

Item 5 — Forests for Food Security and Nutrition

Monday, 28 September 2026 | 17:00–19:30

Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates,

India welcomes the dedicated discussion on *Forests for Food Security and Nutrition* and appreciates FAO's comprehensive document and its efforts to bring greater attention to the contribution of forests and trees to sustainable agrifood systems. India underscores the essential role of forests and trees in strengthening sustainable agrifood systems. Beyond their contribution to food security and nutrition, forests and trees support livelihoods, enhance resilience to climate and other environmental stresses, provide vital ecosystem services and contribute to sustainable rural development. India emphasizes the need to recognise and strengthen these multiple contributions through integrated and context-specific approaches to agrifood systems and landscapes.

India recognises that the contribution of forests to food security extends well beyond direct consumption of forest products. Forests and trees support agricultural production through soil and water conservation, pollination, climate regulation, watershed protection and other ecosystem services.

India places particular emphasis on agroforestry as practical bridges between forestry and agriculture.

As per the India State of Forest Report 2023, tree cover under agroforestry in India is estimated at approximately 12.76 million hectares, reflecting an increase of about 20 percent since 2013.

India also underscores the important role of non-timber forest produce in supporting food security, nutrition and livelihoods, particularly for forest-dependent communities. In India, we are strengthening community institutions and value chains for non-timber forest products, with emphasis on sustainable harvesting, value addition, market access and income diversification.

India also recognises the important role of medicinal plants and other plant-based resources in supporting human health, nutrition and well-being. The National Medicinal Plants Board supports both *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation of medicinal plant species, while promoting community participation. This integrated approach strengthens biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management, while also supporting traditional healthcare systems and livelihoods.

India appreciate FAO's efforts to strengthen the global evidence base on forests for food security and nutrition, including its work on forest foods and agroforestry. We encourage FAO to continue this work while ensuring that national circumstances, ecological diversity, national definitions and existing statistical systems are fully taken into account. The focus should remain on strengthening national capacities and supporting country-led approaches.

Going forward, India encourages FAO to continue supporting Members in scaling up agroforestry, sustainable forest-product value chains, community-based institutions, integrated land-use planning and nationally appropriate monitoring and data systems. Such efforts will help ensure that forests and trees are fully recognized and effectively integrated as contributors to food security, nutrition, climate resilience and sustainable agrifood systems.

Thank you, Chair.