Action Points from the main sessions of the XV WFC

Opening ceremony and High-level dialogue

- In view of the pressing global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity and continuing deforestation and forest degradation we have no time to lose – we need to act now and we can do it!

- Three mutually reinforcing pathways can lead us to a greener, healthier, more resilient future with forests: halting deforestation and maintaining forest ecosystem benefits; restoring and enhancing productive capacity and resilience of forests; and enhancing sustainable forest use and building green value chains.

- To make this happen, we need to invest in our natural capital, our forests. Investment in forests from public and private sources must be increased significantly. To achieve scale we need to catalyze larger financial flows through integrated planning, financial, policy and institutional innovation and by strengthening domestic financial institutions.

- We need to better use scientific and traditional knowledge, and learn from experience and best practices through partnerships and cooperation. The successful example of the Republic of Korea demonstrates that large-scale forest restoration is possible if there is political will and resources are made available. Healthy and thriving forests means healthy and thriving societies – more resilient, inclusive and sustainable.

- Indigenous peoples have been managing their forests sustainably for hundreds of years. Their rights must be recognized and their voices heard. We should also listen to the voice of youth – their future is at stake and they are willing to take action.

- We must reach out to the sectors driving deforestation and degradation to achieve more effective dialogue across sectors and influence decisions. Forests should be integrated in all development strategies that have an impact on the use of land and natural resources. The private sector can lead the way through innovation and green investment.
1. Plenaries

**Plenary 1: UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration – 8 more years to heal the planet**

- The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is an ambitious initiative and a worldwide movement to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

- Ecosystem restoration is much more than planting trees. It can be a means for eradicating poverty and hunger, improving livelihoods, increasing productivity and recovering ecosystem functions.

- The potential to restore ecosystems should not be used as an excuse to degrade them. It is far better and more cost-effective to avoid degradation than to destroy and then restore.

- A great deal of knowledge, wisdom and approaches for ecosystem restoration already exists in communities. Effective ecosystem restoration must combine science and local knowledge, including traditional knowledge.

- Government should not just transfer the responsibility for restoration to local people – it has a responsibility to lead in restoration by providing an enabling environment, empowering local people and supporting them with incentives.

- Forest and landscape restoration is the only solution (for now) for carbon removals at scale and at an achievable cost. However, ecosystem restoration for carbon lacks two things – an attractive price, and certainty about demand. Currently, generating high-quality carbon credits through ecosystem restoration costs USD 60–80 per ton, but the price obtainable is only USD 5–10 per ton.

- Until we bridge that difference in funding, it will be difficult to restore the Bonn Challenge target of 350 million ha by 2030 and even more so, to realize the more than 1 billion ha in total that countries have pledged as part of their commitments to Sustainable Development Goals and Rio Conventions. Fundamental, systemic change is needed to achieve restoration at scale in the timeframe required and must be bottom-up.

- Significant methodological progress has been made in restoration monitoring. A harmonized monitoring and reporting framework needs to be urgently established to measure progress towards agreed commitments.
Plenary 2: Forests for a healthy, prosperous and peaceful world

- The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of forest and trees for human health and wellbeing, especially in urban areas. Urban forests and other green areas should become an integral part of all urban planning as they buffer noise, provide for cleaner air, reduce the urban heat island effect and provide green space for exercise and recreation.

- Forests can help to recover from the stress and depression caused by the pandemic and to “build back better” during the COVID-19 recovery. We need to make a conscious effort to establish a synergetic relationship between people, forest ecosystems and human health and adopt a “one health approach”.

- Apart from the many goods and services forests provide, they also serve as vital safety nets during disasters and conflicts. They are important for livelihoods and income generation in post conflict areas and during peace building. We must maintain healthy and productive forests and must ensure secure access and tenure rights for indigenous people and others who depend on forests directly for their livelihoods.

- Youth are at the forefront for recognizing the human right to a healthy environment. They are ready to care for forests, and they are creating solutions to achieve a sustainable world through mobilization, advocacy and networking. To scale up youth support to forests and catalyze more action, youth need capacity development and more resources, open access to information and platforms for engaging and networking.

