



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN

## **Concept of the Australian-Swiss Region-Led Initiative on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests**

In accordance with ECOSOC resolution 2006/49 (Annex 1), countries have agreed to strengthen interaction between the United Nations Forum on Forests and regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes. This new principal function of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) sets to improve linkages between global and regional forest-related processes, to facilitate enhanced cooperation and to foster greater implementation of sustainable forest management and sharing of experiences, so to contribute to the work of the Forum.

As per ECOSOC decision 2007/277 (Annex 2), the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) of United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) for 2007-2015, adopted at its seventh session, invites relevant regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes to;

- address issues and agenda items planned for each UNFF session;
- provide a concise summary of their deliberations to the UNFF secretariat, prior to upcoming Forum sessions, and
- contribute to the discussions of UNFF sessions according to their mandates (Annex 2: MYPOW 2007-2015).

The MYPOW also indicates that each UNFF session will provide a platform for dialogue with regional and sub-regional processes.

In order to implement this new UNFF principal function, existing forest-related regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes will need to consider how they plan to address UNFF agenda items and pertinent issues. There may be different modalities of doing this, depending on the region and process.

This new function has not been thought out, and given the differences in regions and sub-regions, several approaches may apply. For these reasons some countries, including Switzerland and Australia, believe it is important to host a "Region-Led Initiative" (RLI). The RLI will explore how regional and sub-regional entities could provide inputs to the Forum and operate in relation to other activities of UNFF (i.e. MYPOW, Non Legally Binding Instrument on all types of forests (NLBI), International Year of Forests (IYFs)).

Several steps must be taken in order to implement the ECOSOC resolution 2006/49 and ECOSOC decision 2007/ 277 as well as the draft General Assembly resolution A/C.2/62/L.5 on the NLBI.

## **Step 1: Initial contact with key regional and sub-regional bodies, mechanisms and processes**

The UNFF Secretariat has informed relevant forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes of: <sup>1</sup>

- the ECOSOC resolutions 2000/35, 2006/49;
- the recently adopted ECOSOC decision 2007/277 on the Report of the seventh session of the UNFF;
- the draft General Assembly resolution A/C.2/62/L.5 on the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI);
- the International Year of Forests (IYFs) in 2011;
- the invitation according to the resolution 2006/49 and decision 2007/277, to address agenda items identified in the MYPOW and to provide a concise summary of their relevant deliberations to the UNFF secretariat as appropriate, as inputs to the UNFF sessions.

The Secretariat has also been seeking and receiving information as to when regional meetings will be held during 2008.

The RLI co-organisers, by a letter of invitation, will seek information from relevant forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes of their interest in participating in a RLI to explore and develop processes for contributing to the work of the UNFF.

## **Step 2: Creation of a steering group for a Region-Led Initiative (RLI):**

**Co-organizers:** Governments of Australia and Switzerland

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**Supported by:** The secretariats of the Economic Commission for Europe of the UN – UNECE Timber Committee, the FAO European Forestry Commission, the FAO Asia Pacific Forestry Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the UNFF Secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> The key regional forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes would be identified by the UNFF Secretariat based on the regional contact list and further inputs from the members of the steering group.

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## Step 3: Confirmation of logistic elements for a RLI

**Time of meeting:** 28-30 January 2008

**Venue:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Duration:** 3 days

**Location:** UN premises

**Languages/translation:** French, English, Spanish.

The 2 working groups will be held in 3 languages (one with English-French and Spanish simultaneous translations and the other in English). Plenary sessions will be held with simultaneous translations.

**Funding:** Australia and Switzerland

Attendance on the basis of invitations to:

- forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes (secretariats /heads of Executive committees/Bureaux)
- UNFF 8 Bureau members
- CPF members
- Three experts from 3 regions (Brazil, Cameroon and a Pacific representative) (to expose their views on the regions' role for example)

## Step 4: Preparation of documents for the RLI

The idea is to offer a catalysing environment for the participants (representing Secretariats of regional bodies, and/or Chairpersons/ Bureaux members, UNFF 8 Bureau members, CPF members and other regional experts) an opportunity to explore ideas on how regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes could communicate and contribute best to UNFF sessions on their successes and challenges. It should be a bottom-up approach which highlights current initiatives at the regional and sub-regional levels that have the potential to inform the global level policy dialogue and serve as mechanisms for sharing of experiences and facilitating enhanced implementation of sustainable forest management. The dialogue will build upon the outcome of the Bali CLI on "Possible approaches to enhance regional and sub-regional dimensions in the MYPOW" and the decisions of the UNFF.

