



Draft COFO Opening Statement

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FAO Committee on Forestry

OPENING REMARKS

- As the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, it is a pleasure to join fellow Members of the Committee on Forestry for this important 28th session.
- For more than five decades, COFO has shaped international forest policy by bringing together technical expertise, diverse national perspectives, and practical experience from every major region of the world.
- The United States values COFO as a forum where forestry leaders can share experience and expertise to meet global challenges in the forestry sector.

Active Management Priorities

- The United States Forest Service was founded on the ideal of providing a sustainable flow of timber and water to the American public. Over time, our mission expanded to include multiple uses such as recreation, hunting, fishing, and energy production.
- To meet today's challenges like reducing wildfire risk and revitalizing rural economies, we are expanding responsible timber production, streamlining regulations, and modernizing forest management to support long-term forest health.
- Under President Trump's leadership, our Active Forest Management Strategy guides this work by focusing on collaborative planning, a strong forest-management workforce, and steady, sustainable program growth to keep forests resilient and productive.
- Our focused efforts are paying off. We continue to contain 98% of wildfires during initial attack. This year we have treated more than 1.2 million

hectares for hazardous fuels and have restored more than 111,000 hectares of national forest land.

- These accomplishments contribute to broader U.S. forest benefits: national forests supply drinking water to 80 million Americans, support over 260,000 jobs, and contribute billions of dollars each year to the U.S economy.

Science and Collaboration

- Science-based forest management remains central to our mission. We are focused on developing science **with** the people who will use it. When researchers, land managers, states, Tribes, private landowners, industry, and communities work together, science is more likely to be applied effectively to meet today's challenges.

Markets, Innovation, and Private Sector Investment

- Healthy forest economies depend on strong markets and private sector partnerships.

- The United States, through our Markets Matter Action Plan, is bringing together public and private partners to mobilize investment, retain critical infrastructure, and build demand for small-diameter and residual wood fiber.
- U.S. investments, including over \$100 million in wood innovation grants this year, show how innovation and private-sector participation strengthen both forests and rural economies.
- Trade supports economic opportunities for forest-based products in the United States and around the world. Countries should avoid imposing overly burdensome regulations which would harm rural communities that depend on forest-based products. In protecting against deforestation, countries should be mindful of the unintended consequences their regulations may have, including on legal trade of forestry and agricultural products.

Closing

- By modernizing processes, strengthening partnerships, and investing in innovation, the United States aims to deliver greater public benefits while ensuring our forests remain resilient and productive for present and future generations.
- Just as we have done the hard work to improve program impact and efficiency in our own government, we support the reform efforts within the Rome Based Agencies to focus on their core missions.
- We look forward to the COFO discussions this week to advance forest management that is innovative and focused on practical outcomes for forests and people.
- Thank you.