

Statement of European Union and its 27 Member States

27th session of the FAO Committee on Forestry

Rome, 22-26 July 2024

Agenda item 7: The FAO Forestry Roadmap – From Vision to Action 2024-2031 and FAO's work on forestry under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31

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. Forests are vital in advancing sustainable development goals. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to sustainable forest management and prioritizes actions to this end, including to halt deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 and conserve and restore conserve forests. Robust policies must be enforced to combat deforestation, forest degradation and unsustainable management and logging while preserving and restoring ecosystems.
4. We would like to thank FAO for preparing the Forestry Roadmap and for consulting with the members and we welcome the efforts that led to the outcome of this process.
5. However, we regret that at the last stage, wording has been added that the EU cannot support. In particular, wording such as *“preventing unjustified trade restrictions and distortions, eliminating and not creating unnecessary and unjustified barriers to trade”*. The appropriate expression for this last sentence should be simply *“in conformity with international trade rules”*. In addition, while in principle we agree that we should avoid approaches *“one-size fits all”*, this shouldn't be interpreted in a way that members can't define measures *“in conformity with international trade rules”*.
6. We trust FAO and its members, based on the Forestry Roadmap taking into account our comments and beyond, will continue and intensify actions on halting deforestation and forest degradation, while reconciling the preservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.
7. We welcome further action on a sustainable and circular bioeconomy based on the Roadmap, highlighting that sustainable bioeconomy could be accelerated with reference to circularity and efficiency, inter alia through a resource efficient use of biomass or the use of bio-based materials and side-streams, waste and water, offering renewable,

reusable and recyclable alternatives to fossil resources without harming the environment.

8. Innovation emerges as a cornerstone of sustainable forest management, offering critical solutions to address challenges. The European Union advocates for leveraging sustainable innovative technologies in assisting development of forest habitats, forest monitoring, and forest based solutions, management, and restoration.
9. Emphasizing the necessity of international cooperation, the European Union underscores the importance of collaborative efforts to tackle global forest-related challenges, as well as for forests to contribute to global challenges.
10. Furthermore, we wish to highlight the achievements of FAO in forestry during the biennium of 2022–23. The FAO's efforts in forestry have been instrumental in guiding global trends and developments pertinent to its mandate. We concur with updated priorities for FAO's forestry work in 2024–2025 within the Programme of Work and Budget 2024–25 and the Medium-Term Plan 2022–25, aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31. Although we do not align with the issues previously mentioned, the implementation of the Forestry Roadmap, should contribute to keeping the balance between conservation and restoration of forest ecosystems and the sustainable use of forests, while scaling up science and innovation.
11. In conclusion, the European Union reiterates its steadfast dedication to sustainable forest management and preserving sensitive ecosystems. By embracing innovation, fostering international cooperation, and ensuring inclusive participation, we can collectively safeguard our forests for present and future generations.

Thank you, Madam/Mr Chair