

Forests for our Future

A High-Level Event of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) on the occasion of the 2023 SDG Summit

Summary report

On 18 September 2023, the heads and other senior representatives of the CPF member organizations met to commit to reinforcing actions to strengthen global and national efforts aimed at fully unlocking the contributions of forests to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and the CPF's joint vision for forests towards 2030¹. The event took place in New York at the margins of the 2023 SDG Summit.

The event featured two interactive roundtables, with the participation of Ministers and CPF agency heads and other senior representatives outlining how their countries and organizations contribute to coordinated forest-based actions to accelerate progress towards global goals and targets by 2030.

On this occasion, the CPF launched a “CPF Joint Call to Action for Forests Towards 2030”² stressing the need for enhanced action and political will to maximize the potential of forests for people and the planet, with only seven years remaining to achieve the SDGs and the GFGs by 2030.

CPF member organizations welcomed increased recognition of the importance of forests in achieving the SDGs, which includes helping to achieve sustainable and resilient agrifood systems, addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation and desertification, and providing goods and services. The CPF members also recognized progress made in conserving, restoring and sustainably using the world's forests.

Nevertheless, participants underlined that time is not on our side and that urgent action is needed. These include reversing the loss of forest cover and increasing forest area by 3 percent worldwide by 2030 under the Global Forest Goals, which would make a significant contribution to maintaining the world's carbon stocks, restoring degraded landscapes and creating resilient and adaptive ecosystems.

CPF Joint Call to Action for Forests Towards 2030

In the CPF Joint Call to Action for Forests Towards 2030, launched at the event, four focal areas were set out to overcome the challenges that still inhibit the protection, restoration and sustainable management and use of the world's forests.

These areas include strengthening policies, governance and institutions in Member Countries and improving coordination between sectors, improving the accessibility of forest data, tools and methodology to enhance decision-making, improving finance and investment, and bolstering communication and awareness raising.

The CPF pledged to strengthen individual and joint efforts to address the four focal areas and to work with countries towards a world where all types of forests are sustainably managed for the benefit of people and the planet.

¹ CPF Strategic Vision towards 2030: www.fao.org/3/cb5683en/cb5683en.pdf

² CPF Joint Call to Action: www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/news/joint-call-to-action-for-forests-towards-2030

“With our sights clearly set on 2030, we commit to reinforcing action to strengthen efforts at all levels to fully unlock the contributions of forests to sustainable development and achieve our joint vision for forests towards 2030,” CPF members said in the call to action.

Next steps

Underlining the importance of collective action and renewed and enhanced commitment, anchored in international solidarity and effective cooperation, the CPF Joint Call to Action is a vehicle to bring much-needed attention to the forefront of achieving the GFGs and to the contribution of forest conservation, restoration and sustainable use for achieving the SDGs.

This is even more urgent given the global climate crisis, biodiversity loss, wildfires, and the need to support vulnerable people across the globe. The CPF will bring the Joint Call to Action to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28, November-December 2023) and UNFF19 (May 2024) to showcase how forests can contribute to addressing the global crises and how the implementation of the Joint Call to Action can facilitate to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and the GFGs.

Summary of interventions at the event

Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, opened the event by encouraging participants to use this opportunity to highlight the contributions and the considerable potential of forests towards the SDGs and other major internationally agreed goals to renew and strengthen commitment to supporting Member States. He further noted that financing to achieve international goals is woefully low – just to reach the restoration objectives would require a tripling of resources. Therefore, greater commitment, action, coordination and investment are needed.

Mr Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development highlighted in his opening remarks the critical contributions of forests to the SDGs and outlined priorities for the CPF to further enhance coherence and collaboration on sustainable forest management, and increase its impact on the ground through supporting countries’ efforts to accelerate progress, particularly through the work of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and the upcoming midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests at UNFF19 in May 2024.

H.E. Marina da Silva Vaz de Lima, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Brazil, outlined how she had, in her previous time as Minister, initiated a process that led to a reduction of more than 80% in deforestation rates in the Amazon between 2004 and 2012. It was the largest contribution of a single country to the global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Since her return to office in 2023, deforestation rates in the Amazon have been reduced by more than 40%, but the support of the international community is crucially needed to continue those efforts. She outlined the cross-cutting contributions of sustainable forest use, using a circular bioeconomy, including the contribution to local economies.

H.E. Melis Turgunbaev, Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Supervision of Kyrgyzstan, highlighted how Kyrgyzstan implements measures to preserve and increase the area of forests, as well as expand perennial plantations, which support both adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts. The fragile mountain ecosystems which are crucial for water supply are especially vulnerable and prone to climate change effects. Reforestation and afforestation are some of the countermeasures against the negative effects of climate change.

Ms Inger Andersen, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, recalled the hard choices between conservation and economics



and called for action instead of continued promises. She noted carbon finance is crucial in this regard and forests are the good that we need to invest in to avoid transboundary and compounding impacts.

Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, reminded participants to consider all types of forests, and also consider dryland forests because they are especially at risk of desertification. Another important and often-overlooked aspect is soils which are crucial carbon sinks if managed adequately.

Mr Haoliang Xu, UN Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme, highlighted UNDP initiatives that address the key drivers of forest degradation, restoration and the sustainable use of forests, including repurposing harmful subsidies for agriculture producers, mitigating risks around extractive industries and critical transition mineral and strengthening the evidence base for forest policies through geospatial data and other innovative digital tools and technologies.

Ms Ivonne Higuero, Secretary-General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, highlighted that the CITES species listings have grown to 700 tree species, where CITES has the mandate to ensure that international trade does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild. Together with CPF partners projects on timber identification, plantations and on forest management are on the way.

