

The 17th session of the UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS

UNFF17 High Level Round Table on:

**UNFF response to, role in, and expectations from forest-related multilateral
developments**

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STATEMENT BY ROMANIA

Mr. Ionuț-Sorin BANCIU

Secretary of State

Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests

Madam Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I'm honoured to have the opportunity to address to you within this *High Level Round Table*.

I would like to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for their excellent preparatory work done for this session of the UNFF.

Romania aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and now, I would like to make a few remarks in national capacity.

Romania supports the contributions of the UNFF17 Bureau to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on the vital role of forests in achieving SDG 15 (*Life on land*). In this regard, we consider relevant to emphasize the multiple functions of forests in combating the effects of climate change, drought/desertification, soil protection, reducing biodiversity loss and pollution, etc. All of these aspects need to be addressed in a synergic way, emphasizing the fundamental role of forests and their beneficial influence on land use, biodiversity and climate (synergy between CBD, UNCDD, UNFCCC conventions and Global Forest Goals).

Romania is committed, at national and international level, to promote the contribution of forests towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Under the Global Forest Goals 1 and 5, my country attaches great importance to the sustainable management of forests, especially in the area of forest integrity and to the extension of forests.

Romania invested in the prevention and control of illegal logging by improving transparency of wood supply chains and ensuring full traceability

of wood products. A new version of an *Integrated Information System for Wood Tracking* (SUMAL 2.0) and the *Forest Inspector Public Systems* are currently being implemented and continuously developed to include the best technologies.

We are also supporting small forest owners to achieve more sustainable forest management practices with a dedicated national budget for forest guarding and pest control activities.

Another relevant support measure is a dedicated financial compensation scheme that covers economic losses of private forest owners when their forests are included in strictly protected areas.

Romania is proud and privileged to host a significant part of Europe's last virgin and quasi-virgin forests. These valuable forests, some of the being of Outstanding Universal Value, as UNESCO nominates them, have been constantly under Romania's Government attention. Currently, more than 70 thousand hectares of such forest are strictly protected under Romanian law.

We, as political decision-makers, have the responsibility to take science-based decisions having in mind how the future might look like in terms of climate and society expectations related to forests.

It is well known that forests play a key role also in carbon sequestration. Thus, our goal is to increase the forest area in Romania, especially in those parts that are vulnerable to climate change, for example in the southern part of the country, where desertification represents a major threat. Significant steps were done in the last two decades, thousands of hectares of sandy soils being forested. We plan to continue this initiative and to establish a real green barrier in order to stop the spread of desertification.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the time to give more attention to the forest as a whole, as a complex ecosystem that should not be significantly disturbed. It is also mandatory to

develop and implement the best solutions related to wood processing in order to increase the value and life-cycle of the wood-based products.

Thank you for your attention!