



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI ON AGENDA ITEM 6, EMERGING ISSUES, AT THE TENTH MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF10) (Istanbul, Turkey, 11 April 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, I wish extend the Group's appreciation to the Secretariat for the very helpful report on this agenda item dealing with Emerging Issues. We note the contents of document E/CN.18/2013/6 ('the report') outlining the various interconnections and challenges relating to the international arrangement on forests, the post-2015 development agenda, and the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). That report also sets out a number of recommendations that the Group of 77 and China wishes to comment on during this session.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group welcomes the recommendation in the report for the establishment of an ad hoc expert group to undertake intersessional works relating to various issues as set out under paragraph 62. We agree that this ad hoc expert group (AHEG) should be established at this session. However, to ensure that the AHEG carries out its work effectively, a number of factors must be taken into account.

These include:

- That the composition of the AHEG must be open-ended and intergovernmental, made up of member States of the UNFF;
- It should meet at least twice before UNFF 11;
- In addition to the work proposed under paragraph 62 of the report to be undertaken by the AHEG, it should amongst other things, look into the regional and sub-regional mechanisms; explore potential synergies with other international Conventions and bodies that address forests issues, such as the UNFCCC, UNCCD and the CBD; and review the effectiveness of the Facilitative process;
- The need for the AHEG to work in line with other relevant processes, such as those established by the Rio+20 outcomes document, and to take into consideration the formulation process of the sustainable development objectives, emphasizing the incorporation of different visions, approaches, and models to achieve sustainable development into the scope of the forest instrument.

4. On the work of the AHEG, while we accept that relevant stakeholders should be invited to provide their contribution wherever appropriate, in keeping with the intergovernmental nature of the AHEG, we believe that the decision-making rests with the member States.

5. The Group welcomes the proposal to have forests as one of the priorities on SDGs, This is necessary in order to strengthen the important role of forests for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, improving livelihoods, and achieving inclusive economic growth.

6. The establishment of a cross-cutting sustainable development goal on natural resources underscores the significance of forests in the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. However, the Group considers that clustering forests with other natural resources dilutes the significance of forests. In addition, the proposed clustering pre-empts how natural resources other than forests will be addressed under the existing Rio+20 follow-up processes.

7. The international process on forest dialogue should be strengthened and the UN should play an important role in multilateral coordination and consultation. Likewise, the international arrangement on forests should be strengthened to reinforce the forest instruments and the establishment of a forest financing mechanism.

8. Finally, the Group considers that further discussion is required on the concept of "natural capital accounting" before further action is taken on that proposal in the report, especially since it is not a language agreed by countries in the Rio+20 outcome document and is only one tool for achieving sustainable development.

9. We assure you that the Group of 77 and China will work constructively towards achieving consensus on these issues.

I thank you.

