

UNFF MGCY - High Level Round Table Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

9:00am- 11:00am, 26 April 2021, New York City, USA

The following statement is delivered by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Major Group for Children and Youth to the [High Level Round Table \(HLRT\) on Major Forest-related Developments](#)

Dear Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of Major Group Children and Youth, we would like to express our deepest condolences to all the people of the world who lost their dear ones, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The annual rate of global net forest loss decreased from 7.3 million hectares in the decade 1990-2000 to 4.7 million hectares in the decade 2010-2020. Despite the positive result, deforestation as well as forest degradation are still massive problems that need to be solved. If we want to ask how forests can be part of the solution to current global crises in the post Covid-19 era, MGCY to the UNFF believes that a focus must be laid on the systemic issues threatening forest areas globally that have not substantially changed despite the impacts of the pandemic. Hereby, increasing demand for agricultural land and water, insecure tenure rights and siloed approaches to natural resource governance, are only a few of the driving factors leading to deforestation and forest degradation that were present before the pandemic and that remain and will remain present even after this pandemic has vanished.

However, MGCY to the UNFF perceives a substantial change in our increased awareness about the interconnectivity of human and natural systems. Covid-19 exhibited how unsustainable use of natural resources can have global implications for humanity. The pandemic initiated a more deliberative engagement with more integrative and holistic problem analysis and solution proposals. MGCY to the UNFF strongly supports this tendency to be more sensitive to the interconnectivity of natural and human systems and invest more resources in developing, promoting and implementing novel governance frameworks.

The global forest community now faces the added challenge of Covid-19 on top of a longstanding set of complex conservation, sustainability, and development challenges. A return to business as usual is not a viable option in times where humanity already transgressed various planetary boundaries. Achieving long-term economic, environmental and social goals depends on a holistic management of natural resources. MGCY believes it is essential to adopt an integrated landscape management approach, which systematically considers multiple sectors and different stakeholders' needs, and which can help generate synergistic solutions that simultaneously achieve multiple objectives on a landscape level. In this, the private sector has a pivotal role since there is urgent need for investment in conservation projects around the world, to strengthen the climate resilience of local communities and help to create more sustainable global supply chains. The only way to get the required level of investment to achieve the SDGs by 2030 is by significantly leveraging the private sector. Solving the world's most pressing issues requires a proactive approach, innovative structures that enable greater cooperation between different players, and the use of blended

finance mechanisms. We urge corporates, financiers, governments and NGOs to step up their efforts to conserve our world and build back better for future generations.

Thank you for your attention.