

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COP26 Goal Met with US\$1.8 Billion Invested in Indigenous and Community Lands as Climate and Forest Pressures Mount

At Climate Week NYC, Governments and Philanthropies Pledge to Renew and Scale Land and Forest Commitments at COP30

New York, USA (Sept. 22, 2025) — Governments and philanthropic donors today released a [new report](#) tracking progress on the [COP26 Forest Tenure Pledge](#). Originally launched at COP26 as a US\$1.7 billion commitment to support Indigenous Peoples and local communities in protecting tropical forests, the report shows that signatories exceeded their initial pledge, mobilizing US\$1.8 billion towards strengthening Indigenous and collective land rights, and protecting forests worldwide.

The findings were unveiled at a high-level leaders' event, during Climate Week NYC, convened by the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP), a focused effort of 34 governments committed to maintaining high-level political leadership on forests, and the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG), a coalition of 25 donors supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Leaders reaffirmed the importance of delivering two strategic initiatives at COP30 in Belem:

1. **Advancing land rights in key tropical forest nations through the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment**, which aims to recognize and secure a substantial number of hectares of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' lands.
2. **Renewing the original COP26 Forest Tenure Pledge** to Indigenous Peoples and local communities for an additional five-year period, broadening the ecosystems that are included.

During the event, it was announced that the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment will be part of the COP30 Presidency Action Agenda, reflecting the importance of Indigenous Peoples and local community land tenure in the collective goal to meet climate and biodiversity targets.

"I am pleased to announce that the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment will be highlighted as part of the COP30 Presidency Action Agenda. This ambitious commitment will support the advancements in our collective goal to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030. Matched with a bold financial pledge and as part of a group of critical initiatives led by Brazil, this initiative has the potential to empower Indigenous and community-led climate action while centering rights. COP30 - the UN Climate Change Conference in the Amazon - intends to put even more effort into having land tenure as the heart of climate discussions so we can continue working towards 2030.", **commented Her Excellency Sonia Guajajara, Minister of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil.**

How the US\$1.8 billion pledge funds are strengthening rights and forest protection

Indigenous Peoples govern [39% of the world's most ecologically intact lands](#), yet their territories face increasing pressures from land grabbing, fires, illegal mining and other threats. The funding in the Forest Tenure Pledge aims to strengthen their legal rights and enable protective measures. The largest share of funds in 2024 supported forest and community enterprises (37%), followed by efforts to secure land rights (31%).

"In a four-year period, we have seen unprecedented recognition of Indigenous and community-led solutions. Funding committed through the pledge has supported these advances and demonstrated that targeted investment in tenure security yields measurable results," said Cristián Samper, Bezos Earth Fund, endorser of the pledge under the Protecting Our Planet (POP) Challenge, representing the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG).

In 2024, 7.6% of these funds were provided directly to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, while the majority was delivered through NGOs, multilateral agencies and regranting mechanisms. The report notes a growing role for Indigenous and local community-led funds, which are increasingly facilitating direct funding and managing larger allocations.

Levi Sucre, from the Bribri people of Costa Rica, said, "The fact that the FTFG has surpassed its target ahead of time proves that Indigenous Peoples and local communities were right: direct territorial investment is possible. It is encouraging that Latin America has made progress, but most of the funding remains concentrated in the Amazon, leaving regions like Mesoamerica overlooked despite their key role in social cohesion, governance, and dialogue with governments."

Sucre, who is part of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) and the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB), added, “This highlights the need to balance investments and for bilateral donors to make real commitments to direct financing. We also need to set clear goals and strategies to increase funding for women and youth, ensuring their participation and leadership in climate solutions.”

As an example of the work supported by the pledge, the report highlights initiatives to advance women’s land rights and participation in governance. In 2024, this work included backing women-led groups across 21 countries and contributed to policy gains such as securing women’s land titles in Uganda, formal recognition of Afro-descendant women’s collective rights in Colombia and expanded inheritance rights in Kenya.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The [COP26 Land and Forest Tenure Pledge](#) was launched in 2021 by 25 government and philanthropic donors to support Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ land rights and forest stewardship.
- The Forest Tenure Funders Group [report](#) released today reflects data from 2021–2024 and does not yet capture the full scope of funding mobilized in 2025. Updated figures, including 2025 funding, will be published in 2026 and are expected to confirm that the US\$1.7 billion pledge has been surpassed.
- Land managed by Indigenous Peoples slows deforestation. Peer-reviewed research in 2023 found that [rates of deforestation are significantly lower](#) in Indigenous territories or on land managed by Indigenous Peoples.
- Nearly [60%](#) of Indigenous Peoples’ lands are threatened by industrial development, with weak land rights making them especially vulnerable. Between 2012 and 2024, more than [2,200 environmental defenders](#) — most of them Indigenous — were killed for protecting their territories.

Media enquiries: for more information or media interviews, please contact:

- For the FTFG, please contact Andrea Rodríguez: arodriguez@burness.com: +591 76273793



For the FTFG, please contact Abubakr Uqdah: auqdah@burness.com: +1 (202) 553-0314

- For the FCLP, please contact Rose Olwell: rose.olwell@greenhouse.agency: +447747096122

About the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG)

The FTFG convenes the 25 bilateral and philanthropic donors who are part of the COP26 Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge. The group aims to provide \$1.7 billion by December 2025 to support IP and LC land tenure rights, sustainable forest management, and IP and LC-led conservation in ODA-eligible tropical forest countries. The Pledge does not have a central allocation mechanism; each donor operates independently, funding initiatives according to its mandate. Direct funding pathways, territorial and pooled funds, and policy reforms in countries such as Colombia and the DRC demonstrate the growing scale and impact of IP and LC-led forest stewardship. The FCLP secretariat is hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

About the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP)

The Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) is a focused effort of 34 governments with partners committed to expanding and maintaining high-level political leadership on forests, land-use and climate, to work together to implement solutions that reduce forest loss, increase restoration and support sustainable development, and to ensure accountability for the pledges that have been made.

About UNOPS

UNOPS offers practical solutions across peace and security, humanitarian and development operations. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners to manage projects and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement across the world. Read more:

www.unops.org