



Submission by Poland and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

Warsaw, 08 April 2025

Subject: Views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to the topic of the 5<sup>th</sup> MWP Global Dialogue and Investment Focused Event

## Summary of Key points:

- The EU congratulates the new MWP co-chairs and supports their approach to the MWP for the coming 2 years
- We suggest 3 subtopics for discussion at MWP Global Dialogue and Investment Focused Event (GD&IFE5):
  - Delivering on paragraph 33 of the outcomes of the first global stocktake (GST 1/CMA.5): halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030
  - Sustainable management and restoration of forests and other ecosystems
  - Reducing GHG emissions and increasing carbon sequestration in agriculture
- We refer to our previous submission regarding our overall views on and expectations for the Mitigation Work Programme

We congratulate the new MWP co-chairs on their appointment and we thank them for the letter communicating the topics of the MWP Dialogues over the coming 2 years.

The EU appreciates the inclusive and solutions-oriented approach in the letter presenting an outlook on the MWP topics for the coming 2 years, and we support AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and other Land Use) as the topic for the forthcoming Global Dialogues (GD), followed by Waste, Circular Economy and Industry.

The EU trusts the co-chairs will ensure that key mitigation challenges and opportunities will be reflected in the activities under the work programme in a balanced and comprehensive manner, so as to inform Parties in considering key findings for the annual MWP decision.

We welcome the opportunity to elaborate on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers in the AFOLU sector, as well as to suggest some experts, potential financiers and investors, that could be invited to contribute.





Regarding the focus of the AFOLU dialogue on mitigation solutions in the forest sector, we view that it is meaningful to expand the conversation to include the broader AFOLU sector, including agriculture. Mitigation solutions across agriculture, forestry and other land uses are intrinsically interconnected and addressing them in isolation may limit the effectiveness of solutions. We note that agriculture is also discussed under the framework of the Convention, both under the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work, and in the context of adaptation under the Nairobi Work Programme. Nonetheless, the Mitigation Work Programme is under the Paris Agreement, and its mandate is to cover all sectors.

Furthermore, we emphasize the critical roles of Indigenous Peoples and of local communities in mitigation solutions in the AFOLU sector, as well as the need to advance gender equality, protect human rights, and uphold land rights, which are essential for sustainable and inclusive climate action.

We refer to our earlier submission this year<sup>1</sup> that includes our overall views on the Mitigation Work Programme, its mandated events and related negotiation outcomes, in particular the annual decision, and the need to respond to the mandate in 1/CMA.5 § 186 to (integrate relevant outcomes of GST1 in planning future work). They also include some suggestions for improvement of the modalities for the MWP Global Dialogues and Investment Focused Events. We emphasize the importance of ensuring accessible and inclusive participation, particularly by maintaining a robust online option.

### I. The importance of the AFOLU sector for climate change mitigation

The AFOLU sector plays a critical role in climate change mitigation, provided the sector adapts to climate change. It is both a significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is the only GHG sector acting as natural carbon sinks. In 2019, approximately 22% (13 GtCO<sub>2</sub>-eq) of total net anthropogenic GHG emissions came from the AFOLU sector, about half of these emissions are from deforestation<sup>2</sup>. Model results and atmospheric observations concur that, when combining both anthropogenic (AFOLU) and natural processes on the entire land surface (the total 'land-atmosphere flux'), "land" was a global net CO<sub>2</sub> sink between 2010 and 2019<sup>3</sup>. The AFOLU sector offers significant near-term mitigation potential at relatively low cost<sup>4</sup>. Current NDCs already encapsulate such land-based mitigation action. Yet, new NDCs must reflect this potential to a much greater extent. Reducing emissions and enhancing removals in the AFOLU sector, however, cannot compensate for urgently needed and often delayed emission reductions in other sectors.

 $^{3}$  -6.6 ± 4.6 GtCO<sub>2</sub> yr <sup>-1</sup> with a range for 2010 to 2019 from -4.4 to -8.4 GtCO<sub>2</sub> yr <sup>-1</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> <u>https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/Documents/202501311027---PL-2025-01-</u>

<sup>31%20</sup>EU%20Submission%20on%20MWP%20topics.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC\_AR6\_WGIII\_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC\_AR6\_WGIII\_Chapter07.pdf





The deployment of resilient land-based mitigation measures, i.e., the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of all terrestrial ecosystems, provides multiple co-benefits including enhanced resilience, supply of food and freshwater, increased biodiversity, and multiple other ecosystem services. Land-based mitigation measures can not only advance climate goals but also offer income opportunities contributing to a just transition, especially for rural communities. But there are also risks and trade-offs from misguided or inappropriate land management practices which need to be avoided.

It is further essential to recognize the link between land-based mitigation measures and the three Rio Conventions. Consideration of AFOLU under the MWP should therefore also go hand in hand with considering land's role in delivering on all three Conventions.

