



FOREST DECLARATION ASSESSMENT REPORT - ENVIRONMENT

NEWS: The 2024 Forest Declaration Assessment report, “Forests under fire: Tracking progress on 2030 forest goals,” was released.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

About

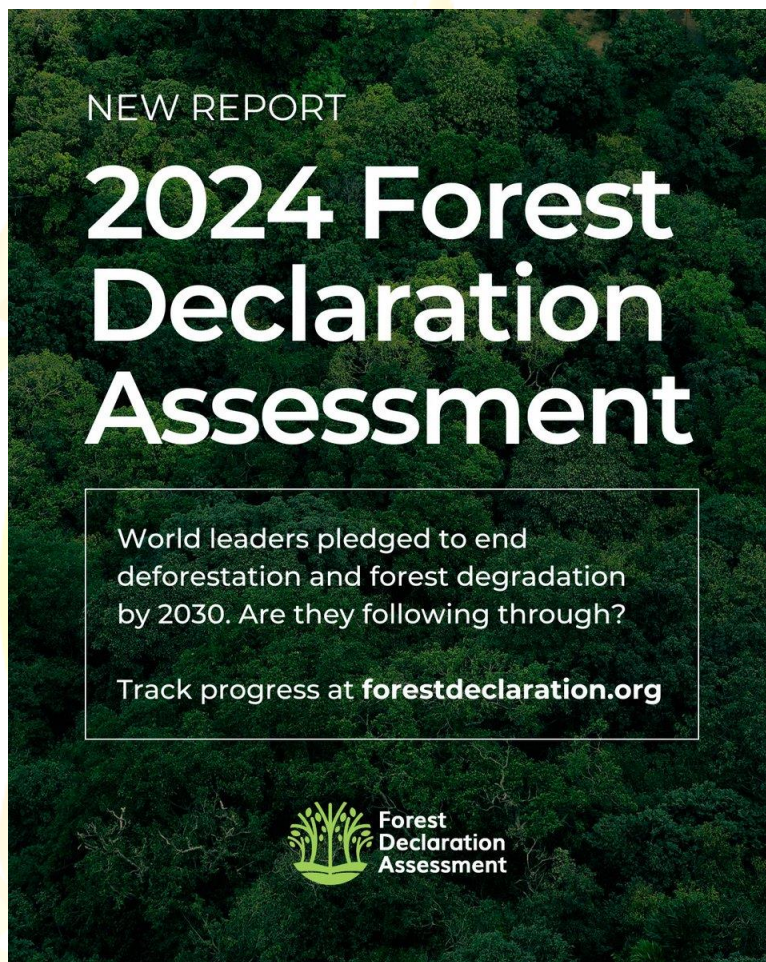
- Most countries backed the **2030 zero deforestation pledge** at the UN Cop26 climate summit in 2021.
- The 2024 forest declaration assessment, produced by a coalition of research and civil society organisations, **assessed progress towards the goal** using a baseline of the **average deforestation between 2018 and 2020**.
- It found **progress was significantly off track**, with the level of deforestation in 2023 almost **50% higher** than steady progress towards zero would require.

Major Findings

- **Shortcomings in Meeting Target:** The target for last year was to bring global deforestation down to a maximum of 4.4 million hectares (10.9 million acres).
 - The global deforestation remains 45 percent above the levels needed to meet international goals
- **Nearly 96 percent** of all deforestation occurred in **tropical regions**, and almost all these areas failed to meet their annual targets
 - Tropical deforestation resulted in the **emission of nearly 3.7 billion metric tons** of carbon dioxide-equivalent in 2023.
- **Loss of Forest:** In 2023, the world lost 6.37 million hectares of forest, this loss was 45 percent higher than the goal to eliminate deforestation by 2030.
 - **Primary tropical forests**, essential for storing carbon and protecting biodiversity, lost 3.7 million hectares in 2023.
 - It indicated serious problems in global efforts to stop deforestation and forest damage.
- **Forest Damage:** Forest damage without complete destruction is 10 times worse than deforestation itself, affecting 62.6 million hectares in 2022.
- **Main Drivers:** Agriculture, road construction, fires and commercial logging were the main drivers of deforestation across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **Positive Progress:** **Brazil** has reduced its deforestation by **9 percent** below previous levels, showing that significant progress is possible.



- Other countries that made progress towards the 2030 deforestation target included Australia, Colombia, Paraguay, Venezuela and Vietnam.
- The report also emphasizes the **loss of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)**, where more than 1.4 million hectares of forest were lost in 2023.
 - Protecting these areas is critical for wildlife and Indigenous communities that depend on them.



- **Forest fires** are a significant threat, mainly due to intentional land clearing for agriculture.
 - Since 2001, 138 million hectares of tree cover have been lost to fires, with about a third of that occurring between 2019 and 2023.
- **The report outlined steps for global actors** to achieve forest protection goals, which includes:
 - Ensuring adequate funding for forest conservation efforts.
 - Reducing the demand for products that cause deforestation.



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- Recognising the important role of Indigenous and local communities in forest protection.

Way Ahead

- Ultimately, the challenges outlined in the 2024 Forest Declaration Assessment underscore that achieving forest conservation goals and advancing sustainable economic development are not mutually exclusive.
- But success depends on the willingness of governments, industry, and civil society to prioritize forests and integrate sustainable practices at every level.
- With just a few years remaining before 2030, the time to act is now.

Source: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/forests/global-deforestation-rates-surge-shows-forest-declaration-assessment-2024>

