Combating Desertification
and the Work of the
United Nations Forum on Forests

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Forests and Desertification

• Forests are often the victim of forces leading to desertification (e.g. climate change)

• Unsustainable practices →
  deforestation and forest degradation →
  desertification and land degradation

• Forests are important in mitigating desertification, climate change, loss of biodiversity, through afforestation, reforestation and forest rehabilitation
Forests in the UN Agenda

- UNCED, 1992: no agreement on forests
  - Forest Principles and
  - Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 Combating Deforestation

- Intergovernmental bodies to address forests under CSD:
  - Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (1995-97)
  - Over 270 proposals for action on SFM

Forests in the UN Agenda

- Permanent UN body to address forests:
  - ECOSOC 2000/35 established the UNFF as a functional commission
  - UNFF is the only body beside the GA with full membership of all 192 UN Member States
  - Main objective: promote the implementation of SFM, strengthen long term political commitment and international cooperation
  - Relevant organizations were called for to form a Collaborative Partnership on Forests
Forests in the UN Agenda (cont.)

• CPF includes 14 international organizations dealing with forests:
  – Specialized UN agencies: FAO, UNEP, UNDP
  – Convention Secretariats: CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, UNFF
  – Non-UN international organizations: GEF, ITTO, World Bank
  – International research: CIFOR, ICRAF, IUFRO
  – Intergovernmental organizations: IUCN

Forests in the UN Agenda (cont.)

• Based on the five-year review ECOSOC 2006/49 decided:
  – to strengthen UNFF by adding new principal functions
  – to set four Global Objectives on Forests
  – that UNFF should adopt a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests at its seventh session
Global Objectives on Forests

Member States agreed “to work globally and nationally to achieve progress towards their achievement by 2015”

Global Objective 1
• Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;

The Non-Legally Binding Instrument On All Types of Forests

• Concluded negotiations over a decade and a half
• The NLBI was adopted on 28 April 2007 by UNFF7
• The General Assembly adopted it as Resolution 62/98 and devoted a Special Event to celebrate the adoption on 17 December 2007
Key Thematic Areas of the NLBI

- Development and implementation of NFPs
- Cross-sectoral coordination
- Governance
- Forest law enforcement
- International trade in forest products
- Stakeholder participation
- Strengthening of science and research
- Public awareness and education
- Means of implementation, finance.
- Integration of programmes of CPF
- Criteria and indicators for SFM
- Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

Desertification and land degradation in the work on forests

- IPF/IFF made several proposals for action by countries focused on D/FD
  - Study historical and underlying causes
  - Provide information on causes and create awareness in the society
  - Enhance the role of plantations to reduce deforestation/degradation
  - Assess long term trends in supply and demand for wood
Desertification and land degradation in the work on forests

IPF/IFF proposals (cont.)
- Develop national forest programmes and integrate with national development strategies to support SFM
- Secure land tenure for local communities and indigenous people
- Ensure participation of all stakeholders in all phases from planning to evaluation
- Monitor implementation
- Strengthen research

IPF/IFF proposals aimed at international cooperation
- Implement measures aimed at development-oriented solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems
- Support local community involvement in SFM through information sharing, capacity-building, provision of economic incentives and legal frameworks
- Analyze the impact of debt on deforestation and forest degradation
- Study the relationship of land tenure issues to deforestation/degradation
Actions by UNFF

- UNFF2 considered the issue of deforestation and forest degradation.
- The Report of the SG concluded that:
  - there were positive developments,
  - however deforestation and forest degradation continued,
  - further efforts were needed to fully implement the IPF/IFF PfA
  - Identified FLEG, fires and perverse incentives as emerging issues.

In Resolution 2/2 the Forum:

- Invited CPF to support developing countries:
  - to implement NFPs
  - to incorporate research in national policies
- Urged countries to strengthen cooperation on finance, TEST and capacity-building
- Encouraged efforts to provide financial resources for achieving the objectives of UNCCD
- Encouraged countries to call on GEF to approve the establishment of OP#15
- Invited countries that report on perverse incentives.
**Actions by UNFF**

- UNFF3 also addressed certain components of D/FD in 2003
- In resolution 3/3 “Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs” it
  - urged countries to strengthen efforts to combat deforestation in the context of national development programmes,
  - reaffirmed the importance of international cooperation in
    - Finance
    - TEST
    - Capacity-building

**Actions by UNFF**

- The Forum, in resolution 3/4 on enhanced cooperation, invited the GEF to consider financing projects on
  - Combating deforestation and forest degradation
  - Forest conservation
  - Protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems
  - Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for LFCC
  - Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands
  - Promotion of natural and planted forests
**Actions by UNFF**

Based on its review UNFF decided to add a new principal function relevant to D/LD:

- Encourage and assist countries, including those with low forest cover, to
  - develop and implement forest conservation and rehabilitation strategies,
  - increase the area of forests under SFM
  - reduce forest degradation and the loss of forest cover in order to maintain and improve forest resources

**Future work of the Forum**

- The sessions are built around the main pillars of SFM
- The main tasks for each session:
  - Progress in implementing the NLBI, and achieving the GOF
  - Cross-cutting issues: MoI and FLEG in the context of themes
  - Common items: Regional Inputs, MSD, Enhanced Cooperation and inputs from CPF
Enhanced cooperation

- ECOSOC invited the Forum to maintain cooperation with MEAs
- The Forum will continue to provide policy guidance to CPF
- CPF is invited to report on its initiatives
- Partnerships involving multi-stakeholders and relevant forest-related instruments, will further be encouraged
- Major groups and other stakeholders are encouraged to participate

Thematic focus of future UNFF sessions

- **UNFF8** (2009): Forests in a changing environment; Means of Implementation
- **UNFF9** (2011): Forest for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication; International Year of Forests
- **UNFF10** (2013): Forests and economic development
UNFF 8 (2009)

Forests in a changing environment

- Forests and climate change
- Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in LFCCs
- Forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas

Means of Implementation for SFM
- Decision on a Voluntary Global Financial Mechanism/Portfolio Approach/Forest Financing Framework

Thank you!

UN Forum on Forests
www.un.org/esa/forests