EIG Submission on the Mitigation Work Programme

The EIG is pleased to share its views on the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP), in response to the call for submissions from Decision FCCC/PA/CMA/2022/L.17, para. 12.

The EIG suggests dedicating the topic of the Mitigation Work Programme in 2025 to urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation with regards to **land-use, land-use change and forestry, including deforestation and forest degradation and adaptive management**. 2025 is the year of nature and forests with the COP30 in Belém offering many opportunities to showcase progress in forests for the wellbeing of humans and the rest of nature. The MWP must increase action in the land use sector towards the Paris Agreement's temperature goal.

There is no pathway to achieve the Paris Agreement's global temperature and adaptation goals without adaptive management, halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation. The Mitigation Work Programme should aim to support Parties to take action to conserve and enhance, as appropriate, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, in accordance with Article 5.1 of the Paris Agreement. Parties are also far off track from halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. Discussions should support the implementation of paragraphs 33[1] and 34[2] of Decision 1.CMA.5 of the first global stocktake.

The MWP should provide guidance and help Parties identify and find international cooperation opportunities to implement actions aligned with reducing emissions of LULUCF, forest protection, conservation and sustainable management for the wellbeing of humans and the rest of nature. In particular, the Mitigation Work Programme could specifically explore policies, measures, best practices, key actions and recommendations to achieve those objectives.

Specific topics of interest include:

1) **Halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030**, and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases (paragraph 33)
   - **Identifying and mainstreaming actions to fight deforestation and forest degradation:** Deforestation and forest degradation are complex issues with drivers that reach far beyond LULUCF. Effective action requires a mix of measures including a multitude of policy instruments such as commodity-centered and market-related instruments. The MWP could summarize the information on best practices, experience, and ideas serving as a means for mainstreaming action and identifying potential cooperation to enhance efforts. This information could be presented by the co-chairs of the MWP in high-level events on forests or other appropriate events. Furthermore, we propose the **establishment of a dedicated work program or a space within an existing item aimed at combating deforestation and forest degradation** while actively encouraging the participation of all Parties. This work program will serve to assess the efforts and activities of Parties in halting deforestation and forest degradation, monitor the global implementation status, and provide practical guidelines and policy recommendations to the Parties.
   - **Adaptive management**: Adaptation is prerequisite for sustaining natures' benefits. Sustainable forest management that includes adaptive measures to enhance the adaptive capacity,

[1] *33. Further emphasizes the importance of conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal, including through enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by conserving biodiversity, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;*

[2] *Parties are encouraged to take action to implement and support, including through results-based payments, the existing framework as set out in related guidance and decisions already agreed under the Convention for: policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries; and alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, while reaffirming the importance of incentivizing, as appropriate, non-carbon benefits associated with such approaches.*

strengthen resilience, and reduce vulnerability of nature to climate change are fundamental for conserving and strengthening ecosystem services including mitigation. Adaptive actions within sustainable management reduce climate-related and other risks to ecosystems and service provision.

- **Scope definition**: All the world's forests (tropical, temperate, and boreal) must be protected, conserved, and managed in a sustainable manner for climate resilient and sustainable development. When considering paragraph 33, it is important to consider forests of all major global climate zones.
- **Domestic tracking:** Parties could present best practices in tracking deforestation, forest degradation at the domestic level, or considering forests in domestic planning, including NDCs. As part of the MWP, respective experience and best-practices could be shared by Parties or relevant expert organizations that can guide interested Parties in designing policies and considering nature and forests in their NDC.
- **REDD+:** REDD+ will be a key tool for Parties to achieve the goal of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. The Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (WFR), developed by the COP and officially adopted at COP19 in 2013, ensures transparency in emission reduction results through its formal operation under the UNFCCC. The experiences, best practices, and implementation outcomes of WFR can serve as guidelines for forest-based mitigation efforts. Such information can be effectively disseminated through official events organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- **Finance:** Financial investments and incentives are key to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation while ensuring the sustainable management of existing forests. Therefore a discussion on the consistency of global financial flows and support provided and mobilized with sustainable forest management and halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation would be important in our view.

