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Statement of the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSFI) on COFO item 7 “Advancing forest-based bioeconomy approaches for sustainable food and agriculture” (COFO/2026/5)

Delivered by

Silvia Melegari

Chair, Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries
Secretary General, European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bòis)

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Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. As Chair of FAO’s Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries, ACSFI, I would like to welcome the COFO document on “Advancing forest-based bioeconomy approaches for sustainable food and agriculture” and its proposed suggested actions.
2. As highlighted in the ACSFI report to COFO, which will be considered later this week in the context of the “Dialogue with Statutory Bodies in Forestry”, the private forest sector recognizes the essential role of sustainable forest-based industries in advancing sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches as means to deliver nature-based solutions, support ecosystem services, and maintain productive and resilient forests that balance ecological integrity and socioeconomic benefits.
3. We underline the important role of sustainably managed forests and harvested wood products in climate-change mitigation through carbon sequestration and storage, while fostering innovation in higher value-added forest-based products and the efficient use of biomass and by-products across forest-based value chains.

4. We therefore call upon FAO to further strengthen capacity building and knowledge exchange, while promoting technology and innovation in the forest-based sector, as well supporting ~~as~~ inclusive policy dialogues at all levels, to enhance private-sector engagement and support collective action for conserving, restoring, and sustainably using forests and other ecosystems. This includes in our view the provision of technical assistance, data generation, capacity development and knowledge exchange to upscale sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches.
5. ACSFI welcomes with appreciation the outcomes of the Country and Organization Led Initiative on sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches as well as the Vienna Call for Action and thanks Austria for its leadership of the Initiative.
6. The ACSFI joined forces with the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development Forest Solutions Group – both entities are represented here at COFO – by issuing a joint statement during the Global COLI Summit.
7. In this Statement we underline that “growing demand for renewable, climate-beneficial materials creates important opportunities across forest product and wood-fiber value chains”, but that “at the same time, policy misalignment, financing challenges, as well as market and raw material uncertainties can slow progress”.
8. We therefore call upon FAO members to continue and strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between the public and the private forest sector as a collective endeavor to advance sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches at scale. We see an important role for FAO to facilitate this dialogue.
9. The ACSFI stands ready to support this process with the commitment and expertise of our member and its outstanding Secretariat.
10. Thank you.