

Item 5: Forests for food security and nutrition: Strengthening the contribution of forests and trees to sustainable agrifood systems

Thank you, Chair.

The UK welcomes this paper and the new global report Forests for Food: Nourishing People, Sustaining the Planet. Together, they make a compelling case that forests and trees must be recognised as an integral part of sustainable and resilient food systems, globally.

We would also like to take the opportunity to commend FAO's Forestry Division, and partners, for their dedication in building and highlighting the evidence of forests in sustaining agriculture over recent years.

Forests contribute directly to food security and nutrition by providing income, energy and livelihoods. But their contribution goes much further. Forests regulate water and climate, sustain soils and pollinators, and help buffer agricultural production against drought, heat and other shocks.

Forests are not just environmental assets, they are critical natural infrastructure, underpinning food and water security, livelihoods and economic prosperity. The impacts of deforestation and forest degradation are already being felt through reduced productivity and increased food price volatility.

The report's finding that agriculture in 155 countries depends on forests beyond national borders for up to 40 percent of annual rainfall, vividly demonstrates the scale of this interdependence. Forest loss in one country can affect rainfall, production and food security far beyond its borders. Protecting and sustainably managing forests is therefore

not only a national concern, but an essential part of strengthening our shared resilience and stability.

The UK supports the paper's emphasis on stronger policy coherence, improved data and evidence, and greater integration of forests within food security, nutrition and agrifood system strategies. This should include stronger collaboration across forestry, agriculture, water, climate, health and nutrition, while recognising the knowledge, rights and contribution of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

We encourage FAO to share the report's findings widely, including with the Committee on Agriculture and across the Rio Conventions, and to continue advancing cross-sectoral approaches that recognise forests as indispensable to resilient and sustainable food systems.

Thank you.