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Ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting

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Agenda item 4: Tasks of the ad hoc expert group

Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

Note by the Secretariat

Summary:

The present note provides background information to assist the ad hoc expert group

on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) in carrying out its tasks. The note addresses approaches and mechanisms for the two areas of the MAR function of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) that are to be addressed by the ad hoc expert group: progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and progress towards sustainable management (SFM) of all types of forests.

The note reviews UNFF decisions on monitoring, assessment and reporting processes in UNFF and in other international processes, instruments and organizations related to forests, highlighting approaches that may be relevant to the further development of the MAR function of UNFF. It considers ways that the Forum might monitor and assess progress and possible reporting procedures and considerations. Finally it addresses needs for capacity building in countries for MAR.

Monitoring and assessment of progress on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action would be facilitated by the use of indicators of implementation. Linking the assessment of progress in implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action more closely with assessment of progress toward SFM using indicators of SFM could have advantages. One option for achieving this could be to reorient reporting on implementation around clusters of IPF/IFF proposals for action based on the criteria of SFM.

Criteria and indicators (C&I) of SFM are recognized as a useful tool for reporting on progress toward SFM. Options for using C&I for assessing global progress toward SFM could include country reporting to UNFF, submission of progress reports from regional and international C&I processes to UNFF and compilation of a report on progress toward SFM by using other existing sources of information.

Countries, CPF members and major groups report to UNFF annually.

Comprehensive reporting on implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action to UNFF at its fifth session is to be coordinated with the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

The need for building capacity in countries for monitoring, assessment and reporting on both implementation of the proposals for action and progress toward sustainable forest management is recognized. Several recommendations have been made in this regard.

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Introduction

1. UNFF, at its third session, agreed on the establishment of an ad hoc expert group (AHEG) on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR). UNFF agreed that the expert group would carry out the following tasks:

(a) Assess existing reporting requirements under relevant international conventions, processes, instruments and organizations in order to identify strengths, weaknesses and duplication in reporting processes, taking into account the relevant work undertaken by Collaborative Partnership on Forests members;

(b) Assess existing monitoring and assessment procedures in international conventions, processes, instruments and organizations related to forests in order to identify strengths, weaknesses and duplications, taking into account the relevant work undertaken by Collaborative Partnership on Forests members;

(c) Propose ways for the Forum to monitor and assess progress, based on: voluntary reporting by countries, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and other relevant organizations, and international and regional processes on implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action; ongoing work on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management being undertaken at the national,

regional and international levels; and existing data and information as well as reporting systems and structures;

(d) Propose an outline for voluntary reporting to the Forum;

(e) Recommend options for drawing upon the reports provided to Forum sessions to identify trends and lessons learned;

(f) Develop recommendations on how to build capacity in countries for monitoring, assessment and reporting, taking into account the special needs of developing countries.

2. The results of the work of the ad hoc expert group will be presented to the fourth session of UNFF. The present report provides background information to assist the AHEG in carrying out its tasks.

I. Background

A. Scope of the work of the ad hoc expert group

3. When the Economic and Social Council established UNFF, it identified monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress as one of the principal functions of the Forum.ⁱ

4. At its first sessionⁱⁱ, the Forum agreed that its MAR function comprises the following areas:

- a) Progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;
- b) Progress towards sustainable management (SFM) of all types of forests;
- c) Review of the effectiveness

5. The ad hoc expert group will address monitoring, assessment and reporting on the first two areas, since the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests is being addressed through another process in UNFF. A proposal for the process for the review of the effectiveness will be discussed at UNFF4, and the review itself will be carried out at UNFF5. The ad hoc expert group may wish to take into consideration the relationship between its work and the review of the effectiveness. The present note clarifies the links between the two.

6. The ad hoc expert group may also wish to consider the relationship between its work and the scope of the discussions at UNFF4 under the agenda item “implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) and the plan of action of UNFF”, specifically related to sub-agenda items: i) monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitionsⁱⁱⁱ (MAR,CTD) and ii) criteria and indicators (C&I) of sustainable forest management (SFM). The focus of these discussions will be on progress made, lessons

learned and constraints encountered in implementing the related IPF/IFF proposals for action, many of which relate to monitoring, assessment and reporting and use of C&I at the national and sub-national levels. The ad hoc expert group focuses on monitoring, assessment and reporting at the international level – how UNFF might monitor and assess global progress in implementing the commitments made by IPF, IFF and UNFF, and what type of reporting would be needed to do this. It is important to note that some IPF/IFF PfA are relevant to the work of the ad hoc expert group, including those related to:

- Promoting the use of internationally, regionally, sub-regionally and nationally agreed criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as a framework for promoting best forest practices and facilitating sustainable forest management
- Using criteria and indicators by relevant organizations to improve consistency in reporting on forest assessment and sustainable forest management
- Incorporating information on relevant criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management into formats for national reporting to international organizations and processes
- Reducing the reporting burden on countries, streamlining forest-related reporting to international organizations and instruments, and improving forest information systems
- Strengthening countries' capacity for monitoring, assessment and reporting,

7. These points are areas of common concern for the ad hoc expert group and for discussions at UNFF4 on implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action related to MAR,CTD and C&I.

