



Kenya Statement on Agenda Item 4: The State of the World's Forests 2026 – Restoring Forests and Landscapes: The Way Forward for a Sustainable Future at the Committee of Forestry- 28th Session, Rome, 28 September - 2 October 2026

**Distinguished Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Kenya aligns itself with the statement delivered by Congo on behalf of the African regional group. We commend FAO and UNEP for this timely and evidence-based “The State of the World's Forests 2026” report.

Kenya notes with concern that 1.56 billion hectares of land are degraded worldwide, including 460 million hectares of forest land. This is not merely a statistic; it represents lost livelihoods, diminished biodiversity, and growing climate vulnerability, particularly for African communities that depend directly on forests and landscapes.

Kenya welcomes the report's emphasis that restoration is a long-term investment, not a short-term activity, with returns of up to USD 30 for every USD 1 invested. However, we are acutely aware of the finance gap: USD 64 billion annually today, against the USD 296 billion needed per year by 2030. Closing this gap requires innovative financing, blended finance, climate finance, and value-chain approaches that reach the local communities who implement restoration and bear its short-term costs.

Kenya is proud to be part of the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) and welcomes FAO's support through the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism, including ongoing projects in our region. We particularly commend the launch of the USD 222 million program supported by FAO and the Green Climate Fund, which will restore degraded landscapes and build climate resilience across eight Sahelian countries. This is the scale of ambition Africa needs.

Kenya also welcomes the UN Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management (2027–2036), as proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 79/283. We see it as a strategic opportunity to consolidate the gains of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and to scale up restoration along a longer-term continuum from restoring degraded ecosystems to sustainably expanding and managing forest resources.

We stress, however, that afforestation and reforestation must follow established FLR principles. We must avoid unintended shifts towards large-scale monoculture plantations. Restoration must prioritize diverse, locally adapted and endemic species; deliver equitable benefits; and be embedded in integrated landscape approaches that respect the rights and knowledge of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, Kenya calls on FAO and development partners to:

- Strengthen monitoring systems that capture not just hectares, but ecological integrity, equity and livelihoods;
- Ensure predictable, accessible finance for country-level implementation; and
- Support capacity development and knowledge exchange, particularly for African member states.

Kenya remains committed to working with all Members to transform restoration commitments into long-term, sustainable forest stewardship at scale.

Thank you.