8 February 2015

Excellency,

I wish to draw your attention to the recommendations arising from the second meeting of the Open Ended Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG2) on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), to conduct informal consultation in preparation for the 11th Session of UNFF (UNFF11).

In this regard, the UNFF11 Bureau decided to hold an informal consultation on 9 March 2015 in UN Headquarters in New York to deeply engage Member States, allowing them to further contribute to the elaboration of the draft UNFF11 Ministerial declaration and draft resolution on the international arrangement on forests (IAF) beyond 2015. The objective of this consultation is to seek further views from Member States of the Forum on the elements and components of:

1- the Ministerial Declaration, and

2- the Resolution on the IAF beyond 2015, building on the proposal from the AHEG Co-Chairs, as contained in Section XII in the Annex to the Report of AHEG2 (attached).

Member States are reminded that considerable inputs on the future IAF were submitted during the last two years, including the reports of the first and second meetings of the AHEG, the views from countries and stakeholders, the Independent Assessment of the IAF, and the Chinese and Swiss CLIs. All substantive inputs are available at the UNFF website at: http://www.un.org/esf/forests/

UNFF11 stands at a critical juncture to shape the future of the multilateral policies and institutions related to forests, while also contributing to processes leading up to the Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015, the Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in September 2015, and the UNFCCC COP21 in December 2015.

The informal consultation on 9 March 2015 presents an important opportunity for Member States of the Forum to provide further guidance to the Bureau, with the view to ensure that the drafts for the UNFF11 Ministerial declaration and resolution on the IAF beyond 2015 address the priorities of Member States for the IAF beyond 2015.

The venue and time of the informal consultation will be announced in the UN Journal in due course.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Noel Nelson Messone
Chair of the UNFF11 Bureau
Minister for Forests, Environment and Protection of Natural Resources of the Gabonese Republic

To: All Permanent Representatives in New York
XII. **Recommendations by the Co-Chairs on the Future IAF**

28. In performing the mandate of the AHEG, the Co-Chairs would like to put forth a set of recommendations providing a strategic direction on the function and institutional arrangement of the IAF for the period beyond 2015. The AHEG Co-Chairs would like to invite the Bureau of UNFF11 to consider the best ways and means to conduct informal consultations between the AHEG2 and UNFF11, building on the following proposed elements and components that are proposed by the AHEG Co-Chairs for inclusion in the resolution of UNFF11 on the future IAF:

**Preambular Section**

1) Acknowledging the contributions of the current IAF, including lessons learned and shortcomings;

2) Stressing the significance of maintaining universal membership for the future UNFF, as defined in ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35;

3) Emphasizing the need for a strengthened IAF beyond 2015, building on the achievements of the current IAF, and taking measures to strengthen it, in particular, in areas related to advancing implementation and mobilizing financing for SFM/Forest Instrument, including the Facilitative Process, promoting synergy, coordination and collaboration on forests at all levels and providing guidance on cooperation among forest-related organizations;

4) Acknowledging the developments and policy decisions related to forests in other forest related fora, including the UNFCCC, CBD, CCD;

5) Stressing the critical significance of the future IAF to position and integrate itself in the broader context of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular, in regard to the achievement of the forest-related SDGs and targets;

6) Further emphasizing that the future IAF should work based on the principles of promoting cooperation and value-addition by continuing to be a universal body to hold policy dialogue on the multi-functional role of forests and all issues related to all types of forests.