- Local communities, Indigenous Peoples and other forest dependent people have strong ties with the forests that are a key component of their livelihoods, health, wellbeing and culture. Their traditional knowledge and best practices should be taken into consideration in forest restoration efforts and forest management policies.
Plenary 3: Wood: the most ancient raw material taking us to the future

- In view of rapid urbanization and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we need to rethink our cities. Cities of the future should be integrated better with nature - architects should focus on locally produced wood and other renewable materials and adapt design to these materials to create more eco-friendly buildings. To facilitate this process we need policies and building regulations that allow and promote sustainable buildings with low carbon footprint.

- Turning to construction with wood and other renewable materials provides excellent opportunities for forest- countries to use the wood they produce for developing sustainable and eco-friendly housing, especially in cities. In many developing countries, this still presents huge challenges and they will need support and investment to establish the processing industries that could produce the modern timber products required for such construction.

- Anything that is made from petroleum today can be made from a tree tomorrow. Scientific research, development and innovations are needed to support the transition to the circular bioeconomy through the development of new wood-based materials, products manufacturing methods and services. We also need to improve resource efficiency and recyclability of already available bio-based products to move towards a truly sustainable and circular bioeconomy.

- Scaling-up the use of wood will require increasing the global supply of sustainably produced wood through restoration, reforestation and afforestation of degraded lands as well as expansion of agroforestry.

- Smallholders, forest communities, and small and medium enterprises produce significant amounts of timber, but we need to strengthen their capacity to participate in sustainable wood value chains, including certification, in order to achieve greater economic resilience at local level.

- In the public perception, wood harvest is often associated with deforestation. We need to join efforts to raise global awareness of wood as a nature-based solution and change the public image about the wood value chains, convincing consumers that “wood is good”, and increased consumption of sustainably produced wood contributes to carbon storage, forest conservation and resilience.

- A strong call for immediate action involves promoting change of society’s mind-set to choose sustainable wood as a replacement to fossil and mineral based materials. The concept of a global communication campaign “Grow the Solution. Wood, nature’s sustainable solution” to be embraced by everyone (government, society, private sector), presented at the Congress, offers a concrete avenue to achieve the sustainable wood revolution towards climate neutrality and resilience.
2. Sub-themes

Sub-theme 1: Turning the tide: Reversing deforestation and forest degradation

- 2022 is a crucial year for accelerating delivery on commitments on forests and collectively reducing deforestation and forest degradation. Coalitions and strengthened national and international commitments, such as the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use and the Paris Agreement, present opportunities to turn the tide on deforestation while combating planetary emergencies related to climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality and global health. It is time to pass from an era of negotiation and commitments to a decade of ambitious action and finance at scale.

- Halting deforestation requires robust and comprehensive information on the dynamics that condition and drive the use of forests and land. Deforestation dynamics data can have strong impacts on policymaking. The institutional dimension of opening access to data must not be underestimated. Stakeholder rights and capacities to generate, access and use data – including socio-economic data explaining underlying drivers – should keep progressing.

- Agrifood systems transformation is a game changer to turn the tide on deforestation. Achieving this transformation requires coherence across environmental and economic policies and greater stakeholder cooperation.

- A number of countries, companies and institutions are defining and implementing voluntary and regulatory approaches to ensure agricultural value chains do not affect deforestation. Demand-side and supply-side measures linked to agricultural production, trade and consumption can accelerate systematic change.

- Partnership and trust are paramount factors of success. Efforts to reverse deforestation and forest degradation – including when driven by new markets – must benefit and engage smallholders, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, with clear and full recognition of their rights.

- Effective forest-sector verification and certification systems, whether voluntary or mandatory, can play an important role in achieving sustainable forest management and reducing forest degradation and deforestation. Genuine engagement of the private sector and civil society is essential for developing inclusive and robust verification and certification system. This contribution should be better reflected in national climate mitigation plans and financing.

- Carbon finance has significant potential to increase financing for reducing deforestation and forest degradation, with the demand for carbon offsets surging rapidly to meet the Paris Agreement targets, stimulated by the recent approval of Article 6 at COP26. Companies are ready to invest in high-quality and high-integrity emission reductions.
Thanks to REDD+ processes over more than ten years, many countries have developed specific strategies and action plans to reduce deforestation linked to national climate and development commitments, strengthened technical and institutional capacities and arrangements, and boosted stakeholder engagement and participation – including of Indigenous Peoples, communities and women – with a vision of ensuring not only carbon but also socio-environmental benefits. A number of countries have demonstrated results on the ground. Result-based finance, such as carbon markets and REDD+, may serve as boosters and complementary financing opportunities for such actions.

