



Video Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)
President of the Economic and Social Council
20th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
5 May 2025

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you today at the twentieth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

I am very proud to come from Canada, which is a great forest nation and I understand, as do all of you, that forests are essential for a healthy planet.

Well-managed forests offer nature-based solutions to many of our most pressing development challenges and provide livelihoods of directly forest-dependent communities by providing food, fodder, shelter, energy, medicine and income.

Despite their undeniable benefits, we have to recognize that forests are under threat all over the world. Deforestation must be addressed with full recognition of its links to poverty, to industrial development, to demand for food and energy, and the impact of climate change.

This conference comes at an opportune time when forests and nature-based solutions are being afforded unprecedented attention to deliver on the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Your discussions at this forum around valuing forests ecosystems in national policy and strategy will inform the discussions at the 2025 HLPF, contributing to deeper engagement with international financial institutions to address development financing gaps, especially for developing countries.

UNFF20 will provide an opportunity to discuss efforts to halt deforestation and use forests to address socio-economic challenges, including inequality and poverty, in the context of forest management that simply has to be sustainable. We have no choice. This will require concerted action rooted firmly in political will.



Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

There is no solution to climate change or biodiversity loss without forests and forests that are healthy. Let us build on the 2024 Pact for the Future and Member States' pledge to reverse environmental damage and do everything we can to conserve our planet's resources, including forests.

Let us be reminded of our responsibilities outlined in the "Declaration on Future Generations" and focus our efforts to realize the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests.

I invite you to make the most of UNFF20 to safeguard, address threats, and identify means to continue advocating for our forests, to shining a spotlight on their contribution to tackling urgent global challenges.

I wish you all a very, very successful meeting and look forward to hearing more about them. Thank you so much and good luck.