**Operative Section**

*The UNFF11 resolution on the future IAF should include agreements on:*  

1) **The rationale, objective, core functions and principles to follow for the future IAF**

2) **The core components of the future IAF, as well as their objectives, functions and their roles and responsibilities:** (future UNFF, its Bureau, Member States and its Secretariat, its Trust Fund and its Facilitative Process, future CPF, regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, Major Groups, updated Forest Instrument, and post-2015 IAF Strategic Plan);

3) **Strengthening the future IAF e.g. through:**  
   a. Reaffirming the universal membership, composition and headquarters of the future UNFF, as agreed in ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35;
b. Defining the working modalities of the future UNFF including restructuring the
Forum’s sessions to enhance its efficiency and impacts;

Means of Implementation

c. Establishing an effective intersessional mechanism under the future UNFF e.g.
subsidiary bodies/committee(s)/virtual groups on Implementation and/or Financing
SFM to meet intersessionally to advance the work of the future UNFF in these areas;

d. Establishing a voluntary Strategic Trust Fund under UNFF, or subaccount within the
existing UNFF Trust Fund, whose operation to be guided by a steering
committee/executive body, to advance implementation of SFM/Forest Instrument, in
particular, through the UNFF Facilitative Process to assist countries in areas such as:

i. Capacity development and transfer of technology under mutually agreed
upon terms;

ii. Development of financing strategies for SFM, as well as national action plans
for implementation of the Forest Instrument and preparation of relevant
national reports on implementation progress;

iii. Mobilization of financial resources including by designing programmes and
projects to facilitate access to existing funds;

iv. Advancing collaboration among regional and thematic group of countries
such as SIDS, LFCCs, African countries, etc in accessing financing for SFM;

e. Consider other options such as establishing the Global Forest Fund
to support developing countries by providing new and additional financial resources in
order to achieve the four global objectives on forests, promote SFM, and implement the
Forest Instrument;

The Forest Instrument

f. Future of the Forest Instrument (e.g. agreement on updating the Forest Instrument through
an addendum or any other relevant means in regard to areas such as its title, changing the
references to “MDGs” to “SDGs”, extending the timeframe of the GOFs to 2030,
integrating forest-related SDGs and targets and the GOFs and the role of the future UNFF
in monitoring, assessment and reporting on the forest related SDGs and targets, and
reflecting on the other forest-related developments since 2007;

Secretariat

g. Strengthening the human and financial resources of the UNFF Secretariat, ensuring these
are commensurate with its defined functions;

Collaborative Partnership on Forests

h. Strengthening CPF, including through providing concrete guidance on its future workplan
and to ensure consistency with the UNFF priorities and its future strategic plan, and
through providing adequate funding for CPF;

Regional Cooperation

i. Using the regional C&I processes as a tool for implementation of the UNFF decisions and
IAF Strategic Plan;

j. Strengthening cooperation between CPF and the Regional Entities, including UN regional
commissions, with the future UNFF;

Major Groups
k. Supporting greater involvement of Major Groups and their coordinating networks by offering adequate opportunity for active participation in future UNFF activities and devote required resources for their involvement;

Post 2015 Development Agenda and Major Processes

l. Ensuring coherence with the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs, including through making the future UNFF to be a body to report on the implementation of the forest related SDGs and targets to the HLPF, including on the best ways and means to achieve them;

m. Advancing coordination and collaboration with other forest related processes in regard to GEF, the Green Climate Fund, REDD+, Aichi targets;

n. Strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting through data-sharing arrangements and synchronizing the reporting process with the FRA, relevant C&I processes etc.;

Post 2015 IAF Strategic Plan

o. Developing a Strategic Plan for the future IAF (the overall time horizon 2030 with periodic reviews in between) to include a time-bound programme of work, including a focus on priority actions which are achievable on the short-term (e.g. 2-3 years), with required resources, as well as agreed roles and responsibilities of core components of the future IAF;

4) Post UNFF11 Follow Up Measures e.g. through:

a. Establishing a working group of the Forum to propose, inter alia, an agreed:
   i. Updated Forest Instrument,
   ii. A Strategic Plan for the future IAF, and the modalities and operational rules of the Strategic Trust Fund and the Facilitative Process;
   iii. Interaction of the future CPF and the UNFF, and possible organizational matters related to the future UNFF sessions;

b. Submitting the agreed outcome of the working group to a Special Session of the Forum in 2016. The work of this working group can be facilitated by a Bureau-designated task force who will prepare initial proposals on the points 4a i, 4a ii and 4a iii for consideration by the working group.