Pledges must be turned into real financial flows, rewarding national efforts to enhance policy coherence and effective public expenditure, and government action backed by private-sector investments. Governments need to maintain a strong role in creating enabling environments and catalysing private investment.
Sub-theme 2: Nature-based solutions for climate-change adaptation and mitigation and biodiversity conservation

- Nature-based solutions, including halting deforestation, sustainable forest management and forest restoration, can provide up to one-third of cost-effective mitigation by 2030, have crucial roles in local climate regulation and the provision of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services and enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of people and forests. They warrant much greater emphasis in measures to address the planet’s multiple and interlinked crises.

- Nature-based solutions should use the best scientific and traditional knowledge and also be developed with the full engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. There is a need for genuine partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, who use nature-based solutions on a daily basis.

- Incentivizing private-sector investors to scale up investments in forest nature-based solutions requires regulatory frameworks to give commercial value to forests and encourage less-progressive companies to change.

- Forest communities, who are often financially and asset poor, must be the centre of attention in efforts to implement nature-based solutions on the ground, and they must obtain real benefits. Financial commitments at the international scale must reach such actors.

- Forest solutions, notably halting deforestation, forest restoration and sustainable forest management, must be part of the mix for scaling up ambitions to achieve the Paris Agreement on climate change, the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and land degradation neutrality targets.

- The opportunity presented by these global commitments should be used to:
  - mobilize financial resources for large-scale ecosystem restoration initiatives that are technically solid, including to ensure that the right tree species are selected for the right places;
  - build capacity for the effective and cost-efficient implementation and monitoring of resilient, multipurpose forest management and ecosystem restoration;
  - empower rural women, men and youth, local communities and Indigenous Peoples to create on-the-ground solutions;
  - create the conditions to enable Indigenous Peoples and local communities to strengthen their forest governance and management capacity;
  - accelerate the implementation of sustainable forest management and ecosystem restoration at scale.

- Restoration and other nature-based solutions require “champions” in communities – those people who can create success stories, inspire others and become leaders. It also requires strong community engagement, long-term government commitment, strong institutions, and partnerships and shared responsibility among stakeholders.
Restoration will be more successful when it shifts its focus away from “number of trees in the ground” towards restoration as a means for improving local livelihoods, including food and wood security, disaster risk reduction and resilience, and addressing social issues, and it requires much greater flexibility in thinking and approaches.
Sub-theme 3: The green pathway to growth and sustainability

- Forests have a role to play in achieving all SDGs but this does not happen by itself. It requires action, in particular: cross-sector collaboration, promoting a landscape approach, new technologies, quantifying, monitoring and reporting of forest socio-economic contributions, including forest ecosystem services, and adequate financial mechanisms.

- Decent and productive work is key to ensure a sustainable forest sector and a circular, bio-based economy provides new opportunities for green jobs. To turn these opportunities into reality, coherent and effective laws, regulations and policies aligned with international labour standards are required and must be duly implemented.

- More efforts are needed to promote formal employment in the forest sector, including for women and young people, by:
  - collecting and making available more reliable and comparable data on employment in the forest sector for enabling evidence based policy making;
  - finding sustainable solutions for improving the sector’s performance and conditions of work through social dialogue at different levels as key means to promote decent work;
  - supporting the private forest sector to promote and establish decent work opportunities, including green jobs in both traditional and emerging forest-related activities;
  - strengthening capacities at all levels to develop quality skills and safe workplaces.

- The bioeconomy represents a huge opportunity for the forest sector and exciting new wood-based products are emerging. Many companies are rethinking their approach to innovation and collaboration to embrace this opportunity. To support sustainable development of the bioeconomy, we need adequate financial mechanisms for innovation in production and manufacture of forest products, social innovation collectively designed to meet social needs, an enabling policy framework and innovation in data collection, interpretation, and utilization.

