

United Nations Forum on Forests – 11th Session
Ministerial Segment May 13-14, 2015
U.S. input for Ministerial Declaration

I. Structure and Tone

- The Ministerial Declaration should be concise, ideally no more than two pages.
- The Ministerial Declaration should focus on high-level issues without getting into details, particularly on points under negotiation at UNFF11, though it should offer support for the decisions of UNFF11.
- Preambular language should be kept to a minimum and avoid citations to previous agreements, decisions, as well as to processes and decisions from non-UNFF bodies, etc.
- The text should be meaningful and accessible to readers with no specialized knowledge of, or familiarity with, United Nations processes, institutions and decisions.
- The language should be political in nature rather than legal (e.g., it should not use terms such as shall, will, agree, etc.)

II. Proposed Ministerial Declaration Elements for Discussion

The Declaration should recognize that:

- Forests provide multiple goods and services that are central to sustaining human well-being, to development, and to poverty eradication;
- These goods and services include wood and non-wood forest products, protection of and support for biodiversity, provision and regulation of water, carbon sequestration, stable and productive soils, as well as cultural, recreational, and aesthetic values;
- Forests have long been undervalued by conventional economic policies and markets, and insufficiently integrated into economic development planning and decision-making, contributing to widespread forest losses;
- Despite many positive developments over the past decade, forest loss and degradation continue, threatening livelihoods and the very life support systems of our planet.

The Declaration should support:

- The importance of national actions to conserve and sustainably manage forests;
- Increased recognition of the full value and multiple benefits of forests through increased cross-sector planning and integration of the valuation of forest ecosystem services into economic development planning and policies, especially their benefits in eradicating poverty, improving food security, combating climate change, conserving biodiversity,

combating desertification, sustaining the world's water resources, and contributing to human health and well-being;

- Strengthening forest governance at all levels by improving the clarity and security of land tenure; building more effective and accountable public and civil society institutions; enabling community-based forest management; cooperating to promote trade in legal forest products; and developing policies that enable public and private sector investment in sustainable forest management (SFM);
- Increasing, diversifying and simplifying financing for SFM drawing on public, private, domestic and international sources;
- The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) as a key body for policy dialogue on forests within the United Nations system playing a vital role in addressing forest-related issues in a holistic and integrated manner and promoting international policy cooperation and coordination to achieve SFM;
- The Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI) as a fundamental basis for national action and international cooperation to promote SFM;
- The importance of sustained international commitment and cooperation, and the critical role of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in advancing implementation of SFM, including the Non-Legally-Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests;
- Raising awareness on the importance of forests across other international processes;
- The vital role and significant contribution of the conservation and sustainable management of all types of forests in achieving sustainable development, and the importance of giving due consideration to this issue in the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.
- Commitment to advance decisions taken at UNFF-11.