

**Talking points for Mr. Javad Momeni
Vice-Chair of the UNFF18/19 Bureau**

**ECOSOC Management Segment
Roundtable on “Transformation is possible:
Actions from the ECOSOC system”**

**8 June 2023, 10:00am- 12:00pm New York time (EDT)
ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ, New York**

Suggested length for initial intervention: 4 minutes

Suggested focus for initial intervention: Climate action and its interrelations with environmental protection from the viewpoint of the UNFF

There is growing recognition globally that healthy forests and other ecosystems are vital to protect the planet and build resilience against escalating climate crises as they offer solutions to the transformation required to achieve sustainable development.

It is undeniable that through reversing deforestation and sustainably managing forests, forest ecosystems can sustain and help lift millions more out of extreme poverty, build resilient economies and societies, safeguard biodiversity, and combat climate change. They also provide a natural buffer against transmission of zoonotic diseases and reduce the risk of future pandemics.

Despite their critical importance to our lives, forests continue to be lost and degraded in many regions at an alarmingly high rate, threatening the health of the planet and the people. To address climate and nature crises and fully recover from the pandemic, we must reverse the current negative trend by placing healthy ecosystems and resilient communities at the centre of our efforts to combat climate change and accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

In this regard, I am pleased to share that the eighteenth session of UNFF- UNFF18- was convened in May 2023 in New York and identified a set of key issues and forest-based actions to advance climate mitigation and adaptation.

In particular, the UNFF18 discussions highlighted that forests and sustainable forest management have significant roles in providing livelihoods, supporting the bioeconomy, increasing employment, and biodiversity, contributing to food security through non-timber forest products, mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration, adapting to adverse impacts of and increased resilience to climate change, as well as reducing the risk of natural disasters, floods, droughts, sand and dust storms, landslides, and other extreme events.

In light of the close interlinkages between forests, biodiversity, and climate change, the sustainable management of all types of forests, and the increased forest cover and protected

areas, including at rural level, can effectively help to address the global challenges of land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change.

In this respect, accelerating the achievement of the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests would also contribute to the achievement of the global goals and targets under the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Discussions at UNFF18 also highlighted that forests are under threat from deforestation for conversion to agricultural lands, illegal logging, forest degradation, climate change, drought, increased forest pests and diseases, and wildfires that affect biodiversity, climate, and local communities whose livelihoods depend on forests.

These threats and the drivers of deforestation must be addressed through a holistic and comprehensive landscape approach, including through sustainable forest management activities such as conservation, afforestation, reforestation, and alongside avoided deforestation and forest landscape restoration.

For this to happen, it is essential that governments, the UN system, and other partners take decisive action to integrate forest-based solutions into their immediate and long-term national development strategies and use this opportunity to accelerate action to realize our vision enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

As we prepare for the forthcoming High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July and the SDG Summit in September, through these critical opportunities, we must send a clear call to action to foster concerted efforts and advance implementation of the global commitments, goals, and targets related to forests, including the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

Thank you.
