



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. SANTIAGO GARCÍA, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL FORESTRY OFFICE OF ECUADOR, AT THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (New York, 1 May 2017)

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. I would like to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for the documentation provided for the current session.
3. Forests are indeed essential to life on earth and an invaluable ecosystem to human well-being, sustainable development and the health of the planet, covering 30% of the Earth's land area. They are crucial for access to water, rural development, agricultural productivity, conservation of biodiversity, energy, soil conservation, and flood control, while providing habitat for at least 80% of terrestrial biodiversity and it constitutes a major carbon sink for regulating global climate. Approximately 1.6 billion people depend on forest for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation, consequently are crucial for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth and for humanity to live in harmony with nature.
4. It is therefore that the Group welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of draft resolutions A/71/L.63 and A/71/L.64 on 27 April 2017, related to the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017 - 2030 and the Quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017-2020, commending its linkages in fostering the implementation of related SDG's and targets in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Chair,

5. The Group believes that the ambitious agreement in the UNSPF, with its six Global Forests Goals and 26 associated targets, while voluntary and universal in nature, represents both a challenge and a commitment by all Member States and relevant stakeholders on Sustainable Forest Management.
6. In particular for G77 Member States 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 the implementation and facilitate the mobilization of increased, predictable and sustaining financing from all sources, including an increasing in ODA, to adequately carry out sustainable forest management at all levels.

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

8. For the Group the strengthening the UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN), fostering and capitalizing existing, new and emerging financing opportunities, including capacity building given constrained abilities by several developing countries 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.

Mr. Chair,

9. The provision of means of implementation should also encompass technology transfer, dissemination and diffusion to developing countries on favorable terms including on concessional and preferential terms, and capacity building for developing countries. In this regard we also should avoid increasing the burden of reporting or creating overlaps in the process of communication through streamlined reporting on the implementation of the Forest Instrument, the Strategic Plan and voluntary planned contributions. We should agree on a communication strategy that addresses those issues, especially by reassuring a transparent process on the issue of reports.

10. Finally, G77 restates the need to strengthen the Forum Trust Fund, and calls for Member States and other relevant stakeholders to increase voluntary contributions to strengthen its role in supporting the activities of the GFFFN.

I thank you.