

Statement by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

For agenda item 4 State of the World's Forests 2026: Restoring forests and landscapes – the way forward for a sustainable future

Thank you, Chair,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity thanks the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for producing the State of the World's Forest 2026 report and welcomes its outcomes that provide an evidence base to support restoration efforts towards halting and reversing biodiversity loss, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Fulfilling the shared vision of living in harmony with nature, as set out in the Framework, requires maintaining and restoring forests while safeguarding their ecological functions and services, integrity, and connectivity.

The world is now at the halfway point in the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Continued commitment to restoring forests and landscapes, including in this room, is crucial to putting biodiversity on a path to recovery.

On 19 October, the 2026 United Nations Biodiversity Conference, comprising COP 17 of the Convention and the Meetings of the Parties to its Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, will begin in Armenia under the theme: "Taking action for nature".

At the COP, Parties will consider a decision on the strategic review of and updates to the expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity, which has provided guidance to forest stakeholders worldwide since 2002. The objective is to align the programme of work with the Global Biodiversity Framework and current forest-related concepts and terminology for greater impact. The update will reaffirm the crucial role of forests, which harbour 80% of terrestrial biodiversity, recognizing that such "Taking action for nature" must include forest conservation, restoration, and sustainable forest management.

The Secretariat continues to work with FAO to implement the Target 2 Road Map and the third phase of the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative. Taken together, knowledge products like the SOFO or the upcoming Restoration Progress Report, established principles, tools and partnerships can be leveraged by Parties to meet their forest and landscape restoration commitments.

Working towards long-term forest and restoration efforts requires all hands on deck. We would also like to thank the FAO Forestry team for their continued collaboration on the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring and capacity-building efforts for Parties to the Convention to establish, monitor and implement national restoration targets and their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

This technical and scientific support is invaluable to countries as they work towards achieving their biodiversity commitments. We look forward to building upon these partnerships to achieve meaningful progress and deepen the impact of the restoration and biodiversity agendas.

The Secretariat stands ready to collaborate to strengthen and scale up forest and landscape restoration as a long-term investment in synergistic biodiversity and climate action, and sustainable development, with particular attention to restoration quality and context-appropriate approaches.

We hope to see many of you in Yerevan in a few short weeks to continue this conversation, especially given the importance of improving forest health for achieving the broader objectives of the CBD.

Thank you, Chair.