



CONCEPT NOTE | HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT ROUNDTABLE ON:

**“Forest-based solutions to the triple planetary crises:
A focus on people, science, technology, and finance”**

Item 6. High Level Segment, including a forest partnership dialogue with heads of CPF member organizations, non-governmental organizations and private sector CEOs

Thursday 9 May 2024 (10:45* am to 1 pm), CR4, UNHQ, New York

I. Background

The Ministerial declaration at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6)¹ in 2024 has acknowledged the threats posed to sustainable development by global environmental challenges including the triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, as well as desertification, land and soil degradation, drought and deforestation, and their impacts on human health and the environment, which are further aggravated by persistent levels of poverty, inequality and food insecurity.

The Global Resource Outlook of UNEA (2024)², reported that Increasing resource use is the main driver of the triple planetary crisis. The report called for urgent action to reduce global consumption and production as the extraction of natural resources could rise by 60% from 2020 levels by 2060, posing the augmentation of triple planetary crisis. The triple planetary crisis represents an urgent and interconnected set of challenges that require comprehensive and coordinated efforts at local, national, and global levels to address through inter-disciplinary science and technologies, transformative policies, adequate financing to transition towards a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for both people and the planet.

Forests play a pivotal role in sustaining life on Earth and addressing triple planetary crisis. Deforestation and forest degradation and unsustainable agriculture contribute significantly to global carbon emissions, exacerbating climate change. The Global Resource Outlook of UNEA (2024) reports that agriculture and forestry account for 28% of total GHG emission, and more than 90% of the total land use related biodiversity loss and water stress. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)³, forests store approximately 861 gigatons (Gt) of carbon, (equivalent to about 3,156 gigatons of CO₂) and play a significant role in regulating the climate and reducing the greenhouse effect.

Forests are home to an estimated 80% of terrestrial biodiversity, including a vast array of plant, animal, and microbial species and ecosystems vital for ecological balance⁴. Biodiversity enhances food security by providing genetic resources, ecosystem services, and cultural heritage essential for sustainable agriculture, nutrition, and

* The Roundtable will begin immediately following the conclusion of the opening remarks, and the keynote speeches of the High-level Segment on the morning of 9 May.

¹ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/k24/005/53/pdf/k2400553.pdf?token=i4lm43A8nrf0z9hCwp&fe=true>

² UNEP (2024) The Global Resources Outlook (Launched at UNEA 6)- <https://www.unep.org/resources/Global-Resource-Outlook-2024>

³ <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>

⁴ [living_forests_chapter_1_26_4_11.pdf](https://www.panda.org/living_forests_chapter_1_26_4_11.pdf) (panda.org)

livelihoods. However, deforestation and habitat loss and fragmentation have been threatening the existence of countless plant and animal species leading to species extinction and ecosystem degradation. Conservation and restoration of forest ecosystem is essential for preserving biodiversity and safeguarding the ecosystem services.

Forests also play a crucial role in regulating the water cycle and help mitigate water scarcity by enhancing water retention, filtration, and infiltration. However, deforestation and land use changes have disrupted hydrological processes in many parts of the world, leading to water scarcity, soil erosion, and increased vulnerability to droughts and floods. Forest conservation measures such as riparian buffer zones, watershed management, and reforestation projects can significantly contribute to improved water quality and quantity and reduce the risk of water-related disasters such as floods and droughts.

The triple planetary crisis represents a serious threat and challenge to forests and forest sector. New solutions are needed to tackle biodiversity loss and mitigating climate change, these will require changes in forest management and investments in forest-based solutions – these can generate multiple biodiversity and social benefits through the conservation, management, and restoration of ecosystems. However, the level of investment in forests and forest sector needs to be increased.

Innovation is crucial for forest sector. It is paving the way for early wildfire detection, digitalization & automation in timber trade, carbon sinks-aerial photography and for better data to inform evidence-based decision-making. Decisions based on data and analysis produce better outcomes and help to find the adequate solutions to the threats posed by global environmental challenges including triple planetary crisis.

In conclusion, forests offer versatile solutions to address interconnected planetary crises, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and water scarcity. There is a great potential to harness the ecological, economic, and social benefits of forests by promoting sustainable forest management, forest conservation and restoration. Forest provides integrated solutions for fostering resilience, promoting biodiversity, and achieving sustainable development goals in the face of global environmental challenges.

II. Objectives

The main objective of the High-Level Segment Roundtable is to identify and discuss transformative forest-based solutions, forest policies and actions to mitigate the threats posed to sustainable development by the triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, as well as desertification, land and soil degradation, drought, and deforestation.

III. Programme and Modalities of the Roundtable

The discussions during the High-Level Segment Roundtable will be co-moderated by Mr. Glenn Hargrove, Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Forest Service, Ministry of Natural Resources of Canada, and H.E. Mrs. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana to the United Nations. To initiate the discussions among participants, the Co-Moderators will pose the following questions to initiate the discussions among participants.

- What are the challenges, and barriers faced by Member States in undertaking forest-based solutions to address the triple planetary crisis, and how we can overcome these barriers?
- What is the role of science, innovation, and technology in addressing the triple planetary crisis? And what assistance should be provided by the international organizations in this respect?

- What changes and steps are required to mobilize increased finance to invest in forests-based solutions to harness their full potential to tackle the triple planetary crisis?
- How could the UN Forum on Forests contribute to accelerate urgent and transformative actions to tackle the triple planetary crisis?

The Moderators will, then, open the floor for interactive discussion on the questions mentioned above. **Delegations are invited to express their interest in intervening during the High-Level Segment Roundtable through the e-Speakers module on the e-deleGATE ahead of UNFF19.** Information on the opening of the list of speakers will be circulated to Permanent Missions in advance. For speaking during the HLS Roundtable, the priority will be given to delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States and representatives at the Ministerial and Director-General levels and above, pursuant to customary protocol. Other requests will be added to the list if time permits. The maximum duration of each intervention is three minutes for individual delegations, and four minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States. Delegations are reminded to e-mail a copy of any prepared statement to estatements@un.org at least two hours before the meeting, including the title and date of the meeting, as well as the name and delegation of the speaker. **If there are a high number of requests for the floor, the Moderators may further limit the duration of the interventions.** The time limit will be strictly enforced. Interactive discussions are strongly encouraged.

IV. Roundtable Coordinators

For further information, please contact Mr. Peter Gondo (gondop@un.org), Mr. Shyam Paudel (shyam.paudel@un.org), and Mr. Tomasz Juszcak (juszcakt@un.org) at the UNFF Secretariat.