B. Recent initiatives relevant to the work of the ad hoc expert group

8. Several relevant expert meetings with substantial outputs have been held since the establishment of the United Nations Forum on Forests, including:

- The country-led initiative in support of UNFF, “International Expert Meeting on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting on the Progress Toward Sustainable Forest Management”, held in Yokohama, Japan, 5-8 November 2001^{iv}
- The FAO/UNEP/UNECE “Expert Consultation on Global Forest Resources Assessment – Linking National and International Efforts” (“Kotka IV”), held in Kotka, Finland, 1-5 July 2002^v
- The country-led initiative in support of UNFF, “Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting on Lessons Learned in the Assessment of the Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action”, held in Viterbo, Italy, 17-20 March 2003^{vi}
- The “International Conference on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: The Way Forward”, held in Guatemala City, 3-7 February 2003.

9. The CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting was established in July 2002 in response to UNFF’s request that CPF members work to harmonize and

streamline forest-related reporting to reduce the reporting burden on countries. The Task Force members include the UNFF Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the United Nations Environment Programme/World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP/WCMC). Since its establishment, the Task Force has carried out a comparative analysis of its members' forest-related reporting to identify potentials for streamlining forest-related reporting and has launched the CPF Portal on Forest Reporting^{vii}. The portal provides information on forest-related reporting to CPF member organizations and easy access to the corresponding national reports. The Task Force is currently working on the development of a conceptual framework for international reporting on forests and options for building country capacity for monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests.

II. Existing monitoring and assessment procedures and reporting requirements under relevant international instruments, organizations and processes

10. This section summarizes existing reporting requirements and monitoring and assessment procedures of UNFF and other major forest-related international instruments, conventions and processes, including the CBD, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), FAO, ITTO, UNDP (on the Millennium Development Goals),

UNFCCC, UNCCD, and regional and international processes of C&I for SFM.^{viii} Annex 1 provides an overview of reporting to these organizations, instruments and processes.

11. The following section reviews the MAR functions of the above relevant international conventions and instruments and their use of indicators for monitoring and assessment purposes, provides information on other forest-related reporting, and highlights relevant points that the AHEG may wish to consider in developing its recommendations to UNFF.

A. Monitoring, assessment and reporting procedures in the main forest-related instruments, organizations and processes

United Nations Forum on Forests

12. At its first session^{ix}, the Forum decided that reporting to UNFF would focus on the implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA and that a representative selection of lessons learned, achievements as well as obstacles encountered should be presented and discussed at each session of the Forum. It further decided that reporting would be voluntary and would start at the second session. It invited countries, regions, organizations, processes and relevant stakeholders to report. The Forum indicated that countries' reports may be prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

13. At its second session, UNFF requested its secretariat to develop a suggested format for voluntary country reporting on implementation of the relevant IPF/IFF PFA at its third session.^x At the third session, the Forum requested the secretariat to develop a similar format for the fourth session, one that is simple, streamlined and flexible and covers the thematic issues of the session, as well as the common items and cross-cutting issues.^{xi}

14. Reporting commenced at UNFF2 when 16 countries provided national reports. The following year 37 countries and the European Community provided their national reports to UNFF3. The members of CPF reported collectively to the two sessions through the *CPF Framework*. Major groups submitted written reports for the multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) of both sessions. The reports to UNFF3 of countries and by major groups focused on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to the thematic issues as UNFF elements addressed by the session.

15. National reports were used as a major source of information for the Secretary General's reports on the thematic issues addressed by the sessions. CPF Frameworks, reports of major groups, and MSD deliberations also helped to inform the discussions on implementation at the UNFF sessions.

16. The Forum will assess overall progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action at its fifth session as part of the review of the effectiveness of the IAF. UNFF included "the extent to which countries, the Collaborative Partnership on

Forests and other actors have made progress in implementing the relevant IPF/IFF PfA” as one of the 21 criteria for the review.

17. The Forum has to take further decisions regarding monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress toward sustainable forest management. At its first session, it did stressed the importance of the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as a basis for reporting on sustainable forest management.^{xii}

Commission on Sustainable Development

18. A principle function of the CSD is to review and monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Voluntary national reports to CSD provide the basis for the monitoring and assessment of progress.

19. The UN Secretariat used the national reports (submitted annually on the implementation of chapters of Agenda 21 addressed at that CSD session) and country profiles (submitted in 1997 and 2002 on implementation of all chapters of Agenda 21) to assess the implementation of Agenda 21 at the global level in 2002.

20. A national reports will be submitted to CSD for each of the two-year “Implementation Cycles” during the 2003-2017 period. They will focus on concrete progress in implementation, including achievements, constraints, challenges and opportunities on the issues being addressed in that cycle. Forests will be addressed in the

2012-2013 cycle. As yet, it is undecided how monitoring and assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation will be carried out between now and 2017.

