

Statement
of the European Union and its 27 Member States

26th session of the FAO Committee on Forestry

Rome, 3-7 October 2022

Agenda item 4: State of the World's Forests 2022: Forest pathways for green recovery and building inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies

Mr Chair,

1. The Czech Republic is honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States at this 26th COFO session
2. Albania, Republic of Moldova, Türkiye and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
3. We welcome the key findings of SOFO 2022, and we request FAO to disseminate and promote them in appropriate fora as well as in other, not only forest-relevant processes.
4. We welcome three interrelated pathways involving halting deforestation and maintaining forests; restoring degraded lands and expanding agroforestry; as well as sustainably managing forests and building green value chains, which would help meet future demand for materials and support sustainable economies. In this regards we would like to request FAO to continue in raising awareness and in organizing of policy dialogues on sustainable management of forests in the framework of sustainable land use as a means for simultaneously achieving economic and environmental goals, and in order to maximize synergies among the three forest pathways and between agricultural, forestry, environmental and other policies.
5. We support more efficient, productive and sustainable agriculture and food systems which are key for meeting future needs for food while reducing demand for agricultural land, maintaining forests and securing the multiple benefits that forests provide also to farming systems.
6. Agroforestry systems are important part of the pathways, because they tend to be more resilient than conventional agriculture to environmental shocks and the effects of climate change, have higher productivity and store more carbon, while contributing to biodiversity conservation. On the other side, agroforestry systems may require longer time to obtain profitable returns compare to annual cropping system and incentives for greater uptake will be needed.
7. We request FAO to continue in raising awareness about forest-based value chains as an essential element in the development of circular economy. When sustainably produced, long-lived and short-lived wood products have significant potential to reduce

greenhouse-gas emissions due to substitution of non-renewable materials. Sustainably meeting demand for forest-based biomass will require an increase in resource supply through restoration, biodiversity friendly reforestation and afforestation including on degraded lands and increased resource efficiency, recycling, re-use and cascading use.

8. We take note that forest investment is well below what is required and all sources of funding – domestic government, private and official development assistance need to be tapped.
9. We emphasize the need to shift policies to divert financial flows away from actions that harm forests and to incentivize investment in sustainable forest management, including in conservation and restoration of forests.
10. We support regulatory frameworks that have been developed so far to avoid the placement of products associated with deforestation or forest degradation on the market. Let me highlight that the EU is preparing a new regulation on making available on the EU market as well as export from the EU of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation
11. We emphasise the role of smallholders and local communities, including women, youth, and indigenous peoples as important stakeholders for scaling up implementation of the three pathways.

Thank you, Mr Chair.