



**Fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4)
(Nairobi, 11-15 March 2019)**

***Statement of the European Union and its Member States
on the deforestation resolution***

Committee of the Whole 13th of March 2019

Mr. Chair,

I take the floor on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and wish to touch upon the negotiations that have taken place in Working Group 2 on the draft resolution on “Deforestation and Agricultural Supply Chains”.

To begin with, we wish to express our appreciation to the co-facilitators who have guided the discussions in the Working Group through long hours during the past days and nights.

Considering the important role forests play for the Earth system, for providing livelihoods to many people worldwide as well as the multitude of ecosystem services they provide, sustainably managing all types of forests, protecting forests, halting deforestation, restoring degraded forests as well as increasing afforestation globally constitute an important priority for us.

The European Union remains committed to the ambitious and effective implementation of all international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals, such as SDG 15, the Global Forest Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity targets. We believe that achieving these globally agreed goals requires addressing the impacts of global supply chains on forests.

Considering the theme of this UNEA, UNEP’s expertise on life cycle approaches and the sustainability of value chains as well as UNEP’s mandates to coordinate environmental

matters within the UN system, the EU is of the opinion that this body is well placed to contribute constructively on this issue.

In line with this conviction, the EU has submitted mid-November a draft concept note and mid-January a draft resolution on “Deforestation and Agricultural Commodity Supply Chains”.

Up until the very first formal discussion in OECPR, the EU and its Member States received nothing but positive comments on these documents.

The intent of this draft resolution was to acknowledge the importance of tackling deforestation, and the shared responsibility of all actors along the value chain, including consumer countries via their supply chains, on deforestation. It intended to initiate a multilateral and multi stakeholder discussion to promote consumer information, traceability, transparency, and due diligence as well as capacity building, sustainable finance and education towards more sustainable agricultural supply chains.

The intent of this draft resolution was to promote concrete, collaborative solutions to reduce trade-offs and build synergies between different SDGs, recognizing the integrated of the 2030 Agenda we have collectively committed to. We fully recognize the importance of sustainable agriculture and the need to end poverty achieve food security and end all forms of malnutrition as a matter of priority.

Throughout the past days the EU and its member states has engaged in extensive consultations with a spirit of compromise and has strived to take up comments by other delegations by revising twice its proposal. We want to thank all the delegations who constructively engaged in these discussions.

Despite all our efforts, we have come at the disappointing conclusion that it is not possible to reach consensus on the need to improve the sustainability of agricultural commodity supply chains with respect to forests. What is even more concerning is that it seemed impossible to reaffirm our collective commitments on halting deforestation.

Mister Chair, we thus wish to inform the Committee of the Whole that the EU and its member states decided to withdraw its proposal related deforestation.

The EU and its Member States remain committed to fight against the different drivers of deforestation. We have implemented the Forest law enforcement, governance and trade action plan to combat illegal logging by strengthening sustainable and legal management, improving governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber. Today, all of our timber industries and wood operators are engaged in this process through the EU timber regulation. But illegal logging is not the only deforestation driver, and for sure not the first. That's why the EU has launched at the end of 2018 an initiative to combat deforestation, protect forest and promote sustainable supply chains. Through that, we want to step up EU action against tropical deforestation and forest degradation by developing a more coherent and comprehensive approach to this complex issue.

Thank you.