

**Statement by the Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
at the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests**

(New York, 26 April 2021)

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the chair of the 16th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and look forward to your able stewardship of this session in success.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the Bureau of the Session and the President of ECOSOC for their continued hard efforts to convene this Session successfully in this difficult time of pandemic over the world.

Madam Chair,

Over the long history of humanity, forests have been served as valuable assets to all of us, providing with every necessary well-being to humankind and play the role as stronghold of global ecosystem conservation.

However, these forests which have been coexisted with humanity for millions of years and precious to all of us, have now been plunged into critical status due to destructive industrial development and excessive exploitation of the nature.

The destruction of biodiversity and abnormal weather phenomena being ever more serious and this would also inevitably aggravate confrontations and conflicts among the nations for natural resources.

We could never think of our life on earth without forest and we all know well about serious consequences of catastrophic calamities to humanity without forest.

Today forest restoration and ecological environment protection to minimize the impact of the climate change are vital factors to human existence and they should be regarded as common obligations and ineluctable responsibilities of all of us who leave on this planet.

Madam Chair,

In 2017, the United Nations has adopted the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017 ~ 2030 to ensure sustainable management and effective protection of the forests over the world.

The DPRK delegation takes this opportunity once again to reaffirm its full support to this UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

In recent years, the government of the DPRK has attached great importance to the protection, expansion and sustainable use of the forests to improve people's living standards and protect the ecological environment of the country.

President Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs of the DPRK, in regard the reforestation as a project to protect the environment of the country and provide our people with better living conditions, has declared forest restoration campaign and delivered all his efforts to lead this campaign in great success.

The DPRK Government has declared 2015 ~ 2024 as period for national forest restoration campaign and set out the plan of restoring more than 1.6 million hectares of forests by 2024 and turning all mountains across the country that cover more than 70% of the national territory, into thick forests of golden and treasure ones.

Since 2015, considerable achievements have been recorded in forest restoration of the country that include cultivation of new forests of over 1.2 million hectares and plantation of more than 4.25 billion trees over the years.

The DPRK Government has also exerted great efforts for turning all forests into golden and treasure ones by planting trees of good species with high economic value including wild fruit trees and the trees for timber woods.

At the same time, parallel efforts are also being made for turning the forests into the environmentally valuable ones by planting needle and broad-leaved trees in proper combination to increase water absorbability and to prevent air pollution and resistance with landslide while diversifying the layer structures of forests.

Recently the DPRK government has set forth the tasks for preventing natural disasters by assessing the overall situation of ecological environment including forests and through an intensified campaign of afforestation and water conservation.

The DPRK Government is thereby pushing ahead with the projects of expanding the forests and nature conservation areas, and actively protecting and promoting the ecological environment through implementation of the National Environment Protection Strategy and the Decade Plan for Afforestation and Water Conservation, thus addressing properly the climate change.

Madam Chair,

Protecting natural ecosystem including forests and mitigating the climate changes is essential to save the earth, the only cradle for human life. And to achieve this goal successfully,

the responsible efforts of all UN member states and concerted action of the international community are needed.

The DPRK delegation is of the view that the international cooperation should further be strengthened in protection of forests and its sustainable use along with more active exchanges of science and technology in this field.

Particular priority should be given to international cooperation to assist the efforts of the developing countries for reforestation on the principle of leaving no one behind, and effective technical and financial assistance to enhance self-reliant capacity of developing countries for environmental protection should also be provided with before anything else.

Strengthening international solidarity and partnership is one of important ways to implement the UN strategy for forests until 2030.

The international community should no longer tolerate any kind of behaviour of selfish and national individualism in disregarding global ecosystem destruction and seeking only for economic interests and politicization and discrimination of assistance should be denounced and encourage every nation to promote genuine unity based on justice and fairness.

The DPRK would continue to fulfill its responsibilities and do its parts successfully by actively joining to international community for protection of forests and ensuring its sustainable use.

I thank you.