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STATEMENT

BY

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AT

**HIGH-LEVEL ROUND TABLE ON “UNFF RESPONSE TO, ROLE IN,
AND EXPECTATIONS FROM FOREST-RELATED
MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENTS”**

**SEVENTEETH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
FORUM ON FORESTS**

**9 MAY 2022
11:00 HOURS**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
CONFERENCE ROOM 4
NEW YORK**

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**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is a great pleasure to join you and participate in the opening of the High-Level Round Table of the Seventeenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), held under the theme: ***“UNFF response to, role in, and expectations from forest-related multilateral developments.”***
2. This year, we are once again meeting in the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have already lost more than **6 million** lives to this pandemic. According to recent estimates, the number of people living in extreme poverty globally is expected to remain well above the pre-pandemic level at **876 million** in 2022.
3. We are also experiencing an increasingly divided world, as uneven recovery of employment and income across different population groups is increasing inequalities within and among countries.

4. It is disheartening that women and youth experienced sharper job losses and disruptions in education in many parts of the world.
5. We also continue to witness and experience the worsening state of nature crisis. Many countries and regions are fighting against the aggravating effects of climate change, and other crises, including wildfires -
- exacerbating the state of deforestation in many parts of the world.

Dear colleagues,

6. We are all aware of the potential of forests to address these crises. Healthy forests sustain human well-being, livelihoods and survival in both rural and urban communities.
7. Forests and trees provide clean water, renewable energy, biological diversity and climate regulation. Halting and reversing deforestation can also reduce the risks and conditions that lead to the outbreak of zoonotic diseases.

8. We continue to witness growing momentum and expectations for forests and other nature-based solutions within and beyond the UN system. This recognition is demonstrated most recently in the adoption of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26).
9. These developments have created unique opportunities to advance implementation of the globally agreed forest-related goals and targets, including the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030.
10. As part of the ECOSOC system, the UN Forum on Forests should effectively engage in setting the global agenda on forests. The Forum plays a critical role to maximize complementarities, synergies and coherence among global forest policies and programmes.

11. In this respect, the Council continues to count on the Forum to galvanize broad political support to turn the tide on deforestation and sustainably manage all types of forests, in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.
12. The recently celebrated **2022 International Day of Forests** raised global awareness on the need to end the unsustainable consumption and production patterns that jeopardize our forests.
13. This coming July, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene the 2022 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the theme: "***Building back better from COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***" and review the progress made on a set of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 15 that prominently features forests.

14. In this regard, the Forum's contribution to the HLPF and the Council will send a strong signal on the critical importance of forests in building a sustainable and resilient future, and to synergistically accelerate progress towards achievement of the global commitments on forests.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. The Council stands ready to support the Forum in undertaking effective measures, in preparation for the mid-term review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests.

16. The Council supports the key objectives of the International Arrangement on Forests, namely:

- Promoting implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM), in particular the implementation of the UN Forest Instrument;
- Enhancing the contribution of forests to the post-2015 development agenda;
- Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues;

- Fostering international cooperation, public-private partnerships and cross-sectoral cooperation;
 - Strengthening forest governance frameworks and means of implementation;
 - Strengthening long-term political commitment towards the achievement of sustainable forest management; and
 - Enhancing coherence, cooperation and synergies with other forest-related agreements, processes and initiatives.
17. As we strive to recover and build a better, sustainable world, we count on the contributions of the UN Forum on Forests to accelerate our efforts to achieve the future we want through forests and nature-based solutions.

I thank you for your kind attention.