

## Preface

Tropical deforestation and its effects on climate change are key concerns of our time. Forests play a crucial role in many ways: supporting livelihoods, providing food security, and sustaining ecosystem services from local to global levels. Agriculture has great potential for increasing rural economic development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, but the conversion of forest into agricultural land is a leading cause of deforestation. To counter this negative trend, a growing number of companies have made commitments over the last decade to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains and production processes. In the 2014 New York Declaration on Forests, governments, companies and civil society expressed their commitment to slowing, halting, and reversing global forest loss while simultaneously enhancing food security. Several European governments reiterated their commitments in the 2015 Amsterdam Declarations on 100% Sustainable Palm Oil and on Eliminating Deforestation from Agricultural Commodity Chains.

These ambitious stakeholder commitments offer major opportunities to address tropical deforestation driven by agricultural expansion through public-private collaboration. This is why this silver anniversary edition of *ETFRN News*, the most comprehensive ever produced, brings together 40 contributions from 100 experts and practitioners who share their experiences and suggest ideas to facilitate the implementation of public and private zero-deforestation commitments. The publication is firmly rooted in the 25-year experience of the European Tropical Forest Research Network in sharing knowledge on key issues related to tropical forests — while also looking to build stronger cross-sector partnerships into the future. It presents stories from many different actors across a range of commodity value chains, including how companies and smallholders are working together to build deforestation-free supply chains. It reviews publicly announced commitments and on-the-ground impacts to develop the understanding of the issues that link them. It analyzes how barriers and challenges to implementation are overcome, how socio-economic and environmental impacts and trade-offs are addressed, how links between private commitments and government policy and regulations are enhanced, and how transnational and civil-society initiatives help or hinder them.

The new knowledge captured in this publication can help us find more and better ways to advance, together, toward the essential goal of reversing deforestation. Innovation in corporate transparency is contributing to enhanced accountability at many levels, but the challenges that smallholders face in responding to local demands and global market requirements must be acknowledged and addressed. There is a clear need for governments at the local and global level to act in a complementary way to private-sector initiatives to address underlying governance issues and engaging stakeholders across the board. Implementing zero deforestation commitments has not all been plain sailing, but as a global community, we are certainly moving in the right direction.

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