



**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE G77 AND CHINA BY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN TO
THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (New York, 20 April 2009)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the G77 and China. Allow me at the outset to extend to you and the bureau our congratulations on your election as the Chairman of the Eighth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and to convey our confidence in your very able stewardship of this very timely and important session.

The Group expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting informative reports on this session, which encompasses many vital issues that will help guide our deliberations.

Mr. Chairman,

This session takes place at a time of profound global challenges. The global mutually reinforcing financial and economic crises have exacerbated the challenges and impediments of developing countries to achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially in eradicating poverty and hunger and achieve sustainable development.

It is known that developing countries host most of the world's forests. Forests play a critical role in the lives of the rural poor and of forest-dependent communities in developing countries. It is a fact that forests and poverty co-exist and that Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) plays an important role in achieving the MDGs and, in particular the eradication of poverty, along with enhancing the economic, social and environmental benefit of all types of forests, for present and future generations. The important contribution of forests as water regulators, carbon sinks and in the conservation of biodiversity is also evident.

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption in 2007 by the General Assembly of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests constitutes the highest expression of the importance that the international community places on forests issues, as well as the recognition of the will to raise the profile of forests, based on the importance they represent, especially to sustainable development.

The Secretary-General in his report E/CN.18/2007 (Forests in a Changing Environment: Low Forest Cover Countries, Small Developing Island States, and High and Medium Forest Covers Countries) identifies the challenges facing these countries.

According to the Note prepared by the Secretary General, seventy one countries are characterized by low forest cover, with less than 10% of their land area covered by forests. Low forest cover countries (LFCCs) are found in all continents except North America, ranging from developed to developing, with most in arid or semi-arid zones. LFCCs are particularly prone to the impacts of climate change, desertification, land degradation, and deforestation. The LFCCs, as identified in

the Secretary General reports, have not received proper international support. This is an important function for any mechanism that is designed for the implementation of forest instrument and the achievement of the global forest objectives.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which as the report notes are among the richest in biodiversity, are highly vulnerable as they may face constraints in their efforts to achieve sustainable forest management. These include limited land area and high population pressure, insufficient land area for developing large-scale operations, degraded lands with poor soils, vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change. It is therefore ironic that this category of countries has historically not benefited from support for forests, a fact borne out in one of the Secretary-General's report. This matter therefore warrants increased attention

Africa has been identified as the continent that is lagging behind in international support for forest management. The continent faces very serious challenges accessing funding for forest management due to complex and time consuming procedures. It is a known fact that forests provide goods and services which are not only vital for the survival of the poorest in many African countries, but are also essential for the basic functioning of a wide range of development sectors in the continent. The success of many poverty reduction and economic growth strategies of these countries is thus inextricably linked to the sustainable provision of forest goods and services.

The Group believes also that high and medium forest cover countries, which possess much of the Earth's terrestrial biodiversity, face important challenges in implementing sustainable forest management and promoting forest law enforcement, thus integrating forests in broader sustainable development policies. UNFF 8 must seriously address the challenges faced by all these categories of countries.

Mr. Chairman,

It is known that forests can become one of the catalysts of recovery, by providing the means for a greener, more sustainable pattern of growth. Forests should, thus, be encompassed in the global response to the multiple crises affecting the world economy. Financial support to sustainable forest management that is consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of developing countries, is a key aspect of building resilience in those countries, as a part of the broader countercyclical measures to be adopted.

The primary barrier to sustainable forest management in developing countries is insufficient funding. The financial gap can only be addressed by dedicating resources to support the implementation of sustainable forest management, the achievement of the global objectives on forests, and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group welcomes the dedication of the UNFF of a separate agenda item in this session to address the means of implementation, which is a key to supporting sustainable forest management.

In this regard, G-77 and China proposes the establishment of a Global Forest Fund, which would tap all sources of financial support committed to promoting sustainable forest management, including in funding afforestation and reforestation activities, in order to provide new and additional financial resources to developing countries. This Fund would further facilitate access to funding by developing countries who are not receiving it.

The Group urges for the provision of new and additional funding from all sources, including voluntary, for promoting sustainable forest management. The Fund would aim at supporting the implementation of sustainable forest management, the achievement of the global objectives on forests, and the implementation of the Non-legally binding Instrument on all types of forests.

The G-77 urges donors to significantly increase and at least double the funding to all types of forest. Furthermore, the fund would complement and not replace existing financial mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

The development and adoption of a voluntary global financial mechanism is mandated by the Economic and Social Council in paragraph 6 of its resolution 2007/40.

In the same resolution, Member States reaffirmed four shared global objectives on forests. It is worth noting that the fourth objective states the need to reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.

The G-77 and China intends to work together with all parties during UNFF8 to further elaborate its position, define the terms of reference of the Fund, and reach a consensus decision.

I thank you.