# II. Proposed sub-topics for the 5th dialogue and IFE

The EU proposes three sub-topics for discussion during the fifth global dialogue and investment focused events:

# Sub-topic 1: Delivering on paragraph 33 of the outcomes of the first global stocktake (GST 1/CMA.5): halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030

Paragraph 33 of 1/CMA.5 calls upon enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, which means to focus on addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

Causes of deforestation and forest degradation differ over time and place and are generally considered as complex transboundary processes with direct and underlying causes. Globally the expansion of agricultural land is causing up to 90% of the global deforestation and forest degradation. Other significant drivers include infrastructure development (urbanization, transport and mining), unsustainable logging, natural resource extraction and natural disturbances (forest fires, pests and diseases). In order to halt and reverse the loss and degradation of forests we need to ensure sustainable agriculture and food systems, deforestation-free supply chains, and integrated policies that address the full range of drivers of deforestation.

With 2030 drawing closer and the world, despite efforts, still being off track to meet the 2030 target, COP30 presents an opportunity to seize the momentum, level the playing field and take the next step. It's time for Parties to provide a direction for achieving it. This includes the need to move towards deforestation-free production, as aspired by the EU Regulation on deforestation-free products<sup>5</sup>. There is a need for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Regulation on deforestation-free products,

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/regulation-deforestation-free-products\_en





further harmonization and cooperation and joint programs to strengthen governance like the Team Europe Initiatives on deforestation free value chains and the 5 Great Forests of Mesoamerica. Finally, it would be of importance to continue to support the implementation of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+<sup>6</sup>.

Potential experts may include:

- Valerie Merckx, France, European Forest Institute

### Sub-topic 2: Sustainable management and restoration of forests and ecosystems

The sustainable management and restoration of forest and ecosystems has a large potential, in particular for degraded ecosystems, to mitigate and adapt to climate, in addition to harboring considerable biodiversity and providing numerous socioeconomic benefits including timber, fiber, non-timber forest products, job creation and fostering community resilience. The combined effects of reduced deforestation and degradation, sustainable management of forests, afforestation and forest restoration, agro-forestry and sustainable bioenergy have the potential to significantly help towards reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. In addition, adaptive management practices help maintain forest carbon reservoirs and sinks, thereby reducing the risks of natural disturbances such as wildfire, pests, and drought.

The FAO highlights the need for all forms of innovation (technological, social, policy, institutional and financial) to scale up forest conservation, restoration and sustainable use as solution to global challenges<sup>7</sup>. Last year the EU adopted the Nature Restoration Regulation<sup>8</sup>, a key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, that addresses particularly ecosystems with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters (including forests, grasslands, wetlands, etc.). Since the 1990s, FOREST EUROPE has been providing an intergovernmental platform for promoting sustainable management of forests in the pan-European region, and, in cooperation with numerous partners, has been monitoring its implementation using an internationally agreed upon set of criteria and indicators.

Enhancing synergies with other multilateral agreements enables a more coordinated approach to the sustainable management and restoration of forests and ecosystems. For instance, The United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests (2017-2030) features global forest goals and associated targets and emphasizes that real changes require collective

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Warsaw Framework for REDD+, <u>https://redd.unfccc.int/fact-sheets/warsaw-framework-for-redd.html</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> FAO (2024). The state of the world's forests. Sector innovations towards a more sustainable future. FAO, Rome.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R1991&qid=1722240349976





action, within and beyond the UN system. Also, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework play a pivotal role by providing a comprehensive framework for conserving and sustainably using biodiversity. Additionally, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) framework play a crucial role in promoting sustainable land use, preventing desertification, and restoring degraded land.

Potential experts may include:

- Beria Leimona, Indonesia CIFOR-ICRAF

### Sub-topic 3: Reducing GHG emissions and increasing carbon sequestration in agriculture

Agriculture is a major and increasing source of GHG emissions, particularly methane and nitrous oxide, released through livestock production, fertilizer use, and other farming practices. Additionally, land conversion and deforestation for agricultural expansion contribute significantly to carbon dioxide emissions. The entire food system accounts for around one third of global greenhouse gas emissions. However, if managed sustainably, agriculture can enhance soil organic carbon sequestration, improving soil health and supporting climate resilience. The IPCC is also clear that agriculture provides the second largest share of the mitigation potential.

Although the IPCC states that on the way to net-zero emissions, some non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, such as methane and nitrous oxide from agriculture, cannot be fully eliminated, many promising measures exist to lever the mitigation potential also in the agricultural sector. There are increasing options for reducing methane emissions including sustainable livestock management, improved manure management and new breeding options, which warrant exploration. The increasing global emissions of nitrous oxide are a measure of the inefficient use of costly artificial mineral fertilizer. This can be addressed through measures to increase nitrogen efficiency, such as precision farming, which are promising, but in other regions, measures like the cultivation of cover crops and legumes have more potential. Leveraging the achievable potential of GHG mitigation in agriculture requires regionally tailored approaches in a broader economic context, strong policy initiatives, incentives and as well as regulatory frameworks, as well as the consideration of the interdependencies and interconnections of the entire AFOLU sector.

Increasing carbon sequestration in agriculture is important not only for mitigation purposes but also provides co-benefits such as enhancement of soil health, improvement of agricultural productivity, improvement of water quality, reduction of soil erosion, and enhancement of biodiversity, contributing to overall ecosystem health. Carbon sequestration practices are most often cost-effective and can be implemented widely, making them accessible to farmers globally.