21. Through the CSD Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development, a set of 58 indicators (including two related to forests) have been identified for possible use by countries in monitoring progress toward sustainable development at the national level.

Convention on Biological Diversity

22. The CBD requests each Party to submit national reports on measures that it has taken to implement the provisions of the convention and their effectiveness in meeting the convention's objectives. The third national report (2005) will provide information on the implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity, among other things. Countries are also invited to submit voluntary thematic reports in 2003, addressing success in implementation of priority actions and challenges and impediments faced in implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity.

23. The reports submitted to CBD provide the basis for monitoring and assessment of progress in the implementation of the convention. An ad hoc technical expert group (AHTEG) provides advice on the way in which the review of the implementation of the

programme of work on forest biological diversity would be undertaken and to provide input to the review. The first meeting of the AHTEG is to take place on 10-14 November 2003. The AHTEG is to complete its work before COP8 in 2006. The review will take place at COP9 in 2008.

24. CBD has been working to develop i) principles for designing national-level monitoring programmes and indicators and ii) a list of potential indicators that may be used by Parties at national level and in national reporting and that may also allow for regional and global overviews on the state and trends of biodiversity. CBD encourages regional cooperation for indicator development. Decision VI/22 on forest biological diversity, “*Recognizes* existing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management including forest biological diversity at the national and regional levels, and *agrees* that these should be applied where criteria and indicators are needed for the purposes of the expanded work programme, and recognizes the need for further development and selection of criteria and indicators for the assessment of the status and trends of forest biological diversity at the national and regional levels.”

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

25. Each Party to the Convention is required to communicate to the COP the measures undertaken to implement the UNCCD. The content of national reports differ slightly depending on the category(ies) into which a Party falls (see annex 1) and thus what its commitments are. Intergovernmental organizations and UN organizations are

also asked to report. Monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the convention is based on these reports.

26. UNCCD has identified implementation indicators to help monitor and assess progress in implementation. The UNCCD is also working to identify the type of data needed to assess the status and trends of desertification (i.e. desertification indicators) and impact indicators to monitor biophysical, socio-economic and institutional impacts of the National Action Programmes developed by (desertification-) affected Parties. These indicators would be useful for the purpose of assessing the impact of implementing the commitments made under UNCCD.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

27. Its “national communication” is the main channel through which a Party to the Convention informs the UNFCCC about its activities related to implementation of the Convention. National reporting requirements for developed countries (Annex I Parties) are more detailed than guidelines for developing countries (non-Annex I Parties). Forest-related information is reported under each chapter of the national communication, such as national circumstances, national inventory of emissions and removals by sinks, policies and measures, and impacts of and adaptation and vulnerability to climate change.

28. In addition to reporting qualitative information related to implementation, Parties also prepare national greenhouse gas inventories, estimating emissions and removals of

greenhouse gases for five sectors of human activities that influence sources and sinks of greenhouse gases: energy, industrial processes, agriculture, land-use change and forestry and waste. In order to carry out the national inventory, specific data on forests and forest resources are required on changes in forest and other woody biomass stocks, forest and grassland conversion, abandonment of managed lands and emissions and removals from soils. It is expected that the GHG inventory on forests will be reviewed based on the forthcoming report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry*. The UNFCCC secretariat also develops and maintains a database of greenhouse gas inventories including data on removals by sinks.

29. Land use, land-use change and forestry activities eligible under the Kyoto Protocol and the Marrakesh Accords include afforestation, reforestation, deforestation, forest management, cropland management, grazing-land management and revegetation for Annex I Parties and afforestation and reforestation project activities under the Clean Development Mechanism. These would involve additional accounting and reporting.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

30. FAO requests information from countries on a large number of variables related to forests. The information most relevant to the monitoring, assessment and reporting function of UNFF is that collected for the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and for FAO's *Yearbook of Forest Products*. In addition to these data on forest

resources, forest goods and services, FAO makes information available on national forest programmes (national forest programme updates) and maintains a database (FAOLEX) on national legislation related to forests.

31. The FRA process has expanded from timber supply studies in the 1940's into the current broad assessments covering forest resources as well as their management and uses. Following recent recommendations in international fora, FAO uses criteria for sustainable forest management as a framework for the update of global FRA planned for 2005, and will report on variables related to: i) the extent of forest resources/contribution to global carbon cycle; ii) forest health and vitality; iii) biodiversity function; iv) productive functions; v) protective functions; vi) socio-economic functions. FRA information is reported by countries through nominated National Correspondents. A global meeting of correspondents was held in Rome 17-21 November 2003 to discuss the design of FRA 2005 and initiate the reporting process for the 2005 report.

32. Forest products production, consumption and trade statistics are also collected by FAO. A global set is published in the *FAO Yearbook of Forest Products*.

