

# DEFORESTATION, CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT EXPORTS



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tropical countries. However, they must now come from sustainable sources. Eating chocolate and drinking coffee is not going to be business as usual. Consumers in environmentally conscious countries are demanding climate clean products.

The implications of this are far reaching. Should you export green or roasted coffee whose source is a previously forested land now deforested, the EU will not accept your coffee. The same applies to six other products.

The EUDR applies to wood, rubber, palm oil, soy, beef, coffee, and cocoa. Wood products, which are most connected to harvesting, have additional 'degradation-free' requirements.

The implications of this legislation are global. According to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), companies placing or exporting the affected products in or from the EU market will have to conduct



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due diligence to confirm the products are not sourced from land which was deforested or degraded after 31 December 2020. Do background checks on the previous land management should you plan to export to the EU.

Furthermore, companies will also have to verify that these products are compliant with relevant legislation of the country of production. This

includes respect for human rights, and the rights of affected indigenous peoples.

Most of Uganda's exports are agriculture based. As we plan for value addition, we must protect our forests. The cost of cutting down forests for charcoal will mean being locked out of lucrative markets like the EU.

Buyers in the EU will bear initial pressure. Through

traceability, buyers ask exporters to keep records of the export supply chain. This burden will be on the shoulders of exporters. Through satellite imagery, GPS and google maps, authorities in Europe already have records of the forests standing by December 2025. This means there is nowhere to hide other than to comply and follow the rules.

To a great extent, this shows forests are part of the family of the human race. You are probably already feeling the physical heat as you read this article. With or without EUDR, we must protect these green spaces for the present and future generations. They say the best time to plant a tree was yesterday. The next best opportunity is today. The delayed implementation of EUDR should not be a cause for celebration, but rather preparation.

As a country we must put our act together and devise clean sustainability chains. The

whip has to be cracked for our forests to remain standing.

Sustainable exports are vital for the economies of all countries around the world. Depletion of tree cover should not become the excuse to plant more coffee and cocoa. Uganda has enough arable land which can be put to good use without destroying the environment.

The EU is the biggest destination of Uganda's coffee exports. Cocoa is largely bought by the same bloc. We should not lose this market due to reckless deforestation. We do not preserve forests for the present generation alone but for our children and grand children as well.

The tourism sector, an important export earner depends upon proper forest management. The mountain gorillas and hundreds of bird species rely on the existence of forests for their survival.

**The writer is an export trade specialist**