

**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: Forest Solutions for Combatting Climate Change**

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. We thank COFO Secretariat for the background document COFO/2022/5, which provides an excellent overview of options to reinforce forest solutions to climate change and FAO's activities to this end, and support the action by the Committee suggested in the background document.
4. The EU underlines adverse impacts of deforestation, which continues to be a major source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, on climate change and on biodiversity loss, and that agricultural expansion is the main cause of deforestation. In that context, we urge Members to focus on the protection of sensitive forest ecosystems, rich in carbon but at risk of deforestation or degradation.
5. We also wish to stress that forests and trees provide climate regulatory functions that are of key importance for keeping future agricultural productivity in the tropics and beyond, as well as for ensuring favourable living conditions in cities.
6. We acknowledge the contribution of wood products to carbon storage and carbon substitution, and invite Members to better integrate mitigation benefits of wood products into national and international policies and NDCs.
7. We witness adverse impacts of climate change on our forests, such as increased incidence forest fires, windstorms and outbreaks of pest and diseases. And only well-adapted, genetically diverse, healthy and resilient forests can deliver ecosystem services, including their climate-change mitigation potential.
8. Therefore, we invite FAO to assist Members in implementing forest-based adaptation measures, including conservation, protection and restoration measures, along with sustainable forest management and agroforestry systems, while applying integrated risk management approaches.
9. We request FAO to assist Members in establishing long-term forest risk prevention strategies and implementing forest-based adaptation measures and to strengthen the

respective regional networks as well as accessibility to the supporting information needed.

Thank you, Mr Chair.