



FSC proposal for forest targets to be included in the Sustainable Development Goals, under “Ecosystems and Biodiversity”

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The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) calls for the inclusion of targets on forests in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), under “Ecosystems and Biodiversity”. It proposes these to be formulated as:

By 2020,

- ***halt deforestation and forest degradation globally***
- ***restore 15 percent of currently degraded forest ecosystems***
- ***ensure sustainable forest management.***

These targets would build on the forest criterion of the seventh Millennium Development Goal, ‘ensure environmental sustainability’, and support the three forest-related Aichi Targets agreed by signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010.

Furthermore, FSC suggests the inclusion of an indicator on certification, which could be formulated as:

Increased use of transparent, effective, balanced multi stakeholder governed forest and chain-of-custody certification systems, particularly in regions where forests are under most pressure.

Aichi Targets relevant to forests

Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 percent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.



Why forest targets in the SDGs?

Failing to include forests in the SDGs would give a wrong signal: that either the fate of forests is not essential for the wider sustainable development agenda, or that problems with forests have been resolved. The United Nations' *MDG Report 2012* clearly shows that forest cover continues to decline rapidly in Africa and Latin America, and that despite impressive increases in forest cover in China, India and Vietnam, the decline continues across Asia as a whole. And this focus on the quantity of forest cover does not take into account trends in degradation of forest quality.

While SDGs should focus on drivers of sustainability, it is also important that they clearly highlight both global ecological limitations and the key challenges that must be overcome to make sustainability possible. FSC calls for the inclusion of a forest target that is clearly linked to existing international commitments, such as the MDGs and the Aichi Targets, as suggested below.

FSC is in favor of using indicators that support the SDGs and their associated targets, we also propose including one on forest and chain of custody certification systems. While certification systems are voluntary, and cannot replace necessary government intervention, they have an important role to play in providing incentives for good practice in forest management, mobilizing investments and experience, and creating cross-border confidence and reliable markets for certified forest products. This also makes them an important element in meeting the challenge of achieving sustainable production and consumption patterns.

The wording of FSC's proposed indicator is intended to promote governments' recognition of and support for sustainable forest management certification schemes as contribution to implementation of a forest SDG or target. Transparency and balanced multi-stakeholder governance of the schemes, as well as effective implementation and auditing, are essential elements.

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The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent organization that promotes environmentally sound, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests. Established in 1993 as a response to concerns over global deforestation, FSC is a membership organization with a governance structure based on participation, democracy, equity and transparency.

Our Vision

The world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

Our Mission

FSC promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.