

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 5: Forests and sustainable production of wood and non-wood forest products – meeting demands and supporting resilient local economies

Mr Chair,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. Albania, Republic of Moldova, Türkiye and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
3. First of all, let me emphasise the multifunctional role of forests in providing economic, social and environmental benefits through a wide range of ecosystem services and their contribution to the achievement of all SDGs as well as the Global Forest Goals.
4. In this regard, we want to underline the importance of the sustainable production of wood and non-wood products in ensuring active multifunctional forest management that improves the resilience and sustainable development of forests, and we welcome support of FAO to Members with technical expertise to improve sustainability, legality, and productivity of wood and non-wood forest products' value chains.
5. Wood and the forest-based value chains play a significant role as a renewable resource and material to substitute the carbon intensive and fossil-based counterparts; providing significant income and job opportunities, especially in rural areas. Forests and sustainably produced forest-based products are one of important keys in the transition to a green, nature-positive, climate neutral and competitive circular bioeconomy.
6. We appreciate the work of FAO and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in this regard and ask FAO to increase and improve cooperation, coordination, and coherence between international wood-related policies and activities at all levels in order to maximise synergies and co-benefits.
7. We welcome the emphasis on the promotion of sustainably produced wood-based products, especially long-lived ones, to address the lack of awareness of their potential, and at the same time recall that resource efficient and sustainable production and use of forest-based products, including short-lived ones, contribute to the climate goals, to the circular bio-economy, to a sustainable and greener post pandemic economic recovery and to rural development.
8. In this regard, we welcome the outcomes of the XV World Forestry Congress, including

the Ministerial Call on Sustainable Wood. We are requesting FAO to scale-up global and regional policy dialogues on wood-based pathways, to further promote sustainable production, consumption and investments and to promote short and local supply chains and sustainability-oriented procurement policies along the whole value chain, especially with regard to enhancing resource efficiency and circular bio-economy.

9. Scaling-up the sustainable use of wood, as a renewable material as well as energy source, has a high potential to become an innovative and effective contribution to climate protection and the circular bio-economy. Wood-based pathways are key in order to achieve carbon neutrality, energy security as well as to build more resilient economies and societies.

Thank you, Mr Chair.