United Nations Development Programme

33. UNDP's work related to monitoring, assessment and reporting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may be instructive to the AHEG in considering options for UNFF's MAR function. To help track progress toward the achievement of the MDGs,

the United Nations Secretariat and other UN agencies and organizations defined a set of time-bound and measurable global goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. A set of indications (including one on forests) was identified to help monitor progress toward meeting each of the targets.

34. MDG monitoring will be carried out at the country and global levels. At the country level, governments are to prepare MDG reports (MDGRs) at a suggested interval of every 2-3 years. Countries identify goals and targets relevant to themselves by adopting, adapting or adding to the global goals and targets. They report on the status of progress, challenges faced, resource requirements and monitoring capacity on each goal. At the global level, the Secretary-General is to report annually to the General Assembly on progress on a subset of the MDGs and to report more comprehensively every five years. Data for these reports are drawn from the databases for the selected indicators that are maintained by the United Nations Statistical Division. The figures in the databases are from international series compiled by various UN agencies. Countries are not asked to report new statistics; the existing databases are used as the sources of information for monitoring and assessment of progress.

International Tropical Timber Organization

35. Parties to the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA, 1994) are to provide statistics and information on timber, timber trade and activities aimed to

achieving sustainable management of timber producing forests. Members are asked to submit data annually on their national production, trade, supply, stocks, consumption, and prices of tropical timber. These are compiled and published in ITTO's *Annual review and assessment of the world timber situation*. Members are to supply other statistical data and specific indicators and to report on activities aimed at achieving sustainable forest management and on progress towards ITTO's Year 2000 Objective. Member (producer) countries are encouraged to apply the ITTO Criteria and Indicators for this reporting. ITTO will publish the first *Status of tropical forest management report*, largely based on the national reports provided in 2004.

Regional and international processes of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

36. Some 150 countries are members of one or more of the nine regional and international processes for C&I for SFM.^{xiii} These processes develop, implement and use C&I to guide the monitoring, assessment and reporting on their forests and improve forest policies and practices.

37. There is considerable variability in the indicators identified by the various processes, but notable convergence in their criteria. CICI 2003 acknowledged the following thematic areas of SFM that are common to all regional and international C&I processes:

1. extent of forest resources

2. biological diversity
3. forest health and productivity
4. productive functions of forest resources
5. protective functions of forest resources
6. socio-economic functions
7. legal, policy and institutional framework

38. Three of the processes -- the Pan-European (Helsinki), Montreal and ITTO -- are at the stage of reporting data on the indicators:

- National reporting at the pan-European level on criteria and indicators has been done twice (in 1994-5 in the testing phase and in 1998), and a third round of reporting is underway. Data from the 1998 reports were compiled by FAO/UNECE and were incorporated into the global Forest Resources Assessment 2000. Data from the current reporting will be incorporated into the global FRA update for 2005.
- In 2003, the members of the Montreal Process developed their first Country Forest Reports on the sustainable management of their forests using the Process' criteria and indicators. The *Montreal Process First Forest Overview Report 2003* presents some of the data found in the country reports.
- Reporting using the ITTO Criteria and Indicators to assess progress toward the Year 2000 Objective (see above).

39. The other C&I processes -- Tarapoto Proposal, African Timber Organization, African Dry-Zone Process, Near East Process, Dry Forest Asia Initiative, and Lepaterique Process -- are not at the stage of reporting yet.

B. Conclusions regarding international monitoring, assessment and reporting related to forests

40. The following key conclusions can be drawn about monitoring, assessment and reporting in the above-mentioned instruments, organizations and processes:

- Reporting to UNFF has focused on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The country reporting has benefited from the simple, streamlined and flexible format that covers the thematic issues of each session, as well as the common items and cross-cutting issues. Reporting to other instruments similarly focuses largely on actions taken and progress made in implementing their respective commitments. The information provided is largely descriptive.
- UNFF has not made any specific decision regarding monitoring, assessment and reporting more broadly on progress towards sustainable forest management
- Countries report quantitative data on forest resources and forest goods and services to FAO and UN/ECE for the global FRA, to FAO and ITTO on forest products, to

UNFCCC in conjunction with the GHG reporting, and to the three C&I processes that are at reporting stage.

- Several instruments (e.g., UNCCD, CBD, CSD) have identified, or are in the process of identifying, sets of indicators for use at the national level and in some cases at the global level. The indicators may be for monitoring and assessing progress in implementation (implementation indicators) or for monitoring and assessing the situation and trends on the ground, which help indicate the impact of the actions taken.
- Developments that could facilitate assessments of progress toward SFM and help streamline related reporting include: i) a global understanding has emerged of what constitutes SFM, as reflected in the thematic areas of SFM that are common to all regional and international C&I processes; ii) three C&I processes, together involving 84 countries, are now reporting on progress toward SFM in their region or eco-region; and iii) and criteria for SFM will be used as a framework for FAO's global FRA update 2005.
- In most cases, monitoring by an instrument is based on reports submitted to the body. However, in the case of the MDGs, monitoring of global progress is based on existing data series compiled by UN agencies, thus saving countries from having to report the data a second time.

