



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. INIA SERUIRATU, MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTS AND PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, AT THE TENTH MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF10) (Istanbul, Turkey, 8 April 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, we wish to congratulate you and the Bureau on your election to guide our work at this Tenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). We are confident that under your able leadership, we will achieve positive results during this important session.
3. We wish to extend our sincere thanks to the Government of Turkey for all the arrangements made to host this 10th Session of UNFF.
4. Let me also express the Group's appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting substantive reports for this session, which address many vital issues that will help guide our deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The international community has just celebrated last month, on the 21st of March, the first International Day of Forests, as decided in General Assembly Resolution 67/200. In accordance with that Resolution, this year marks the first occasion when we begin celebrating the International Day of Forests on 21st March each year. We are convinced that such an event represents a useful recognition of national, regional and international actions on the sustainable management, conservation and development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations. It is crucial to raise global awareness of the importance of forests in order to mobilize support for sustainable forest management (SFM) and its contribution to socio-economic development and environmental sustainability.

Mr. Chairman,

6. I would like to reaffirm once again the Group of 77 and China's support for the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The Future We Want". That seminal document highlights the vital role of the United Nations Forum on Forests in addressing forest-related issues in a holistic manner and promoting international policy coordination to achieve SFM. It also underscores the contribution of SFM to sustainable development across all its pillars, including respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and rural communities that live and survive on the forest, and invited the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue its support to the Forum and encourage stakeholders to remain actively engaged in the work of the Forum.

7. The Group is firmly of the view that forests, and SFM, are crucial for the sustainable development of developing countries. As such, the Group reiterates its commitment to implementing SFM. We are aware that there remain significant challenges in SFM. The ongoing effects of the global financial and economic crisis have created further impediments to addressing

the financial needs of countries to sustainably manage their forests. This is being particularly experienced by developing countries with special needs and circumstances.

8. We therefore stress the importance of addressing financial gaps in SFM. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China urges developed country donors to significantly increase and at least double the funding to all types of forest. While emphasising the need to strengthen forest financing by UN agencies and international organisations, we also invite multilateral organisations that have not done so to consider forest financing in their programmes.

9. We underscore the importance of the Four Global Objectives on Forests for the international community as a whole, and in particular for developing countries. Especially relevant for the Group of 77 is the Fourth Global Objective, which identifies the need to reverse the reduction of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and to mobilize new and additional financial resources from all sources, including public and private, for the implementation of SFM. In fulfilling the Fourth Global Objective, it is essential to respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing countries. In this regard, we urge developed countries to exercise strong political will and flexibility to contribute to the achievement of SFM.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The Group of 77 and China reiterates its call for the establishment of a new Global Forest Fund in line with the principles of sustainable development. We consider this necessary in order to concentrate on the financing needs of developing countries to sustainably manage their forests, as well as to comply with their commitments under the UN Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forests (NLBI). The establishment of the Global Forest Fund in the framework of the United Nations to address financing gaps in SFM takes on greater urgency in the follow-up to the Rio+20 Summit. We recognize and reiterate the significance of the NLBI, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 in Resolution 62/98, which is the guide for all regions and countries when addressing conservation, protection and sustainable management of forests.

11. The Group understands that the UNFF process should be a part of the post-2015 development agenda as the main platform to deliberate on global forest issues. Therefore it should contribute towards enhancing inter-sectoral coordination to integrate forests into the UN system's work on sustainable development.

12. It is important to support cross-sectoral and cross-institutional policies promoting SFM. There is also a need to develop and strengthen the role of governments on forest issues including public-private-partnerships and private sector engagement where appropriate.

Mr Chairman,

13. Capacity development through technical assistance and the transfer of technology remain a serious challenge for many developing countries, and efforts should be made to address those challenges through international cooperation. Against this backdrop, the Group urges all developed countries and international agencies to ensure that private commercial interests must be in line with the development agenda of developing countries.

14. We assure you that the Group of 77 and China will work constructively towards achieving consensus on the many important issues under our consideration at this session.

I thank you.