Mr David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, recalled that the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted in 2022 to set nature on a path of recovery by 2030. The Framework complements and reinforces the Global Forest Goals and CBD is envisaging a strong and unique role in delivering the CPF Joint Call to Action for Forests Towards 2030.

Professor Anne Larson, Principal Scientist CIFOR-ICRAF, representing also IUFRO, highlighted the interdisciplinary assessments, published by the CPF, which provide policymakers and other decision-makers with reliable information on the essential role forests are playing in achieving the SDGs. The CPF provides a mechanism for effectively linking research and policy and mobilizing evidence, data and knowledge to achieve the SDGs. Addressing inequality, social inclusion, food security, and well-being are as important as biophysical goals, actions and outcomes, this is the reason for a deep engagement with the relevant people, communities, institutions and other stakeholders.

Ms Valerie Hickey, Global Director for Environment, Natural Resources and the Blue Economy, and Mr Tuukka Carsten, Senior Forestry Specialist, World Bank, stated that there is no lack of political will and no lack of money. To use investments better and faster, the need for coherent policies and subsidies, robust data and science to monitor progress, and a mix of finance products and sources are crucial to be addressed. Moving beyond green projects and instead investing in building green, resilient and inclusive economies that use forests to unlock SDG results, not just SDG15 but for all of them, is a major task for the CPF and the global community.

Mr Jerry Velasquez, Director, Division of Mitigation and Adaptation, Green Climate Fund, highlighted that grants are an essential instrument for financing the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests. Developing countries will inevitably continue to rely on grant instruments wherever return on investment cannot be provided or markets cannot be created, which is often the case for global public goods. He also stressed the massive finance gap that we are facing which according to UNEP's State of Finance for Nature 2022, is \$230 billion away every year from providing nature-based solutions with sufficient funding. To address this, he suggested diversifying the range of

financial instruments to include debt, equity and guarantees which can give greater flexibility to design mechanisms that will attract private finance and de-risking private investments.

Ms Juliette Biao, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, underscored the critical importance of making full use and accelerating the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and its Global Forest Goals as they provide a global framework for sustainably managing forests and trees, halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation, and increasing the forest area by 3% by 2030. In the context of the midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests in 2024, it is imperative for the CPF to identify concrete joint actions to foster and strengthen efforts to advance the implementation of the global commitments on forests.

Ms Sheam Satkuru, ITTO Executive Director, highlighted the dire need to address socioeconomic needs and priorities in the tropics through the sustainable harvesting and trade of wood and other forest products and urged a substantive increase in investment and cross-sectoral cooperation that enables tropical forests to maximize their value compared to other land uses. Now is the time to recalibrate the CPF's collective efforts to unlock the full potential of tropical forests for the benefit of people and the planet.

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan, FAO Goodwill Ambassador, recalled the importance of forests to provide food, shelter, jobs and inspiration. They are crucial in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, and providing other goods and services. Reaching the Global Forest Goals through effective conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the world's forests, is an opportunity to maximize forests contribution to the SDGs. She further outlined that the Collaborative Partnership on Forests has a key role to play in making this happen and in building consensus around solutions that forests can provide for and in accelerating action at all levels. She emphasized that the CPF's Joint Call to Action contains a list of priority areas for action, which is expected to result in more effective and impactful implementation and synergies and lower transaction costs. It outlines how the CPF will scale up its efforts to support the role of forests in achieving the Global Forest Goals and SDGs towards 2030. It is not a one-time off manifest, nor intended to establish new structures or frameworks.



ANNEX A

CPF High-Level Event – Forests for our Future

Moderator: **Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan**, FAO Goodwill Ambassador

Opening Session

18:00 – 18:10 **Dr QU Dongyu**, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Mr Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Launch of the CPF Joint Call to Action

18:10 – 18:15 Video presenting key messages of the CPF Joint Call to Action for Forests towards 2030 and forests' role in achieving the SDGs

Roundtable 1

H.E. Marina da Silva Vaz de Lima, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Brazil
H.E. Melis Turgunbaev, Minister Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Supervision of Kyrgyzstan

18:15 – 18:55 **Ms Inger Andersen**, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme
Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
Mr Haoliang Xu, UN Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

Roundtable 2

Ms Ivonne Higuero, Secretary-General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
Mr David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

18:55 – 19:20 **Professor Anne Larson**, Principal Scientist CIFOR-ICRAF, representing also IUFRO
Ms Valerie Hickey, Global Director for Environment, Natural Resources and the Blue Economy, World Bank
Mr Jerry Velasquez, Director, Division of Mitigation and Adaptation, Green Climate Fund
Ms Juliette Biao, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, also delivering an intervention on behalf of the International Tropical Timber Organisation

Closing Session

19:20 – 19:30 Closing remarks by **Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan**

ANNEX B

Materials published and outreach

- Press release: <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/sdg-summit--fao-announces-the-launch-of-a-cpf-joint-call-to-action-for-forests-towards-2030/en>
- News story: <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/news/joint-call-to-action-for-forests-towards-2030/en>
- CPF Joint Call to Action: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc7688en/cc7688en.pdf>
- Launch video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua2FM9viF5k>
- Meeting website: <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/meetings/forests-for-our-future/en>
- Pictures: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/faoforestry/albums/72177720311715303>
- Newsletter: <https://newsletters.fao.org/q/1x4lXy115DVidnD7M/wv>
- Tweets:
 - <https://x.com/FAOForestry/status/1703944566607400965?s=20>
 - <https://x.com/FAOForestry/status/1703921912190046315?s=20>
 - <https://twitter.com/FAODG/status/1703957611211620443>
 - <https://twitter.com/FAOForestry/status/1704043498054234195>
 - <https://twitter.com/FAOnews/status/1703911635130184105>
 - <https://twitter.com/FAONewYork/status/1703846403670262120>