



**STATEMENT BY MR. ABDELLAH BENMELLOUK (MOROCCO), ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 13 (I) UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS, DURING THE GENERAL SEGMENT OF THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (GENEVA, 21 JULY 2003)**

Mr President,

On Behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to make the following observations:

- During the establishment of our Forum, UNFF, we have unanimously recognized that the social, economic and environmental well-being of the world's population is closely associated with the effective management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests which cover nearly one-third of the planet earth's landscape.
- The UNFF has been entrusted with a highly important mission, the main objective of which is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.
- Aware of the importance of this mandate and the complexity of forest issues, the Group would like to reiterate its strong commitment to the RIO Declaration on Environment and Development, the Forest Principles and Chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the proposals for action of the IPF/IFF as well as the outcomes of WSSD.
- Consideration of the report of the 3rd session of the UNFF is taking place at the mid-road of the multi-year program of work, while big challenges still obstruct endeavors by developing countries to attain the goal of sustainable forest management
- Since Rio, significant progress has been made in the formulation of a solid repertoire of commitments on actions pertaining to sustainable forest management, mainly by the IPF/IFF processes and the UNFF.
- The UNFF future work should, therefore, focus on the reinforcement of effective and coherent approaches to ensure the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for actions as well as to promote the implementation of forest - related decisions made by various inter-governmental fora.
- In this regard, the Group of 77 and China is looking forward to an effective implementation of the proposed measures with respect to 1/Economic aspects of Forests, 2/Forest health and productivity and 3/Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs.
- The focus on means of implementation has been underlined as a matter of priority of the UNFF multi-year program of work in ECOSOC resolution 2000/35.
- We would like to underline in this respect that despite the continuous efforts undertaken by developing countries to attain the objective of sustainable forest management, numerous difficulties, mainly the lack of sufficient and reliable means of implementation, remains the major obstacle encountered by these countries in implementing their respective national programs with regard to forest management, conservation and sustainable development.
- In this context, we would like to underline that promoting sustainable forest management through

private sector actions should not diminish inter-governmental partnership between developed and developing countries. This partnership remains indispensable for the attainment of an effective sustainable forest management.

- Given the importance of the inter-sessional work in advancing the objectives of the Forum through scientific and technical advice, the Group, while reiterating its support for the creation of the ad-hoc expert groups, would like to underline the importance of ensuring an adequate participation of developing countries in these groups.

The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its support for the outcome of the UNFF3 as a step forward to achieve substantive progress in implementing the proposals for action of the Inter-governmental Panel on Forests/Inter-governmental Forum on Forests at the national, regional and global levels.