

STATE OF ISRAEL
COFO Twenty-eighth Session
*State of the World's Forests 2026: Restoring forests and
landscapes – the way forward for a sustainable future*
Rome, 28 September – 2 October 2026

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Israel welcomes *The State of the World's Forests 2026* and its focus on restoring forests and landscapes as a pathway towards a sustainable future. We thank FAO for placing this critical issue at the centre of our discussions.

More than 60 percent of Israel's land area is arid or semi-arid. Restoring forests and landscapes under conditions of water scarcity, prolonged drought, soil erosion and increasing wildfire risk is therefore a national priority.

Israel's experience has shown that restoration is not simply a matter of planting trees. It is a long-term process of rebuilding ecological functions, processes and structure, strengthening resilience and restoring the services that healthy landscapes provide to people and nature.

Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael–Jewish National Fund, KKL-JNF, Israel's acting forestry service, applies a site-specific and adaptive approach to forest restoration. Natural regeneration is given priority wherever ecological conditions allow, supplemented when necessary by targeted planting and the use of drought-resistant native species.

In Israel's drylands, water-harvesting and soil-stabilization techniques help reduce erosion, improve water availability and support the recovery of vegetation. These methods demonstrate how restoration can be adapted to areas where rainfall is limited and highly variable.

In damaged and fire-affected forests, restoration is planned as a long-term process rather than a one-time intervention. Updated Israeli policies combine wildfire prevention, post-fire recovery, continued monitoring and adaptive management. Our objective is to develop diverse, multi-aged and multi-species forests that combine conifers and broadleaved trees and are better able to withstand future climatic and ecological pressures.

Restoration must also extend beyond individual forest sites. Israel seeks to maintain continuity among forests and other open spaces, strengthen ecological corridors and incorporate biodiversity considerations into planning and management at the national, regional and local levels.

Our experience points to several principles for advancing forest and landscape restoration. Actions must be adapted to local ecological and social conditions,

make the greatest possible use of natural processes and be supported by sound science, long-term monitoring and effective governance. Restoration policies must also consider the needs of local communities and the multiple environmental and social benefits that restored landscapes can provide.

Israel supports a continued role for FAO in helping countries translate restoration commitments into sustained action through capacity development, practical knowledge exchange, monitoring and appropriate financing. Particular attention should be given to drylands and other vulnerable ecosystems, where restoration is both especially challenging and urgently needed.

Israel remains committed to sharing its experience in dryland forestry, forest restoration and climate-resilient landscape management, while continuing to learn from the knowledge and experience of other countries.

Thank you.