

Honorable Chair, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies & Gents,

I take this opportunity to congratulate the governments of China and Canada for hosting the CBD COP15 in the beautiful city of Montreal. The ITTO expresses its appreciation to the CBD Executive Secretary and her team for their efforts in facilitating the COP15 meeting and also to all delegates for their resilience in the negotiations for the last 2 weeks.

The ITTO is the only IGO with a dual mandate on tropical forests:

The implementation of SFM AND the diversification of trade in wood and forests products from legally and sustainably harvested tropical forests. ITTO's members cover 80% of global tropical forest resources and account for 90% of the trade in tropical wood products. The tropics is home to over 70% of the global population who live in extreme poverty and simultaneously is home to nearly 70% of global diversity.

The nexus between tropical forests, biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation are inseparable and need to be tackled holistically. The ITTO's work is governed by the ITTA 2006 under the auspices of the UNCTAD and ITTO supports its members to implement elements of global commitments to the GFGs, the SDGs, the UNSPF, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the CBD, the UNFCCC, CITES, IUCN, etc.

Yet, tropical forests, both terrestrial and coastal, remain increasingly susceptible and vulnerable to land use change, deforestation and forest degradation, all of which are precipitated by global challenges affecting food, wood and energy security.

The global community must change the way in which it interacts with sustainably managed tropical forests, which can ensure biodiversity conservation, amongst other elements, for future generations.

The ITTO implores delegations to reach consensus on the post 2020 Global Biodiversity framework and resource mobilization to enable tropical forests to continue to be effective contributors to almost all the SDGs 2030.

The ITTO urges delegations to welcome further collaboration and strategic investments in IGOs such as the ITTO, who is well experienced in the successful implementation on the ground of scalable, replicable and transferable projects.

ITTO is able to offer much needed nature-based solutions stemming from sustainably managed tropical forests, imperative for the implementation of the GBF once adopted. This requires equitable and fair access to international funding support under the GEF, GCF, World Bank and other global funding sources.

ITTO urges investment in tropical forests, which will ensure the sustained longevity of the sustainable use of biodiversity, water resources and carbon sinks/sequesters/substitutes for environmentally harmful materials, producing the oxygen we breathe whilst providing value for forests and enriching the livelihoods of local communities and indigenous peoples, leaving no one behind. ITTO is fully committed to a nature positive world.