

EU & Member states' Statement to the UNFF17 high level round table – 9th of May 2022

UNFF17 High Level Round Table: UNFF response to, role in, and expectations from forest-related multilateral developments

Madam chair,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member states.

1. More than ever, forests are under the pressure of increasing threats and disaster risks such as forest fires, droughts and storms, but also wars and violent aggressions.
2. Let me first express the full solidarity of the EU and its Member States with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression against Ukraine, which is a flagrant violation of international law and the UN Charter, and with dramatic human as well as environmental consequences in this region. The EU demands that Russia immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders and abide by UN General Assembly resolution titled "Aggression against Ukraine" supported by 141 states at the 11th emergency special session. The EU resolutely supports Ukraine's inherent right of self-defence and the Ukrainian armed forces' efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and population in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. At all times Russia must respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, including with respect to the protection of civilians, women and children. Russia also needs to stop its disinformation campaign and cyber-attacks.
3. If we are here today, it is because we know that forests are vital, for people and the planet. They have a major role to play in mitigating climate change, combatting biodiversity loss, and a crucial role in providing economic, social and environmental advantages to people, and are an important cultural heritage for indigenous communities worldwide.
4. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened the need to work towards the One Health approach, as human induced changes in nature participate in increasing the transmission of zoonotic diseases. We thus stress the need to integrate the importance of forests and their sustainable management in post-Covid recovery plans and encourage the UNFF to continue to monitor the long-term impacts of the pandemic on forests.
5. Considering with deep concern that the current trends demonstrate that deforestation will continue due to the need for more agricultural land in terms of food security and growing

prosperity. We encourage the UNFF to step up action, promote and implement more cross-sectoral coordination of the UNFF with the agricultural sector.

6. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to reverse forest cover loss as stated by the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration of COP26. We advocate to actively and concretely work towards achieving all Global Forest Goals (GFGs), through different actions such as sustainable forest management, but also through the mainstreaming and upscaling of forest-related actions in national development programmes and joint initiatives by all 15 members of CPF. Furthermore, we want to emphasize the confirmation within the latest IPCC report with regards to the overall mitigation potential of halting deforestation.
7. We also stress the importance of, and the EU's commitment to, an ambitious, realistic and effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework that duly recognises the particular role of forests and sustainable forest management in the fight against biodiversity loss.
8. In this context, we also encourage particularly all members of the UNFF to adopt concrete and coherent measures in favour of sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains. We also invite countries to firmly commit to this end. The EU and its MS also support increased efforts on forest and ecosystem restoration actions worldwide from all stakeholders, such as forest owners and managers, or small farmers.
9. To meet the GFGs, increased investments from all sources and at all levels are necessary to enhance sustainable forest management, conservation, resiliency and ecosystem restoration. To this end, we highlight the role of the GFFN in supporting countries in the design of forest financing strategies.
10. Finally, Mr/Madam Chair, the EU and its member states call on the UNFF Secretariat and all the UNFF members to effectively promote the UNSPF 2030 and its GFGs and UNFF-17's outcomes at the 2022 High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, in particular at the in-depth review of SDG 15, and in order to timely and jointly achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Of course, we can only stress the need for an enhanced and integrated cooperation and coordination between the UNFF and the 3 Rio Conventions in order to achieve the above objectives.

French version of the above statement:

Madame la Présidente,

J'ai l'honneur de m'exprimer au nom de l'UE et de ses États membres.

1. Plus que jamais, les forêts sont soumises à un nombre croissant de menaces et de risques de catastrophes, tels que les incendies de forêts, les sécheresses et les tempêtes, mais aussi les guerres et les agressions violentes.
2. Tout d'abord, permettez-moi d'exprimer la pleine solidarité de l'Union Européenne et de ses États membres à l'égard de l'Ukraine et de la population ukrainienne. L'Union européenne

condamne avec la plus grande fermeté l'acte d'agression non provoqué et injustifié perpétré par la Russie contre l'Ukraine, qui constitue une violation flagrante du droit international et de la charte des Nations unies, et qui a des conséquences dramatiques sur le plan humain, et environnemental dans la région.

3. Si nous sommes ici aujourd'hui, c'est parce que nous savons que les forêts sont vitales, pour les peuples comme pour la planète. Elles jouent un rôle majeur dans l'atténuation du changement climatique, la lutte contre la perte de biodiversité, et bien entendu, ont un rôle crucial dans la fourniture de bénéfices économiques, sociaux et environnementaux aux populations.
4. La pandémie de COVID-19 a renforcé la nécessité d'œuvrer en faveur de l'approche « Une seule santé ». Par conséquent, nous soulignons la nécessité d'intégrer l'importance des forêts et de leur gestion durable dans les plans de résilience post-Covid.
5. De plus, il est urgent d'inverser la perte de couverture forestière, comme l'indique la déclaration des dirigeants de Glasgow lors de la COP26. Nous préconisons de travailler activement et concrètement à la réalisation de tous les objectifs mondiaux pour les forêts (OMF), par le biais de différentes actions, parmi lesquelles, la gestion durable des forêts.
6. Dans ce contexte, nous encourageons particulièrement tous les membres du FNUF à adopter des mesures concrètes et cohérentes en faveur de chaînes d'approvisionnement durables et zéro-déforestation.
7. Pour atteindre les objectifs mondiaux relatifs aux forêts (OMF), des investissements financiers accrus provenant de toutes les sources et à tous les niveaux, sont nécessaires pour améliorer la gestion durable des forêts, leur conservation, leur résilience et la restauration des écosystèmes. À cette fin, nous soulignons le rôle du Réseau Mondial de Facilitation du Financement des Forêts (GFFFN en anglais) pour son soutien dans l'élaboration de stratégies de financement des forêts.
8. Enfin, Madame la Présidente, l'UE et ses Etats membres appellent le Secrétariat et tous les membres du FNUF à promouvoir efficacement le Plan stratégique des Nations unies pour les Forêts 2030 et ses objectifs mondiaux relatifs aux forêts (OMF) ainsi que les conclusions issues du FNUF-17 lors du Forum politique de haut niveau sur le développement durable de 2022. Enfin, bien entendu, nous ne pouvons que souligner la nécessité d'une coopération et d'une coordination renforcées et intégrées entre le FNUF et les trois conventions de Rio afin d'atteindre les objectifs susmentionnés.

Je vous remercie de m'avoir écouté.