- Small- and medium-sized forest-based enterprises face many challenges when it comes to accessing finance, due to issues of scale, banking literacy, or lack of pre-requirements, such as, collateral for loans. Lessons learned from innovative approaches undertaken by countries show that bankable projects of smallholders often require mobilizing technical assistance and patient capital, accessing markets (including through larger players in the value chain), providing innovative solutions to collateralize loans and developing new technologies to reduce production, organization, and business costs. The role of financial intermediation should be further explored and supported. This role could be covered by local finance institutions, cooperatives, and producer organizations and associations themselves to build a bridge between individual small farmers and financing institutions.

- Good governance and protected local rights (incl. tenure rights) are a pre-conditions for effective and successful local investments by smallholders and must be ensured.
Blended finance has great potential to provide more funding for sustainable forest and landscape management from both public and private sources. It includes pooling resources that come from multiple agencies and that deliver cross-sectoral benefits. Innovative resource mobilization mechanisms include green bonds, crowdfunding, innovation hubs, or collaboration with insurance companies. To attract institutional investors mechanisms to reduce country and currency risk are necessary; land-tenure arrangements should be favorable; adequate forestry information should be available and support should be provided to supply-chain investments that ensure trees can be harvested, transported, and processed.
Sub-theme 4: Forests and human health: revisiting the connections

- Forests offer multiple benefits, including physical, psychological and spiritual health. Forests also contribute to medicines, food security, boosting resiliency of food systems, inclusive rural development. However, these benefits are under-appreciated.

- Forests can support people’s health in multiple ways but there are multiple risks related to infectious diseases, safety and security. People working and/or living in forests particularly face risks and vulnerabilities.

- Evidence from across the world shows that forest/nature-based health practices such as forest medicine, forest bathing (shinrin-Yuko), forest therapy and healing yields enormous health benefits to societies at local, national and global levels.

- There is a need to promote forest-based health practices at multidimensional facets including national health and forest policy integration; data, knowledge and information sharing; collaboration among sectoral actors, and capacity building.

- Expand tree cover in densely populated areas to increase healing benefits of trees and forests to citizens.

- Enact laws to guarantee tenure and use rights of indigenous people and local communities on forestlands to protect forests and improve the livelihoods of rural populations.

- Governments, forest and farm producer Organizations and community-based associations should play their roles to facilitate marginalized groups of rural society such as women, youth and indigenous people in forest-based enterprises.

- Explore feasibility of initiatives such as planting trees and establishing forest peace parks in internal or cross-border conflict areas can help peace and reconciliation process.

- Participation of women, youth and other economically and socially marginalized groups of people in decision process on forests and land management issues should be promoted.

- In the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic, promote holistic and integrated policies and programmes on human and animal health, with “One Health” approach. Share knowledge between countries on forest products and services that enhances or have potential to enhance public health.
Sub-theme 5: Managing and communicating forest information, data and knowledge

- Knowledge and information on forests are needed for effective climate action and to halt deforestation and restore forest ecosystems. Increasing the transparency of forest data collection, analysis and dissemination is essential for building trust in the data and a fundamental requirement of the Paris Agreement and many performance-based payment schemes.

- A large number of countries and users benefit from the free provision of very-high-resolution optical, lidar and radar data. The continued provision of these datasets as global public goods should be encouraged.

- Field-based assessments are necessary because they produce detailed data on species, quality and other biophysical attributes as well as provide validation data for remote sensing-based models and products. The collection of biophysical and socio-economic data in the field needs ongoing support.

- Data combined with appropriate computing infrastructure and provided as a global public good allows the widest possible audience to be reached and offers new insights into deforestation and its drivers as well as measures of forest degradation. Such work is vital for efficient forest mapping and monitoring, including for understanding the global carbon cycle, and should be continued and expanded.

- Effective forest monitoring requires innovative and accessible technologies at all levels. Forest monitoring and research programmes should be developed and implemented inclusively to meet the data and information requirements of policymakers to assist the development of coherent policies.

- Significant methodological progress has been made in restoration monitoring toward a harmonized monitoring and reporting framework with the launch of the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM). However, the capacity of countries and restoration stakeholders needs to be strengthened to ensure transparent monitoring and reporting of progress towards agreed commitments.

