

Note on the voluntary questionnaire to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Introduction

At the fourth session, the Forum agreed in resolution 4/4 on a voluntary questionnaire based on the Specific Criteria. The resolution invited member States to submit the response to the questionnaire, voluntarily and within their capacities by 31 October 2004. Furthermore, CPF members and other relevant organizations and forest-related processes were invited to submit their response to the questionnaire by 30 September 2004.

The questionnaire is annexed to this Note, which has been prepared to assist member States, CPF members and other relevant organizations and forest-related processes to respond to the questionnaire. The Note includes guidance on how to fill out the questionnaire and respondents are also encouraged to consult the baseline information, which serves as a reference source to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement (IAF) on forests.

The UNFF Secretariat intends to post the submitted responses to the voluntary questionnaire on the UNFF website as they become available. The Secretary-General will prepare, well in advance of UNFF 5, a synthesis report based on the information provided as a response to the voluntary questionnaire as well as reports submitted on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Guidance on how to fill out the Questionnaire

For each Specific Criterion the voluntary questionnaire consists of four parts:

1. Remarks
2. Overall assessment
3. Quantifiable benchmarks
4. Assessment of activities

Remarks

Respondents have the opportunity to provide open-ended general remarks on each Specific Criteria. The remarks should address the role of the international arrangement on forests for each of the Specific Criteria, in order to support the overall assessment provided in the section below. The remarks could also include information, e.g. in the form of a synthesis report with illustrative examples on relevant actions or activities that are or have been undertaken by the respondent related to the Specific Criteria.

Respondents are welcome to enclose additional relevant information as an annex to the questionnaire.

Overall assessment

The overall assessment of the international arrangement on forests is in a form of a tick-box. In this section the respondents are requested to place an X in one of the following boxes: none; limited; moderate; high; not applicable to assess the international arrangements' role against each Specific Criterion.

Quantifiable benchmarks

Quantifiable benchmarks refer to resolution 2/3, in which the Forum invited countries, CPF members, as well as forest-related processes to provide voluntary quantifiable benchmarks, where appropriate, against the Specific Criteria.

The respondents are requested to indicate whether they quantify the Specific Criteria. If yes, then describe the quantifiable benchmarks used. If no, indicate possible benchmarks (if any) that could be associated with each Specific Criterion.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests

In Resolution 2000/35, ECOSOC decided on the main objective of the international arrangement on forests and on its principal functions. To achieve the main objective and carry out the functions it further decided to “*establish an intergovernmental body called the United Nations Forum on Forests*” and to “*invite the executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of other relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments to form a collaborative partnership on forests to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests*”.

In support of the IAF, the Secretary General of the United Nations has established a secretariat to service UNFF and to support CPF. The secretariat is constituted in accordance with established rules and procedures of the United Nations.

The assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement is an opportunity for respondents to give an appraisal of the international arrangement according to its different activities, such as: UNFF sessions; UNFF decisions/resolutions; Panel discussions at UNFF sessions; Country- and Organization-led Initiatives; Reports of Ad Hoc Expert Groups; CPF initiated activities; Contacts at UNFF sessions; Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. For the sake of comprehensiveness respondents are encouraged to make an assessment of these activities for each Specific Criterion. Respondents, as appropriate, may choose to select activities related to their experiences, with the understanding that the degree of influence of such selections shall not form a comparative assessment in the final synthesis report of the Secretary-General.

For each listed activity, the respondents are requested to place an X in one of the following boxes: none; limited; moderate; high; not applicable.