



Council of the
European Union

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	7 April 2022
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Subject:	Council conclusions with a view to the participation of the European Union and its Member States in the 17th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-17) - <i>Council conclusions</i>

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council conclusions on the abovementioned subject, as approved by the Council at its 3865th meeting held on 7 April 2022.

Council conclusions with a view to the participation of the European Union and its Member States in the 17th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-17)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLING the Council conclusions of:

- 9 April 2018 with a view to the participation of the European Union (EU) and its Member States in the 13th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-13), as well as previous Council conclusions with a view to the participation of the EU and its Member States in the previous sessions of the UNFF;
- 16 December 2019 on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests;
- 23 October 2020 on Biodiversity – The need for urgent action;
- 19 October 2020 on the *Farm to Fork strategy*;
- 10 June 2021 on Forging a climate-resilient Europe - EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change;
- 29 November 2019 on the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy;
- 15 November 2021 on the new EU Forest strategy for 2030;

2. STRESSING the importance of the United Nations (UN) Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 (UNSPF 2030) and its six Global Forests Goals (GFGs) as a framework for action for the harmonised implementation of forest-related commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification;
3. RECALLING the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use adopted on 12 November 2021 at the COP26 of the UNFCCC, in which 141 Leaders of countries representing more than 90% of the world's forests committed to working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030;
4. RECALLING the essential role of forests for human health, animal health and a healthy natural environment under the “One Health” approach, and in this context; UNDERLINING the link between human-induced changes in nature, such as deforestation or land use changes, and the increased transmission of zoonotic diseases; STRESSING the need to integrate the importance of forests and their sustainable management in post-Covid recovery plans;
5. RECALLING the role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in protecting endangered plant and animal species and preserving ecosystems, including forests;
6. RECALLING the importance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and their role in the sustainable management of forests, including their preservation, as forests are essential to the equitable development and well-being of the people who depend on them; EMPHASISING the importance of continuing efforts to enhance and support the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in all relevant UN organisations;
7. EMPHASISES the need for an integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, taking into account its cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity, and ending poverty;

8. CALLS all stakeholders for increased efforts on forest and ecosystem restoration actions worldwide in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; REITERATES the role of a wide range of actors as active agents of change in the forest and ecosystem restoration processes, such as forest owners and managers, or small farmers;
9. EMPHASISES the role of forests and their sustainable management, as an example of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, in safeguarding biodiversity, in mitigating and adapting to climate change and in combating land degradation in connection with the three Rio Conventions as well as in reducing disaster risks;
10. RECOGNISES the urgent need to reverse forest cover loss; REITERATES its deep concern that current policies and action at global level on conservation, sustainable management and restoration of forests do not suffice to halt deforestation and forest degradation, and EMPHASISES that enhanced global action is needed by implementing GFG 1;
11. SUPPORTS that special attention should be paid to the protection of primary forests as they are unique, irreplaceable, of crucial importance for biodiversity and climate protection and which are heavily threatened;
12. EMPHASISES the multifunctional role of forests in providing economic, social and environmental benefits through a wide range of ecosystem services, in line with GFG 2, and their contribution to the achievement of all SDGs; HIGHLIGHTS the need to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of forests through their sustainable management;
13. UNDERLINES the importance of the income derived from sustainable production of wood and non-wood products in ensuring practices that improve forest resilience and the importance of wood from sustainably managed forests as a renewable resource and material to substitute their carbon intensive and fossil-based counterparts; RECOGNISES the important role of forests and sustainably produced forest-based products in the transition to a green, nature-positive, climate neutral and competitive circular bioeconomy, and for rural development;

14. REMAINS ENTIRELY COMMITTED to an ambitious, realistic and effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework that duly recognises the particular role of forests and sustainable forest management in the fight against biodiversity loss and promotes the GFGs in a coherent and mutually supportive manner;
15. ENCOURAGES all members of the UNFF to adopt concrete and coherent measures in favour of sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains; INVITES countries to firmly commit to this end, including countries which are consumers of commodities linked to deforestation and RECALLS the work initiated by the EU in this regard; ENCOURAGES the UNFF to foster dialogue and strengthen cooperation and coordination in an integrated manner, including through cross-sectoral and landscape approaches and with involvement of the finance sector, as well as other regional and sub-regional partners, major groups and stakeholders in stepping up action to halt deforestation and forest degradation;
16. UNDERLINES the continuous need to mobilise significant resources from all sources and at all levels in order to more effectively implement the GFGs of the UNSPF, in line with the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network's mandate and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;
17. CALLS on the UNFF Secretariat and all the UNFF members to effectively promote the UNSPF 2030 and its GFGs and UNFF-17's outcomes at the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, in particular at the in-depth review of SDG 15¹, and in order to timely achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda;
18. WELCOMES and REITERATES the importance of the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF); RECALLS the need for increased cooperation on forest-related issues with and within the CPF, as advocated in its Strategic Vision 2030; REQUESTS that the UNFF strive to increase and improve cooperation, coordination, and coherence between international forest-related and other relevant policies and activities at all levels in order to maximise synergies and co-benefits of forests;

¹ Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems

19. IS OF THE OPINION that a sense of ownership of the UNFF by its members, partners and stakeholders is crucial to a strong positioning of the UNFF; UNDERLINES the importance of a strong, effective and efficient UNFF Secretariat; STRESSES the necessity of strengthening the communication and outreach activities of the UNFF;
 20. ENCOURAGES the preparatory work of UNFF-17 for the mid-term review of the International Arrangement on Forests that will be launched in 2024, in order to analyse the progress and performance of the Arrangement against its original mandate and objectives, and SUGGESTS that recommendations for improvement be made;
 21. RECALLS the need for further work to facilitate national reporting to the UNFF; ENCOURAGES the CPF to continue its work on the global core set of forest-related indicators; REITERATES that before deciding on a new flagship publication, an assessment of the impact of the first publication is needed, and furthermore, SUGGESTS that it should be coordinated with the cycle of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment.
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