- There is a need to demonstrate to policymakers the value of forest assessments, including field-based components, to ensure ongoing support. There is also a need to make high-quality forest information available for use in forest and land-use planning, policies and decisions.

- A new narrative on forests and increased capacity building for forest communicators is needed to strengthen understanding and awareness of the benefits of sustainably managed forests and trees among decision-makers and the public and to influence global dialogues.

- Forest education requires strengthening at all levels, from early childhood to university curricula, to sensitize increasingly urbanized populations on the importance of forests and the use of sustainably produced wood and to attract new generations of foresters equipped to address diverse forest-related challenges.
Sub-theme 6: Forests without boundaries: enhancing management and cooperation

- Forests are part of the solution to the big challenges of today. To maximize the benefits forests provide to people and the planet, they must be considered as an integral part of mosaics of land cover, land use and agrifood systems.

- Administrative boundaries and silos must be overcome and multisectoral institutional mechanisms at the local and national levels strengthened or established.

- A broad and integrated landscape-scale management framework is required to address water, biodiversity, agriculture, energy and the interests and concerns of forest-dependent people, particularly Indigenous Peoples and local communities as well as urban populations and other stakeholders.

- As society evolves, the forest sector and the scope of forestry itself must adapt. We need to change the way we think, beyond economic aspects.

- Forestry is a key sector for green jobs and it must be sustainable, with sustainable growth, income, revenue and investments.

- We must consider the full range of contributions that forests make to ecosystem services and agrifood systems beyond wood, carbon and water. The social and cultural values of forests are equally important.

- The active participation of all stakeholders is an essential element of sustainable forest management and the sustainable management of other land-based natural resources. To obtain this, coordination, collaboration and partnerships among different sectors and stakeholders and the creation of an enabling environment are required. Collaboration and partnerships should be transparent, accountable and built on trust!

- Civil-society organizations can and should play crucial roles as brokers of trust, bringing together governments, the private sector and Indigenous Peoples and local communities to creating better understanding and an environment of mutual respect and cooperation. Indigenous Peoples are not stakeholders, but rights holders!

- We need to enhance intergenerational cooperation in order to attain our common goals for forests. The participation of young people – the decision-makers of the future – is essential.
3. Special events

Special event: Ministerial Forum on Forest Finance

- A huge funding gap exists between what is needed to implement global commitments on forests and what is available – public and private investment must both scale up.

- Innovative and sustainable financing options exist but there is a shortage of bankable projects. Some countries are making progress, but more effort is needed to increase access to global climate- and environment-based funds for those countries most in need.

- There is a need to change the way public money is spent to support forests as public goods, adjusting rules across sectors and markets to ensure they take nature into account. Policies must change to divert financial flows away from actions that harm forests and to incentivize investment in conservation, restoration and sustainable use.

- There is also a need to advance on multiple fronts, from the broader use of financial instruments, to building robust portfolios of investible projects and developing appropriate financing vehicles.

- Blended concessional finance, such as through official development assistance and climate finance, should be used to make projects bankable and thereby leverage private-sector investment.

- “Blue carbon” investment in mangroves should be encouraged for its capacity to deliver high-quality carbon credits. Accessible carbon markets can also reward real carbon gains in forest restoration projects but should be part of a wider mix of income to achieve financial sustainability.

- Transitioning to higher value economies and jobs anchored in the sustainable use and conservation of forests will require a solid enabling environment to attract conventional investment to the right areas as well as taking advantage of emerging carbon finance mechanisms.
Special event: Ministerial Forum on Sustainable Wood

See Ministerial Call on Sustainable Wood: (https://programme.wfc2021korea.org/en)
Special event: CPF Dialogue: Climate change, conflicts, and food insecurity – forest solutions to tackle effects of crises

- No matter which crises we are facing - a pandemic, conflicts, climate change - and resulting economic recession and food insecurity - we need to consider our forests and our natural resources as part of the solution and integrate them in recovery plans and strategies. It is time for the world to invest in forests: politically, financially and technologically.

- Transforming agrifood systems to make them more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable is key in combating food insecurity, especially in countries affected by conflict and insecurity. Forests should be an integral component of this transformation.

