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Presentations	Session 4.2	<i>Global Forest Bioeconomy: Continuity or a Pathway to Transformations? (Part 2)</i>

*Abstract Session 4.2 – The effect of supply chain position on zero-deforestation commitments: Evidence from the cocoa industry.*

Global agrifood companies' sustainability strategies have evolved to increasingly rely on self-set voluntary commitments to address the persistent social and environmental challenges embedded in commodity supply chains. While state actors continue to guide sustainability efforts within their jurisdictions, the onus is increasingly placed on corporations who pronounce their own measures to eliminate deforestation and other unethical practices associated with their business operations. The literature on transnational environmental governance suggests that the reputational risks associated with failed attempts at sustainability is enough to push companies to publicly pronounce rigorous measures to which a broad set of stakeholders can hold them to account. In this contribution, we look more closely at how rigorous these self-pronounced corporate rules are through a case study of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI), a novel zero-deforestation commitment that focuses mainly on the world's top cocoa producers Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. We analyze the publicly available corporate action plans from all CFI companies in these two countries ( $n=35$ ) covering more than 85% of global cocoa trade. We construct a CFI index to systematically compare company pledges and uncover any relationships between the strength or quality of a company's CFI action plan and key company characteristics. We find that, contrary to what the literature would suggest, the consumer-facing and high brand value firms are pronouncing less stringent zero-deforestation commitments as compared to their upstream partners. In a second step, we apply an existing framework for evaluating the effectiveness of zero-deforestation commitments to uncover key gaps in the CFI, including the lack of clarity surrounding key definitions and timelines, such as whether the CFI refers to zero-gross, -net, or -illegal deforestation, neglect of indirect supply chains, and unclear geospatial precision. This case study demonstrates that more attention must be placed on understanding the conditions that enable change towards more sustainable supply chain governance.