

COFO 28 – statements of the EU and its Member States

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Advancing forest-based bioeconomy approaches for sustainable food and agriculture

1. Madam / Mr. Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, and representatives, I am honoured to speak on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.
2. The European Union acknowledges the essential role of sustainable bioeconomy in helping to phase out the use of fossil-based raw materials and energy, while contributing to green growth, competitiveness, and resilience. The role of forests and sustainable forest management is vital in enabling a thriving, sustainable bioeconomy.
3. The EU has recently renewed its Bioeconomy Strategy creating a framework for a competitive and sustainable bioeconomy in the EU. Forests are in the centre of the strategy as they are a key renewable biomass source.
4. Together with Brazil, the European Union co-chairs the FAO Group of Friends on the Bioeconomy, which fosters international dialogue and cooperation. Looking ahead, the Global Bioeconomy Summit 2026, hosted by Ireland, will provide another important platform to strengthen global partnerships and advance the international bioeconomy agenda.
5. The EU also welcomes the recommendations on sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches emerging from the Global COLI Summit and the Vienna Call for Action. They represent important milestones for scaling up sustainable forest-based bioeconomy solutions worldwide. The COLI Summit was an excellent example of international cooperation in the field of bioeconomy.
6. The European Union underlines the crucial contribution of sustainable forest management and forest-based bioeconomy approaches to all three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social, and environmental—as well as to resource efficiency and circularity, as resources are not unlimited.
7. A sustainable forest-based bioeconomy depends on the availability of sustainable biomass. Therefore, increasing forest resilience and sustainable productivity must be recognised as key enablers of bioeconomy development.
8. Sustainable forest-based value chains are supporting low-carbon development, safeguarding ecological integrity, and strengthening rural and urban livelihoods, including those of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth.
9. Integrated, place-based, and cross-sectoral approaches are essential. Particular attention should be given to improving knowledge and data on the availability and sustainable use of biomass, addressing trade-offs between different biomass uses and ecosystem services,

strengthening research and innovation capacities, developing sustainable regional value chains, and building the skills needed for the transition.

10. We welcome the increasing recognition of sustainable wood-based construction. In this regard, we acknowledge the contribution of initiatives such as the European Wood Policy Platform and its Dara Award, which facilitate policy and cross-sectoral dialogue, showcase innovation, and promote sustainable wood-based value chains with a particular focus on the construction sector.
11. We welcome FAO's role, especially in developing bioeconomy metrics and indicators and in providing a platform for knowledge exchange.
12. We encourage further international work on assessing the climate benefits of wood and wood-based products, including carbon storage and material substitution effects.
13. We thank the authors for the preparation of the background document, and we support the suggested actions as outlined in document COFO/2026/5.