



# XV WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests

2–6 May 2022 | Coex, Seoul, Republic of Korea

## The Seoul Forest Declaration

We, the participants from 160 countries gathered in person and online at the 15th World Forestry Congress in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 2–6 May 2022, assert that **forests, forestry and forest stakeholders offer major nature-based solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, hunger and poverty, but we need to act now – there is no time to lose.**

We convey the following urgent messages to encourage actions for a green, healthy and resilient future with forests, as a contribution to Sustainable Development Goals, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and green recovery from COVID-19 pandemic.

- Forests transcend political, social and environmental boundaries and are vital for biodiversity and the carbon, water and energy cycles at a planetary scale. **The responsibility over forests should be shared and integrated across institutions, sectors and stakeholders in order to achieve a sustainable future.**
- Vast areas of degraded land require restoration. **Investment in forest and landscape restoration globally must be at least tripled by 2030 to implement global commitments and meet internationally agreed goals and targets.**
- There is no healthy economy on an unhealthy planet. **Production and consumption need to be sustainable and policies should foster innovative green financing mechanisms to upscale investment in forest conservation, restoration and sustainable use.**
- Wood is one of humanity's most ancient raw materials but can take us into the future – it is renewable, recyclable and incredibly versatile. The full potential of legal, sustainably produced wood **must be used to transform the building sector, provide renewable energy and innovative new materials, and move towards a circular bio-economy and climate neutrality.**
- Forest degradation and destruction have serious negative impacts on human health and well-being. **Healthy, productive forest must be maintained to reduce the risk of, and improve responsiveness to, future pandemics and provide other essential benefits for human physical and mental health.**
- Innovative technologies and mechanisms are emerging for the provision of, and equitable access to, accurate information and knowledge on forests. **These must be applied widely to enable evidence-based forest and landscape decision-making and effective forest communication.**

Forest-based solutions must be inclusive of the perspectives of family farmers, smallholders, forest communities, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth and respectful of their rights, and they must empower them to participate equitably in decision-making and sustainable forest value chains.

Greater investment and capacity building in forest communication and education and more research are needed to strengthen understanding and awareness of the benefits of sustainably managed forests and trees.

Close cooperation among nations is required to address challenges that transcend political boundaries. This was strengthened at the Congress by new partnerships such as the Assuring the Future of Forests with Integrated Risk Management (AFFIRM) Mechanism, the Sustaining an Abundance of Forest Ecosystems (SAFE) initiative and the Platform for REDD+ Capacity Building.

The outcomes of this Congress, including this declaration as well as the Youth Call for Action and the Ministerial Call on Sustainable Wood, should be transmitted to the next Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to other important forest-related fora.

The Congress calls on governments, the private sector, research organizations, educators, communities and youth organizations to take the urgent actions outlined above, in partnership, as a means for achieving a better future for all.

*Congress participants gratefully acknowledge the hospitality of the Government and people of the Republic of Korea and the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.*