



Statement by

H.E. Ambassador Lachezara Stoeva

President of the Economic and Social Council

Opening of the

Eighteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

8 May 2023 at 10 am, Conference Room 4, UNHQ, NY

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honor to participate in the opening of the 18th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, UNFF. I am especially glad to welcome you back in New York for the first fully in-person meeting since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dear colleagues,

This year the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development – HLPF will meet in July under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council – ECOSOC, and in September under the



auspices of the General Assembly. The 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit will provide an opportunity for Heads of State and Government to follow-up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs.

The 2023 SDG Summit also marks the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and should provide high-level political guidance on transformative and accelerated actions leading up to the target year of 2030 for achieving the SDGs. I wish to commend UNFF, which is among the first ECOSOC Functional Commissions, which aligned its work with the 2030 Agenda, both in its substantive areas of work, and in its annual program of work.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The Global Forest Goals (GFGs) of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), and their targets were conceived having in mind their linkages with various SDGs and their targets; given the contributions of sustainably managed forests to the achievement of the SDGs.

Forest-related actions to combat climate change, including carbon sequestration, mitigation and adaptation, contribute to the accomplishment of SDG 13 on climate change. A green economy that offers decent employment in the forestry sector helps in the achievement of SDGs 1, 8 and 10, namely on poverty, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequality; the income generated



from decent forest jobs may contribute to the provision of quality education, SDG 4, and promote gender equality, SDG 5.

The list goes on to include, for example, clean water and sanitation, achieved through actions to conserve and restore forest watersheds, as well as trees outside forests and urban forests, which can contribute to the sustainability of cities and communities.

In this regard, I would like to thank the Bureau of UNFF18 for organizing the very timely and important discussions on Forests, Energy and Livelihoods as emerging issues during this session of the Forum. This discussion is directly related to achieving SDG 7, affordable and clean energy, and to the nexus of forests, energy, and livelihoods, which is critical for achievement of all SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every subsidiary body of ECOSOC plays a role in the success of the 2030 Agenda. UNFF, throughout the years, has been providing valuable substantive input to different sessions of the HLPF. Relying on its universal membership, UNFF and its members, should seize the opportunity provided by the ongoing preparations for the SDG Summit, and share its own perspectives on advancing achievement of the SDGs, through suggesting concrete actions on accelerating progress towards the GFGs. In this respect, I invite you to be actively involved in the deliberations of UNFF18, as well as the upcoming



session of the HLPF. Working together, we will ensure that the goals set in 2030 Agenda, and the UNSPF will be accomplished.

I wish you a very successful meeting.

Thank you very much.