

28 September 2026

Ethiopia's Statements to be delivered on the 28th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO28)

Thank you, Chairperson.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Congo on behalf of ARG.

It is a great honor to express our sincere appreciation to the FAO for its continued support in strengthening the forestry operations.

Ethiopia firmly believes that boosting afforestation requires the expansion of comprehensive extension services, and training programs are being implemented to carry out these measures and achieve the anticipated objectives.

Ethiopia's forest coverage declined dramatically from an estimated 40% to just 3% by the late 1990s, driven by unsustainable land-use practices, deforestation, poor resource management, and overgrazing. This environmental degradation has led to severe biodiversity loss, reduced agricultural productivity, shrinking water bodies, and heightened vulnerability to drought, flooding, and food insecurity.

Recognizing these challenges, Ethiopia has made the protection and sustainable management of natural resources a national priority. Building a green economy now stands at the center of the government's development agenda. In 2019, under the leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, the Green Legacy Initiative was launched. This ambitious program aims to restore ecosystems, combat deforestation

and soil erosion, expand forest coverage, improve air and water quality, while also creating millions of jobs.

Since its inception, the initiative has mobilized citizens across all age groups and sectors. Each year, billions of seedlings are planted during the rainy season. The results were remarkable. For the current year, the plan was to plant 7.5 billion seedlings and proudly we achieved it, contributing toward the overall target of 50 billion seedlings. This makes Ethiopia one of the world's leading nations in implementing large-scale, sustainable natural resource development.

The Green Legacy Initiative has introduced a diverse mix of seedlings, including fruit trees, fodder plants, fuel wood, and ornamental species to enhance urban landscapes.

Beyond its national impact, the program has attracted global recognition as a model for climate action. Neighboring countries have joined the fight against desertification, with Ethiopia supplying multipurpose seedlings.

In essence, the Green Legacy Initiative is more than a reforestation campaign; it is a transformative, multifaceted program that strengthens Ethiopia's resilience to climate change, boosts agricultural productivity, and inspires international collaboration.

Looking ahead, the initiative will continue with renewed focus and coordination, further expanding the green economy and ensuring sustainable development for generations to come.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia encourages the FAO to help build a strong framework for managing national forestry resources through effective monitoring and leadership.

A systematic research framework for forest development promotes stakeholder collaboration while emphasizing climate change resilience, economic development, and sustainable behavior. Coordination strategies to scale up forest restoration and meet the rising global demand for wood products. Training programmers, such as the strengthening of centers of excellence, contributes to modernizing the forestry sector.

Finally, Ethiopia will commit itself to the success of the FAO vision's aims of guaranteeing that no one is left behind and working hard to ensure food security.

Thank you Chairperson, and Back to you.

