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Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon emission balances of forests

***Draft resolution submitted by the
Standing Committee on Sustainable Development***

Rapporteur: Ms. A. Mulder (Netherlands)

The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Recalling* the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2015 Paris Agreement, including its goal to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above 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 carbon sequestration and reduce emissions in forests,
- (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 committed to working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation and value chains, and reaffirmed international financial commitments, private finance and investment support to enable forest conservation and restoration, and support for indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the findings of the IPCC Working Group III on mitigation and its recommendations on reducing deforestation and increasing reforestation,
- (3) *Welcoming* the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted in December 2022 and its 4 goals and 23 targets, including target 2, which seeks to "ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity",
- (4) *Looking forward* to the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP28, which will be held in Dubai and will follow up on the COP26 and COP27 climate conferences' outcomes regarding forest protection,
- (5) *Recalling* the IPU resolutions *Climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies* (120th IPU Assembly, Addis Ababa, April 2009), *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), the Nusa Dua Declaration *Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change* (144th IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, March 2022), and the Declaration of the President of the Assembly on climate change (116th IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, May 2007),

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(6) *Guided by* the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize that climate policy, poverty reduction and universal peace are all inextricably linked in achieving sustainable development, 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”, as well as SDG 17 to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”,

(7) *Committed to* the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted by the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022, in particular of target 2 to restore at least 30% of areas of degraded ecosystems by 2030 and of target 3 to ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures,

(8) *Reaffirming* United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/300 recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, resolution 71/285, in which the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 was adopted, and resolution 73/284 on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030),

(9) *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”,

(10) *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”,

(11) *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”,

(12) *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”,

(13) *Welcoming* the international community’s continuing engagement in numerous global initiatives to address the contribution of forests to climate protection, including the Forests and Climate Leaders’ Partnership; the Congo Basin Forest Partnership; the 15th World Forestry Congress held in Seoul in May 2022; the ASEAN Green Initiative to ramp up restoration efforts and plant at least 10 million native trees in the next 10 years across the 10 ASEAN Member States starting from 2021, set standards for the recognition of tree planting activities and programmes across the region that not only regrow forests in the region but also contribute to people’s well-being, livelihood improvement, and resilience-building; 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; the World Economic Forum’s global initiative to conserve, restore and grow 1 trillion trees by 2030; the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative; and the Strategic Plan of Action for ASEAN Cooperation on Forestry, which have contributed 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,

(14) *Recognizing* the crucial role that women and youth play in forest ecosystem conservation and restoration, and stressing the need for the full participation of women and youth at all levels of policymaking and implementation in forest ecosystem conservation and restoration,

(15) *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, landslide, rockfalls, avalanches, floods, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity; that sustainably managed forests deliver natural, climate-neutral resources for various value chains; and that well-managed forests provide subsistence, medicines, recreational and cultural purpose, livelihood, employment and income to forest-dwelling communities, forest-dependent people and indigenous people, and act as a natural buffer against the transmission of zoonoses,

(16) *Gravely concerned about* the loss of 420 million hectares of forests between 1990 and 2020 through deforestation, approximately 10.34% of the world's total forest area in the last 30 years, according to the FAO's report *The State of the World's Forests 2022*, with associated damage as manifested in droughts, desertification, and changes to weather patterns, as well as about the severe impact of forest loss on aspects of human life and on human development, and the fact that deforestation has a multiplying effect on existing crises in many respects and aspects,

(17) *Noting with great concern* that deforestation and forest degradation are having an accelerating severe 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,

(18) *Cognizant* of the detrimental impact of armed conflicts on forest ecosystems and such conflicts' contribution to greenhouse gas emissions,

(19) *Regretting* that the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the largest conflict currently in existence, accompanied by massive forest fires and resulting in at least 33 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions, has significantly undermined global efforts to achieve negative carbon emission balances of forests and to combat climate change,

(20) *Aware* that the progression of deforestation and forest degradation 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,

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

(22) *Recalling* paragraphs 47 and 48 of the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan adopted at COP27 in November 2022 pertaining to the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing country Parties, in the context of which Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss, in accordance with national circumstances, consistently with the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC, while ensuring relevant social and environmental safeguards,

(23) *Expressing deep concern* about the severe damage caused by forest loss to societies and economies, with an estimated 1.6 billion people, or 20% 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. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to provide, in line with their parliamentary tasks, national regulations and laws that commit to the objective of net zero deforestation, meaning that when forests or trees are cleared in one area, reforestation or afforestation is ensured in another area as appropriate, seeking to maintain the same CO₂ storage balance and taking account of the time that different varieties of tree take to grow;
2. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to intensify urgent actions to prevent and halt deforestation and forest degradation, increase forest areas and enhance the resilience of forest ecosystems, which are among the most cost-effective actions for mitigating and adapting to climate change, while stressing that reducing deforestation to a minimum and encouraging climate-focused afforestation avoid the direct emissions from lost biomass and enable conservation and enhancement of the greenhouse gas absorbing and capturing capacity of forests;

3. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to: expand existing protected areas and create new ones to protect forest ecosystems in line with the relevant international commitments; guarantee demilitarization of protected areas, especially in times of war; establish an appropriate legislative framework for the management of protected areas and take effective measures to enforce it; and cooperate, where appropriate, with neighbouring States to ensure better management and functioning of protected areas;
4. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to ramp up efforts to reforest and even restore degraded forests in the light of national circumstances, keeping in mind: that forest restoration is an active attempt to return an area to its previous naturally forested state using native trees; that non-native trees provide timber that can boost local economies and reduce logging pressure in native forests; that reforestation, afforestation and agroforestry using native and/or non-native trees help diversify livelihoods and landscapes to increase land productivity; that afforestation and restoration of forests can provide significant environmental, climatic, sociocultural and economic benefits; and that 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;
5. *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, 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;
6. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments take immediate action to ensure that sustainable forest management is more beneficial to generating income than deforestation 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, and can enhance the adaptability and resilience of forests to the impact of climate change, while creating green jobs, especially in developing countries;
7. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments create shared value from collective efforts through experience sharing and technological transfer to promote: the application of the principles of the circular economy in the use of wood; 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; advancing green technology; changing consumption patterns; and facilitating a transition to more circular and green economies;
8. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to review and improve forest-related legislation, strengthen forest law enforcement, and promote good governance at all levels in order to support sustainable forest management, and to combat and eradicate illegal practices in forest-related sectors;
9. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to adopt strategies and a systematic review and self-monitoring system that will allow governments to increase the value of the conservation and restoration of forests, especially of rainforests and boreal forests; 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 Protocol 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;

10. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to call on their governments to consider ecological fiscal reforms, to introduce policy initiatives to promote responsible consumption and production of forest-related goods, and 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;
11. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to ensure that the objective of net zero emissions is incorporated in national economic, environmental and climate strategies, reaffirming the goals agreed upon in the Paris Agreement to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, largely through ambitious efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum, to remove residual emissions from the atmosphere by, inter alia, protecting and restoring natural sinks like forests, soil and peatlands or through negative emission technologies such as Direct Air Capture and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS);
12. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments scale up action to phase down unabated coal power and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, especially for lignite and coal, which often require extensive logging; bear in mind the principle defined within the UNFCCC, and reconfirmed in the Paris Agreement, of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances; direct global development policy in 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 energy, job security, climate and forests;
13. *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, hydro, geothermal, wind and nuclear power; 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;
14. *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 peoples and local communities have been sustainably managing forests for millennia, using practices based on indigenous knowledge systems, 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 and enforced as appropriate; and emphasize that forest restoration preserves the territories and resources of indigenous people and lowers the pressure on declining forests in terms of firewood extraction, illegal logging and charcoal production;
15. *Also urges* IPU Member Parliaments to ensure that forest conservation practices and other nature-based climate solutions promote and respect the inherent rights of indigenous people related to their traditional territories, including their right to be consulted and accommodated when measures and actions might adversely impact them, their lands or their resources;
16. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments: to take action to strengthen their common understanding of forests, their sustainable management and climate protection, taking into account national and regional conditions, including as a matter of intergenerational equity and solidarity; to engage the educational sector and local communities, through a multi-level strategy and multi-stakeholder approach, in reforestation as a key to sustainable and inclusive economic growth; 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; and to ensure that gender-sensitive approaches and tools are mainstreamed to provide men and women with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from sustainable forest management while also ensuring the engagement of young people in forest-related decision-making;

17. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to set up mechanisms for agricultural extension services 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;
18. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments use their legislative powers to support incentives for local people and entrepreneurs in green economic employment and investment, as well as to enhance the balance of economic development at all levels, namely for individuals, families, communities and societies, to pursue green growth strategies and the benefits of the sharing economy by taking into consideration social, cultural and environmental contexts for life-long learning, resilience and inclusive growth;
19. *Requests* IPU Member Parliaments to allocate a sufficient national budget in terms of investing 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 or the diversification and combination of tree varieties in forest plantations in order to take advantage of the existing complementary characteristics of different species;
20. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to provide appropriate national budget to ramp up efforts to mobilize and invest in digital technologies and broadband services that provide access for households in rural and remote areas 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;
21. *Strongly urges* IPU Member Parliaments to maintain peaceful relations among themselves, to respect State sovereignty and State territory, and to take concerted and united action, despite political, economic and social differences, to bring a rapid end to wars of aggression around the world, 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;
22. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to foster enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies among themselves and with national and international bodies and partners in working towards the common goals set out in this resolution; and to facilitate enhanced support and partnerships, including in terms of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building, to assist developing countries in promoting forest ecosystems, sustainable afforestation and agroforestry, as well as people's well-being;
23. *Requests* that the IPU Secretary General transmit the present resolution to the IPU Member Parliaments, the United Nations Secretary-General and all relevant institutions;
24. *Encourages* the IPU Member Parliaments to take suitable measures as per national circumstances to achieve implementation of this resolution.