

Minutes from Forests of The World General Assembly, 6th of May 2026

Participants in the General Assembly:

Karen Roij
Henrik Oxenvad
Birgitte Voss
Lene og Allan
Sanne Thelle
Lars Mikkelsen
Diddi Struve Hansen
Lilian Nielsen
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Sigrid Skou Hansen
Lisbet Christoffersen
Rehné Vokstrup
Mike Speirs
Astrid Kring
Anders Bastholm
Lisbet Christoffersen
Aldo Salazar
Esbern Friis-Hansen
Anja Grønskov
Lars Mikkelsen
Katja Abel
Brian Sundstrup
Kristian Hollmann
Johan Julin
Esbern Friis Hansen
Nanna Jochumsen
Troels Dam Christensen
Karin Hoeck
Kristian Lybæk
Kirsten Marie Nielsen
Karen Krag
Christian Gregart

Hans Olav Nymand
Peter Stolt
Nanna Bohmann
Karen Brodersen
Berit Rechnagel
Peter Stolt
John Strikart
Soren Henssel-Rasmussen
Mads Lonnberg
Hans Peter Kajs Abrahams
Jørgen Mathiasen
Anders Morten Christoffersen
Lilian Nielsen
Isabel Sande Frandsen
Brian Sundstrup
Carsten Rodin Hansen
Jakob Kronik
Gabriel Nyrop-Larsen

Agenda

1. Election of Chairperson and Minute Taker
2. Report from the Chairperson and General Secretariat
3. Presentation of the new strategy of World Forests
4. Presentation on the book *“Wild Nature – The Forgotten Solution to the Climate Crisis”*
5. Approval of the financial statements
6. Election of Chairperson
7. Election of Vice Chairperson
8. Election of other Board Members and Alternate Members
9. Submitted proposals
10. Forest Friend of the Year 2025
11. Any other business

Item 1) Election of Chairperson and Minute Taker

Christian Gregart was elected Chairperson of the meeting.
Sigrid Skou Hansen was elected Minute Taker.

The Chairperson of the meeting confirmed that the General Assembly had been convened lawfully, as it had been announced four weeks in advance and the agenda had been distributed on time, one week before the meeting.

Item 2) Management Report

The annual report from Chairperson Anders Morten Christoffersen and Co-Executive Directors Jakob Kronik and Nanna Jochumsen was characterized by optimism and organizational development. The association now has a new strategy to guide decision-making and coherence across the organization, a positive financial result, and a stabilized, successful organization ready to develop and scale its efforts in 2026.

Highlights from the reports

Impressive turnaround:

The financial situation improved from a deficit of DKK 1 million in 2024 and an expected million-kroner deficit to a small surplus in 2025. This was achieved through sharp prioritization and difficult decisions, such as transferring Tirsbæk Bakker to Vejle Municipality, discontinuing the printed edition of *Forest and People* in favor of digital communication, and narrowing the association's policy work to areas where World Forests can have the greatest impact.

More members:

The association is growing and gained nearly 500 new members during the past year, reaching 6,500 members in April 2026. Efforts continue to strengthen membership growth and private fundraising. Among other initiatives, a new webshop will be launched in 2026.

Global expansion:

With two major new Danida projects, UGROW and HOTSPOTS, the organization has expanded its program to two new countries: Peru and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This expansion takes place in strong partnership with the organization Re:Wild.

Danish policy work:

The organization has provided evidence-based input into Danish legislation and frameworks for wild forest nature in Denmark. This includes taking several political spokespersons on forest excursions to demonstrate that new unmanaged forest does not necessarily lead to greater biodiversity. The association has also published the book "*Wild Nature – The Forgotten Solution to the Climate Crisis*," which serves as a knowledge contribution for decision-makers. The first edition has already sold out.

Engagement and public events:

World Forests organized a range of events and collaborative activities in 2025. Examples include community events in Aarhus, training carpentry students at Roskilde Technical School, participation in the Youth Democracy Festival, collaboration with other environmental organizations such as the Folk High School for Nature Education, participation in several public democracy festivals, and strengthened partnerships with Danish universities through guest lectures and internships.

Successful organizational structure:

The transition to a co-executive leadership structure has created a more action-oriented organization. Both the Board and management confirmed the positive collaboration. The organization has grown through the recruitment of technical and programmatic staff in its regional hubs, while in Denmark employees have been hired with competencies in learning,

documentation, branding, and engagement. A conscious effort is being made to connect the global program with both the organization and association in Denmark.

Board development:

The Board has also undergone significant development with new members, including an employee-elected member and a member recruited directly by the Board. Two alternate members and Vice Chairperson Jakob Ryding stepped down, requiring the General Assembly to elect a new Vice Chairperson. Open calls for Board positions attracted strong interest and support for the organization's mission.

Future focus:

The priority now is to use the strategy as a tool for ongoing prioritization and evaluation of what activities should continue or be discontinued, scaling partnerships, and strengthening finances to achieve even greater impact for forests.

