

Thank you Mr. Chairman, for allowing to briefly address this agenda item on behalf of the Global Forest Coalition.

As a worldwide coalition of Indigenous peoples organizations and NGOs from 53 different countries we look forward to a substantive debate on forests at the upcoming Conference of the Parties. As highlighted yesterday, we think this debate should first and foremost focus on the status of implementation of forest-related Aichi targets and the expanded program of work on forest biodiversity, also in light of the recently adopted ambitious target to halt deforestation by 2020, and in line with the explanation of the ES we welcome contributions by all CPF members to this debate. We expect a lively debate on this at the upcoming SBI meeting and we want to emphasize the need to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, local communities and women in these deliberations, in light of their essential role in forest conservation and restoration on the ground.

We also want to reiterate our comments that biodiversity should not be mainstreamed into a polluted stream. In this regard, we support the Party observations yesterday that the background documentation on this item does not yet respond to the mandate given by the COP, and we look forward to a more substantive background documentation for the upcoming SBI meeting. Such background document should not only look at the positive effects of forest conservation on biodiversity, but also at the potential negative effects of afforestation and reforestation on biodiversity, including in particular the impacts of afforestation with alien invasive species on natural grassland, peatland and dryland ecosystems. In light of the developments under the UNFCCC already highlighted during the previous debate on geo-engineering, recent calls for a so-called "net zero" approach under the UNFCCC, and the recently adopted SDG 15.2 that calls for an expansion of afforestation, there is a more significant need than ever for strong guidance by the CBD on the potential risks of invasive species, GE trees and large-scale tree monocultures on biodiversity and biodiversity-dependent communities. In the first results of the CCRI, which will be presented tonight, a large number of communities actually highlighted large-scale monocultures of trees as a key threat to their conservation efforts and livelihoods. Sadly, current definitions still qualify such monocultures as forests. In fact, in light of this definition a lot of the information presented in the background documentation to this session is actually incorrect as it is based on the assumptions that forests and forest-related activities would always contribute positively to the Aichi targets. Sadly, in light of current definitions, this is not necessarily the case. That is why it is essential that the CBD takes the lead in a joint initiative by CPF members to align forest-related definitions that are being used by the UN with the Aichi targets.