Standing Committee on C-II/146/DR

Sustainable Development 17 January 2023

**Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests**

***Draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs***

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The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

(1) *Recalling* the 2015 Paris Agreement, including its goal to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°Cabove pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°Cabove pre-industrial levels, and in particular its Article 5, which calls on the Parties to the Agreement to take action to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including forests, and encourages them to develop policy approaches to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, to set positive incentives for sustainable management of forests and to enhance forest carbon stocks,

(2) *Mindful of* the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences in Glasgow (COP26) and Sharm el-Sheikh (COP27) and taking note of the forest-relevant contribution of the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use, in which more than 140 countries pledged to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation, including through sustainable forest management,

(3) *Recalling* the IPU resolutions *Addressing climate change* (141st IPU Assembly, Belgrade, October 2019), *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences* (142nd IPU Assembly, virtual session, May 2021), and the Nusa Dua Declaration *Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change* (144th IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, March 2022),

(4) *Guided by* the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize that climate policy, sustainable development, poverty reduction and universal peace are all inextricably linked, in particular SDG 15 to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss” and SDG 13 to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”,

(5) *Reaffirming* United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/300 recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right,

(6) *Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/285, in which the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* was adopted*,*

(7) *Committed to* the realization of the shared vision set out in the *United Nations* *Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* “of a world in which all types of forests and trees outside forests are sustainably managed, contribute to sustainable development and provide economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for present and future generations”,

(8) *Reaffirming* the importance of the six goals defined in the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030*, and especially goal 1, “reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change”, which would, among other benefits, serve the achievement of SDG targets 6.6 “Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including […] forests”, 12.2 “Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources”, 15.1 “Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests”, and especially 15.2 “Promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally”,

(9) *Emphasizing* target 1.2 of goal 1 of the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017‑2030*, which calls for “the world’s forest carbon stocks [to be] maintained or enhanced”,

(10) *Endorsing* goal 2 of the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030*, to “Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people”, especially its target 2.2 to “Increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets” and target 2.3, which calls for “The contribution of forests and trees to food security [to be] significantly increased”,

(11) *Welcoming* the international community’s continuing engagement in numerous global initiatives to address the contribution of forests to climate protection, such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership; the 15th World Forestry Congress held in Seoul in May 2022; the Bonn Challenge, a global goal to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030; and the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, which have led to States’ affirmation of forest protection and emission reduction targets, and have showcased the many opportunities for prevention, mitigation, resilience-building and adaptation through the contributions of national governments, provinces, cities and villages, private corporations, financial institutions and civil society,

(12) *Noting* that forests are resources of global significance, covering 31% of the Earth’s land surface, but storing almost half of terrestrial carbon; that forests help to regulate regional climate by influencing rainfall patterns and cooling urban areas; that trees and forests regulate the water balance, serve as drinking water reservoirs and protect against erosion, avalanches, floods, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity; that sustainably managed forests deliver natural, climate-neutral resources for various value chains; and that forests provide subsistence, livelihood, employment and income to forest-dwelling communities, forest-dependent people and indigenous people,

(13) *Gravely concerned about* the loss of 420 million hectares of forests between 1990 and 2020 through deforestation, according to the FAO’s report on the State of the World’s Forests 2022, with the associated damage manifested by local climatic changes, droughts and desertification, as well as about the severe impact of forest loss on aspects of human life and on development opportunities, and the fact that deforestation has a multiplying effect on existing crises in many respects,

(14) *Noting with great concern* that deforestation is having an accelerating impact on climate change, with destruction and degradation of forests, including their soils, accounting for around 15% of global human-induced carbon release on Earth,

(15) *Aware* that the progression of deforestation is one of the main root causes of increasing biodiversity loss and loss of genetic resources, as forests provide habitat for 80% of amphibian species, 75% of bird species and 68% of mammal species; and that tropical forests are particularly important as they contain about 50% of all animal and plant species,

(16) *Underlining* the concrete and existential threat to food security and agriculture caused by deforestation, with forest destruction having massive regional impacts on rainfall and consequently on rainfed agriculture, particularly in the Amazon and the African tropics,

(17) *Expressing deep concern* about the severe damage caused by forest loss to societies and economies, with an estimated 1.6 billion people, or 25% of the global population, depending on forests for subsistence, livelihoods, employment and income generation, according to the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030*,

1. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to call on their governments to incorporate the objective of net zero deforestation into national law, meaning that when forests or trees are cleared in one area, reforestation or afforestation is ensured in another area in the same or another country, maintaining the same CO2 storage balance;
2. *Calls* *on* IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to intensify urgent actions to significantly reduce deforestation and maintain forest ecosystems, among the most cost‑effective actions for mitigating climate change, stressing that reducing deforestation to a minimum avoids both the direct emissions from lost biomass and enables conservation and enhancement of the CO2 absorbing and capturing capacity of forests;
3. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to ramp up efforts to restore degraded forests in the light of national circumstances, keeping in mind that: reforestation and agroforestry help diversify livelihoods and landscapes to increase land productivity; restoration involving trees can provide significant environmental, climatic and economic benefits; trees provide shade on agricultural land, prevent extreme sun exposure for the soil and cultivated plants, cool down temperatures on the ground, influence precipitation and lead to improved harvest results;
4. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to promote more productive, efficient and sustainable agrifood systems by continuing to use existing arable land to reduce the demand for new agricultural land, maintain forests and secure the multiple benefits that forests provide to farming systems; keeping in mind that agricultural expansion is driving almost 90% of global deforestation and that many areas of arable land are not being utilized as efficiently and productively as possible and that sustainably increasing productivity will reduce the pressure on forestland caused by a 35-56% increase in food demand by 2050 due to the projected growth in the global population to 9.7 billion people;
5. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to take immediate action to ensure that sustainable forestry management is more beneficial to generating income than clearing forests and that such incomes are regular and high enough for people to sustain a living and compete with income derived from other land uses, while emphasizing that the sustainable management of forests and green value chains prevent the conversion of forest into agricultural land and support the transition to carbon-neutral economies, and that responsible forest management can counteract the underlying drivers of deforestation including poverty, unsustainable production practices and consumption patterns, while creating green jobs, especially in developing countries;
6. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments promote: the circular and cascading use of trees and reforestation to expand the use of sustainable wood; substituting non‑renewable or emissions-intensive materials, such as cement and concrete, in construction with sustainably grown wood products; increasing the lifespan of wood products to address growing demand; reducing waste through more efficient processing and the cascading use of forest products; changing consumption patterns; and facilitating a transition to more circular economies;
7. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to develop strategies to increase the value of the conservation and restoration of forests, especially of rainforests;to emphasize the global value of the ecosystem services and natural resources of forests; to highlight that national, regional or international emissions trading schemes, such as the European Union Emissions Trading System or the Kyoto Protocols emissions trading scheme, are beneficial instruments for mobilizing private capital to finance forest protection and afforestation, including the use of removal units on the basis of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities such as reforestation, with an emphasis on maintaining the highest environmental and climate integrity of such schemes;
8. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to call on their governments to introduce policy initiatives to repurpose agricultural subsidies to include agroforestry and sustainable forestry, keeping in mind that policy instruments can be used strategically to create market incentives for responsible and sustainable forest management and to reorient incentives to boost green markets and financing;
9. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to consider incorporating the objective of net zero emissions in national economic, environmental and climate strategies, reaffirming the internationally agreed goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, largely through ambitious efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions to a minimum, to remove residual emissions from the atmosphere by protecting and restoring natural sinks like forests, soil and peatlands and to consider the creation of artificial sinks using new Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies, which must comply with the highest environmental and climate integrity requirements and are not to be used in the energy sector due to emission-free alternatives;
10. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments scale up action to phase out fossil fuels, especially lignite and coal, which often require extensive logging; bearing in mind the principle defined within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC) establishing the common responsibility of States for the protection of the global environment while, at the same time, laying down different standards of conduct for developed and developing nations; direct global development policy towards supporting developing countries that plan to construct coal-fired power plants to instead consider renewable-energy power plants allowing the same energy production while also protecting climate, energy and job security and forests;
11. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to intensify efforts to reduce the use of charcoal as an energy source and to promote sustainable, cost-effective, viable, renewable and carbon‑neutral alternatives such as solar-powered and pellet stoves; bearing in mind the considerable forest loss and CO2 emissions resulting from charcoal being the major source of energy in many developing countries with limited access to energy;
12. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to take into account the needs and knowledge of local communities, including forest dwellers, forest-dependent people and indigenous people, as per national norms in sustainable forest management, which are integral in the fight against climate change; acknowledge that indigenous people and local communities have been sustainably managing forests for generations, enabling them to fulfil their needs without undermining the capacity of the ecosystems and forests in which they live; reaffirm that land tenure rights for indigenous peoples and local communities should be protected as appropriate; and emphasize that forest restoration preserves the habitat of indigenous people and lowers the pressure on declining forests in terms of firewood extraction and charcoal production;
13. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to take action to strengthen their common understanding of forests, their sustainable management and climate protection; to make sure that appropriate educational programmes on forests are implemented and included in school curricula; to promote educational efforts with young people and include future generations in climate protection measures so that they are aware of the need to protect forests and the environment and the ways in which it can be done, keeping in mind that it is the children and young people of today and tomorrow who will bear the consequences as climate change intensifies and who thus wish to actively engage in efforts to address climate change;
14. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to set up programmes to install agricultural extension officers as intermediaries between researchers and farmers to explain the devastating effects of deforestation, train local populations in good agricultural practices, encourage farmers to adopt new, improved methods of farming, help farmers in their decision‑making and ensure that appropriate knowledge is implemented to obtain the best results with regard to sustainable production and rural development, while stressing the need for further investment in agronomy in tropical areas so that inputs like seeds and nutrients as well as training and access to markets can be provided;
15. *Requests* IPU Member Parliaments to invest in research and development for leveraging technology like cross-breeding of trees that are high-performing, have fast-growing roots and possibly promote forest rejuvenation and regeneration, and hence CO2 storage capacity and climate resilience;
16. *Asks* IPU Member Parliaments to ramp up efforts to mobilize and invest in digital technologies and broadband services that provide access for rural households to online information about sustainable land use and forestry income opportunities, bearing in mind the importance of creating awareness about the need for sustainable forest management;
17. *Strongly urges* IPU Member Parliaments to maintain peaceful relations among themselves, to respect State sovereignty and State territory, bearing in mind that violent conflicts, wars and mines may lead to the destruction and contamination of ecosystems such as forests that are not only important for the people living in them but for humankind as a whole;
18. *Recommends* fostering enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies among IPU Member Parliaments, national and international bodies and partners in working towards the common goals set out in this resolution;
19. *Requests* that the IPU Secretary General transmit the present resolution to the IPU Member Parliaments, the United Nations Secretary-General and all relevant institutions;
20. *Invites* the IPU Member Parliaments to communicate to the IPU Secretariat by the 150th Assembly the measures taken to achieve implementation of this resolution.