

ZAMBIA DEFORESTATION IN THE WESTERN AND NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES

The answer to slow the pace of climate change, preserve biodiversity and support millions of Zambians are in the trees we lose through deforestation. Forests cover 31% of the global land area, according to a 2020 report from [FAO and UNEP](#) on the State of the World's Forests (SOFO). In comparison, forests in Zambia cover over 66% of its total landmass ([Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources 2017](#)), yet as the demand for agricultural expansion and fuelwood continues, we sacrifice the lifelong benefits of standing trees for short-term momentary gain.

What are we talking about here? When we drink coffee or eat meat, we unknowingly contribute to deforestation. The agricultural raw materials which contribute most to deforestation are livestock and the food used to feed animals. A 2013 report by Emily Cassidy and other researchers at the [University of Minnesota's Institute](#) showed that just 55% of the world's crop calories are eaten directly by people, while 36% are for animal feed. The remaining 9% went to biofuels and other industrial usages.

[Climate change](#) has emerged as a pressing issue in Zambia affecting socioeconomic development. The related forest loss in Zambia has substantial socioeconomic impacts on the people and their environment, even though local communities drive forest degradation and deforestation.

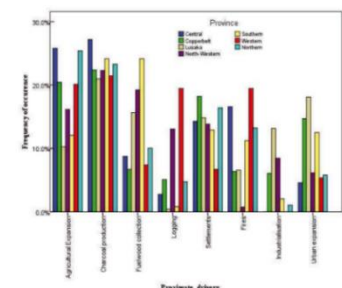
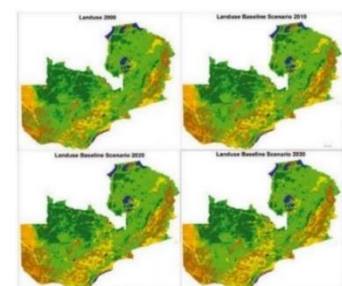


Figure 7: Frequency of occurrence of specific drivers of deforestation by province

According to the 2012 Preliminary study prepared by the [Copperbelt University](#) on the drivers of deforestation in Zambia, the deforestation rate had increased over two decades due to agricultural expansion and fuelwood. While the demand for agricultural expansion and fuelwood continues, it adds additional pressure on the remaining intact forests in the Western and North-Western provinces and their natural capital. The study also illustrates the visible characteristic of deforestation hotspot patterns in Western and North-Western regions.



ZAMBIA DEFORESTATION IN THE WESTERN AND NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES

The press preceded and followed the 26th [UN Climate Change Conference](#) in Glasgow (Oct. 31st - Nov. 12th, 2021), where many welcomed the UN Secretary General's announcement that a group of experts would bring vital scrutiny to offset markets for these raw materials. The EU will set up a [compulsory certification system](#) for raw materials when entering the European market. When raw materials from developing countries enter the European port, and the buyer cannot prove the goods don't contribute to deforestation, it will not enter the European market.



While we work towards the [emission gap of 1.5°C](#) and attempt to achieve the emission reductions of at least [40% by the end of this decade](#), more efforts should stop greenwashing and close the loopholes for big deforestation emitters. The Glasgow COP conference meant to deliver on closing the emission gap of 1.5°C, but that didn't happen. While the COP26 climate summit recognised the need for deep emission cuts within this decade, youth who have experienced the climate crisis won't tolerate such outcomes anymore. Why should they when they are fighting for their future livelihood?

We embrace the positive grassroots movements and communities from many regions since today's progressions were thanks to the youth, indigenous leaders, and activists who forced concessions on the climate front lines. These COP talks on climate change would have gradually failed if it weren't for these frontline fighters. As the [EU aims to curb deforestation](#) with import bans on commodities linked to deforestation, this issue should also be top of the agenda as the [COP goes to Egypt \(COP 27\)](#) next year.

Our once stable climate is now breaking down around us. We see it every day in wildlife; we also continue to see increased occurrence and intensity of droughts and floods impacting rural communities' self-sustainability in food, water and energy supplies. It's a matter of self-survival and self-preservation that requires the mobilisation of multiple funding

ZAMBIA DEFORESTATION IN THE WESTERN AND NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES

modalities of public, private, multilateral, and bilateral aimed to shift from a project-based approach to a more science-integrated and economically-inclusive policy to the climate deal.

Zambian tree planting nationwide can be an initiative to reduce these high-intense occurrences and create a more sustainable flow even after rain ceases. Inner cities lack plants and trees that temporary catch rainfall drops in masses before entering a canalisation system not built to absorb large water masses in a short timeframe leading to floods. Several examples exist worldwide of governments using tree planting to control floods and limit soil erosion.

Forests are the best allies against climate change. Consumers should demand international certification of sustainable farming and fair trade to ensure that sold goods are not from deforestation, organised crime, or exploitation. It should be everyone's obligation to protect forests by purchasing deforestation-free and legal products because no goods consumed in other countries should justify the costs of destroying the country of origin.



Governments should enhance mandatory due diligence rules for companies with additional regulations, increase data quality collection for official recording and continue action to redress deforestation violations, including conducting extensive research and development to meet the aspirations of the Zambian natural capital.

We hope to link the new governments' future climate change success without sacrificing biodiversity while creating a well-established economic growth partnership with the EU, in particular as EU rules on global trade are motivated through the EU's compulsory certification system.

“Reversing deforestation is a complex undertaking, but planting trees is simple.”