

4th APEC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry
“The Seoul Statement of the MMRF4”

We, the Ministers and Senior Officials attending the Fourth APEC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry (MMRF4) in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, on 30-31 October 2017:

Building upon the achievements of and continuing the momentum of the First MMRF in Beijing, China (2011), the Second MMRF in Cusco, Peru (2013), and the Third MMRF in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (2015) and recognizing the economies who have supported and volunteered to host these events;

Acknowledging the 2017 APEC theme of “Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future” and reaffirming the importance of forests in achieving APEC’s goal of supporting sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region;

Noting the recognition given by APEC Leaders of the important role that forests play in terms of environmental, economic, and social development as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation;

Recognizing the importance of achieving and assessing, in due course, the aspirational goal of increasing forest cover in the region by at least 20 million hectares by 2020 as set out in the 2007 APEC Sydney Declaration;

Acknowledging that illegal logging and associated trade impedes progress towards the APEC Sydney forest goal, and recognizing APEC’s efforts to promote regional cooperation on combating illegal logging and associated trade, especially through the APEC Experts Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT);

Recalling the need for a concerted effort by all APEC economies to accomplish the Sydney forest goal, and recognizing that sustainable forest management of all types of forests plays a crucial role in the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Reaffirming that sustainable forest management and forest-based industries are critical in providing income and employment opportunities, especially for forest-dependent communities, and recognizing that forests play an important role in enhancing livelihoods and the well-being of people in member economies;

Further recognizing the need for cooperation and proactive discussion, including high-level policy dialogues among APEC economies, to maximize the contributions of forests to the economic, environmental and social development of the region, we aspire to:

1. Maintain and expedite efforts to achieve the goal of increasing forest cover in the region by at least 20 million hectares by year 2020;

2. Strengthen cooperation to combat illegal logging and associated trade, by establishing and implementing effective policies within individual economies and sharing information and best practices among APEC economies, especially through the EGILAT;
3. Further enhance coordination and cooperation amongst APEC economies to promote trade in legally harvested forest products, which would contribute to, among other things, increasing income from forests and international trade opportunities, and to share best practices and information on effective schemes in this regard;
4. Promote the health, productivity, and resilience of forests to ensure that they continue to provide essential goods and services as well as to further contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation;
5. Promote the revitalization of forest-dependent communities and regional development to increase the benefits of forests, especially in terms of forestry-related job creation and income generation;
6. Enhance the implementation and sharing of successful forest-related policies relating to recreation, healing, education and well-being;
7. Explore future actions and foster closer cooperation with the FAO, ITTO, UNFF, and other international and regional organizations such as APFNet in order to maximize the contributions of forests to economic, environmental and social outcomes, and address common challenges related to the forestry sector; and
8. Continue to actively raise awareness on the importance of forests in achieving APEC's mission by sharing the outcomes of the MMRF4 at relevant fora, including the APEC Leaders' Meeting.