

**PRESS RELEASE: Embargoed for 00:01 BST Wednesday 2 September 2020**

## **Countries commit to restore over 210 million hectares of forest landscapes under the Bonn Challenge, creating an opportunity to boost climate ambition**

*Since its launch in 2011, 61 nations, 8 states and 5 associations have taken up the Bonn Challenge – committing more than 210 million hectares to the world’s largest forest landscape restoration (FLR) initiative and forging ahead with restoration planning and implementation.*

*A new analysis shows unrealised potential for forest landscape restoration (FLR) as a critical lever for meeting climate targets, protecting biodiversity, reversing land degradation and rebuilding economies. If Bonn Challenge countries were to fully incorporate their already committed quantitative Bonn Challenge targets into their NDCs, this would account for 205.78 million hectares of increased climate ambition and action in the forest and land use sector – removing up to 15 billion tons of carbon dioxide.*

The Bonn Challenge, launched in 2011 by IUCN and the Federal German Ministry for the Environment, aims at 150 million hectares under restoration by 2020, and at 350 million hectares by 2030.

Launching today, ‘*Restore Our Future*’ is an ongoing global campaign celebrating the Bonn Challenge in its first milestone year and accelerating action over the coming decade. Over a 24-hour period, 24+ nations will showcase how, by committing to the Bonn Challenge, they have used FLR to boost ecological and human health and wellbeing. *Restore Our Future* brings to life stories of forest landscape restoration by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

To mark the 2020 milestone, the Bonn Challenge Secretariat, managed by [IUCN](#), today released a report – entitled [Bonn Challenge: Impact and Potential of Forest Landscape Restoration](#) [*live 2 Sept*].

The report highlights the diversity and impact of the Bonn Challenge with six case studies – from Rwanda to Guatemala - showing what is happening on the ground in preparation for the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. It also reveals the unrealised potential for participating countries to use forest landscape restoration efforts to raise their climate ambition before the upcoming UNFCCC COP26 and stimulate economic recovery through the creation of jobs and other benefits after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report found that:

- 117 of 166 countries (70%) have not yet set quantitative targets from the forests and land use sector related to forest landscape restoration to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> within their climate change Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- Of 166 NDCs analysed, 128 countries included targets aligned with FLR, reflecting recognition of the role of restoration in combating climate change in the forest and land use sector, but only 30% of NDCs expressed quantitative targets.

- Of 166 NDCs analysed, 61 have made Bonn Challenge commitment but only 53 of these included targets aligned with FLR in their NDCs, and only 27 were quantitative targets.
- If all Bonn Challenge countries were to fully incorporate their already committed quantitative Bonn Challenge targets into their 2020 NDCs, this would account for 205.78 million hectares of increased climate ambition and action – removing up to 15 billion tons of carbon dioxide.

**Dr Bruno Oberle, IUCN Director General, said:**

“To restore our future, we require durable, effective nature-based solutions that can tackle challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss or food and water security, but also stimulate economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The achievements made under Bonn Challenge to date clearly illustrate that such solutions exist, and that they work at a global scale. We call on the global community to build on the momentum created and increase ambition even further at this crucial moment in time.”

**Stewart Maginnis , IUCN Global Director for the Nature-based Solutions Group, said:**

“Countries that have joined the Bonn Challenge have realised a vast array of socioeconomic benefits, from boosting crop yields in poverty-stricken areas - to enhancing flood resilience. Crucially, through adopting forest landscape restoration through the Bonn Challenge, countries can activate a vital lever to unlock collective ambition in the run-up to COP26.”

**Mr Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Government Of Germany said,** “The Bonn Challenge has triggered regional initiatives promoting collaboration between countries on the restoration of forests at the landscape level. It unlocked new funding and led to the development of new policies and tools to advance implementation. This is an important collective commitment to restore our future. To keep this ball rolling, it comes at the right time that the community of states proclaimed the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration for the Years 2021 to 2030. We expect the Bonn Challenge as well as other initiatives to play a major role in making this UN Decade a success..”

**Christiana Figueres, co-founder of Global Optimism and the former UN climate chief who oversaw the signing of the Paris Agreement on climate change commented:**

“The Bonn Challenge provides the evidence we need to further invest in forest landscape restoration. We know that the climate change, biodiversity, health and economic crises have all converged. Forest restoration is not only a powerful and effective nature-based solution to address these challenges, it is also 30% of the solution to carbon removals. The human, environmental and economic case for increasing global restoration action is key to restoring our future.”

