

26TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

FAO

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Item 4. State of the World's Forests 2022

Country's Intervention – JAMAICA



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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Jamaican delegation adds our voices to our colleagues in Commending FAO on the State of the World's Forests 2022 and the continuous support provided to assist countries like Jamaica in submitting our forest data thus leading to this comprehensive report.

From our perspective, the report highlights the challenges and contentious issues that small island states within the Caribbean like Jamaica face when we try to financially capitalize on decades of conservation and reforestation efforts. In Jamaica, forest cover accounts for greater than 40% of the landscape and with a net annual increase in forest cover but unfortunately, **degradation, and the dearth of sustainable economic opportunities are our current realities.**

Jamaica also grapples with the challenge that >70% of the national forest cover is in private hands and hence at significant risk of conversion. This along with issues such as traceability issues associated with the unregulated extraction and sale of Timber and other wood products, underdeveloped eco-recreational businesses, insufficient information on existing opportunities, forest resource values especially non-wood products, and other unique and emerging opportunities linked to value chain enhancement **eludes us.** Consequently, our national GDP does not adequately reflect the significant contribution of forests as a high-value and renewable resource. Jamaica, therefore, agrees with the position brought forth, that Forests and trees provide vital goods and ecosystem services which are grossly undervalued in current economic systems.

As a country, we are still in the nascent stages of realizing the potential economic opportunities that may be derived from sustainable forest utilization. We are on our REDD+ journey having just completed our REDD+ strategy in August 2022, we are in the process of acquiring high-Resolution images to complete our LULUCA, and come December 2022, The Forestry Department of Jamaica will be hosting a national forestry conference with the theme "Forestry as a business" to explore economic opportunities of forest resources which are worth scaling up into green enterprises.

We use this opportunity to solicit expert and technical support from FAO on the development and augmenting of green economies, especially in island states wherein we seek to build and strengthen the three forest pathways to support efforts to up-scale investments and effective implementation, in close collaboration with global and regional partners.

Sir Chair, I thank you.

