



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
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REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED
NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE NINTH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (New York, 24 January
2011)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Allow me at the outset to extend to you and the bureau our congratulations on your election as the Chairman of the Ninth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and to convey our confidence in your able guidance of this very timely and important session.

You can be assured that the Group will give careful consideration to the proposed building blocks for the High-level Segment Declaration and will work constructively towards reaching consensus on these very important issues.

The Group also expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting informative reports for this session, which encompass many vital issues that will help guide our deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, declared as the International Year of Forests, 2011, offers a unique opportunity to raise public awareness on how forests contribute to the livelihoods of millions of peoples and the challenges facing many of the world's forests and the people who depend on them.

Forests are crucial for the economic growth of developing countries. Forests are central to sustained poverty reduction and practically relate to all aspects of sustainable development. Forests are crucial for access to water, rural development, agricultural productivity, climate change, conservation of biodiversity, energy, soil conservation, and flood control. They provide habitat for at least 80% of terrestrial biodiversity and are also a major carbon sink for regulating global climate. Over 1.6 billion people depend on forest resources for their livelihoods.

Desertification and land degradation constitute one of the key drivers leading to deforestation. Addressing those challenges becomes imperative for sustainable forest management as well as for achieving the internationally agreed development goals. While efforts should be made to preserve existing forests, the same should apply to carry out massive reforestation and afforestation projects.

However, the ongoing financial and economic crises have exacerbated the challenges and impediments of developing countries to achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially in eradicating poverty and hunger and achieve sustainable development.

We would like to recall that it is the position of the Group that at this session we need definitions on:

- o Emphasizing that sustainable forest management contributes significantly to sustainable development and poverty eradication;

- o Promoting implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests and its four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs);
- o Accelerating cooperation in addressing financing needs of countries to sustainably manage their forests, in particular developing countries with special needs and circumstances, including Africa, least developed countries, low forest cover countries, high forest cover countries, high forest cover low deforestation countries, medium forest cover countries and small island developing States;
- o Addressing financial gaps in sustainable forest management (SFM) by the establishment of a new Global Forest Fund in the framework of the United Nations, in line with the principles of sustainable development;
- o In relation to the role of forests in combating climate change, reaffirming that forests provide economic, social, political, cultural and environmental benefits;
- o Recognizing the special needs and requirements of countries, with fragile ecosystems, including those of low-forest cover countries, Africa, least developed countries, high forest cover countries, high forest cover low deforestation countries, medium forest cover countries and small island developing states;
- o Recognizing that high and medium forest cover developing countries, which possess much of the Earth's forests and terrestrial biodiversity, face important challenges and needs in implementing sustainable forest management;
- o Recognizing the special needs and requirements of developing countries, with fragile ecosystems, including those of low-forest cover countries;
- o Taking effective steps towards implementing agreements on providing adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, technology and capacity building to support forest-based climate change actions and new and additional financial resources;
- o Stressing that SFM is a wider concept that encompasses an array of elements other than those considered under REDD Plus. In this sense, it is crucial to avoid any reductionist approach and ensure that REDD Plus not be taken as a substitute of SFM required actions;
- o Developing a strong intersessional process between UNFF9 and UNFF10, aimed at putting into effect proposals for a Global Forest Fund, in the framework of the UN, to be considered by the 2nd meeting of the UNFF Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance (AHEG2) at the end of year 2012;
- o Calling upon the Rio+20 conference to recognize all values of forests and their contribution to sustainable development, energy and food security, poverty reduction, land degradation and water conservation, biodiversity conservation and climate change.

All these aspects have to be taken into consideration in this dialogue to produce effective outcomes.

According to the Report of the Secretary-General on regional and subregional inputs (E/CN.18/2011/3) , the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the four global objectives contained therein are being taken into account universally in the design and implementation of policies, as well as a basis for new instruments at the regional and subregional levels. At the same time, progress differs among the reporting regions and the integration of livelihoods into sustainable forest management is affected by economic, social and historical aspects.

The report of the Secretary-General assessing the progress on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on forests (E/CN.18/2011/2) further recognizes key obstacles faced by developing countries, including financial and human resources constraints.

Mr. Chairman,

The financial gap can only be addressed by dedicating resources to support the implementation of

sustainable forest management, the achievement of the global objectives on forests, and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests through the adoption of a voluntary global financial mechanism as mandated by the Economic and Social Council in paragraph 6 of its resolution 2007/40.

In the same resolution, Member States reaffirmed four shared global objectives on forests. It is worth noting that the fourth objective states the need to reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.

In this regard, G-77 and China calls for the establishment of a Global Forest Fund, which would tap all sources of financial support committed to promoting sustainable forest management, including in funding afforestation and reforestation activities, in order to provide new and additional financial resources to developing countries. This Fund would further facilitate access to funding by developing countries who are not receiving it.

The G-77 urges donors to significantly increase and at least double the funding to all types of forest. Furthermore, the fund would complement and not replace existing financial mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

As a final remark, I would like to reiterate the significance of having full representation from the developing countries in this important meeting and that the delegations from the South receive the appropriate financial support that has been historically granted for this purpose.

I thank you.