

Other Decisions

2024/328

Declaration of the High-Level Segment of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

18 (j)

23 Jul 2024

Plenary meeting

37th plenary meeting

United Nations Forum on Forests

Declaration of the High-Level Segment of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

At the 37th plenary meeting, on 23 July 2024, the Economic and Social Council adopted the following declaration of the High-Level Segment of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests:

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The Economic and Social Council took note of the following declaration of the high-level segment of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests:

Declaration of the high-level segment of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. We, the ministers and other high-level representatives responsible for forests, gathered at the high-level segment of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests:

(a) Reaffirming the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 as a global framework for action at all levels to protect and sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests, to halt deforestation and forest degradation and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals;

(b) Recalling the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and recalling also the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”;

(c) Reaffirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, the commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, the recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, the commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business;

(d) Recognizing that forests cover 30 per cent of the Earth’s land area, or nearly 4 billion hectares, and are essential to human well-being, sustainable development and the health of the planet, and noting that an estimated 1.6 billion people, or 25 per cent of the global population, depend on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation;

(e) Recognizing also the multiple values and contributions of forests and sustainable forest management to sustainable development in its three dimensions, as well as the myriad benefits provided by all types of forests and trees outside forests, their wood and non-wood products, their functions and services to the environment, health and well-being, and to socioeconomic development, poverty eradication, and employment, such as food security, clean water, provision of wood, fuel and fibre, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and restoration, prevention of land degradation and floods, and sand and dust storm mitigation, among others;

(f) Expressing deep concerns about the continued global trend in deforestation as well as the mutually reinforcing adverse impacts of climate change, desertification and land degradation, biodiversity loss, pollution and waste, while acknowledging efforts of countries in addressing deforestation;

(g) Noting that these trends and challenges have strongly hindered sustainable development gains and are further exacerbated by persistent levels of poverty, hunger, malnutrition and socioeconomic and gender inequalities, and have had negative impacts on forests and other natural resources, as well as human health and well-being, in particular in developing countries and on forest-dependent communities, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and people in vulnerable situations;

(h) Expressing deep concerns that, despite welcomed recent increases in forest finance pledges, there are persistent financial gaps to support the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forest ecosystems, especially in developing countries, and stressing the urgent need to further support developing countries, in particular by facilitating access to existing resources and strengthening multilateral funding mechanisms in support of sustainable forest management;

(i) Recognizing that many Indigenous Peoples, local communities and forest-dependent communities rely on forests for their livelihood and have an important role in their stewardship, and therefore also recognizing the need to promote their full and meaningful participation in forest-related decision-making, contributing to better conserving and managing forests;

(j) Welcoming the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, as well as the outcomes of the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(k) Emphasizing the continuous need to increase the visibility of the social, economic and environmental benefits of forests and sustainable forest management and place them as an important component of our responses to global challenges, and in this regard noting recent forest-related declarations, pledges and developments, including but not limited to the forest-relevant contributions of the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030);

(l) Recognizing that meeting both sustainable forest management objectives and the achievement of food security calls for strong cooperation in order to realize the global forest goals and sustainable development;

(m) Emphasizing the need to further accelerate the efforts and increase political commitment to achieve the global forest goals by 2030, while acknowledging the efforts and progress made by members of the Forum, its secretariat, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations, partners and major groups and other relevant stakeholders towards achieving the objectives of the international arrangement on forests and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its global forest goals.

2. We therefore commit to take urgent and accelerated actions to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation and prevent land degradation by 2030, while achieving sustainable development. To this end, we will strive:

(a) To address the threats to forests as well as the significant drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including unsustainable practices across economic activities and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production;

(b) To accelerate the implementation of the United Nations forest instrument, the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of its global forest goals, to deliver on forest-related commitments, and to unlock the full potential of forests to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) To work collaboratively to protect, conserve, sustainably manage and restore forests and forest ecosystems in line with the global forest goals and all relevant multilateral agreements and related processes, including through meaningful engagement with and supporting the contributions of partners and stakeholders, including forest owners, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, local authorities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, women, children, youth, and scientific, academic and philanthropic organizations at all levels;

(d) To strengthen political engagement, cross-sectoral cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies, as appropriate, and reduce fragmentation at all levels on issues related to all types of forests, by facilitating and encouraging partnerships among stakeholders, in particular within and among member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in line with their respective mandates;

(e) To promote and raise global awareness of the substantial contribution of forests and sustainable forest management to social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to the conservation of biodiversity, and advance cooperative actions to achieve global forest-related goals and targets;

(f) To adopt an integrated approach to wildland fire management, including early warning systems, to prevent, manage and address the negative impacts of extreme wildfires and related disasters, while recognizing ecological benefits of fire, through policy interventions and actions, harnessing science and technology and enhanced international and regional cooperation, as appropriate, and in this regard noting the Landscape Fire Governance Framework presented at the Eighth International Wildland Fire Conference in Porto, Portugal, in 2023;

(g) To strengthen collaboration across sectors and facilitate partnerships to promote sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches and restoration of ecosystems, contributing to improved livelihoods, including through building capacities of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, underlining the need to ensure sustainable patterns of consumption and production;

(h) To effectively implement forest-related legislation, strengthen forest law enforcement as needed and promote good governance at all levels, as appropriate, to advance sustainable forest management, including forest conservation, in a manner supportive of local livelihoods, land tenure and user rights, in accordance with the national regulatory frameworks;

(i) To improve forest monitoring, assessment, reporting and information systems, in particular with the aim of increasing the availability of knowledge and data for scientific and evidence-based policy decisions and actions on forests, biodiversity, climate change, desertification, land degradation, and sand and dust storms, and further strengthening the reporting systems, in particular of developing countries, through enhanced international cooperation, including by strengthening capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer partnerships on mutually agreed terms;

(j) To strengthen the provision and mobilization of and access to new and additional resources from all sources, given the importance of predictability for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests, in particular developing countries, including through innovative mechanisms;

(k) To promote investment, innovative financing mechanisms, and scientific, technological and capacity-building support for efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and to leave no one behind, including through results-based payments, positive incentives for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests, and alternative policy approaches, and make this support accessible and attractive to stakeholders involved in sustainable forest management and use, including forest owners, smallholders, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth;

(l) To convey consistent messaging in the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to promote achievement of the global forest goals and to advance implementation of national and international commitments to protect, restore, conserve and sustainably manage forests globally;

(m) To encourage members of the Forum in a position to do so to provide increased voluntary contributions and resources to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests to support activities of the Forum, its secretariat and the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to accelerate achievement of the global forest goals and enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and encourage members of the Forum to announce and update voluntary national contributions;

(n) To facilitate policy dialogues and information and scientific knowledge exchange at all levels on issues related to sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests, including through sharing best practices, nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and other sustainable management and conservation approaches, in line with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/5 of 2 March 2022, and enhance communications and outreach to promote sustainable forest management, including for the sustainable production and use of timber and non-timber forest products;

(o) To protect and respect the traditional knowledge, tenure and rights of Indigenous Peoples and, where applicable, local communities, according to national legislation, when implementing actions to promote the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forest ecosystems;

(p) To encourage members of the Forum to make use of Forum country-led initiatives in order to exchange experiences and develop new global forest goal-oriented solutions;

(q) To invite the high-level political forum on sustainable development to recognize the need for accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 to effectively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and other forest-related international commitments and agreements.

Ref: E/2024/42, ch. 1, section A, draft decision I

The final edited text of this decision will be contained in the official records of the Council for 2024 (E/2024/99 (Supplement No. 1)) after editorial review.