2) **Conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems**

Sustainable management and restoration of forests and other ecosystems offer the greatest economic mitigation potential. It also achieves a multitude of ecological, social, and economic benefits. The EIG proposes to focus on action that can develop and strengthen synergies between mitigation and other ecosystem services:

- **Adaptation to enhance mitigation:** Natural carbon stocks are severely threatened by climate change. Adaptation measures help conserve and foster ecosystem services including mitigation. Best practices shall be shared allowing parties to implement effective adaptation measures for conserving and enhancing ecosystem-based mitigation and other services. Hereby, linkages between the MWP and the work on the Global Goal on Adaptation could be explored and possibly presented in events at COP30.
- **Nature-based solutions and Ecosystem-Based Approach (EbA):** Nature-based solutions and Ecosystem-Based Approach are part of almost all countries' NDCs and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and are being implemented around the world. At the same time, there is a lack of common understanding as to how to maximize their benefits.
- **Safeguards and standards for nature-based solutions and Ecosystem-Based Approach:** Concrete examples could help show how Parties can apply those in their policy planning. Parties may wish to reflect on how these can be recognized by COP30.
    - **REDD+ Safeguards:** The UNFCCC recognized the importance and necessity of addressing safeguards in the implementation of REDD+. The COP developed and adopted seven safeguards which are essential elements of WFR implementation. Discussions on the specific implementation of these safeguards and the assessment of their outcomes can provide Parties with practical ideas for their application and execution.
    - IUCN should be invited to present its **standards for nature-based solutions**. Concrete examples could help show how Parties can apply those in their policy planning. Parties may wish to reflect on how these can be recognized by COP30.

- The IPCC also is a key actor that should share the findings in its AR6 regarding Ecosystem-Based Approaches and their uses for mitigation, including the synergies with adaptation and the barriers and challenges for their implementation.
- Discussions could draw from the **ENACT Partnership**, which is a hub for Parties and non-state actors working on nature-based solutions. The Partnership was launched at COP27 by the Egyptian COP Presidency in collaboration with the Government of Germany and IUCN, which hosts ENACT's secretariat. The ENACT Partnership's annual nature-based solutions report and the ENACT Dashboard, soon to be launched to track progress on the ENACT nature-based solutions Goals for adaptation, mitigation, and biodiversity, could be a place to showcase progress.

- Parties may reflect on how the contribution of nature and nature-based solutions to climate mitigation could best be recognized at COP30.
- **REDD+:** The UNFCCC is at the forefront of incentivizing mitigation in ecosystems at scale through the GCF. The GCF mainstreamed REDD+ in 2024.

3) **Sustainable and adaptive forest management:** Discussions should showcase best practices for sustainable and adaptive forest management, including how to build in **circularity** in sustainable forest-based supply chains.
   - **Highest Carbon Sequestration Potential:** Core measure for fostering forest carbon sequestration potential is risk reduction through sustainable and adaptive forest management measures e.g., to protected forest stands from insects, diseases, and fire. The highest carbon sequestration potential in forest stands occurs when they are managed for the fastest growth rate through early thinning (to be implemented exclusively in forest stands dedicated to wood production). Resulting wood has to be transferred into long-term material use. There is a need to share and discuss cases in which these enhancement effects are reflected in the national greenhouse gas inventory of the forest sector.
   - **Transition towards a sustainable Forest-based bioeconomy:** It is important to strengthen collaboration on sustainable wood-based value chains and encouraging greater use and re-use (cascade use) of long-lived harvested wood products to maximize forest carbon benefits, especially building sector. Also, it needs to establish a system to share newly created value with local communities. Sharing best practices will contribute to global forest-based sustainable development.
   - **Community contributions to the forest management**: REDD+ recognizes the need to include the communities in conservation and forest management strategies. In that sense, the MWP can address these contributions, such as forest protection in areas managed by Indigenous Peoples, deforestation rates are often lower than in non-protected areas as well as the use of Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Management (eg. use of practices such as agroforestry, controlled fire management, and reforestation with native species) and include examples of good practices on payments for ecosystem services to communities that protect forests and capture carbon.

