

Committee on Forestry

Agenda item 4: State of World's Forest 2022

Thank you, Chairperson.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

On behalf of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, we support the statement made by XXX delivered on behalf of the G77 and China or the Near East Group on the State of World's Forest 2022.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan wishes to underline the plight of vulnerable developing countries, where prolonged social unrest has had devastating effects on the forest and land use due to breakdown in the management of natural resources. In fact, Afghanistan is one of those unfortunate vulnerable countries.

Due to four decades of conflict and displacement of population followed by the forceful taking of power by the Taliban, where a large number of the Afghan population have either left the country through humanitarian corridor or fled the country, Afghanistan area of natural forest has gone down from 1.5 million hectares in the 90's to about 1 million hectares at present; This is a loss of 50%. Currently, the area under forests is 1.33% of total land area compared to 2.3% in the 1990s. From 2001 to 2021 in Afghanistan, 27% of tree cover loss occurred in areas where dominant drivers of loss resulted in deforestation. Reports indicated that under the Taliban administration, biodiversity policies are fully neglected and thus the illegal timber trade, though limited to a few eastern provinces, plays an important role in on- going instability in these areas. Hence this has created a lucrative shadow economy that reaches across the border, providing incentives for the Taliban profiting from timber smuggling to perpetuate instability. Thus, the degradation of natural resources has directly and severely harmed the environment and ecosystem, affecting the livelihoods of the majority of the Afghans population as well as the country's agriculture and economic development as a whole. Let us not forget that healthy societies depend on healthy environment that is rich in biodiversity.

Mr. Chairperson,

Dear Colleagues,

The process of recovery of natural forests is to make the community its custodian, provide training to communities in care to manage forests, replant and maintain barren forest landscape, and aggressively prevent illegal export of forest wood. Considering the close link between forest and rangeland, it is also essential to ensure that the community is put in charge of both forest and rangeland. Hence, it is proposed that the FAO concentrate on ways and means of dealing with Members of the Afghan Community in Afghanistan as well as our mutual partners on forest pathways in order to achieve environmental goals, which could adequately be reflected in the agrifood system's transformation policies.

Thank you, Chairperson, and over to you.