



## Seoul Forest Declaration

**For Prelims:** Seoul Forest Declaration, World Forestry Congress, SOFO 2022, FAO

**For Mains:** State of Forest Resources in India and related concerns

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Seoul Declaration** was adopted at the **XV World Forestry Congress**, held in Seoul, South Korea.

- The Declaration, **signed by 141 participant countries**.
- Earlier, the [State of the World's Forests 2022 \(SOFO 2022\)](#) was released by the [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#).

### What is the World Forestry Congress?

- **About:**
  - It is held **every six years**.
  - This year's event, hosted by the Republic of Korea and co-organized with FAO, was the second congress held in Asia.
    - Indonesia hosted the **first Congress in Asia in 1978**.
  - The Congress has been **providing a forum for inclusive discussion** on the key challenges and way forward for the forestry sector.
- **Theme for 2022:** Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient.
- **Aim:**
  - To build a new vision – a new way of thinking and acting – for the future of forests and forestry in sustainable development at all levels.
    - Investing in forests and forestry is **investment in people and their livelihoods**, especially the rural poor, youth and women.
    - In turn, **this is investment in sustainable development** and in achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) by 2030.

### What are the Highlights of the Declaration?

- **Urges for Shared Responsibility:**
  - The declaration urges that **responsibility for forests should be shared and integrated across institutions**, sectors and stakeholders.
  - It was Underlined that **forests transcend political, social and environmental boundaries** and are vital for biodiversity and the carbon, water and energy cycles at a planetary scale.
- **Investment in Forest:**

- **Investment in forest and landscape restoration globally needs to triple by 2030** to meet internationally agreed commitments and targets on restoring degraded land.
- **Circular Bioeconomy and Climate Neutrality:**
  - One of the key takeaways from Congress was the **importance of moving towards a circular bioeconomy** and climate neutrality.
  - The **Declaration called for innovative green financing mechanisms** to upscale investment in forest conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and highlighted the potential of sustainably produced wood as a renewable, recyclable and versatile material.
- **Steps to Prevent Future Pandemics:**
  - **Healthy, productive forests must also be maintained** to reduce the risk of future [pandemics](#) and to provide other essential benefits for human physical and mental health.
- **Need for Innovative Technologies and Mechanisms:**
  - The Declaration urged the **continued development and use of emerging innovative technologies** and mechanisms to enable evidence-based forest and landscape decision-making.

## What are the other Highlights of the XV World Forestry Congress?

- Other Initiatives undertaken at the Congress to boost international participation and cooperation.
  - **Assuring the Future of Forests with Integrated Risk Management (AFFIRM) Mechanism:**
    - AFFIRM aims to **develop integrated risk management plans** to use as examples for other countries to follow, creating a methodology that will enable countries to better conduct disturbance risk assessments and provide an improved understanding of forest hazards and forest-related risks.
  - **Sustaining an Abundance of Forest Ecosystems (SAFE) Initiative**
  - The **Platform for REDD+ Capacity Building:**
    - REDD+ is a framework created by the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) Conference of the Parties (COP) to guide activities in the forest sector that reduces emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

## What are the Major Initiatives of India for Forests?

- **National Mission for a Green India:**
  - It is one of the eight Missions under the [National Action Plan on Climate Change \(NAPCC\)](#).
  - It was launched in February, 2014 with the **objective to safeguard the biological resources of our nation and associated livelihoods** against the peril of adverse climate change and to recognise the vital impact of forestry on ecological sustainability, biodiversity conservation and food-, water- and livelihood-security.
- [National Afforestation Programme \(NAP\):](#)
  - It has been implemented since 2000 for the afforestation of degraded forest lands.
  - It is being implemented by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- [Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority, \(CAMPA Funds\):](#)
  - Launched in 2016, **90% of the fund is to be given to the states** while 10% is to be retained by the Centre.
  - The funds can be **used for treatment of catchment areas, assisted natural generation, forest management, wildlife protection and management**, relocation of villages from protected areas, managing human-wildlife conflicts, training and awareness generation, supply of wood saving devices and allied activities.
- **National Action Programme to Combat Desertification:**
  - It was prepared in 2001 to address issues of increasing [desertification](#) and to take appropriate actions.
  - It is implemented by the MoEFCC.
- [Forest Fire Prevention & Management Scheme \(FFPM\):](#)

- It is the only centrally funded program specifically dedicated to assist the states in dealing with forest fires.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions

**Q. With reference to the 'New York Declaration on Forests', which of the following statements are correct?**

1. It was first endorsed at the United Nations Climate Summit in 2014.
2. It endorses a global timeline to end the loss of forests.
3. It is a legally binding international declaration.
4. It is endorsed by governments, big companies and indigenous communities.
5. India was one of the signatories at its inception.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

- (a) 1, 2 and 4
- (b) 1, 3 and 5
- (c) 3 and 4
- (d) 2 and 5

**Ans: (a)**

**Exp:**

- The New York Declaration on Forests is a voluntary and non-legally binding political declaration which grew out of dialogue among governments, companies and civil society, spurred by the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Summit in 2014. **Hence, statement 1 is correct and statement 3 is not correct.**
- The declaration pledges to halve the rate of deforestation by 2020, to end it by 2030 and to restore hundreds of millions of acres of degraded land. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The declaration currently has over 200 endorsers including, national governments, sub-national governments, multinational companies, indigenous peoples and local community organizations, nongovernment organizations, and financial institutions. Hence, statement 4 is correct.
- India was not one of the signatories at the time of New York Declaration on Forests inception. **Hence, statement 5 is not correct. Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

**Source: DTE**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/seoul-forest-declaration>