



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE INFORMAL CONSULTATION IN PREPARATION FOR ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS (New York, 9 March 2015)

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to present the views of the 134 members of the Group of 77 and China to this informal consultation aimed at soliciting contributions on the elements and components of the UNFF11 ministerial declaration and the resolution on the international arrangement on forests.

The Group welcomes the prompt follow-up on the decision of the Second Ad hoc Expert Group on the international Arrangement on Forests to convene informal consultations in preparation for the UNFF11.

According to the Multi-Year Program of Work (MYPOW) agreed in 2007, UNFF11 takes place in 2015 and is mandated to review the International Arrangements on Forests (IAF) and make recommendations on its future. Coincidentally 2015 is a year of critical importance to the UNFF, because of summit level meetings relevant to forests that are being convened, such as the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that will take place in Addis Ababa in July 2015, the Summit on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in September 2015 and the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015.

UNFF11 should therefore speak to these unfolding processes and highlight the importance of forests to their outcomes. In this regard it is important to note that according to the concept of Sustainable Forest management, developed through the UNFF, forests are important in the context of the 3 dimensions of sustainable development, including for poverty eradication - a factor that has been underscored since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit as well as in Rio+20.

Mr Chairman,

There is no gainsaying in underscoring the multifunctional role of forests in supporting efforts towards achieving all development goals. In this context, the UNFF process, as the main policy platform to deliberate global forest issues, should further contribute towards enhancing inter-sectoral coordination, to integrate forests into the UN system's work on sustainable development.

The Rio+20 Outcome Document highlights the principal role of the UNFF in addressing forest-related issues in a holistic manner and promoting international policy coordination to achieve Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). It also underscores the contribution of sustainable forest management to sustainable development across all its pillars as well as invitation to the Collaborative Partnership on Forest to continue its support to the Forum and encouragement to stakeholders to remain actively engaged in the work of the Forum.

The International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) is the culmination of over two decades of UNFF efforts to raise the profile of forests globally. It is therefore critical for the Forum to voice in a clear and concise manner its vision on the role of the IAF within the future global development framework.

Mr Chairman,

With regards the **Ministerial Declaration**, the view of the G77 and China is that the following key elements would make for a strengthened IAF with the future global development framework:

- Firstly, the Declaration should reiterate the prominent role of the UNFF as the multilateral platform to address forest-related issues in a holistic and integrated manner;
- Secondly, it should reiterate the importance of Forest Instrument, the Global Objectives on Forests (GOF) and all development goals and targets related to forests.
- Thirdly, it should address the need to strengthen the UNFF Secretariat, including its capacity, human and financial resources, commensurate to the mandate/function assigned to the UNFF;
- Fourthly, the Declaration should address the importance of enhancing synergy and coherence between the negotiation on IAF under UNFF-11 with the current negotiation processes (FfD-3, post-2015 development agenda and COP-21/CMP-11 UNFCCC);
- Furthermore, it should address the current challenges as well as the provision of Means of Implementation including adequate financing, capacity building and development, and transfer of environmentally sound technology to ensure the full implementation of Forest Instrument, the Global Objectives on Forests (GOF) and all development goals and targets related to forests;

Crucially, this has to be underpinned by a clear political commitment to a more effective future IAF and determination to continue the deliberations on the future of the IAF in a comprehensive manner taking into account the outcome of the relevant processes taking place in 2015.

With regards the **Resolution on the Future International Arrangement of Forests**, the Group considers the following elements as important:

Possible elements for the **preambular section**:

- Appreciation on the contributions of current IAF in advancing SFM
- A reflection on the state of development in SFM, including the challenges in combatting deforestation and degradation
- Must link the importance of SFM to support poverty eradication and to ensure sustainable development
- Emphasize the universal membership of the future of UNFF as stipulated in ECOSOC Res 2000/35
- Highlight the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development "The Future We Want" and the specific references made related to the UNFF and its call for the implementation of the NLBI.
- Recognize the need to strengthen the resource mobilization for the implementation of the NLBI and the achievement of the Four Global Objectives on Forests.
- Welcome the proposal of the Open Working Group on SDGs of the United Nations General Assembly, which is the main basis for integrating the SDG in the Post-2015 development agenda,

and recognize the inclusion of a goal related to ecosystems, and with specific targets related to forests, and welcome as well the inclusion of other several targets mainstreaming forests across the overall document.

