

17th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF17)

Philippines
National Statement

Ms. Chairperson

Her Excellency Ms. Miriam Mac Intosh

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Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Philippines reaffirms its commitment to continuously promote sustainable forest management and implement considerable efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the global agenda for forestry by rehabilitating unproductive, denuded, and degraded forestlands and protection of forests, through the implementation of the country's Enhanced National Greening Program, National Forest Protection Program, and existing projects, programs, and initiatives.

The Philippines was able to implement several policy improvements concerning climate change and impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the country. In 2021, despite the limitations brought about by the pandemic, the Philippine government, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, developed the "Greening the Philippines' COVID-19 Response, Recovery and Resiliency Program" or GC-3RP. The GC-3RP provides for the green recovery strategies such prioritization of upland communities in vaccination program; recovery and improvement of livelihood through community-based forest management and reforestation/rehabilitation initiatives, and identifying several RRR program to anticipate, prepare and mitigate natural disasters' impact on the vulnerable communities. Through this program, local organizations and communities living in highly disaster-vulnerable upland and coastal areas are trained on disaster preparedness, safety protocols, and emergency response.

On the other hand, the Philippines, through the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), spearheaded the celebration of International Day of Forests (IDF) through the conduct of the *ForeSTART UP 101: A*

Webinar on Forest and Sustainable Production and Consumption via Zoom Teleconference and Facebook platforms, in line with this year's IDF theme: "Forest and Sustainable Production and Consumption" and its key messages. *ForeSTART UP 101* was participated by representative from the Philippine Wood Producers Association, private tree plantation owners, academe, private sector, local government units and the general public. The webinar served as an avenue to discuss financing opportunities and instill the importance of sustainable production in forestry-related businesses.

Further, the Philippines would like to express our commitment and support to the Alliance for the Conservation of Rainforests. We are one with all the members of the Alliance in pursuing a multilateral, effective and concerted action to protect rainforests. The Philippines reiterates its commitment to further our cause in contributing to the achievement of increasing forest cover; Implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change, particularly in pursuit of policy approaches for adaptation in the forestry sector; and Improving wildfire prevention, preparedness, and response as well as restoration.

Finally, we commend the United Nations and this Forum for leading the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which emphasizes that forests, wetlands, drylands, and other natural ecosystems are essential for sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and improved human well-being. With this, we are reminded to always strive to go beyond reforestation and aim to address bigger national/international issues. To an extent, this is already being done with the Philippines' Enhanced National Greening Program, as we prioritize the rehabilitation and reforestation in the 143 critical watersheds, while taking into consideration features that will enhance the lives of Filipinos such as enterprise development, investments in new plantations, agroforestry, among others.

With this, the Philippines reassure this Body on its commitment and active engagement in achieving the targets of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

Thank you very much and Mabuhay!