### Scope of the RLI:

To promote, stimulate and enhance the contributions and participation of forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes in UNFF's work with a view to contribute to the achievement of sustainable forest management (SFM) in the regions.<sup>2</sup>

### Objectives of the RLI:

- Raise awareness at the regional and sub-regional levels of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) and the role and work of the UNFF, especially its mandate to strengthen interaction between the UNFF and regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes;
- Inform on the topics identified in the UNFF MYPOW with a view to sharing regional and sub-regional perspectives on these topics with the UNFF;
- Examine opportunities for and constraints to integrating the planned UNFF agenda items into meetings of the regional or sub-regional processes;
- Identify practical mechanisms and timelines for ensuring that the outputs from regional meetings are submitted to the Forum secretariat and integrated into the UNFF sessions, as appropriate and likewise enhancing outputs from the global level to the regional level;

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<sup>2</sup> The objective of achieving SFM is the focus of many regional processes such as the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and the Asia Forest Partnership.

- Encourage inputs from forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes to UNFF, by 1) sending written focused contributions; 2) and/or participating in the sessions of the UNFF.

**Documentation:**

- Agenda
- Concept paper
- Discussion paper

**Agenda:**

- Explanation of the rationale why UNFF agreed to perform the principal function to strengthen regional interaction between the global and regional level and what was decided at UNFF7.
- Perspectives from countries and regional organizations
- **Two Working Groups** (one with English-French and Spanish simultaneous translations and the other in English)
  - ❖ Ways to enhance the integration of UNFF topics/matters into regional meetings
  - ❖ Key priorities/challenges of regional bodies and how these link to the topics of the UNFF sessions (including any other topic that would need to be added)
  - ❖ Capacity to influence future UNFF deliberations (emerging issues, 2-way process). What kind of outcome/decision/document from UNFF could contribute to improving SFM at the regional level?
  - ❖ Modalities for providing regional input to UNFF (What type of support is required to hold regional meetings to deal with UNFF agenda items and to use reporting mechanisms to collect and organise input to UNFF).

➤ **Outcome:**

Options on:

- how to organise regional/sub-regional inputs on issues and agenda items planned for each UNFF session, including for its dialogue on regional priorities;
- applicable approaches to contribute to the discussions of UNFF sessions according to regional mandates;
- How UNFF can contribute to regional processes.

The 3 day meeting would involve a half day of plenary covering the first 2 agenda items, followed by one day and a half of working groups to cover the 3<sup>rd</sup> agenda item, and the preparation of working group reports. The final day would involve presentation of working group reports, discussions on issues raised and presentation of the co-chair's report.

## **Step 5: Australian-Swiss Region-Led Initiative on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests**

The RLI will be held in Geneva, Switzerland for three days (28-30 January 2008). The meeting will be divided into plenary and breakout working group sessions.

A co-chair's summary of the discussions from each working group and plenary session will be prepared at the end of the RLI providing participants with some options to bring to their respective forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes on approaches ;

- To organise regional input on issues and agenda items planned for each UNFF session,
- To contribute to the discussions of UNFF sessions according to regional mandates, and
- That UNFF can apply to contribute to regional process.

## Annex 1: Resolution 2006/49

<http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/documents/2006/resolutions/Resolution%202006-49.pdf>

### Excerpts:

*Recognizing* the need to strengthen interaction between the global forest policy dialogue and **regional and sub-regional level processes**,

*Recognizing* the need to strengthen interaction between the global forest policy dialogue and **regional and sub-regional level processes**,

1. *Decides* to strengthen the international arrangement on forests, by the following;

2. *Agrees* that to achieve its main objective as set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, the international arrangement on forests will perform the following additional principal functions:

.....

(c) Strengthen interaction between the United Nations Forum on Forests and **relevant regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes**, with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21 and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum.

### Working modalities

...