- Emphasize strong support for a strengthened IAF beyond 2015 and take measures to enhance policy coherence, address its weaknesses related to implementation and financing of forest instruments
- Enhance coordination and collaboration on forests at international, regional and national levels;

Possible elements for the **operative section**:

- Present the rationale of the IAF including objectives, purposes and functions highlighting the stewardship function of forest and the implementation of SFM in all types of forests
- Reflection on forest developments since 2007
- Agreement on the future of the Forest Instrument, update the FI to replace the reference from MDGs to SDGs
- Timeframe of the IAF to be renewed to 2030
- Highlight the added value that the IAF provides for SFM at the multilateral level, and the role it has to complement the ongoing work of other processes and multilateral instruments related to forests.
- Highlight crucial importance of the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations General Assembly and the integration of forests in the SDGs as well as the need to establish a link between the contribution of forests and future IAF to support the post-2015 development agenda
- Highlight the linkage between forests and other multilateral processes related to forests, such as: the Post 2015 Agenda and the SDGs, CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, ITTO and CITES.
- Support the Interactive Facilitative Process Website as a useful online platform for access and advertising information on all sources of forest financing;
- The basic criteria and format for project formulation and evaluation of the Interactive Facilitative process should also be developed and published in the web.
- Agreement on strengthening the overall governance of the future IAF (UNFF) among others through concrete actions inter alia, as follows:
 - establishing a strengthened institutional body of future UNFF like subsidiary bodies or committees on implementation and financing to advance the work of UNFF in advancing the SFM;
 - Strengthen the financing of SFM by establishing a Global Forest Fund to assist developing countries in implementing SFM;
 - The resolution needs to reflect the major UN Processes where there is funding opportunities, particularly between the UNFCCC and UNFF and the many CPF so that member states can access funds to implement SFM;

- In this regard, forest-specific window in Green Climate Fund;
- A new focal area under GEF to be active in the subsequent replenishment phase is practical proposal towards enhancing access to funding for developing countries;
- Strengthening the monitoring, assessment and reporting, including the monitoring of implementation of supports for SFM;
- The importance of strengthening CPF making it a more formal arrangement with guidance, work program and funding for joint activities and stronger engagement and consultation on pertinent issues on forests with member states;
- The role of major groups including private sector in the future of IAF;

- The resolution needs to also reflect on the importance of capacity building, technology development and transfer and other means of implementation (MoI) in ensuring that developing countries can implement SFM, taking into account the need to strengthen the North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation, as well as the need to have coherence with other international processes related to the Means of Implementation, such as the Conference of Financing for Development.

- The resolution needs to also agree on a strategic framework for the future IAF which should include concrete pathway i.e. program of work with achievable and measurable actions, roles and responsibilities of components and the required financing.

In conclusion Mr Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China is aware that the draft Ministerial Declaration and the resolution will be tabled on the third day of the Forum, on 6 May. While it may be standard practice that drafts are tabled at the beginning of the Forum, the Group would like to request that the drafts be made available earlier. Given the complexity of the agenda, we believe that earlier engagement with the drafts would not only facilitate a deeper engagement with the drafts but would also ensure better coordination within our governments.

On the future organization of work/modalities to follow up after UNFF11, the Group supports the proposal to establish a working group to work on the integration of the relevant outcomes of the FfD Conference, the Post 2015 Development Agenda Summit and COP21 Paris in the future IAF. Such a working group could also be tasked to work out further details of decisions of UNFF11 with regard to the forest instrument, the strategic plan of the future IAF. In this regard the group proposes to explore the options to convene a special UNFF session (could be UNFF-12) in 2016 to take decisions on the proposals of the working group.

Thank you.