

## United Nations Forum on Forests 13<sup>th</sup> Session

Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group statement on smallholder forest owners to SDG's  
delivered by the International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA)

Mr Chair,

The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 (UNSPF), Paris Climate Accord, Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 give us a blueprint how sustainable forest management should be included in more coherent policy-making in all sectors, not just in forestry. To successfully implement these principles to achieve our goals towards more sustainable societies we need to find the best concrete actions how to achieve these targets.

The International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA) is the global voice of family forestry. Together with community forests and indigenous people, family smallholders manage one third of the world's forest and consists more than 1 billion people. These small forest owners have a crucial role as providers of various ecosystem services and raw materials for local societies, nationally and globally.

Land tenure and clear ownership rights are one of the key factors when developing good forest governance and sustainable forest management. This is essential for family forest owners and farmers to invest in long-term activities, such as management and protection of established trees. Security of ownership in forest management gives forest owners an incentive to plant more trees and increase forest cover.

Increasing the profitability of forestry decreases the need for land-use changes to agriculture and other more profitable business activities. Unfortunately, an individual smallholder is in a very weak position in the market place, and in seeking access to services, such as seedlings, planting equipment and certification procedures.

Therefore, the right to and support of strong collaboration by forest smallholders in the form of their own producer organizations is also an essential condition, if we want to utilize the whole potential of smallholder family forests and our organizations in achieving the sustainable development goals. Strong, effective producer organizations provide the basis for fair trade, respect from markets and authorities and give strong incentive to plant two trees after harvesting one.

Sustainable forest management of family, community and indigenous peoples' forests is perfect example how multiple SDG's are advanced in an interdependent and complementary way: livelihoods, water, climate and many others. Recognition of this should be high priority of the upcoming High Level Political Forum in July.

For example, climate funding mechanisms doesn't recognize the multiple benefits that sustainable forest management and in particular, sustainable wood, have in our communities, especially improved livelihoods in addition to the most cost-efficient way to tackle carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation.

For these reasons we encourage member states to support our efforts to identify and if necessary design financing mechanisms that recognize multiple benefits of smallholder and community forests and their multiple benefits of sustainable forest management. With this we can unlock the whole potential that the smallholder, communities and indigenous people can do towards achieving the sustainable development goals with sustainable forest management.

Thank you,