



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS SAHAR NASSER, FIRST SECRETARY AT THE MISSION OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE TO THE UN, AT THE 14TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (New York, 6 May 2019)**

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, allow me to extend to you and the Bureau our congratulations on your election as Chair of the 14th and 15th Sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, and to convey our confidence in your very able stewardship of those sessions.
3. The Group expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting informative reports on this session, which encompass many vital issues that will assist and guide our deliberations.
4. Forests are crucial for the economic growth of developing countries, and are central to sustained poverty reduction and practically relate to all aspects of sustainable development. 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.
5. In this connection, the Group recognizes that all types of forests provide essential ecosystem services, such as timber, food, fuel, fodder, non-wood products and shelter, as well as soil and water conservation and clean air, and that all forests prevent land degradation and desertification and reduce the risk of floods, landslides and avalanches, droughts, sand and dust storms and other disasters.

Mr. Chair,

6. The Group recognizes that this Forum, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, plays a vital role in addressing challenges and issues relating to forests in a holistic and integrated manner and in promoting policy coordination and cooperation to achieve the sustainable management of all types of forests and of trees outside forests. In this connection, the Group wishes to encourage other forest-related forums, initiatives and processes to cooperate with the Forum to achieve sustainable forest management.
7. The United Nations strategic plan for forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030 and its global forest goals and targets provide a solid and overarching framework for advancing global forest policy coherence and promoting international understanding of sustainable forest management. In this connection, the Group reiterates that the adequate and timely implementation of the UNSPF and its Quadrennial program of work for the period 2017-2020 are essential for all countries, especially developing countries.
8. The Group stresses that the full implementation of Global Forest Goal 4 and its five associated targets constitutes a common aspiration to deliver a real impact on the ground, to catalyze and facilitate the mobilization of increased, predictable and sustainable financing from all sources, including and increasing in ODA, to adequately carry out sustainable forest management at all levels, in particular for developing countries.

9. The Group reiterates that the adequate and timely implementation of the UNSPF is essential for developing countries. In this regard, we highlight the important issue of financing which needs to recognize major gaps on current allocation of resources.

10. The Group calls on the international community to restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation, reforestation and conservation globally. While protecting areas in forest and terrestrial ecosystems is on the rise and forest loss has slowed, other facets of terrestrial conservation continue to need accelerated efforts to protect biodiversity, land productivity and species and genetic resources.

11. Finally, the Group would like to reiterate its commitment to follow up and implement the outcomes of the Session of the UN Forum on Forests and to work constructively to support the implementation of UNSPF.

I thank you.