



**OPENING REMARKS BY MS. MARILYN HEADLEY, CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS OF JAMAICA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (New York, 16 May 2005)**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I take this opportunity to congratulate you as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your election during this crucial session of the UNFF. You can be assured of the full support and cooperation of the Group of 77 and China.

May I also commend Mr. Pekka PATOSAARI and the staff of the UNFF for the preparations for this session and the quality of the documents submitted for our consideration.

Might I also extend on behalf of the Group our satisfaction with the decision taken to convene the panel discussion on regional realities, with specific emphasis on Asia. It will no doubt provide a very useful opportunity for us to exchange views on a variety of issues.

The Group also appreciates the information presented by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). We acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the CPF to the work of the UNFF and would wish to express appreciation for the efforts undertaken to address the needs of developing countries. We further recognize the role of the major stakeholders in the process as evidenced by their participation in our discussions.

Mr Chairman,

By way of general comments, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate the urgent need to fully implement the internationally agreed commitments for sustainable forest management, as reflected in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Forest Principles, Chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the proposals for action of the IPF/IFF, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as in the outcomes of sessions of the UNFF. The implementation of these commitments, in particular for the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer, remain critical to advancing the objective for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

It is against this background that means of implementation takes on particular significance. As a matter of urgency, greater efforts must be undertaken to identify relevant financial and investment mechanisms for the mobilization of existing, new and additional financial and technical resources for sustainable forest management. There is critical need to reverse the decline of ODA allocated to forest-related activities and to provide the necessary resources, in accordance with the Rio Declaration, the relevant chapters of Agenda 21, the provisions of the Forest Principles as well as those of JPOI, to enable developing countries to manage, conserve and develop, in a sustainable manner, their respective forest resources. Developing countries should have access to readily available and predictable funds for sustainable forest management.

International cooperation in sustainable forest management must also adequately address the issue of capacity-building and technology transfer, especially in support of traditional knowledge and best practices provided by indigenous and local communities. The Group therefore wishes to reiterate the call made by the IPF to urge developed countries to promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and know-how to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account Chapters 34 of Agenda 21 and 1 of the Forest Principles. Means of implementation should also be linked to national and regional processes and strategies in support of sustainable forest management and should also take account of specific circumstances and dynamics and national legal frameworks.

I would also like to stress the importance of the international community supporting South-South cooperation, including through triangular cooperation, to allow, inter alia, for the sharing of successful experiences being developed and implemented in developing countries.

Mr Chairman,

The social, economic and environmental well-being of the world's population is closely associated with the effective management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and the broad array of goods and

services they provide. Consequently, the Group wishes to reiterate the crucial link between sustainable forest management and development, in particular the need to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of life of those living in forests and rural areas.

Sustainable forest management cannot be achieved without ensuring access to basic services such as water, sanitation, health and education. For this reason, a holistic and comprehensive approach is needed which also satisfies the key issues raised in the earlier paragraphs on international cooperation and the means of implementation. Sustainable forest management can not be divorced from the broader issues of sustained economic growth and social development and the provision of critical resources by the international community to this end.

Finally, Mr Chairman, the G77 stands ready to engage constructively in the discussions on the many important issues before the Forum for this session. We believe that our deliberations over the next two weeks will be critical to ensuring that the achievements to date can be advanced in the years to come. We look forward to working with all concerned parties in this regard.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.