*Further findings of the report include:*

As well as showing opportunities to increase climate ambition, the new report highlights advantages for countries participating in the Bonn Challenge to increase impact under the other Rio Conventions<sup>1</sup>: the national targets for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) related to the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/rio\\_20\\_adaptation\\_brochure.pdf](https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/rio_20_adaptation_brochure.pdf)

FLR is also a key route for rebuilding economies following Covid-19, as underscored by the case studies in *Bonn Challenge: Impact and Potential of Forest Landscape Restoration* report. Jobs are created through restoration action: for example, between 2011 and 2018, 354,000 jobs were created in 5 Bonn Challenge countries.<sup>2</sup> It has been estimated that USD \$75.6 trillion can be gained, on an annual basis, from effectively addressing land degradation.<sup>3</sup> For every dollar spent on restoration, at least \$9 USD of economic benefit is generated<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the pandemic has made it more apparent that many essential products people use come from forests and trees, such as personal protective equipment (PPE)<sup>5</sup>. Restoring already degraded lands through forest landscape restoration provides a sustainable source for such products.

The thousands of restoration champions who are the engine behind Restore Our Future are demonstrating the potential of forest landscape restoration as a Nature-based Solutions to chart a sustainable roadmap for our planet as we tackle ever growing threats.



Supported by:



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

**ENDS**

based on a decision of the German Bundestag

#### **For media enquires and interview requests:**

- Rachel Parkes [rachel.parkes@greenhousepr.co.uk](mailto:rachel.parkes@greenhousepr.co.uk) +44 07775 652919
- Mayowa Ogunremi [mayowa.ogunremi@greenhousepr.co.uk](mailto:mayowa.ogunremi@greenhousepr.co.uk) +44 07943517418

#### **About the Bonn Challenge**

The Bonn Challenge is a global goal to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. It was launched by IUCN and the Government of Germany in 2011 to respond to the urgent issue of land degradation and deforestation. The secretariat for the Bonn Challenge is housed within the IUCN.

#### **About BMU**

The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) touches all areas of society and drives innovation and a transition to sustainable development which will benefit future generations. Modern environmental policy secures the foundations of economic prosperity, quality of life for each individual and social cohesion. The ministry has been working over 30 years now to protect the public from environmental toxins and radiation and to establish an intelligent and efficient use of raw materials, to advance climate action and to promote a use of natural resources that conserves biodiversity and secures habitats. The key responsibilities are to prepare legislation, funding research and development, cooperate at national and international level and communicate for broad public participation and acceptance. Since 2008, BMU hosts the

<sup>2</sup> <https://infoflr.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/2019-018-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/09/150915090404.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [http://4fqbik2blqkb1nrebde8yxqj-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Nature-positive-recovery\\_For-people-economy-and-climate\\_July-2020\\_Final.pdf](http://4fqbik2blqkb1nrebde8yxqj-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Nature-positive-recovery_For-people-economy-and-climate_July-2020_Final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> FAO, 2020

International Climate Initiative ([IKI](#)), funding innovative ideas like the Bonn Challenge to overcome the climate and biodiversity crises into life improving projects.

### **About IUCN**

IUCN is a membership Union composed of governments, civil society organisations and indigenous peoples organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of more than 15,000 experts. This diversity and vast expertise makes IUCN the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. IUCN recently unveiled a [Global Standard](#) providing the first-ever set of benchmarks for nature-based solutions to global challenges. The new IUCN Global Standard will help governments, business and civil society to ensure the effectiveness of nature-based solutions and maximise their potential to help address climate change, biodiversity loss and other societal challenges on a global scale.

### **About the analysis**

IUCN conducted a rapid analysis of how restoration targets have been presented in national submissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) goal and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This analysis pinpoints how and where countries have indicated quantitative targets to use restoration as a tool to mitigate climate change, reverse degradation and protect biodiversity. You can read more [here](#).

### **About FLR**

FLR is a key Nature-Based Solution that protects, manages and restores forest landscapes to address urgent societal challenges, such as climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss. It can take many forms such as managed natural regeneration, agroforestry, new tree plantings or improved land management to accommodate a mosaic of land uses, including agriculture.