



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States**

**171<sup>st</sup> session of the FAO Council**

**(5-9 December 2022)**

**Item 6.4: Report of the 26th Session of the Committee on Forestry (3 – 7 October 2022)**

Mr Chair,

1. I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
3. The EU and its Member States would like to thank the COFO Secretariat and the Chair, Mr Glenn Hargrove, for an excellent meeting and the satisfactory outcomes of the 26th Session of the Committee on Forestry
4. We wish to highlight that the COFO session recommended making efforts towards finding a common definition of forest degradation during the 2025 Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) cycle. We fully support this recommendation.
5. We also express our full support for the COFO recommendation to continue collecting and analysing necessary science- and evidence-based data on agriculture and forestry interdependencies, including on the direct and underlying drivers of deforestation and land degradation. We regret that our suggestion to include agricultural expansion as the main driver of deforestation could not be agreed on in the final report.
6. The EU and its Member States would like to highlight the importance of field inventory data in quality control and the validation of results derived from remote sensing. Field measurements are needed to produce reliable and unbiased forest information. This is well reflected in the final report.
7. Lastly, we must express our concern about the very full agenda of the 26<sup>th</sup> COFO session. This resulted in serious time constraints. For lack of time, the observers were not able to deliver their statements on any of the agenda items. For example, under agenda item 8.6. ‘Dialogue with Statutory Bodies in Forestry’, we regret that we were not able to hear the statements by the chairs of the relevant bodies.
8. With these observations, the EU and its Member States endorse the report of the 26th Session of the Committee on Forestry.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

