

Inter-Institutional Committee on Sustainable Palm Oil Announcement

Global Climate Action Summit

September 12-14, 2018

English

“Ecuador’s Inter-institutional Committee on Sustainable Palm Oil seeks to balance economic growth, productivity, and forest conservation and preservation. To achieve this, the Committee will work towards increasing production of palm oil on existing cultivation areas, by implementing sustainable agricultural practices based on national legislation and international standards, including the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO); thus, decreasing pressure on remaining forests in the country and strengthening the capacities of smallholder producers on sustainable management. These combined actions will contribute to Ecuador’s advancement in the fight against deforestation, using a jurisdictional sectoral approach, with a vision towards reducing and eliminating deforestation from palm oil production in the Amazon by 2025, as well as achieving zero deforestation from the sector by 2030, nation-wide.”

In 2009, with the implementation of the Socio Bosque Program, which consists of providing economic incentives to individuals and communities committed to forest conservation, Ecuador demonstrated its political will to reduce deforestation and advance in its international commitments. At the same time, the Ministry of Environment worked to identify national deforestation drivers and, to address these drivers, policies and measures were designed in a differentiated manner according to the varying territorial dynamics. In 2016, Ecuador launched its REDD + Action Plan and has reduced its net deforestation rate by 49% in the 2009-2014 period when compared to 1990-2000. It will be one of the first countries to access result-based payments through the Green Climate Fund’s (GCF) pilot program.

Efforts to reduce deforestation, restore forests and increase the resilience of communities to cope with the effects of climate change continue to be strengthened with the support of PROAmazonía, a program financed with grant funds from the GCF and GEF, and with UNDP as the implementing agency. Through this program, actions are implemented to strengthen forest conservation and boost bio-entrepreneurship, restoration of priority watersheds, strengthening of governance and territorial planning, and the transition from traditional agriculture to sustainable and environmentally friendly production systems, as well as promote international market access for deforestation-free products. In this process, the participation of indigenous peoples, communities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and the private sector has been fundamental. The commitment of value chains is a great example of how to promote sustainable economic development that is free of deforestation.

The Interinstitutional Committee for Sustainable Palm Oil (CISPS for its acronym in Spanish) has a unique structure, as a public-private entity that acts as an autonomous and independent body, with representatives from various sectors: small and national producers' associations, trade associations, marketers, extractors, producers of fats and oils, NGOs, academia, central government institutions and local governments. It works to strengthen the social and environmental governance of oil palm production systems in Ecuador.

The governance of CISPS is founded on the idea that the advancement and implementation of sustainability policies and action plans, can only be achieved when public and private policies are focused on meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the needs of future generations. To date, the country demonstrated reduced deforestation rates and is developing viable alternative practices that allow for producers and markets, using international certifications such as the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and Punto Verde national standards, as well as compensation schemes such as the Socio Bosque Program. This allows us to start from a solid foundation, articulated with existing processes and move towards integral and sustainable development.

In this context, the Committee seeks to balance economic growth of the sector with the preservation of forests, increased productivity and conservation. To achieve this, CISPS seeks to establish enabling conditions that will increase productive yields of oil palm in existing cultivation areas as well as the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices that abide by national regulations and meet international standards. These combined actions will alleviate the pressure on forests in the country, strengthen the capacity of sustainable management in small producers, and will contribute to the country's progress in the fight against deforestation, with a jurisdictional sector focus. Thus, the Committee is committed to maintaining a zero-deforestation horizon for palm oil production by 2025 for the Amazon, as well as zero deforestation by 2030 for the entire country in the sector.

This commitment is reflected in ten principles of sustainability developed by the Committee for the palm sector: 1. respect and guarantee of human rights; 2. respect of the rights of nature; 3. labor rights; 4. freedom of affiliation and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; 5. fight for the eradication of child labor; 6. preventative approach oriented to environmental protection; 7. the adoption of initiatives that promote greater environmental responsibility; 8. risk reduction; 9. promotion of environmental and social benefits; and 10. the fight against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

It is necessary to generate dynamics that encourage transaction lines to ensure that sustainable and deforestation-free oil palm is valued in the market, in such a way that we encourage countries to preserve their natural resources and improve livelihoods. Producers, processors and consumers are part of an equation of several variables that converge to achieve a commitment that belongs to everyone, not just one country.