- Various types of global assessments related to forests have been carried out under the above-mentioned instruments, organizations and processes:

- i) Periodic reviews of implementation of the international instrument (done by all instruments)
- ii) Assessments of the status and trends of forest resources, goods and services, including FAO's global *FRA* and the *Yearbook of Forest Products* and ITTO's *Annual Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation*
- iii) Assessments of progress toward SFM under C&I processes, including *Montreal Process First Forest Overview Report 2003* and ITTO's upcoming *Status of tropical forest management report* represent assessments of progress toward SFM.

III. Considerations regarding ways the Forum might monitor and assess progress

A. Monitoring and assessment of progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

41. IPF/IFF proposals for action targeted at countries, CPF members and other international and regional organizations and processes, and major groups. All of these have a role in monitoring and assessment of progress in implementation.

42. Progress in implementing a subset of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, related to the thematic issues of the session, has been assessed at UNFF2 and UNFF3 and will be assessed at UNFF4. The corresponding Secretary-General's reports provide an overview of the situation globally, drawing on national reports and other sources of information, including from CPF members. In 2003, major groups were invited to provide information related to implementation to the UNFF Secretariat at the same time as countries submit their national reports, so that the Secretary-General's reports to UNFF4 can better reflect the experiences of major groups.

43. A comprehensive assessment of implementation of all IPF/IFF proposals for action is expected to be part of the review of effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at UNFF5. One of the 21 criteria for the review is the extent to which countries, CPF members and other actors have made progress in implementing the relevant IPF/IFF proposals for action. The ad hoc expert group may wish to develop recommendations on how and when these actors would be involved in the assessment process. These recommendations could be considered by UNFF in its deliberations at UNFF4 on the process for the review of the effectiveness.

44. The monitoring of progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action could be facilitated by the use of indicators. Some indicators might be identified in the process of the review of the effectiveness through the provision of quantifiable benchmarks on the 21 criteria for the review by countries, CPF members and major groups. However, the ad hoc expert group may wish to make recommendations on how a

list of possible indicators for implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action could be developed for the consideration of UNFF.

45. Another issue that the AHEG may wish to consider is the clustering of the IPF/IFF proposals for action for the purposes of monitoring and assessment of progress in implementation. Implementation of the proposals for action is intended to contribute to SFM. Currently, they are clustered around the UNFF elements to facilitate discussion of implementation at the UNFF sessions. This makes it difficult to make a link between progress in implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action and progress toward SFM. Organizing monitoring and assessment on implementation around clusters of IPF/IFF proposals for action related to the criteria of SFM, with a linkage to the UNFF elements, could help indicate whether actions taken are having a positive impact on the ground.

46. The AHEG may wish to consider the following options for the assessment of implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action at UNFF5:

- Countries, CPF members and major groups could be asked to carry out a comprehensive assessments of the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to themselves, drawing upon any relevant assessments they have carried out to date;
- Countries, CPF members and major groups could be asked to assess progress using a set (or sets) of indicators for this purpose;

- An assessment of progress in implementation at the global level, drawing upon the assessments made by countries, CPF members and major groups, could be made organized by criteria for SFM and use a set (or sets) of indicators.

B. Monitoring and assessment of progress toward sustainable forest management

47. Criteria and indicators for SFM were developed as tools for forest policy development, and among other things, to monitor and assess progress toward SFM at the national and sub-national levels, and are widely seen as a means of monitoring and assessing SFM at the regional and global levels. IPF and IPF encouraged countries to develop and implement C&I for SFM as a basis for reviewing, monitoring and reporting national trends in the state of forests, as well as progress on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

48. The AHEG may wish to consider options for UNFF to use criteria and indicators for monitoring SFM. One option would be to use a global set of criteria or a global set of criteria and core indicators based upon those in existing regional and international C&I processes. Another option would be to encourage monitoring and assessment of progress at the regional or eco-regional level through existing C&I processes. This would require continued efforts to strengthen the capacity of countries to use criteria and indicators for monitoring and assessing progress.

IV. Considerations regarding an outline for voluntary reporting to the Forum and options for drawing on the reports to identify trends and lessons learned

A. Reporting on progress in implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action

49. Table 1 gives a picture of reporting to UNFF between 2002-2004 by countries, CPF members, and major groups. It also indicates possible options for these entities to report to UNFF5, based upon the discussion of monitoring and assessment in section III.

