

**Statement**  
**of the European Union and its 27 Member States**  
**26<sup>th</sup> session of the FAO Committee on Forestry**  
**Rome, 3-7 October 2022**

**Agenda item 7.1 Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031**

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, we warmly welcome the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 endorsed in June 2022, its update within the FAO document COFO/2022/INF/9, as well as the document COFO/2022/5.1 that sets out the Action Plan for its implementation.
4. Many countries are facing increasing adverse impacts of climate change on forests and only well-adapted and resilient forests can continue to deliver ecosystem services, including their climate change mitigation potential. We therefore welcome the content of the Action Plan.
5. However, it will be necessary to remain vigilant to ensure that within agriculture and food systems, forests should not be reduced to their carbon capture role. Forests indeed provide many other functions that are essential to fight climate change, such as their supply of renewable materials and energy, their biophysical effect on climate and the importance of forest biodiversity in their resilience.
6. The Action Plan is divided into relevant outputs and structured into three distinct and complementary levels of action from the global to the local level. We would like to stress the importance of the local level in particular for adaptation measures, which must by nature be implemented by actors at the local level according to their knowledge, on what science can advise, and with the support that national and global scales of action can provide.
7. In this regard, we encourage the FAO to continue to promote science, evidence and data-based adaptation and mitigation measures as well as low-emission solutions.
8. We are concerned that current policies and actions at the global level on the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests are insufficient to halt deforestation, most of it caused by conversion of forests into agricultural land, which continues to be a major source of greenhouse gases emissions. In particular, in the event of trade-offs

between sustainable forest management and other development goals, in particular agricultural production, reiterating that sustainable forest management should remain one of the encouraged options.

9. We encourage the FAO and its member states to mobilize climate finance for forest adaptation and mitigation.
10. At last, particularly in the light of the latest IPCC report, we encourage the FAO and its member states to mainstream both climate change consideration and climate risks consideration in their overall action, notably through the many outputs mentioned in this Action Plan.
11. We encourage the FAO to continue the work on this Action Plan by mainstreaming gender equality, youth engagement and participation of indigenous peoples.

Thank you, Mr Chair.