

STATEMENT BY
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on the occasion of
International Day of Forests

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“Inspire for the Future – The Role of Forests in Ensuring Sustainable Production and Consumption”

Forests provide over 86 million green jobs. Two hundred million people directly depend on forests for their survival¹.

However, global supply chains include products that drive deforestation. This causes water depletion, land and soil degradation, greenhouse gasses emission, inequality and conflicts.

With the loss and degradation of primary forest, we continue to lose precious forest biodiversity. Further, degraded and fragmented forests cannot support landscape connectivity and integrity, important factors for healthy habitats.

The expansion of commodity crops such as palm oil and soy, cattle pasture and timber plantations is the biggest global driver of tropical deforestation. Some 420 million hectares of forest has been lost over the last three decades through conversion to other land uses.

Deforestation is not only a risk to biodiversity – it is also a climate risk, posing a direct threat to the human rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Scaling up investments in nature-based solutions including regenerative and sustainable agriculture, forest and land use, as well as securing land tenure and forest rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are immediate critical actions to halt forest loss over the next eight years.

Companies and financial institutions can reduce these risks by implementing clear commitments to ensure their supply chains and portfolios are deforestation-free and monitor and track progress made.

Global actions on ecosystem restoration are gaining pace, with almost 1 billion ha committed for ecosystem restoration globally. However, restoring degraded forest ecosystems is not enough to turn the deforestation trend. Deforestation needs to be rooted out from the supply chain. More needs to be done to eliminate incentives which promote unsustainable production and encourage deforestation.

Stopping further forest loss and addressing climate change also helps prevent the risk of future pandemics. By degrading our wild spaces, we have created increased opportunities for disease transmission as research shows that 75 per cent of all emerging infectious diseases come from wildlife.

Recognizing this, the fifth *Global Biodiversity Outlook* indicated that a profound transformation is required on the land and forest nexus to deliver the promise of the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. The post-2020

¹ www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/UNFF13_BkgdStudy_ForestsSCP.pdf

global biodiversity framework, to be adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference in China later this year, underpins the need to ensure that all areas under forestry are managed sustainably.

As we celebrate the 2022 International Day of Forests, let us take a moment to be inspired by forests and all the tangible and intangible wealth they provide.