Table 1: Current reporting and options for reporting in 2005 to UNFF

Entity	Reporting to UNFF in 2002, 2003 and 2004	Options for reporting at 2005
Countries	National reports on the implementation of the PfA related to the thematic issues of the UNFF session (2002, 2003, 2004)	Report of national implementation of all relevant PfA Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation and updating of existing information from national reports to UNFF

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National reporting for the review of the effectiveness, from which information on implementation of PfA could be extracted
Major groups	Reports for the MSD (2002, 2003, 2004)	Report of national implementation of all relevant PfA
CPF member organizations	CPF Framework (2002, 2003, 2004)	<p>A report on implementation of all PfA and UNFF decisions related to CPF members – compiled for the review of the effectiveness</p> <p>CPF Framework 2005 reporting on joint CPF member’s activities and summarizing information provided for the review of the effectiveness</p>

50. The suggested formats for national reporting to UNFF3 and UNFF4 focus on the thematic issues of each session and the common items and cross-cutting in the context of the thematic issues. The format was explicitly designed to draw out experiences and lessons learned in implementation as well as to identify constraints and emerging issues. The suggested reporting format provides a basis for the identification of lessons learned, but the identification of trends is more difficult. The identification of trends could be facilitated by the adoption of indicators and subsequent reporting against the indicators. Developing a means of being able to electronically sort the information in national reports, all of which are made available on the UNFF website, would also facilitate identifying lessons learned and trends.

B. Reporting on progress toward sustainable forest management

51. Monitoring and assessment of progress toward SFM at the global level rely upon data and information from countries, provided either directly or indirectly. Reporting to UNFF5 could be considered so as to have a base for monitoring from then on. There are at least three different options for reporting on progress toward SFM during the 2000-2005 period of UNFF, in line with

- Countries could report to UNFF on a global set of indicators for SFM, on the basis of which the UNFF Secretariat could prepare a report on the global situation
- The criteria and indicators processes that are at the stage of reporting could provide their reports to UNFF

- A report of global progress toward SFM could be compiled by the UNFF Secretariat based upon existing information.

C. Issues to consider for future reporting related to forests

52. The periodicity of country, CPF members and major group reporting to UNFF as well as the content of their reports submitted to UNFF sessions are determined the Forum's multi-year programme of work. The periodicity and content of future reporting on forests will have to be examined in light of decisions made at UNFF5 regarding future international arrangements on forests.

53. Decisions related to future reporting on forests should take into consideration the opportunities for streamlining reporting, as stressed by UNFF. The areas for potential streamlining of reporting or reducing the burden of reporting could include:

- i) information on implementation of commitments made; and
- ii) information on forest resources, products and services as well as on forest-related policy and institutional frameworks.

A successful example of a joint questionnaire is the ITTO/UNECE/FAO/EUROSTAT Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ), where countries provide the information on production and trade of wood products only once but the organizations involved use the information in various ways for reporting to their own constituencies. Drawing from a

common set of information will not only reduce the reporting burden on countries, but will enhance consistency in the data and information.

V. Capacity building in countries for monitoring, assessment and reporting

54. IPF and IFF recognized the need to strengthen capacity for national data collection, analysis and reporting, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with the primary objective of improving decision-making and policy and programme development related to forests.^{xiv} They also identified the need for greater coordination and cooperation within and among countries and with international organizations and instruments for periodic and timely collection, review, synthesis and utilization of forest-related information.

55. Various efforts are being made to strengthen capacities in developing countries to monitor, assess and report on forests. Information will be provided in the Secretary-General's report for UNFF4 on monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions, under the agenda item "implementation of the proposals for action of IPF/IFF and the plan of action of UNFF". Some examples include:

- FAO assists developing countries strengthen their capacity in monitoring, assessment and reporting through the global FRA programme, regional forest sector outlook studies, various regional criteria and indicators processes, and, along with other partners, through the National Forest Programme Facility.

- ITTO has funded projects in member countries to assist the development of national forest statistical information systems, has conducted national training courses in the implementation of the ITTO C&I, and has provided support to countries to prepare their first national reports using the C&I based reporting format
- UNFCCC has supported capacity building for information collection, analysis and dissemination for forest-related carbon inventories
- CIFOR has played a significant role in capacity building through its work on criteria and indicators, including through country-level testing and training
- The World Bank has supported capacity strengthening efforts for forest data and information through projects in many countries
- The Global Environmental Facility has provided funding to strengthen country capacity in the collection, dissemination and analysis of forest information as a component of projects related to biodiversity, climate change and land degradation
- UNDP is providing technical support to countries for monitoring progress and preparing MGDRs and helps them seek financial assistance for the preparation and distribution of MGDRs.

56. Despite these and other efforts, recognition of the need for intensified efforts to strengthen countries' capacity in MAR is reflected in several IPF/IFF proposals for action and UNFF resolutions^{xv}. Three recent meetings have made recommendations on strengthening country capacity related to inventory of forest resources and forest-related monitoring and assessment: the CICI 2003, a meeting of the Working Group of the

Montreal Process held in Quebec City in September 2003 and Kotka IV in July 2002^{xvi}
(see box 1).

