

**ITTC 36th Session, Interlaken, Switzerland**  
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Madame Chair  
Executive Director Manuel Sobral  
Distinguished delegates

I want to thank you very much for this opportunity to address the Council. Let me start by expressing my deepest appreciation to the Council and ITTO for the continuation of the long-lasting previous practice of staff secondment to the UNFF Secretariat. ITTO has recently confirmed of seconding a senior staff to the secretariat from August 1<sup>st</sup> for the period of one year. I am extremely pleased of this cooperation and support offered by you.

The relationship between the UNFF and ITTC is growing well and getting stronger. We are very pleased for receiving the high level participation from ITTO at the UNFF sessions, and as we have repeatedly stressed, and you have echoed your support to the International Arrangement on Forests with enthusiasm, showing that these two intergovernmental bodies on forests are walking and efficiently working together.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
UNFF is a key body on international forest issues and a platform for promoting sustainable forest management to all types of forests worldwide. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) among the major international forest-related organizations, institutions and instruments was established to support UNFF and enhance cooperation and collaboration among on forests. ITTO has been a very active partner of CPF. As a lead agency in forest trade, ITTO's role is critical to the success of this collaborative arrangement. I greatly appreciate for the cooperation the UNFF secretariat has been receiving from ITTO for UNFF's work. I particularly note the support provided by ITTO to the most recent country- and organization-led initiatives in support of UNFF, such as the Brazzaville initiative on transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity building and to the initiative on decentralization, federal systems in forestry and national forest programs, held in this beautiful city of Interlaken earlier this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some important aspects of UNFF that are of interest to this Council and ITTO. UNFF held its fourth session last May in Geneva. Many members of the Council who are present here today were also present at the session. The fifth session of the Forum will be held in New York, next year in May. The fifth session is extremely important for the international forest community, as it will review progress and review the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, and take decision on future actions. Most importantly, the fifth session will also

“consider with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests”.

UNFF’s ad hoc expert group on the same issue will be meeting in New York from 7 to 10 September this year. The preparations are underway for the successful conclusion of this important ad hoc expert group.

As you are aware Madame Chair, both UNFF and this body are approaching a highly critical juncture, from the international forest policy perspective. A process for the negotiations on a successor agreement to ITTA 1994 has already begun, with a UN Conference taking place next week in Geneva. The international arrangement on forests, which includes UNFF, will be reviewed next year.

The international community will be watching on how closely and in coordinated way these two important processes evolve in the coming days. We, in the UNFF Secretariat, would like to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our commitment to work with ITTO in these matters.

I believe everybody here but agrees that no machinery works unless people make it work, referring to a wise assertion by Mrs. Roosevelt a half century ago. When we all work together in different fora or ‘*machineries*’ as she put it, in a coordinated manner, then the goal of sustainable forest management for all types of forests will not remain a far-fetched dream. Nor will be the aspirations of millions of people for sustainable livelihood will be far from reality.

I thank you for your attention