

UNFF21 – FSC & South Africa Event

Title

From Commitment to Action: Scaling Sustainable Forest Management – Halting Degradation and Deforestation

Background and rationale

Despite growing international commitments to halt deforestation and advance sustainable forest management (SFM), significant gaps persist between global ambition and on-the-ground implementation. Global Forest Goal 3 (GFG3) calls for increasing the economic, social, and environmental benefits derived from forests, yet progress remains uneven across regions.

In parallel, renewed international momentum around anti Deforestation policies, including those linked to global climate processes, highlights the need for practical and inclusive pathways that translate government commitments into measurable results. This requires effective synergies between national policies, multilateral frameworks, and implementation tools that can operate at scale.

This side event, co-arranged by FSC and the Government of South Africa, will explore how to bridge commitment with actions – and how sustainable forest stewardship can serve as a core delivery mechanism for deforestation roadmaps and for achieving GFG3 as well as GFG1 - reversing Forest Loss. Particular attention will be given to the role of forest governance systems, including credible forest certification and incentives that support implementation, strengthen accountability, enable market uptake, and complement public policy objectives. The discussion will also underscore the central role of Indigenous Peoples and forest stewardship in sustaining forests.

Objective

To examine how governments, UN institutions, Indigenous representatives, and implementation partners can scale sustainable forest management as a practical pathway to deliver Global Forest Goal 3 and halt degradation and deforestation, drawing on national experience, inclusive governance, and implementation tools that bridge commitments with action.

Format

The side event will take place within the **75-minute UNFF side event slot** and will include:

- Moderated panel discussion
- Short, focused interventions (maximum 8 minutes per speaker)
- Interactive exchange with participants

Proposed speakers and indicative contributions

- **Moderator - Dr Harrison Ochieng Kojwang, Senior Affairs & Engagement Advisor, Africa and Global Institutions, FSC.** 5 mins

He will open and moderate the session, framing the discussion around the implementation gap between global forest commitments and action on the ground. He will highlight the importance of inclusive governance and practical implementation tools, including forest certification, in supporting delivery of the Global Forest Goals.

- **United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat Dr Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director.** 5 mins

She will highlight the strategic importance of Global Forest Goal 3 and the role of UNFF in promoting implementation, policy coherence, and international cooperation, including an overview of ongoing actions and future priorities to advance sustainable forest management and halt deforestation.

- **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – Dr Zhimin Wu, Director, Forestry Division (TBC).** 8 mins

He will present FAO's role in coordinating and supporting sustainable forest management and deforestation-related action, including through the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and the AIM4Forests programme, and will reflect on how national implementation can be strengthened through governance frameworks and complementary tools, including certification, to enhance forest resilience.

- **Government of South Africa – Ms Pumeza Nodada, Deputy Director-General, Forestry Management, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.** 10 mins

She will share South Africa's experience in advancing Global Forest Goal 3, with a focus on strengthening sustainable forest management and forest governance, including lessons learned on the role of certification and public-private collaboration.

- **Government of Turkey - H.E. Abdulkadir Polat, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye (TBC).** 8 mins

The intervention will address national progress and challenges in achieving forest-related goals, with a focus on forest resilience and governance, and will reflect on the role of implementation tools, including certification, in supporting sustainable forest management and addressing deforestation pressures.

- **COP 30 Presidency - Mr. Marco Tulio Scarpelli Cabral, Editor, COP 30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030.** 8 mins.

Connected to GFG1, Mr Scarpelli Cabral will provide updates on the process of elaboration of the COP 30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030. In particular, he will present a picture of the written contributions received in early April, in response to the invitation presented by the COP 30 Presidency.

- **Indigenous Peoples' Leader, Matachewan First Nation – Mr David Flood** 8 mins

He will highlight the central role of Indigenous forest rights, stewardship and entrepreneurship to enhance community well-being. David will also reflect on Indigenous knowledge systems and especially how knowledge is shared across generation that drive emerging guardianship programmes.

- **Closing remarks, FSC & South Africa,** 5 mins

Expected outcomes

The session aims to:

- Demonstrate how different approaches to sustainable forest management can operationalize Global Forest Goals 1 and 3.
- Highlight how public-and private collaboration can bridge commitments to actions that are complementary and compatible.
- Share country-level programs and experiences in aligning policy, governance, and implementation.
- Highlight the role of forest certification and other tools in supporting accountability and on-the-ground delivery.
- Reinforce the importance of Indigenous stewardship and entrepreneurship and inclusive approaches in achieving lasting forest outcomes.

Relevance to UNFF21

This side event directly supports the implementation-focused agenda of UNFF21 by showcasing practical pathways to deliver the Global Forest Goals. By bringing together governments, UN institutions, Indigenous representatives, and implementation partners, the session contributes to strengthening coherence between global commitments and national action, in line with the mandate of the United Nations Forum on Forest.

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