



UNFF15

Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

1. The EU and its Member States appreciate the opportunity to submit an official statement for UNFF 15 in writing.
2. Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to the UNFF Secretariat and the UNFF Bureau and to recognise the unprecedented circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic and furthermore the efforts by all members of the Forum on achieving agreement to the UNFF 15 Omnibus Resolution. We would like to thank you for providing us the opportunities for exchanges on the draft UNFF15 Omnibus Resolution in writing and via informal consultations, even though we found this process quite burdensome.
3. Secondly, we see the UNFF 15 Omnibus Resolution as a compromise text containing high level of flexibility from all members involved in its development, and understand it as a safeguard for a smooth transition to the sixteenth Session of the UNFF without abating our common efforts in the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF 2030).
4. We underline our deep concern about current trends of continued deforestation and degradation of forests, in particular primary forests, in many regions of the world, and further underline the importance of enhancing coherent and synergetic forest and forest-related policies within and outside the UN system in order to advance the implementation of the UNSPF 2030.
5. In this context, we look forward to substantial discussions on strengthened forest-based solutions to sustainable development at the sixteenth Session of the Forum. In our view, a strengthened Collaborative Partnership on Forests has a key role in supporting the work of the Forum, especially in this year's intersessional period.
6. Recalling the outcomes of the technical exchange at UNFF14, the Forum's inputs will in our view be essential to the Summit on Biodiversity and the development of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework presenting a unique opportunity to demonstrate the important role of forests and sustainable forest management in preserving and restoring biodiversity.
7. Finally, we would like to conclude by highlighting the continued important role of Major Groups in the implementation of the UNSPF 2030, and encourage for further active, cross-sectoral involvement in the activities of the Forum.