

Forests for the world

G7 special event

Rome, Italy 15 and 16 October 2024

Final Statement

Organized under the high patronage of the President of the Italian Republic and convened by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, the G7 Special Event on “Forests for the World” was held in Rome, Italy, on 15 and 16 October 2024. The meeting was organized by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in partnership with Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze detta dei XL, Accademia dei Georgofili, Accademia Nazionale di Agricoltura, Accademia Italiana di Scienze Forestali, Società Geografica Italiana, Consiglio per la Ricerca in Agricoltura e l’analisi della Economia Agraria (CREA), European Forest Institute (EFI), Federazione Italiana Dottori in Agraria e Forestali (FIDAF), and Federlegno.

The G7 Special Event builds on the results of the International Conference on “Global Forest and Tree Restoration”, held in Rome, Italy on 11 and 12 October 2022, organized by the same scientific Academies. The 2022 Conference, underlining that forests and trees play an essential role for the preservation of ecosystems and for the livelihood of present and future generations, urged for large-scale global forest conservation, forest and ecosystem restoration and afforestation programs to contribute not only to climate change mitigation and adaptation, but also to job creation, to nature conservation mainstreaming and to promoting social equity. At that end, the Conference formulated a set of recommendations for action by International Organizations, National Governments, private sector and civil society.

The participants in the G7 Special Event, after a deep discussion on national and international experiences:

- **Acknowledge** the role of the Italian government in mainstreaming forest issues in G7 and other international organisms;
- **Acknowledge** that forest landscapes of the world, including waterbodies, play a fundamental role as sink of greenhouse gases, mitigating the impact of extreme events, and preserving biodiversity, soil and ecosystem services, while supporting billions of people for their food, livelihoods, and wellbeing (One Health paradigm);
- **Underline** the importance of sustainably sourced timber and wooden products, as well as other forest products for the creation and maintenance of thriving circular bioeconomy and climate neutrality;
- **Remark** that Earth’s climate system is changing at an alarming rate, despite actions and initiatives already undertaken globally, and the associated impacts and risks are being felt increasingly across a range of ecosystems, while threatening global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the declared goals of the UN Environmental Conventions, including the UN Forum of Forests. For many vulnerable countries these impacts also hinder and threaten their economic and social development;

- **Note** that unsustainable land use, combined with increasing changing weather patterns, is a driver of deforestation, land degradation and biodiversity loss in many countries, which affect the livelihoods of millions of people, including increases in environmentally induced migrations;
- **Recognise** that deforestation and forest degradation is still advancing at an alarming pace, and that most of it is driven by the expansion of agriculture, animal farming and unsustainable use of natural resources;
- **Recognise** that the commitment of the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to 1.5°C by 2050, would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change and increase the ability to adapt of forest ecosystems in the world;
- **Highlight** the vital role of The Three Basins, Amazons, Congo and Indonesia, as home to 80% of the world's tropical forests and two-thirds of terrestrial biodiversity, and as global regulators of terrestrial carbon balance, in the face of accelerating climate change and its increasingly harmful consequences for human communities, animal and plant species. Note with interest the conclusions of the Summits in Nairobi and Brazzaville and the content of the Belen declaration;
- **Note** that land-use change can be halted by ceasing the business generated by deforestation and unsustainable use of forests, and incentivizing the protection of forests. This can be achieved by creating a market for deforestation-free products and attributing value to ecosystem services;
- **Reaffirm** the urgency of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation globally, through sustainable management of forests, afforestation, reforestation and ecosystem restoration programs, while favoring adaptation and resilience of forest ecosystems to a changing climate. Key elements of climate adaptive management and restoration plans include conserving natural habitats and ecosystem structural diversity; increasing variability in tree species distribution, density, ages; advancing the production of high-quality planting material for forest and landscape restoration, through the conservation and management of forest genetic resources;
- **Affirm** the need that adequate financial resources are allocated to fund forest and ecosystem restoration initiatives, with special reference to low-income countries, and then **support** the call made by the Brazzaville Summits and Nairobi Summit for a coalition to finance the protection of environments rich in wildlife and important carbon dioxide storage sites. In that respect the role of international financial institutions is underlined;
- **Call** for stopping deforestation by ensuring that the raw materials and products entering the global trade market should be sustainably sourced and produced - meaning their production has not contributed to deforestation and forest degradation – by forests, agriculture, livestock, and soil and water, while contributing significantly to the sustenance and socio-cultural values of local peoples, including indigenous communities and their traditional knowledge;
- **Commend** the international initiatives aimed at halting the illegal timber international trade and stimulate and expand the commerce of timber obtained from responsibly managed forests as certified by robust multi-stakeholders' international systems;
- **Indicate** deforestation-free development as a viable opportunity to be pursued by drawing on locally available self-regenerating resources such as valuable timber and nutraceutical products;

- **Take stock** of relevant legislation, such as Amsterdam agreement, EUTR and EUDR, on marketing of timber and food commodities, and **recommend** streamlining of related procedures and supplying technical assistance to facilitate compliance, with special reference to empowering of small holders;
- **Emphasizes** the complementary role of robust certification schemes in addressing environmental challenges, such as deforestation, as well as in supporting forest legislation implementation and compliance worldwide;
- **Noting with satisfaction** that international cooperation programs and projects, including those run by the private sector, in place in several countries involve local communities in afforestation, reforestation, forest restoration and sustainable management activities, including also indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and expertise, and combine nature conservation objectives with job creation and socio-economic development, **call** for strengthened efforts in forest-centered international cooperation for development;
- **Invite** the Italian government to launch a special initiative related to forestry including forest-based industry under the G7 umbrella in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders;
- **Recommend** strengthening the role played by intergovernmental organizations, including FAO and UN Forest Forum, as well as relevant non-state actors, to promote and coordinate international initiatives for afforestation, reforestation, protection and restoration of forests and other natural ecosystems;
- **Support** the international undertakings devoted to discourage the expansion of the agricultural frontier at the expense of forests and other natural ecosystems by regulating the international trade of timber and agricultural commodities, and thus **encourage** the creation of deforestation-free markets; and

Urge that appropriate attention is paid at international level to capacity building, institutional development and knowledge sharing in order to adequately strengthen afforestation, reforestation and forest restoration programs and projects.