

**Remarks by Ms. Juliette Biao, Director of the UNFF Secretariat on:
Activities and achievements of the Secretariat
Twentieth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF20)
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**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure to speak at this unique global forest body today to provide a brief overview of the major activities and achievements of the UNFF Secretariat since UNFF19, our vision for advancing the work of the Secretariat in the coming year, and the potential risks.

In recent years, the global community has continuously grappled with increased socio-economic, ecological, humanitarian, geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges. The current complex situation has created an atmosphere of fragility, and uncertainties about the future.

At this challenging time, the Forum adopted the omnibus resolution on the midterm review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), and the High-Level Segment Declaration at UNFF19, as the blueprint for our work until the time of final review of the IAF in 2030.

Distinguish Delegates,

UNFF19 outcomes contains over thirty new tasks for the UNFF Secretariat. No Programme Budget Implications (PBI) provided to offset the resource insufficiency of the UNFFS Secretariat for undertaking these new tasks. The ongoing and unprecedented UN liquidity crisis further exacerbated the severity of the situation. Despite these challenges, the Secretariat undertook various measures to respond proactively to the new demands and requests emanated from the outcomes of UNFF19. I wish to highlight just a few examples:

1. The Secretariat promoted enhanced support by countries to the Forum's work. There has been increased interests among Forum Members to organize Country/Organization Led Initiatives. In July 2024, Congo organized a CLI on afforestation and reforestation. Morocco will hold another CLI on technology, finance and forest community development in June 2025. There will be two more CLI to be announced on forest fires, and forests and sustainable bioeconomy at this session.
2. A major and strategic work was carried out with the CBD Secretariat to analyse the interlinkages of the Global Forest Goals and the Global Biodiversity Framework. This is the first type of such work carried out and it lays a foundation for similar type of analyses regarding other global forest related goals and targets. This is a major ingredient for advancing complementarity and coherence on all global forest related goals.
3. The Secretariat continued to provide its routine GFFFN support to countries and enhanced political support on forest financing by organizing joint event with Presidency of COP29 UNFCCC. Closer and deeper collaboration with relevant data holders was promoted to explore the possibility for systematic collaboration to turn the GFFFN Clearing House to a

comprehensive source of information, knowledge and data on forest financing. The United Nations and China also made major progress on resolving many pending substantive and legal issues regarding the proposed GFFN office.

4. Major advances made in facilitating monitoring, assessment and reporting, with the launch of a new online reporting platform towards a streamlined and data-driven reporting means to track the progress on the UNSPF. This, hopefully, leads to significant increase in the quality and quantities of national reports in June 2025, and subsequently a solid 2026 Global Forest Goals Report.
5. The outreach and partnership activities of the Secretariat scaled up by issuing Monthly UNFF Update, organization of Forest Pavillion at COP29, and preparation for the next one at COP30 of UNFCCC, and intersessional meetings for UNFF regional and subregional partners, and Major Groups. Collaboration with CPF members further enhanced by developing CPF work plan.
6. One major activity of the Secretariat in the past year was to support the GA negotiations on the draft resolution on UN Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management, which was adopted by the GA three weeks ago. In this resolution, the UNFFS and two other CPF members are invited to facilitate the observance of this Decade. By adoption of this resolution, which is in line with the Global Forest Goals of the UNSPF, the Secretariat plans to work closely with relevant partners to devise a plan for its observance.

Dear Colleagues,

In the period leading to next session of UNFF in 2026, we will do our best to continue to deepen strategic partnerships, strengthen support for streamlined national reporting, and further advance our work on forest financing. However, I wish to reiterate that this situation is not sustainable. The current resource insufficiency of the Secretariat has put its delivery capacity at great risk. You will hear the presentation on the Information Paper on the Workload, Needs and Gaps of the UNFFS this week which hopefully pave the way for addressing the challenges that the Secretariat is facing.

Before concluding, I wish to remind ourselves that the UNFF remains the only universal, intergovernmental platform with mandate on all types of forests. It is where priorities are shaped, partnerships are forged, and multilateralism is put into practice. The work we do together—at this session and over the next five years—will be decisive in determining whether we meet our shared goals. Rest assured that; the Secretariat stands ready to support you in this endeavour.

Thank you.