



## **UN Climate Action Summit: Five things governments should be doing**

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As the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit concludes, world leaders need some outside the box thinking about steps to strengthen their national commitments to shrink their greenhouse gas emissions ahead of the next phase of the Paris Agreement.

### **Reforestation and preservation of mangroves and wetlands**



Mangrove plant grows on a shore in Cancun. In the 40 years since Cancun was founded, countless acres of mangrove forests have been lost. Now many scientists say that mangrove forests can help slow climate change, and are desperate to save them. REUTERS

Between 1990 and 2016, 502,000 square miles, an area slightly larger than Peru, of forest was lost through land use changes, industry, and clearing for agriculture. Forests act as a natural carbon sink and can serve as an effective carbon control method. A single acre of forest can have the potential to sequester between 2.2 and 9.5 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> each year. For perspective, a typical passenger vehicle emits about 4.6 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> each year. Analysis by the Nature Conservancy and the World Resources Institute estimates that by stopping deforestation, restoring lost forest, and improving forestry practices nearly 7 billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> could be removed from the atmosphere annually, more than all of the cars in the world today. A scientific

**paper** calculated that as much as 21% of annual U.S. carbon emissions could be offset via comprehensive natural climate solutions such as reforestation and restoration of grasslands, wetlands and seagrass, as well as other methods, such as use of biochar, improved management of plantations, cover crops, and manure management. Farming, livestock grazing, mining, and drilling accounted for more than half of all deforestation. Some countries have found success in their efforts to develop forests. Europe's forest cover has actually **increased** by 65,600 square miles since 1990. This was mostly due to a successful push to afforestation, the planting of trees in areas that were not previously planted. Despite afforestation success, ongoing deforestation activities remains a concern and the EU has pledged to completely halt deforestation by 2020. The European Commission recently released a **communication** detailing how they would address the issue.

Deforestation has increasingly become a **global issue**. At a recent meeting of the G-7, an offer was made to Brazil to incentivize it to combat fires burning in the Amazon. International financing institutions are likely to reconsider funding measures that add to deforestation, and deforestation could become a matter of trade policy where penalties are placed on goods that require extensive deforestation.

Source: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/un-climate-action-summit-five-things-governments-should-be-doing>