- Reducing deforestation and forest degradation is key to mitigating climate change and avoiding conflicts arising from large scale, climate-induced displacement of people. We will only succeed by improving the governance of land and ensuring secure tenure rights for local communities and indigenous people who are the stewards of the land.

- Conflicts around forests are often brought about by power imbalances and weak governance, by conflicting interests over land use and corruption. We need to address the underlying causes of conflict and science can help create a better understanding of these. However, the positive role forests can play in conflict resolution, for example through cross-border conservation areas, restoration activities or peace parks, should also be recognized and strengthened.

- Youth are taking initiative and action – they have the ability to mobilize and create social change by being innovative. Their initiatives need to be supported to achieve greater impact.

- Collaboration and cooperation at all levels is essential to scale up ambitions and turn them into reality. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests that consists of 15 international organizations with significant programmes on forests, has a significant role in driving real change.
**Special event: Sustainable investments in forests for people, profit and nature**

- The increasing population and the need to substitute polluting materials in a developing bioeconomy will drive up wood consumption, and the forest sector must prepare for this increasing demand. More efficient wood use will not suffice, and sustainable plantations as well as forest and landscape restoration will be required.

- Mobilizing more finance and investment to implement sustainable plantations and achieve forest and landscape restoration is crucial. It will require innovative models and the strong involvement of the private sector, working in collaboration with communities and smallholders while also building on the multiple goods and services from forests.

- “Greening finance” and “financing green” are two sides of the same coin that need to be further developed. Greening finance is advancing (through measures such as ESG standards and sustainable finance taxonomies) but will be insufficient if capital flows are not redirected to nature-based solutions, including forest assets.

- Financial institutions are called on to “finance green” and move from a do-no harm and risk-based approach to proactive financing and investment approach in nature-based solutions.

- Examples of promising investment models with potential to unlock the billions of dollars needed for forest conservation, afforestation, reforestation and restoration include:
  - Implementing restoration in combination with plantations as part of a business rationale.
  - Blended finance models to catalyse private-sector investment.
  - Initiatives to boost the emergence of new investment vehicles.
  - Diverse local projects with potential for upscaling.

- Building on such models can help achieve the transformation at the scale required.
Special event: High-level roundtable on the Peace Forest Initiative


- Planting trees is a non-political activity. In border areas, neighbouring countries, even in adverse political or other challenging situations, can be encouraged to work together in tree-planting and creating forest parks.

- Land is the foundation of life on Earth and a fundamental asset for humanity. Land degradation increases poverty and insecurity, but land restoration can be a cornerstone of stability and peace.

- The role of joint forest restoration initiatives warrants further exploration as a means for advancing peace and mutual respect across borders. It requires commitment, mutual understanding and trust.

- Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society may wish to consider advancing this initiative through the following actions:
  - Make such initiatives inclusive and politics-free.
  - Promote dialogue for tree-planting near and across the borders to improve understanding and friendship between parties.
  - Encourage countries and communities to develop peace parks by planting trees in disputed areas as a means for reducing tension, improving mutual understanding and building trust.
  - Provide technical and financial resources for tree-planting and establishing peace parks that deliver multiple economic, social and environmental benefits such as job creation, ecosystem restoration, watershed management, erosion control and carbon storage.
  - Help develop systems for management and benefit-sharing from such initiatives.

- Invite countries that have established or are in the process of establishing forest peace parks, such as Peru and Ecuador, to share their experiences with the global community to motivate other countries embarking on such projects.
Special event: Fire management forum – wildfires beyond forests

- The frequency, severity and extent of wildfires are increasing due to climate change and human pressure on forest lands. Landscape and forest wildfires must be tackled at the local, national, cross-border and global levels, including through strategic fire management, detection, prevention and suppression, coordinated approaches, research, and international cooperation.

- Wildfire management goes beyond forests to include infrastructure, health, transport, tourism and other sectors affected by damaging fire thus actions are needed at cross-sectoral level. Integrated fire management (IFM) needs to be implemented as an essential approach for adapting to ongoing change in wildfire risk.

- IFM requires engagement with the four axes of diversity – geography, disciplines, risk and social. This will require reinforcing existing and, where necessary, building new fire management networks to enable regular engagement, relationship-building and exchanges on fire management.

