

COFO 26th Session OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY, FAO

JAMAICA DELEGATION - FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

Intervention: Forests and sustainable production of wood and non-wood forest products

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Jamaica commends the FAO on an interesting and useful document looking at the sustainable production and use of forest products and strongly supports the 4 suggested actions outlined. Of note, in the Jamaican context, where forest cover is approximately 40% and generally confined to mountainous regions; State-owned forests make up only 25%. These state-owned forested lands are largely steep, remote, and generally inaccessible. The Forestry Department, therefore, focuses its active forest management efforts on restoring degraded forest areas and hurricane-damaged old pine plantations.

The long-term aim is to maintain and improve forest cover and develop resilient forest landscapes that have higher biomass, biodiversity, productivity, and greater social and economic value than the current day situation.

As 75% of Jamaica's forests are privately owned, they have limited legal protection against conversion to other land uses. The need to implement innovative incentives to promote private forestry and develop the economic potential of forests without compromising social and environmental values is therefore critical. Like many other SIDS there is also a broad need for modernizing, mechanizing and increasing the value-added benefits through value chain development. Consequently, there is a strong need to attract financing and long-term investors to trigger the potential of the Jamaican forestry sector.

We are therefore call on the FAO to provide support to SIDS to assist them to unlock the potential of their forests sectors through:

- 1) Technical support to increase capacity in the area of traceability, legality and transparency of markets for forest products.**

- 2) Technical support to establish forest information management systems to improve the quality of information available to guide sustainable forest management.**

- 3) Expand initiatives that develop forest related value chains especially those which safeguard the livelihoods of Forest Adjacent**

Communities and strengthen their capacity to access financing and markets.

We further request that the FAO considers:

- 1) The Inclusion of value chain development in the FAO Forest Farm Facility**
- 2) Support the development of sustainable agroforestry systems to reduce reliance on timber products and help to secure livelihoods.**
- 3) Support for the piloting of the use of Bamboo for fuel and other products** using community-based and appropriate technology for harvesting and improving value.

Mr Chair, I thank you