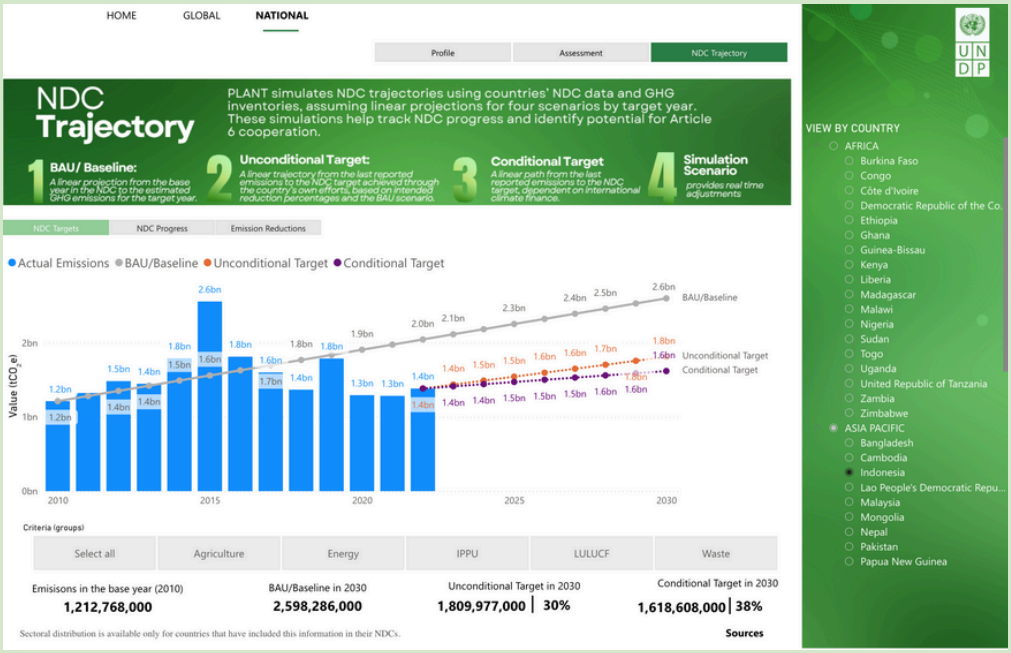
Valéria Mourão with her socio-environmental enterprise is one of the Indigenous women beneficiaries of the Floresta+ project in Brazil.

Photo Credit: Floresta+ Collection

Spotlight: Leveraging digital solutions to enhance the role of forests in NDCs: Paris Agreement LULUCF and NDC Tool (PLANT)

UNDP's PLANT supports countries to analyse opportunities to enhance the contribution of the forest sector to NDC mitigation targets, the potential for high-quality emission reductions/removals available for carbon market access, and the systems and processes needed to meet the requirements of the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement. It currently includes data for 63 countries.

PLANT was created by UNDP Climate as an agile database to consolidate country data on GHG emissions and removals from the LULUCF sector. By systematizing and illustrating publicly available data, PLANT allows countries, with the support from UNDP Climate and Forests thematic experts, to assess key elements for the implementation of the Paris Agreement via the LULUCF sector, with a particular focus on forests.



Country spotlight: Liberia

Liberia's forests: From emission source to climate solution

Photo Credit: UNDP Liberia

Liberia's forests cover roughly 69 percent of its national territory and is home to the largest remaining portion of the Upper Guinea ecosystem. While the country's forests represent a vital carbon sink, the sector is also a major source of emissions. Liberia's third NDC recognizes that the LULUCF sector accounts for close to two thirds of its total national GHG emissions, driven mainly by deforestation and land degradation. In response to this, the new NDC makes a clear strategic shift from earlier NDCs by placing heavier emphasis on the role of forests and LULUCF in achieving climate goals and Liberia's long-term, net-zero vision. This shift reflects a pragmatic understanding that Liberia's comparative advantage, and its greatest opportunity for global climate impact, lies in conserving and restoring these landscapes.

Liberia's NDC 3.0 commits to reducing the national deforestation rate by 10 percent, and expanding protected areas by 200,000 hectares. Notably, it features the introduction of a policy that will mandate all new agricultural interventions or concessions be granted only on degraded land, rather than primary forest area by 2028. Adaptation goals aimed at strengthening resilience to droughts, floods, soil degradation, and supporting alternative livelihoods in forest-dependent communities are also included in the new NDC. The forestry and land-use components include quantifiable indicators, explicit baselines and improved measurable results, demonstrating a move toward stronger evidence-based planning and accountability.

Beyond progress and ambition demonstrated through the LULUCF sector, and particularly forests, Liberia's new NDC includes a target of reducing GHG emissions by 64 percent below BAU levels by 2035 and commits towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. It has expanded mitigation efforts beyond forestry and energy to include transport and waste management and enhanced adaptation measures across key sectors. The NDC aligns with the GST outcomes, especially on clean energy. Targets include expanding renewable energy to 75 percent of on-grid generation, installing 150 MW of new renewable capacity, promoting clean cooking for 200,000 households, and deploying 2,000 electric tricycles for cleaner public transport. Gender, children, youth and local communities' engagement, policy coherence within the Rio conventions, and SDG linkages have been included in the NDC. It highlights that it has integrated the key objectives of all three Rio Conventions by aligning climate ambition with biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management and inclusive development strategies and efforts. Priorities and measures of the new NDC are aligned with relevant national plans and strategies, such as the REDD+ Investment Plan, the National Adaptation Plan and the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (2025–2029).

The UN system, through the Climate Promise, was instrumental in supporting Liberia's NDC revision process. This support illustrates strong UN system collaboration, with UNDP leading technical support across key areas, as well as ensuring gender equality, social inclusion and whole-of-society engagement. Other UN entities including FAO, UN Women, UNFCCC Regional Collaborating Center, UNICEF, UNECA, UNEP, WHO, UNFPA and UNCDF, also provided support that was coordinated through the UN's Resident Coordination Office.


Photo Credit: UNDP Liberia

Endnotes

[1] The 117 parties include 116 countries (Andorra, Angola, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Barbados, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Niue, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tonga, Turkiye, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and the European Union. The UNFCCC tracks new NDC submissions in the 2025 cycle on a dedicated NDC 3.0 page.

[2.] World Resource Institute's Climate Watch Historical GHG Emissions 2021.

[3.] Zambia was counted as March submission in the previous Issues as a provisional submission. In October, Zambia submitted a full submission, thus, it is now reflected in the October submission instead of March.

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