

**IUFRO statement during the UNFF16 High-Level Roundtable on 26 April**

Thank you for giving us the floor [Mr/Ms] Chair.

Excellencies, colleagues, honoured participants...

The prosperity and well-being of people throughout the world depends fundamentally on the health of the world's forests and the services they provide. As we have heard during this excellent discussion, there is a growing need to harness their potential to help address our current global crises and contribute to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The forest science community has much to offer in this effort. Over many decades, it has generated a wealth of reliable data, information, knowledge and experience – all of which are needed to make the most of the opportunities to “Build Back Better”. As we are learning during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it is essential that the voices of the international scientific community be heard by, and inform, the work of policy-makers, practitioners, and the general public.

IUFRO is dedicated to building research, education and development capacity worldwide in all fields of forest science, including those related to social, economic and policy issues that lie at the heart of so many of our challenges – *and* their solutions. Through our work, the global IUFRO network seeks to provide the best available scientific knowledge, data and expertise to decision-makers at all levels, from policy makers at the global level to land managers at the local level.

For example, with the involvement of many partners and the support of our donors, IUFRO's Special Programme for Development of Capacities has engaged in an extensive array of knowledge synthesis, training and communications efforts related to forest landscape restoration in many countries, particularly in the Global South.

IUFRO also leads the CPF's Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) program. GFEP assessments, specifically designed to serve the needs of policy makers, by providing objective and independent scientific evaluations of key issues related to forests and their roles in enhancing the environmental, social, and economic benefits they provide. In recent years GFEP assessments have focused on such issues as: Forests and Food Security; Forests and Water; Forests, Biodiversity and REDD+; Illegal Logging and Related Timber Trade; and, most recently, on Forests and Poverty.

We call upon the Forum and its Member States to strengthen engagement with the scientific community, and reiterate our commitment to support the Forum's critically important work with the best available knowledge and scientific information on key topics to support evidence-based decision-making.

Thank you for your attention.