



**Statement by H.E. Sunil Sitaldin  
Permanent Representative of Suriname to  
the United Nations**

**on the occasion of the International Day of Forest  
21 March 2025**

**New York  
21 March 2025**

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Thank you for giving me the floor Moderator,

It is with a profound sense of responsibility and determination that Suriname delivers this statement as we commemorate the International Day of Forest today.

Forests are essential to life on Earth. They provide clean air and water, regulate our climate, and are home to an incredible diversity of plants and animals.

This year's theme on "Forests and Food", highlights the vital role that forests play in providing us with nourishment, including fruits, nuts, seeds, and mushrooms. Forests also provide food indirectly, for example by supporting pollinators which are critical for the production of many agricultural crops.

However, the relationship between forests and food goes beyond the provision of sustenance. Forests also play a vital role in food security.

Forests help to regulate the water cycle, preventing both floods and droughts, which can devastate crops. Forest conservation also plays an important role in climate change mitigation. As we all know, climate change is a major threat to food security, and forests can help to mitigate its effects.

Moderator,

It is important to acknowledge that forests also have a large cultural significance. In Suriname, the forests are home to diverse cultures and a variety of different resource uses.

The Government of Suriname is not merely committed to environmental protection; we are driven by a powerful vision of a future where our nation's natural heritage is not just conserved, but thrives, fueling sustainable development and prosperity for all Surinamese citizens. Suriname is proudly one of the most forested countries on earth, with approximately 93% forest cover.

This vast forest is not just a national treasure, but also a vital carbon sink, storing an estimated 12,200 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and significantly contributing to climate regulation.

Our commitment to preserving this invaluable resource is reflected in our National REDD+ Strategy, which aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. We are also strengthening forest governance, promoting sustainable land-use planning, and investing in research and education to support sustainable development.

We recognize that our forests are essential not only for our environmental health, but also for our economic and social well-being. That is why we are working to promote sustainable forest management, increase the value of wood production, and support alternative livelihoods for forest-dependent communities.

However, our forests face threats. Deforestation, driven by factors like mining, infrastructure development and agriculture, poses a significant challenge. To address this, we are implementing a National Forest Monitoring System and taking steps to combat illegal and unplanned logging.

On this International Forest Day, we call on the global community to take collective action to protect our forests. We must continue to promote sustainable practices in other land use sectors, such as mining and agriculture, to minimize their impact on forests.

We must also empower local communities and ensure they benefit from forest conservation and sustainable use.

There are many things that we can do as individuals to make a difference. We can support sustainable forestry practices, reduce our consumption of forest products, and advocate for policies that protect forests.

We are proud to share that in a significant step towards building global momentum for a net zero, climate-resilient and nature positive future, Suriname, together with Bhutan, Madagascar and Panama launched the G-ZERO forum, and issued a joint Declaration at COP29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024.

In closing Moderator, Suriname strongly believes that by working together, we can ensure that forests continue to provide us with food and other essential benefits for generations to come. **Thank you.**