11. *Invites* forest-related **regional and sub-regional bodies, mechanisms and processes**, in coordination with the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, as appropriate, to strengthen collaboration and to provide input to the work of the Forum by:

a) *Raising* awareness of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests at the **regional and sub-regional** levels;

b) *Addressing* topics identified in the Multi-Year Programme of Work, with a view to sharing with the United Nations Forum on Forests **regional and sub-regional** perspectives on these topics;

c) *Encouraging* participation of interested United Nations Forum on Forests members, especially from within the region, as well as Collaborative Partnership on Forests members, relevant **regional** organizations and major groups;

15. *Stresses* that the United Nations Forum on Forests should consider inputs from forest-related **regional and sub-regional** bodies, mechanisms and processes and from country-led initiatives, as well as from major groups;

22. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations Forum on Forests will provide guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and *invites* Collaborative Partnership on Forests members:

.....

(d) to *explore* ways to involve major groups in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests activities and to strengthen the Partnership's contribution to activities at the **regional** level;

## Annex 2: ECOSOC Decision 2007/277

### Multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2007-2015

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

#### Excerpts:

##### A. Forum sessions

2. The Forum sessions will be held in the following manner:

(e) Each session will also address the common agenda items: achieving the four global objectives on forests and implementing the non-legally binding instruments on all types of forests; **regional and sub-regional** inputs; multi-stakeholder dialogues and participation; enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, including activities and inputs of Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(f) Each session of the Forum will provide, including through interactive panels, a platform for dialogue with:

(iii.) **regional and sub-regional** forest-related and other relevant processes, mechanisms, instruments and organizations;

(g) The discussion in each session will focus on exchanging of national, and **regional** experiences and activities and sharing best practices and lessons learned, identifying constraints and challenges in the advancement of elements in 2(a);

(h) Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, high-level ministerial segments, including a dialogue with the heads of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as other forest related international and **regional** organizations, institutions and instruments, will be held in 2011 and 2015;

##### B. Inter-sessional activities of the Forum

6. During periods between biennial sessions of the Forum, the Bureau and the Forum secretariat will coordinate to effectively prepare for Forum sessions, drawing on the outcomes of the following:

(b) forest-related, and other relevant, **regional and sub-regional** bodies, mechanisms and processes;

(e) country, organization and **region-led initiatives** on topics relevant to the upcoming Forum session;

##### C. Regional and sub-regional inputs and dialogue on regional priorities

7. Relevant **regional and sub-regional** forest related mechanisms, institutions, instruments, organizations and processes are invited to address issues and agenda items planned for each Forum session and to provide a concise summary of their deliberations to be submitted well in advance to the secretariat prior to the upcoming Forum session and are encouraged

to contribute to the discussions of the Forum sessions, according to their respective mandates;

8. The Secretary-General is requested to prepare a summary report based on the above submissions;

#### **E. Enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination**

13. The Forum will further encourage partnerships involving multi-stakeholders and the relevant forest related international, **regional, sub-regional** bodies, mechanisms and processes, as well as the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to develop synergies and to explore possibilities for joint activities towards the achievement of sustainable forest management, the global objectives of forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding instruments on all types of forests;

14. Major groups and other forest stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to and participate actively in the discussions of the Forum and, where appropriate, in relevant **regional and sub-regional** discussions with a view to providing their perspectives and inputs to the Forum's programme of work and engaging in an exchange of views and experiences with other Forum participants;

#### **F. International Year of Forests 2011**

15. Member States, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, **regional and sub-regional** groups, major groups and other stakeholders are invited to share information on their activities in support of the International Year of the Forests;

#### **H. Monitoring, assessment and reporting**

19. For the ninth session (2011) and the eleventh session (2015) of the Forum the Secretary-General is requested to prepare, in collaboration and coordination with FAO, in its capacity as Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, analytical consolidated reports, based on voluntary country reports, contributions from members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant organizations, relevant **regional and sub-regional** forest related mechanisms, institutions, instruments, organizations and processes, major groups and other stakeholders, making best use of existing information systems and the inputs from other relevant processes, in order to serve the purpose as set out in paragraphs 20, 22, 23. The report for the eleventh session, in 2015, will additionally include an assessment of the international arrangement on forests and the contribution of forests to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;