Questions and comments

Question: How are responsibilities divided between the Co-Executive Directors?

Answer:

The Executive Secretariat functions as a unified leadership team with shared responsibility for the organization. Day-to-day professional leadership is divided so that Jakob Kronik leads the global program, advocacy, and institutional fundraising, while Nanna Jochumsen leads finance, administration, communications, and private fundraising. The Board added that they experience closer engagement with the leadership of professional areas and a more holistic view of organizational decisions.

Item 3) Presentation of the New Strategy of World Forests

Presentation

The association's new strategy was presented. It has no fixed end date and is designed to be flexible and long-term so it can adapt to new challenges, knowledge, and partnerships.

The primary focus is forests, through which the organization works for climate action, biodiversity, and Indigenous peoples' rights. Efforts are concentrated in so-called "hotspots," including East Africa, Latin America, and Denmark, where the organization can achieve the greatest impact.

It was emphasized that World Forests remains rooted in Denmark despite its international growth. Therefore, it has a responsibility to advocate for better and more forests in Denmark so it can be accountable for what it promotes internationally. The organization is guided by Danish values such as transparency and participation, which it brings into partnerships and activities worldwide.

The strategy is based on a theory of change involving three key objectives that create the greatest impact for forest conservation:

1. Legitimate governance and responsible management
2. Sustainable livelihoods
3. Rights for people and forests

These objectives are enabled by strong partnerships and public engagement.

Strategic indicators have been defined to measure and document impact. Particular attention is paid to deforestation rates, hectares conserved, the number of households with improved livelihoods, the number of partners, and the number of people engaged in forest conservation.

The strategy will be reviewed annually at the end of each year through a gathering where members, volunteers, staff, and Board members can examine parts of the strategy and make adjustments if necessary.

Leaders from World Forests' hubs in Bolivia, Honduras, and Ethiopia also presented case studies illustrating the strategy's three objectives.

Questions and comments

Question: How will World Forests create financial partnerships and engage private companies more closely?

Answer:

The organization was previously highly dependent on Danida but has pursued a diversification strategy for several years. This has resulted in more than 30 smaller foundation contracts over the last decade. Opportunities are also being explored with American foundations and regional foundations in program areas. Positive experiences have been gained through commercial partnerships, such as those within the UGROW project. However, there remains significant untapped potential for increased business-sector engagement through sponsorships and similar arrangements.

Question: Are the new partners and countries involved in HOTSPOTS based on the same model as the organization's previous work?

Answer:

Yes. They are defined according to the same principles because the program is derived from the organization's strategy. HOTSPOTS is financed by Danida as part of the DKK 100 million allocated from the so-called "forest billion" for development assistance. It is a traditional donor-funded project involving 13 partners.

Question: What forms does local support in Denmark take?

Answer:

The organization has 6,500 members and continues to grow each month. Many members contribute actively as volunteers, event participants, contributors to communications activities, and more. Efforts are underway to engage more young people and individuals with specialized technical expertise who can work more closely with global partners.

In addition, a new staff member was hired in early 2026 to support outreach, public engagement, and branding.

Question: What is the status of Indigenous peoples' rights in Central America?

Answer:

In Nicaragua and Honduras, civil society has been weakened, and Indigenous territories are under pressure from illegal mining and cattle ranching. Nicaragua is currently a highly closed country, while Honduras is experiencing political upheaval under a new Trump-supported government. World Forests supports Indigenous peoples and civil society organizations working to conserve forests in Central America.

Question: What is World Forests doing in Uganda regarding Indigenous peoples' rights?

Answer:

Not enough, as this is a more challenging issue there than in Latin America. Uganda, like many African countries, does not recognize the conventions protecting Indigenous peoples. As a result, those conventions cannot be used effectively as tools for rights protection and territorial security. The organization hopes to learn from the experience of its new partner Re:Wild, which has worked on these issues in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The participants raised a toast and congratulated the organization on its new strategy.

Item 4) Presentation on the Book *“Wild Nature – The Forgotten Solution to the Climate Crisis”*

Jeppe Aagaard Kristensen, scientific editor and co-author, gave a presentation on World Forests' new book *“Wild Nature – The Forgotten Solution to the Climate Crisis.”* The book has sold out and has just been released in a second edition.

Questions and comments from participants

Question: Could greater carbon storage be achieved through a more diverse biotope rather than converting production forests into unmanaged forests?

Answer:

Yes. Both biodiversity and overall growth are higher in mixed forests.

Question: Regarding the experiment in the forests of Mols, where areas grazed by horses show the largest accumulations of CO₂: if we look 50 years into the future, will we see even greater accumulation?

Answer:

In some places there is only a very small difference in carbon pools regardless of whether animals are present. In forests, trees are the dominant biomass. In open landscapes, animals play a larger role. We know that forest regeneration declines where animals forage intensively, which could logically affect the number of trees and therefore carbon storage in forest landscapes over the timescale of tree generations (centuries).

