Title: The role of zero-deforestation commitments in protecting and enhancing rural livelihoods

Tropical forests are socio-environmental systems, and a large body of evidence demonstrates the importance of protecting indigenous and traditional forest-dependent people’s rights for achieving both environmental and social sustainability outcomes. The production of agricultural commodities is a key driver of deforestation, with negative impacts on forest livelihoods across the tropics. Over the past decade, there has been a rapid surge in the number of companies and multinational corporations making public commitments to reduce deforestation. These ‘zero-deforestation commitments’ are statements of intent to address forest loss through more sustainable sourcing policies. In addition to environmental objectives, many zero-deforestation commitments also make commitments to enhancing social sustainability in commodity supply chains. We reviewed the literature to characterize the role of these commitments in protecting and enhancing the well-being of indigenous and traditional forest-dependent people, laborers, and smallholders. First, we find that social criteria in zero-deforestation commitments pertain to labor standards, land rights, and community consultation. Second, we find that few publications examine the impacts of zero-deforestation commitments on social outcomes. Of those few, most are gray literature reports that rely on field-intensive data-collection to evaluate compliance with social criteria. Third, we highlight opportunities for linking zero-deforestation commitments to certification programs, and for developing jurisdictional approaches to sustainable sourcing. Finally, we call for more research to better-understand the social dimensions of zero-deforestation commitments.