- The priority actions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 need to be further pursued, including to understand wildfire disaster risks; strengthen wildfire disaster risk governance to manage risk; invest in wildfire disaster risk reduction for resilience; and enhance wildfire disaster preparedness for effective response.

- To address these new and emerging challenges, the Global Fire Management Platform should be used and further developed to build global technical competence and integrate the capacity of all partners.

- Emerging mechanisms such as the “Assuring the Future of Forests with Integrated Risk Management Mechanism” (AFFIRM) offer potential for advancing IFM. AFFIRM aims to help governments understand the factors driving wildfires and to advocate for a shift in focus from emergency responses to sustainable forest and land management practices that reduce risk, enhance readiness and facilitate recovery.
Special event: The role of forests in a post COVID-19 recovery: re-imagining the future of forests

- For the global social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis to be durable and resilient, it must be environmentally sustainable and inclusive. The forest sector should seize the opportunity to contribute to “building back better” and support a transition to a green, healthy, and resilient future.

- Forests and trees are an important element of nature-based solutions and the contribution of forests to a greener and more resilient post-pandemic future cannot be underestimated.

- The economy and human well-being depend on the functional integrity of natural forests in particular. This however is in jeopardy. To reduce risk, halting deforestation and restoring degraded landscapes is a must.

- Forests are also affected by climate change and threatened by an increasing frequency and severity of wildfires, droughts, storms and insect attacks. Investing in enhancing the resilience and biodiversity of forests can help mitigate these effects. Maintaining healthy and resilient forests and investing in restoring degraded forests at scale should be considered in COVID-19 responses and economic recovery plans to leave no one behind.

- The concern however remains that new zoonotic diseases may emerge due to closer contact between humans and wild animals due to rapid change in frontier forest areas. Increased preparedness to face such risks is crucial and need to be urgently addressed.

- Forests have positive effects on the health and well-being of people. Traditionally forests are serving as a natural pharmacy. Also, spending time in forests for physical, mental and spiritual well-being is beneficial, thus increasing interests in sustaining forests. This has proven particularly important during the pandemic, when the recreational use of forests increased in many countries.

- COVID-19 presents an opportunity to shift the global development paradigm towards sustainability and a greener, more inclusive economic development that addresses climate change and biodiversity loss as well as poverty. In this context, current challenges in the forest sector can be turned into vehicles for transformation, driving economic and behavioural changes.
Special event: Sustainable Forests and Green Energy: sustainable bioenergy for energy transition towards net zero emissions

- Accelerating the energy transition to renewables that is required to achieve our climate goals is an urgent task. Bioenergy is among the key options for achieving these targets and can bring major socio-economic benefits as bioenergy is already the second-largest employer in the renewable energy sector today. Universal energy access requires replacing traditional biomass use with modern, clean technologies.

- The forestry sector is key to expanding sustainable biomass feedstocks. Realizing the feedstock potential requires accelerating afforestation on degraded lands and sharing best practices for sustainable forest management.

- Traditional bioenergy is the only energy for 2.4 billion people around the world, but it is not sustainable. To transition to modern bioenergy, the efficiency and sustainability of existing energy value chains needs to be improved or alternatives should be developed to reduce the pressures on forest resources by adopting substitute feedstocks, technologies and bioenergy pathways.

- In countries, where charcoal is an important source of household energy, sustainability of charcoal production and trade, within broader forest-agricultural landscapes, is more urgent than ever. For decarbonizing charcoal production, there is a need for sustainable feedstock sourcing and efficient carbonization.

- A comprehensive policy framework is needed to ensure sustainability including coordinated planning across departments, including energy, forestry and others, as well as regulations and certification schemes. For effective policies, reliable statistical data on bioenergy is required, which is currently lacking, especially in Africa.

- We need stronger collaboration between UN agencies and other partners including the private sector, to foster stronger linkages between the provision of energy, in particular bioenergy, and food production to achieve the SDGs and Net Zero Growth, leaving no one behind.
Special event: The future is now: investing in young forestry professionals and career development

- Investing in career development for young forestry professionals, using their expertise and engaging their perspectives in decision-making will help prepare the sector for current and future challenges and opportunities. Young professional visibility and involvement in decision-making should be normalized.

