

Intervention Notes to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

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Working towards the 2023 SDG Summit

by

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Thank you, distinguished moderator, for giving this opportunity to the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization.

As an inter-governmental organization committed to promoting forest cooperation in the Asian region at all levels toward sustainable development, the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization would like to take this precious opportunity to emphasize that the role of the forest sector should never be overlooked in achieving SDGs.

Forests can play an overarching role in achieving SDGs by providing a livelihood for more than 1.6 billion forest-dependent people across the world, harboring 80% of terrestrial biodiversity and providing the largest atmospheric carbon sink of the terrestrial ecosystem. The significance of the forest sector in achieving SDGs is also evident through a number of global initiatives to halt and reverse forest loss, as well as increased awareness of the public and private sectors on the important roles of the forest sector.

However, deforestation and forest degradation still continue to take place at an alarming rate under the pressures of agricultural expansion, over-exploitation of forest resources, and illegal logging. It has warned that the Sustainable Development Goals would not be met by 2030 without tackling forest loss and fostering sustainable forest management. In this regard, we would like to put a special emphasis on the importance of unleashing the full potential of forests by clearly identifying and integrating the role of the forest sector in national priorities, including its contribution to regional and international commitments to achieving SDGs.

To facilitate the above process, we are also committed to strengthening private sector engagement for resource mobilization and support capacity development for improving professional competencies in forest planning, community forest, environmental impact assessment, and establishing a scientific research network to enhance evidence-based policymaking.

Thank you.