

## Urban Forests in Context

Agenda Item 2

80<sup>th</sup> Session, Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry  
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

### Background

Sustainable urban and peri-urban forestry is an integrative and cost-effective nature-based solution that helps develop greener, healthier, and more resilient cities. Trees and forests in urban and peri-urban areas provide vital benefits for health and wellbeing, sustainable development, climate adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity, and disaster risk reduction. This contributes not only to sustainable local development, but also to national objectives and to most SDGs.

Integrated long-term planning, design and management at the local and national level are critical to unlock the multiple co-benefits urban forestry provides. Furthermore, policy actions and implementation must be aligned across sectors and levels of government. In addition to action by city governments, national governments can support urban forestry through national policies, standardized data collection, financial support and cooperation across boundaries and sectors.

Reforestation and afforestation, including in urban areas, are receiving increasing political attention, particularly in the aftermath of UNFCCC COP26. While there is an urgent need to maintain and expand the urban forest cover in urban and peri-urban areas, any intervention should be planned, designed, and managed sustainably over the long term. This planning should consider cross-sectoral linkages, such as the food security and economic benefits of urban food forests, to ensure that urban forestry plans and actions maximize these and other benefits. Predictable sources of long-term finance to allow for proper investment decisions, planning and long-term management are required for proper long-term planning and implementation, while innovative finance instruments can complement existing budgets and sources. Thus, while national policymakers are presented with a window of opportunity to advance sustainable urban forestry, timely efforts are required to ensure that political good will leads to successful outcomes.

The link between cities and forests outside cities is also critical in this context, as policymakers must consider how urban forests fit within the national policy for forests and the forest industry. For example, the climate benefits of investing in urban forests should be compared with the benefits of investing in promoting increased use of forest products in cities, including wooden building construction.

The session will explore these interconnected issues through key presentations, which aim to: (1) understand the potential contribution of urban forestry to SDGs and climate action; (2) identify opportunities for investing in urban forests; (3) consider policy and planning needs and opportunities; and (4) reflect on the evolving relationship between cities and forests.

## Provisional Programme

10 min	<b>Welcome</b> <i>Opening remarks (5 min)</i> <b>Ms. Paola Deda, Director, UNECE Forests, Land and Housing Division</b> <i>Moderator's welcome (5 min)</i> <b>Mr. Keith Anderson, Senior Advisor, International Forest Policy, Forest Ecosystem Services and Silviculture Section, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland</b>
5 min	<b>Keynote Video</b> <i>Trees on the skyline: vertical forests and the city of the future</i> <b>Arch. Stefano Boeri, Founding Partner, Stefano Boeri Architetti</b>
15 min	<b>Setting the Scene</b> <i>Sustainable urban and peri-urban forestry: a national policy opportunity for the SDGs and climate action</i> <b>Mr. Cecil Konijnendijk, UNECE Consultant (video)</b>
35min	<b>Does money grow on urban trees? Investing in urban and peri-urban forests</b> <i>The business case for public investment in urban forests (10 min)</i> <b>Ms. Sharon Gil, Head of Cities Unit, UNEP</b> <i>Forestry and urban financing mechanisms – the old and the new (10 min)</i> <b>Mr. Jack Major, UNECE Consultant (video)</b> <i>Moderated Q&amp;A (15 min)</i>
45 min	<b>The right tree in the right place, for the right reason: urban forestry planning and policy</b> <i>Urban forestry planning in the Canton of Vaud: lessons for national policy (10 min)</i> <b>Mr. Yves Kazemi, Forest Inspector, General Direction for the Environment, Canton of Vaud</b> <i>Planning and managing urban forests: tools and resources (10 min)</i> <b>Ms. Kathy Abusow, CEO and President, Sustainable Forestry Initiative</b> <i>Urban trees and the Swiss forest policy (10 min)</i> <b>Ms. Clémence Dirac, Co-Head, Forest Ecosystem Services and Silviculture Section, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland</b> <i>Moderated Q&amp;A (15 min)</i>
35 min	<b>Cities and forests in the new context</b> <i>A garden city for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: urban forests and food production in the city of Geneva (10 min)</i> <b>Mr. Alfonso Gomez, Magistrate in Charge of the Department of Finance, Environment and Housing, City of Geneva</b> <i>Lock carbon in cities instead of releasing it to the atmosphere – how low carbon construction will tighten the bonds between cities and forests (10 min)</i> <b>Mr. Uwe Kies, Secretary General, InnovaWood asbl (video)</b> <i>Moderated Q&amp;A (15 min)</i>
5 min	<b>Closing</b> <b>Ms. Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab, Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section</b>

For more information and registration, please visit:

<https://unece.org/info/events/event/365296>