- Mentoring can have a high impact in developing the skills, experience and self-confidence of young forestry professionals and has demonstrated value in retaining young talent. Companies, institutions and professional associations should make mentoring a structural component of their workplaces.

- Career development programmes targeting young professionals have proven effective in enhancing the capacities of participants and strengthening their contributions to their institutions and the forest sector. Such programmes should be scaled up.

- Forestry workplace cultures need to adapt with changing expectations and to compete with other sectors, including through competitive wages, elevating the contributions and perspectives of youth and young professionals, and creating respectful, inclusive and diverse work environments.

- There is a strong need to increase the visibility and desirability of forestry as a career pathway. Better communicating what the forest sector does and promoting the need and benefits of sustainable forest management to the public, as well as through primary and secondary education, is needed.

- Alliances and networks among young forestry professionals, and between generations of forestry professionals and students, should be encouraged to build expertise and create empowering, collaborative workplaces in which young people can thrive.
Special event: The contribution of a forest circular bio-economy to sustainable development

- Forests and forestry are central in achieving the new circular bioeconomy paradigm being our most important biological infrastructure and should be part of national sustainable bioeconomy strategies. Forests can play a catalytic role in the transition to a bioeconomy, if coherent cross-sectoral policies and joint strategies are put in place.

- The forest-based bioeconomy contributes to the decarbonisation of societies as renewable forest products both store carbon and substitute for more emission intensive products. New opportunities for emerging forest products are rising thanks to extraordinary scientific advances and innovation in the sector. To further strengthen the shift from fossil-based materials to biomass and bio-based materials, it is necessary to de-risk private investments, balance public and private interests, and translate this balance into integrated public-private financing approaches.

- The sustainable use of wood can reduce the carbon footprint of a multitude of sectors, including construction, biochemicals and textiles. Clear and measurable sector-specific target (e.g. x per cent of buildings made out of wood) will help boost the transition to the bioeconomy. Further research, capacity building and knowledge exchange is required to ensure the necessary quality standards and respect legal requirements.

- Current statistical systems are not designed to measure the bioeconomy and cover only classical sectors. For effective bioeconomy monitoring, we need to identify clear monitoring objectives and collaborate across sectors to better integrate the bioeconomy into statistical systems.

- A growing bioeconomy can empower communities and indigenous peoples by creating green jobs, enabling local value addition and developing local markets, while ensuring subsistence purposes. Opportunities created by non-wood forest product (NWFP) value chains must be seized to support the uplifting of marginalized people, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the expansion of the forest sector beyond wood.

- To achieve a circular bio-economy transition, more forests and trees are needed as currently existing - therefore we must conserve, manage better and actively restore forests. The expected increasing demand in forest products will require an expansion of the resource base through sustainable plantations, agroforestry and other suitable land use systems and is expected to further increase the value of forests.
Special event: Rural Finance, forest and farm producers and Indigenous Peoples at the centre of the ‘green recovery’

- More than eighty percent of the world’s food in value terms is produced by smallholders and family farms and they are crucial actors for ecosystem restoration, climate change mitigation and food security. The organization of smallholders and family farmers into forest and farm producer organizations (FFPOs) is essential to realize their full potential.

- FFPOs need strengthening in their capacity to link the sustainable management of forests and farms to secure markets and enterprises that depend on maintaining diverse and complex land-use mosaics.

- The capability of banks and impact investors to address the needs of FFPOs must be improved, including how they deal with risk in forestry, agroforestry and agriculture, and FFPOs must improve their financial literacy. Mechanisms to support FFPOs with their “first loans” to create track records in financial institutions would be a huge steppingstone for both parties.

- Concrete schemes are needed to secure rural women’s rights to lands and forests within collective right systems such as community forestry. Innovative mechanisms should be employed to give rural women direct access to climate finance and other dedicated financial schemes.

- Payments for the public local and global goods provided by FFPOs in maintaining forest landscapes while hugely contributing to providing food security are required to ensure their sustainable business cases.

- Platforms at the national or subnational levels should be created featuring banks, FFPOs, value-chain actors and knowledge agencies to increase cross-actor learning, identify lessons, and improve mutual understanding and cooperation.

- International learning and exchanges on rural and climate finance are important for enabling national and regional FFPOs, the financial sector, governments and development cooperation to speak to each other and find solutions.