4) **Conserving biodiversity, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**
   - **Synergies between multilateral agreements:** Discussions could touch on how to leverage the contributions made by other multilateral agreements and mechanisms (e.g. **CBD, Ramsar, UNCCD, UN Forest**) in aligning climate and biodiversity goals. What role can the KMGBF play? What concrete actions can support synergies between the climate and biodiversity conventions?
   - **Synergies through planning instruments:** Namely, examples could be shown of how to support synergies in formulating NDCs and NBSAPs, in formulating legislation or policies at the domestic level, as well as at the implementation level.
   - **Synergies in scientific products:** We suggest leveraging evidence from the **IPBES Nexus assessment**: the thematic assessment of the interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food and health (nexus assessment) of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) addresses the complex and interconnected character of the crises and challenges of biodiversity loss, water availability and quality, food insecurity, health

risks and climate change. The more than 70 response options presented in the report, taken together, support the achievement of all 17 SDGs, all 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the long-term goals for climate change mitigation and adaptation of the Paris Agreement.

- **Ensuring environmental and social safeguards:** Discussions should focus on how to ensure social and environmental safeguards in the land-use sector, namely with regards to nature-based solutions and ecosystems based approach, considering as basis the guidance and safeguards for policy approaches and positive incentives on REDD+ (Decision 1/CP.16, Annex 1, paragraph 2), as well as the checklist of safeguards in biodiversity financing mechanisms under the Convention on Biological Diversity (paragraph 6 of decision CBD/COP/DEC/14/15 of 30 November 2018).
- **Reliable accounting:** Guidance could also be shared on how to ensure reliable calculation of sequestration rates of biodiversity action.

5) **Urgently reduce emissions from land-use and land-use change, while fostering food security and nutrition**

Agricultural expansion accounts for almost 90% of deforestation. Agriculture and forestry linkages can mitigate the negative impact on forests and nature. The EIG proposes a focus on:

- **Integrated Land Use and Land Management, Long-term Land Policies:** The IPCC WG3 AR6 presents land-based options such as forest conservation, avoided deforestation, improved sustainable forest management, agroforestry, and soil carbon management to link mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development. It also emphasizes the need for integration with existing land use to maximize synergies and overcome trade-offs among these options. Discussions are needed on cases promoting integrated land use and long-term land policies, such as the **FACT Dialogue** (Forest, Agriculture, and Commodity Trade Dialogue) and the **European Union Reforestation Regulation** (EUDR). In particular, in the case of the FACT Dialogue, launched at COP26, it is an intergovernmental initiative and an international cooperation platform that enables Parties to collaborate in addressing the interconnected challenges of sustainable commodity production, trade, and environmental protection. Hosting a high-level event on the FACT Dialogue at COP30 would help enhance awareness of the importance and urgency of sustainable land policies.
- **Integrative landscape approaches and sustainable and circular bioeconomy:** Many Parties are implementing a new paradigm of **integrative landscape management** in which deforestation and forest degradation can be avoided through the implementation of economically, ecologically, and socially beneficial practices. These include specific models of sustainable and circular bioeconomy that enhance mitigation benefits. Further, non-destructive management of forest and agricultural landscapes strengthens a multitude of ecosystem services, including water storage and filtration, pollination, climate regulation, and soil protection. Best practices could be synthesized and shared on landscape and bioeconomy.
- **Strengthening food security and nutrition while reducing emissions:** Sustainable and adaptive land use practices that reduce emissions can simultaneously contribute to more resilient food systems and enhance food security and nutrition by improving soil health, water management, and crop diversity[3]. Parties can share best practices that demonstrate how these two fields of innovation can be brought together and what policy frameworks are sustainable to achieve urgent emission reductions while improving food security and nutrition.

For all the above topics, Parties should be invited to consider possible concrete steps, solutions, best practices, and actionable recommendations in that regards.

Discussions should be informed by the IPCC AR6, recent publications of BTRs and NDCs, as well as the most recent NDC Synthesis Reports.

[3] An important resource here includes the FAO's: Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: FAO's global roadmap

Investment-focused events

The investment-focused events could focus in particular on how to support the implementation of paragraph 5.2 of the Paris Agreement[4]. The investment-focused events could also focus on how to implement paragraphs 33, 34 and 55 of Decision 1/CMA.5 of the first global stocktake.

The investment-focused events could showcase opportunities through participation in REDD+ as well as existing funds, international cooperation initiatives and facilities, and mechanisms like Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES).

[4] *Noting the need for enhanced support and investment, including through financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, for efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, in accordance with Article 5 of the Paris Agreement, including through results-based payments for policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries; and alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, while reaffirming the importance of incentivizing, as appropriate, non-carbon benefits associated with such approaches.*