



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. SHEYAM ELGARF, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (New York, 7 May 2018)**

Distinguished Chair, Excellences,

1- I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, I would like to thank the Bureau, and the Secretariat for the documentation provided for this session.

2- The United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) provides a global framework for sustainably managing all types of forests and trees outside forests, halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation and increasing forest area.

3- The Group of 77 and China reiterates that the adequate and timely implementation of the UNSPF and its Quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020 is fundamental for all countries, especially developing countries. Hence, the Group attaches great importance to this session in which we consider means and ways for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In this regard, the Group would like to highlight the significant role of all resources needed for its implementation.

4- The Group takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary General on the Progress in the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33. The report shows that since the adoption of the resolution, intensive work was undertaken to implement its provisions, involving members of the Forum and various stakeholders. Specifically, the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020 were developed, and adopted; its global objectives on forests were extended until 2030 and it was updated to include reference to the 2030 Agenda; the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network was operationalized and its guidelines will be considered at this very session of the Forum; and the Forum's contribution to the follow-up, review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda has been streamlined into the work of the Forum.

5- The Group of 77 and China considers the Ministerial Roundtable on Forest-based solution for accelerating achievement of the SDGs as an important platform for policy dialogue and recommendation. In preparation for input from the Forum to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, The Group would like to propose that all its substantive inputs of both Ministerial Roundtable meeting and expert meetings will be constituted in the Forum's input to HLPF 2018.

Mr. Chair,

6- The Strategic Plan recognizes that communication and outreach are essential components of the Plan, and the need to raise awareness of forests and trees as being vital to life on earth and human well-being. In this regards, it is very important that communications efforts related to the Strategic Plan highlights, and shares best practices and success stories on the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the UN Forest Instrument, and provide inspiration where additional action is needed.

7- In accordance with paragraph 32 of the strategic plan, members may, on a voluntary basis, communicate their progress on the implementation of the voluntary national contributions to the Forum at regular intervals as part of their voluntary reporting on the implementation of the strategic plan and the United Nations forest instrument to avoid any additional reporting burden. The Group believes that the current format of voluntary national contribution facilitates the participation of member states to present their report in this framework. The Group would like to request the Secretary-General to report to the Forum at its session in 2020 on progress to the Forum at its sixteenth session.

Mr. Chair,

8- The Group would like to stress the unique role of the UNFF and its Secretariat and the new mandate given to this Forum through the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 till 2030 and would like to stress the necessity of upholding and developing its role and independence of the Forum and its secretariat in the process of DESA reform, and of guaranteeing that the outcome of the Forum is not jeopardized

9- For the Group, strengthening the UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN), fostering and capitalizing existing, new and emerging financing opportunities, including capacity building to apply to or implement international cooperation for forest-related programs, to facilitate mechanisms for developing countries to access funds and to disseminate best practices on Sustainable Forest Management for ensuring the full implementation of the Forest instrument and to achieve the goals and targets in the UNSPF is very important. In this regard, Group would like to emphasize that sufficient and predictable financial, technical and human resources will be necessary for effective functioning of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN).

10- The Group of 77 and China restates the need to strengthen the Forum Trust Fund. The Group would like to thank the support of the donors and calls for Member States and other relevant stakeholders to increase voluntary contributions to strengthen its role in supporting the activities of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN).

Mr. Chair,

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.

Thank you.