Box 1:

Recommendations from recent meetings related to strengthening country capacity in monitoring, assessment and reporting

- Countries with limited capacity consider starting with an easily measured and understood core set of indicators and expand gradually to cover other indicators of sustainable forest management;
- Countries and criteria and indicator processes seek support for their work on criteria and indicators through FAO, ITTO, the Global Environment Facility and other relevant organizations and mechanisms. In this regard, the donor community should support the efforts of developing countries, including by providing financial support, technology and know-how;
- Criteria and indicator processes and their member countries strengthen cooperation, including South-South and North-South cooperation, by sharing of experiences and know-how, for example, through joint meetings, workshops, ministerial conferences, e-mail networks and other appropriate mechanisms;
- Countries and processes should use existing mechanisms and fora to enhance collaboration and coordination among the criteria and indicator processes, including to fostering capacity building;

- Criteria and indicators processes should review, refine and share data, and develop strategies to help countries mobilize resources to collect needed data;
- Criteria and indicator processes should increase communication, collaboration and cooperation among its members;
- Universities and other educational institutions should be encouraged to incorporate the latest information on sustainable forest management in their curricula and provide skills for developing and implementing criteria and indicators including stakeholder participation, conflict management and public outreach
- National and international institutions should carry out or facilitate research on criteria and indicators that are difficult to assess.

57. Most of these recommendations concern monitoring, assessment and reporting on forest resources and goods and services. Strengthening capacity for monitoring, assessment and reporting of implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action is also needed, including the capacity to carry out assessments involving a range of stakeholder groups at various levels. Such efforts at capacity strengthening could be done in conjunction with efforts to develop, strengthen and implement national forest programmes.

VI. Conclusions

58. The following conclusions can be drawn from the present report:

- **Assessment of progress in implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action has been reflected in Secretary-General's reports to UNFF sessions on thematic issues, using reports to UNFF, among other sources of information. An assessment of global progress in implementation of all IPF/IFF proposals for action is expected to be carried out in conjunction with the review of the effectiveness that will take place at the fifth session of UNFF.**

- **Forest related monitoring, assessment and reporting is also carried out by several international instruments, organizations and processes. Their approaches to monitoring, assessment and reporting procedures are instructive for the further development and implementation of the MAR function of UNFF.**

- **The output of several relevant expert meetings since the establishment of the Forum and the work of the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting provide useful background for the consideration of the ad hoc expert group.**

- **Two general types of information are reported to the other forest-related instruments, organizations and processes: 1) measures taken to implement the commitments of the international agreements or instruments; and 2) data on forest resources, products and services as well as information on forest-related policy and institutional frameworks.**

- **National reporting to most international instruments is descriptive, focused on implementation of commitments. Efforts are underway to identify quantifiable indicators that can help monitor and assess progress in implementation and the impact of the actions taken.**
- **Assessment of the implementation of international instruments is based mainly on national reports submitted to the bodies. The United Nation's assessment of progress in the Millenium Development Goals, however, is based on existing sources of information.**
- **Reporting to UNFF has focused mainly on progress in implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action, clustered around the thematic issues as UNFF elements, addressed at each UNFF session.**
- **The suggested format for voluntary national reporting to UNFF is conducive for identifying lessons learned in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Use of indicators in reporting could facilatate the identification of trends in implementation.**
- **Monitoring and assessment of progress in implementation would be facilitated by the identification of a set of quantifiable indicators that could be used for the purposes of monitoring implementation.**

- **UNFF has recognized criteria and indicators as a useful tool for reporting on progress toward SFM and various expert meetings have identified options for using C&I for assessing global progress in SFM. Options include: i) country reporting to UNFF on a global set of indicators for SFM; ii) C&I processes that have compiled report would submit them to UNFF; and iii) a report of global progress toward SFM would be compiled using existing information.**
- **Linking the assessment of progress in implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action more closely with assessment of progress toward SFM would have advantages. This could be achieved by orienting MAR on implementation around clusters of IPF/IFF proposals for action related to the criteria of SFM.**
- **Building capacity in countries, particularly developing countries and countries with economies in transition, is needed for MAR on both implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and progress toward SFM.**

Annex 1

National Reporting on Forests to International Organizations, Instruments and Processes

Organization or instrument	Report/reporting	Periodicity/date(s) of issue	Content of reports
Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)	Country profiles	1997, 2002	Status of decision-making structures, capacity building, information, research and technology, financing, and international cooperation related to all Agenda 21 chapters.
	National reports	Annual from 1993-2002 Biennial from 2003-2017 <u>(National reports on forests were provided in 2000 (CSD8). Forests will next be on the CSD agenda in 2012-2013)</u>	Status of implementation of the Agenda 21 chapters related to the themes of the CSD session (National reports on forests in 2000 included information on: current situation of sustainable forest management (SFM); progress in implementation of IPF/IFF PfA; policy and legal framework; implementation of criteria and indicators for SFM; information dissemination.)
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	National Reports	Every four years (1997, 2001, 2005, ...)	Implementation of the articles of CBD and related COP decisions addressed to Parties. First national report: general measures for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Second national report: assessments of implementation of CBD's thematic programmes, including on forest biological diversity, and cross-cutting issues. Third national report: as second report, including information on implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity.

