

Statement of European Union and its 27 Member States

27th session of the FAO Committee on Forestry

Rome, 22-26 July 2024

Agenda item 6: Enhancing the contribution of forestry to bioeconomy – opportunities and challenges

Madam/Mr Chair,

1. Hungary is honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. [XXX, XXXX, XXXX align themselves with this statement.]
3. The European Union is at the forefront of developing and implementing sustainable and circular bioeconomy strategies. We recognize the invaluable contribution of forests to bioeconomy and the the imperative of optimizing local conditions and resources to foster resilient, locally-driven sustainable and deforestation-free bioeconomic value chains, in line with the three pillars of sustainability .
4. Forests are fundamental to the EU's bioeconomy framework, supporting sustainable practices and the efficient utilization of biomass. For woody biomass, wWe prioritize the efficient use of resources, and promote high-value products of woody biomass.
5. We support FAO the suggested actions in the COFO/2024/4 provided that the sustainable bioeconomy term would be replaced by sustainable and circular bioeconomy. We also would like to remind at the same time of the need for cost-efficiency and avoiding duplication of work. When formulating sustainable and circular bioeconomy policies and strategies, it is vital to take into account the local conditions as bioeconomy is based on developing sustainable and circular value chains that promote the use of local resources.
6. We are committed to fostering partnerships among FAO, the private sector, and other stakeholders to drive forward sustainable and circular bioeconomic development. Our support extends to member states in establishing robust systems that ensure a legal, sustainable and deforestation-free forestry production.
7. The EU recognizes the sustainable and circular bioeconomy as a pivotal tool in addressing global challenges such as sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity loss. By reinforcing the sustainable an circular forest-based bioeconomy, we aim to mitigate land abandonment, prevent rural depopulation, halt and reverse deforestation and degradation by 2030, safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services. In this regard, we would like to underline that bioeconomy should stimulate

sustainable management and profitability of forest and the most efficient use of wood and non-wood forest products while safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services.

8. Finally, we would like to underline that a sustainable and circular bioeconomy is a source of products, income opportunities and science and evidence-based innovations that provide renewable, reusable, and recyclable alternatives to fossil resources, while reconciling the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, rural development and food security and providing benefits and income to local communities.
9. Sustainable forest management is integral to our sustainable and circular bioeconomy approach, ensuring the responsible stewardship of forest ecosystems. We advocate for the development and deployment of innovative bio-based materials and technologies that reduce pollution and preserve biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as for innovative approaches such as agroecology.

Thank you, Madam/Mr Chair.