

Statement by H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia,
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations,
at the 16th Session of the UN Forum on Forests
26-29 April 2021

Madam Chair,

The Holy See is pleased to participate in this sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. We welcome its practical focus and hope that it will result in concrete steps to translate the goals of forest protection into reality.

Forests are a critically important dimension of the natural world. They play a key role in sustaining fragile ecosystems, enhancing the environment, and contributing to climate change mitigation. Reversing the loss of forest cover and addressing what is causing this loss globally must stay high on the Forum's agenda. At the same time, the Holy See urges the Forum to remain particularly aware of the human toll that forest degradation takes. So many of our sisters and brothers depend on forests for their homes, livelihoods, food security, forest-based enterprises, and the preservation of their spiritual and cultural heritage. The degradation of forests and wanton disregard for the impact of human activity on the health of forests have had profound and concrete consequences for the human family, especially for the poor and for those in the most vulnerable situations.

The work of the Forum and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests is "a reference framework for ambitious and transformational actions."¹ These actions should address the urgent needs of the natural world and those of the human family. This has become even clearer

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