	Thematic Reports	Varies by thematic programme (Thematic reports on forest programme: 2001, 2003)	I. Implementation of thematic programme areas of CBD II. (2001: implementation of the work programme on forest biological diversity 2003: implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity, including: priority actions; successes; challenges and impediments)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Global Forest Resources Assessment	Every five years (1995, 2000, 2005, ...)	Data on a wide range of variables related to forest resources, forest goods and services; data published in the Global Forest Resources Assessment report.
	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire	Annual	Forest products production, consumption and trade statistics; data published in the <i>FAO Yearbook of Forest Products</i> and FAOSTAT
International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire	Annual	Forest products production, consumption and trade statistics for ITTO producer and consumer countries; data published in the ITTO Annual Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation
	Reports on ITTO's criteria and indicators	Biennial (2002/2003. ...)	Data and information on ITTO's national and forest management unit level criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management of natural tropical forests

<p>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)</p>	<p>National Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Affected Parties (1999, 2002, 2004)) Other Affected Parties (2000, 2002, 2006) • Developed country Parties (1999 and/or 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006) • Intergovernmental organizations (1999 or 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006) • United Nations organizations (1999 and/or 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of national action programmes and joint, subregional and regional action programmes: information on implementation • Unaffected: Consultative processes and partnership agreements; measures to support preparation and implementation of action programmes; Affected: strategies and priorities to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, and any relevant information on their implementation. • Actions taken to facilitate implementation • Actions taken to facilitate implementation
<p>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</p>	<p>Millennium Development Goal Reports</p>	<p>Flexible: at least once every 2-3 years suggested; the first report requested by 2004</p>	<p>Development context; information for each goal chosen on: status of progress (including data on indicators), major challenges, resource requirements, capacity for monitoring progress</p>
<p>United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)</p>	<p>National Reports</p>	<p>Annual (2002, 2003, 2004, ...)</p>	<p>Progress, lessons learned, constraints encountered in implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA related to the “UNFF elements”, or thematic issues, addressed at the session</p>

<p>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)</p>	<p>National Communication</p>	<p>The main reporting years for Annex I Parties under UNFCCC were 1994 (within six months of the entry into force of UNFCCC), 1997 and 2001, for the first (initial), second and third communications respectively. The fourth national communication will be provided in 2006. Non-Annex I Parties were requested to make their initial communication within three years of the entry into force of the Convention for that Party, or depending by the availability of financial resources. However, least developed countries can make their initial communications at their own discretion. The frequency of future non-Annex I communications will be considered at COP-9 (Dec 2003)</p>	<p>Annex I Parties: report of implementation of commitments under Articles 4.1 and 12, including: greenhouse gas inventory information; policies and measures; vulnerability assessment, climate change impacts and adaptation measures; financing, technology transfer, research and education. Non-Annex I Parties: report as stated in Article 12.1 of the Convention, information covering a national GHG inventory, a general description of steps taken or envisaged to implement the Convention and any other relevant information to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.</p>
	<p>National Greenhouse Gas Inventory</p>	<p>Annual</p>	<p>GHG emissions and removals, including those from land–use change and forestry (changes in forest and other woody biomass stocks; forest and grassland conversion; areas and rate of regrowth of abandoned land; CO₂ emission/removals from soil)</p>

Notes

ⁱ See E/2000/35

ⁱⁱ See Resolution 1/1 (E/2001/42/Rev.1)

ⁱⁱⁱ The discussions will build upon the deliberations and decisions of UNFF2 under agenda item, “concepts, terminology and definitions”. See E/CN.18/2002/8 and E/2002/42.

^{iv} See Japan Forestry Agency. 2002. Proceedings of the International Expert Meeting on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting on the Progress Toward Sustainable Forest Management, 5-8 November 2001, Yokohama, Japan. Tokyo.

^v FAO. 2002. Proceedings of the expert consultation on “Global Forest Resources Assessments - linking national and international efforts”, Kotka, Finland, 1-5 July 2002. Available at:

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/forestry2/index.jsp?siteId=1320&langId=1&sitetreeId=4180>

^{vi} See E/CN.18/2003/9, Annex: The Viterbo Report. UNFF country-led initiative in monitoring, assessment and reporting on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, 17-20 March 2003, Viterbo, Italy.

^{vii} See <http://www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-mar>

^{viii} For a more exhaustive review of forest-related reporting to international instruments and organizations see: Braatz, S. 2002. National reporting to forest-related international instruments: mandates, mechanisms, overlaps and potential synergies. In FAO, 2002. Op cit.

^{ix} See Resolutions 1/1 and 1/2, E/2001/42/Rev.1

^x See Resolution 2/1, E/2002/42

^{xi} See Decision 3/2, E/2203/42

^{xii} See Resolution 1/1, E/2001/42/Rev.1

^{xiii} For an overview of progress of regional and international criteria and indicators processes see: Simula, M. 2003. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management: overview of progress and issues. In: FAO. 2003. Op cit.

^{xiv} See IPF/IFF PfA: IPF 115c and IFF 17a

^{xv} Including proposals for action: IPF 89b, IPF 115c, IFF 17a, IFF 17e, IFF 19b, and UNFF resolutions 1/1 1/3 and 3/2

^{xvi} FAO. 2002. Op cit.