

# Importance of broad financing for sustainable forest management highlighted at UN forum

4 May 2017 – A United Nations meeting on sustainable management of forests today discussed the importance of mobilizing resources from a diverse range of actors to ensure broad ownership as well as to advance the overall sustainable development agenda.

“By far the greatest source of forest financing has been – and will continue to be – from commercial private sector investments in sustainable forest management,” Manoel Sobral Filho, the Director of the [UN Forum on Forests](#) secretariat, [said](#) in a briefing on the importance of diversifying resources.

In the UN Strategic Plan for Forests, agreed earlier this year, UN Member States stressed the importance of partnerships of philanthropic organizations, foundations, as well as public-private and other multi-stakeholder entities in scaling up resources for sustainable forest management and as well as the plan’s own implementation.

The Strategic Plan also provides a framework for forest-related contributions to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change and a number of other international instruments, commitments and goals.

In addition to these direct links, importance of ensuring sustainable forest management was also recognized in the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) – one of the key constituents of the 2030 Agenda – given the importance of forests for efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition as well as for its larger environmental benefits.

In his briefing today, Mr. Filho further informed the meeting of funding received from resources allocated for sustainable forest management initiatives, as well as the activities of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, one of the five main components of the post-2015 International Arrangement on Forests.

Some key functions of the Network include mobilizing and supporting new and additional financial resources, and promoting effective use of existing financial resources for sustainable forest management.

The briefing was followed by a panel discussion that was attended, among others, by officials from the Ford Foundation and the World Bank.

Penny Davies, Programme Officer for Equitable Development, Ford Foundation, said the organization planned to disburse \$1 billion over the next 10 years into private funds promoting “social and environmental justice” activities, she described two specific streams of forest-related investment financing:

first, sustainable agriculture that did not clear natural forests and included some protection of forests; and second, sustainable forest management and community-based forest management.

“However, we are finding it difficult to place [that financing],” she said, due to a number of constraints that made those investments too difficult to justify, including: “incoherent spatial mapping” and uncertain land tenure, where investments could be contested by several parties; conflict, which could cause delays in the Foundation’s projects or cause the withdrawal of its partners; and the fact that the Ford Foundation’s private finance is insufficient in the face of government subsidies to unsustainable forest and agricultural management, that incentivizes forest clearance.

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) is a high-level intergovernmental policy forum that includes UN Member States, Permanent Observers as well as regional organizations and groups.

Its current (twelfth) session concludes tomorrow, 5 May.