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Unilever, WRI Partner to End Tropical Deforestation Through Supply Chain Transparency

by Sustainable Brands

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Unilever and the World Resources Institute (WRI) this week announced a new partnership that will increase transparency in agricultural commodity supply chains with the goal of [ending tropical deforestation](#).

The partnership will enable Unilever and its suppliers to use the [Global Forest Watch Commodities platform](#) to monitor forest cover change around commodity supply areas and processing facilities such as palm oil mills. This will allow more informed sourcing decisions, and reporting of performance against sustainability commitments. WRI will not receive financial support from Unilever through the partnership, which was signed this week at Unilever's [Partner to Win Summit](#) in Wembley, London, England.

"Major consumer goods companies are waking up and realizing it's in their interest to protect forests and pursue sustainable business strategies," said Dr. Andrew Steer, president and CEO of WRI. "Reducing the risk of deforestation in commodity supply chains greatly reduces risks to reputation and supply chain disruption — it's also simply the right thing to do. Unilever has been one of the real leaders in this area and we are pleased to have the opportunity to work with them to promote better forest management and business practices. The effect of this partnership will ripple throughout global commodity supply chains."

Deforestation has serious repercussions on global climate, local livelihoods and biodiversity, and poses a growing problem to commodity businesses. According to [data](#) from the University of Maryland and Google, the world lost 2.3 million square kilometers (230 million hectares) of tree cover from 2000 to 2012, equivalent to 50 soccer fields every minute of every day for 12 years.

Building on Global Forest Watch, GFW Commodities provides a suite of online tools for companies to assess the impact of commodity production on forests using the latest and most powerful data in near-real time. The partnership will help to expand the suite of tools and analyses currently under development for the GFW Commodities platform and will result in additional data, tools and resources available to all users.

Unilever is committed to reducing its environmental impact and ending deforestation across its supply chain through the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan, which sets out to source 100 percent of agricultural raw materials sustainability by 2020, with a strong focus on biodiversity and zero net deforestation.

"Unilever is firmly committed to transparent and sustainable sourcing of raw materials, and GFW Commodities is providing us with the means to reach our targets," said Pier Luigi Sigismondi, Unilever's Chief Supply Chain Officer. "In today's world, businesses can no longer [ignore the risk deforestation poses](#) to vital ecosystems and people's livelihoods. We are excited to be partnering with WRI so we can gain more insights into our supply chains. This partnership will bring new focus to see where our risks are highest and to improve forest management."

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"This partnership should provide a great boost for companies that seek to responsibly source raw commodities such as palm oil in Asia, Africa, and Latin America," said Kuok Khoon Hong, chairman and CEO of Wilmar International, one of the world's largest palm oil producers and traders, which [announced its No-Deforestation Policy](#) in December 2013 after years of pressure from NGOs. "GFW Commodities lowers the cost of identifying deforestation risk hotspots, a critical factor for success in the competitive supplier market."



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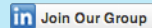
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