

New Zealand Statement to Opening Plenary

Delivered by Alan Reid, Head of Delegation

New Zealand would like to join other delegates in congratulating you on your appointment as Chair for this eight session for the UN Forum on Forests. And also give our congratulations to the Ms McAlpine on her appointment of the Director of the Forum.

New Zealand supports the key objectives of the UNFF as captured in the documents guiding its establishment to “promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.”

New Zealand believes the UNFF has taken the spirit of the Rio Declaration, the Forest Principles, Chapter 11 of the Agenda 21 and the outcome of the IPF and IFF and other key milestones of the international forest policy and made admirable progress towards achieving the difficult objectives it has been tasked with.

Mr Chairman, in many ways SFM is very old but it is has also not been clearly defined at the global level. Among countries, there are a huge variety and mix of forest types and then there are also the varying commitments, demands on forests. Since the UNFF last meet in 2007 new pressures and demands of forests arising from climate change and also the economic and food security crises. For climate change in particular we have to understand and address both the boundaries and synergies between climate change solutions and sustainable forest management.

How do we deal with this? Negotiations of the NLBI and the establishment of the CPF were vital steps. There are regional processes that reflect efforts to measure monitor and report under criteria and indicator processes, for example the ‘Montreal Process’ of which New Zealand is a member. There processes reflect the grouping of forest types and regional groups and their efforts are directed to addressing the evolving demands on forests. There are also the efforts of ITTO and regional FAO initiatives.

New Zealand believes that strengthening the links and developing greater synergies between the UNFF and these groups would benefit SFM. Particularly, as Ms McAlpine noted this morning, the development of synergies on the reporting requirements. New Zealand looks forward to discussing these over the coming days.

So, what is the way forward? We need to look at ways to attract funds to SFM, we need to look at ways to improve the use of existing mechanisms for SFM.

We need to use the NLBI to embrace and identify the new pressures on SFM – both the boundaries and issues with climate change – while also working on developing synergies.