Question: It was suggested that more should be done to challenge the binary perspective of what is and is not nature. Production forests are not always highly intensive, and nature is not always so rigidly defined. What about landscapes where people live—can humans and nature coexist?

Answer:

I believe it is problematic to think about nature and culture in strictly binary terms. It is important to have areas where nature has priority, such as our national nature parks, where human considerations must take second place. However, this does not mean that people should not use these areas for recreational or educational purposes. An example of long-term ecological restoration with gradually decreasing human intervention is the Holmehave project. About 40% of the area is kept open through grazing, while trees are planted with the intention that some timber will be harvested during the first decades. This can generate income in the early stages of the project and help maintain a more open landscape. Over time, the area gradually transitions into a landscape governed by natural dynamics, where humans are welcome as guests.

Question: Does the book take account of the leakage effect—that is, emissions resulting from increased timber consumption and forest harvesting abroad if timber can no longer be sourced from Denmark?

Answer:

It was a conscious choice not to address the leakage effect directly in the book. However, it is acknowledged that production may shift abroad in some cases if demand for resources remains unchanged.

Question: The presentation seemed to focus very little on biodiversity. Isn't that what the book is really about?

Answer:

Yes. Biodiversity is the primary focus of ecological restoration. The perspective is essentially reversed in the book: the goal is wild nature for biodiversity's own sake, while climate mitigation is treated as an important co-benefit in order to avoid creating the wrong incentives.

Item 5) Approval of the 2025 Financial Statements

Presentation by Head of Finance Kristian Hollmann.

The results show that the organization successfully reversed the large deficit from 2024 and achieved a small expected surplus of approximately DKK 100,000 in 2025. Total income and expenditure were both just under DKK 33 million.

Questions and comments

Question: Have specific targets been set for increasing equity?

Answer:

The ambition is to maintain equity equivalent to four months of salaries and operating expenses.

Question: What accounts for the increased consultancy expenses?

Answer:

The amount corresponds to slightly less than one full-time position and relates to tasks including financial management, recruitment of the new Head of Finance, and organizational support.

Question: Does the association earn returns on investments?

Answer:

Funds are currently held exclusively in deposit accounts. Discussions regarding investment of funds are referred to the Board. Prepaid project funds are reserved for future project financing.

Question: Are there any expenditures expected to change significantly in the future?

Answer:

Several recent hires will increase salary costs compared to last year. At the same time, consultancy expenses are expected to decrease. Transfers of support to partners will also increase due to new activities.

The 2025 financial statements were approved.

Item 6) Election of Chairperson

This item was withdrawn, as Chairperson Anders Morten Christoffersen was elected last year for a two-year term.

Item 7) Election of Vice Chairperson

The previous Vice Chairperson, Jakob Ryding, who had been elected for a two-year term, resigned from the Board in April 2026.

Board member Jørgen Skytte stood for election as Vice Chairperson without opposition. Jørgen Skytte was elected Vice Chairperson for the remainder of the term (one year).

Item 8) Election of Other Board Members and Alternate Members

Two Board members were to be elected for two-year terms, and one Board member for a one-year term (the seat vacated by Jørgen Skytte). In addition, two alternate members were to be elected for one-year terms.

Existing Board members seeking re-election:

- Esbern Friis

- Brian Sundstrup

Presentation of the candidates:

Christian Gregart
Troels Dam Christensen
Esbern Friis Hansen
Karin Hoeck
Brian Sundstrup
Johan Julien
Karen Roiy
Maria Nielsen
Anders Barsøe
Anja Sandal Grønskov
Birgitte Voss
Isabel Sande Frandsen
Jacob Lillemose
Rasmus Vincentz

There were 31 eligible voters, and the seats were allocated as follows following the vote:

Board Members (2-year terms):

- Christian Gregart (20 votes)
- Troels Dam Christensen (18 votes)

Board Member (1-year term):

- Esbern Friis (16 votes)

Alternate Members (1-year terms):

- Karin Høck was elected 1st Alternate Member (13 votes)
- Brian Sundstrup was elected 2nd Alternate Member (12 votes)

Item 9) Submitted Proposals

The Board had proposed an amendment to the bylaws to reduce the number of General Assemblies from two meetings per year to one annual meeting.

The rationale was that holding two annual meetings was a legacy from the organization's founding, and that the change would reduce resource consumption while freeing up time to organize informal social activities for members instead.

Decision:

The proposal was adopted unanimously.

Item 10) Forest Friend of the Year 2025

Four candidates were nominated:

- Christian Barkentin Overby
- Mols Laboratory
- Association for the Restoration of Lake Tastum
- Camaradas de la Naturaleza

Members can vote for a candidate on the World Forests website.

The winner will be announced on **5 June**, which is **World Environment Day**.

Item 11) Any Other Business

A member expressed a wish for more in-person membership activities that would strengthen connections between members and the association across the country, preferably initiated and facilitated by the Board.