

Statement by the Deputy Minister and Head of the NEWO at the 28th Session of COFO

Mr. Chair, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor to speak on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 28th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 28). Recognizing the vital role of forests in climate resilience and sustainable development, Iran has pursued transformative measures in line with global forest goals.

In support of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, our national initiative, "Planting One Billion Trees," has over the past three years produced 690 million seedlings and planted 200 million trees with public participation. Using unconventional water resources, we have expanded timber cultivation. We have strengthened forest protection capacity and advanced integrated watershed management in the Hyrcanian and Zagros regions. Afforestation efforts aimed at containing dust-generating hotspots have successfully contributed to preserving soil health, securing clean water, and supporting food security and agricultural production.

Iran has launched comprehensive programmes in the Hyrcanian forests to advance sustainable forest management. Our model, based on social forestry, empowers local stakeholders and promotes a bio-economy while improving community livelihoods through non-wood forest products, ecotourism, and increased private-sector investment in forest parks.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Over the past three years, Iran has carried out forest restoration operations across 300,000 hectares and rehabilitated degraded lands. Despite severe climate-induced fire risks last year, our participatory fire management programmes have significantly reduced the number and extent of forest fires. Urban forestry measures have also been expanded to enhance climate resilience.

Iran remains fully committed to the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests and its roadmap. Achieving global forest goals requires equal access to international financing, technology transfer, and the exchange of experiences. As forest ecosystem services are global in nature, international cooperation is essential.

In this regard, the UNESCO Category 2 Centre for Integrated Watershed Management in Iran announces its readiness to share successful experiences and cooperate with all Member States.

Distinguished Participants,

My country, Iran, is facing an unjust war. In an attack and bombardment on 28 March 2026, the Commander of the Forestry Guard and a number of Iran's forest rangers and nature protectors were martyred. The Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with more than 120 years of experience in protecting forests and rangelands, honors the memory and path of these martyrs and pledges to continue their green and honorable path with tireless effort, planning, and firm resolve.

In the hope of a green Earth, a world of peace, and a world of hope.

Thank you.