



**Statement by Ms. Jan McAlpine, Director, United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat,
COP 14 (SBSTA 29), 2 December 2008, Poznan, Poland**

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to address this SBSTA session. As you are well aware the United Nations Forum on Forests, the intergovernmental body with 192 member States promoting sustainable forest management worldwide, focuses on the full spectrum of forests issues, from complete protection and conservation on one end, to sustainable use at the other. The Forum looks to forests for all three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Priority issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and livelihoods are key elements in this forest architecture. UNFF is also concerned with intersectoral impacts on forests – sectors like transportation, agriculture or development aid priorities stemming from finance ministries decisions on ODA.

Given the close interdependent linkages between forests and climate change, the Forum welcomes the renewed interest by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in forest issues. The more recent recognition that forests provide value not only for mitigation but also for adaptation measures, and thus significantly contribute to the climate change solutions, is yet another significant step forward.

The Forum's unique perspective and broad purview brings together countries with low-forest cover, countries with high forest cover and with high and low deforestation rates and countries which depend on others for benefits of forests, when they have none themselves – whether those benefits are environmental, social or economical. Within this comprehensive perspective and recognizing differences in their relationship to forests, countries have stressed the need for the sustainable management of forests – which the IPCC also recognized in its fourth assessment report last year which stated that “...Forest mitigation strategies should be assessed within the framework of sustainable forest management ...” Experts at recent UNFF-related meetings on forest financing have cautioned that recent intensification of donor investment in forests with only climate change mitigation objectives in mind could result in significant distortions to sustainable forest management financing.

In 2001, 14 prestigious forest-related and forest-impacting multilateral and international organizations formed the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), chaired by FAO, and in support of the UNFF. The UNFCCC Secretariat is a valuable member of this innovative partnership and we hope to broaden and deepen our work together in light of the interest in forests by the climate change community, and in the context of sustainable forest management. Later this week, you will hear from all 14 members of the CPF, through a joint CPF paper on the significance and importance of the climate change/ forest intersect. This joint paper also identifies areas of stress and fracture which would need to be prevented in achieving the objectives of the convention – as well as those of the Forum.

I would also like to inform you, Madam Chair, that the next session of UNFF in April 2009 will focus on the theme of “Forests in a Changing Environment”, which includes a priority focus on the forest dimensions of climate change. The session will also focus on means of implementation for sustainable forest management, including in particular the issue of financing in implementing the newly agreed Forest Instrument.

In closing, I would like to stress that Forests represent both a reliable solution to redress the adverse effects of climate change, while at the same time providing much broader economic, environmental and social services. Loss of forests due to deforestation and degradation contributes not only to Greenhouse Gas emissions, but also creates social and economic hardship. It is through comprehensive sustainable forest management that we can assure that the forests continue to provide their full range of benefits and services, including the ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

While fully committed to enhance cooperation with the climate change process We would like to extend invitations to you and the distinguished delegates to participate in the upcoming session of the UN Forum on Forests in New York in April next year and thereby enrich the deliberations and enhance the synergy and coordination.

Thank you.