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Enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2011 and 2012

Information Note on the Partnership’s activities and accomplishments

Summary
This biennial report of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) provides an overview of CPF activities and accomplishments in 2011-2012 towards CPF’s two fold objective, which is to support the work of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and its member countries and to enhance forest cooperation and coordination among CPF members. As a voluntary partnership without dedicated financing, and thus facing funding challenges, the CPF made headway on both fronts during the reporting period.

There was a significant increase in CPF outputs during the period compared with those outlined in the previous report (E/CN.18/2011/11). Among the outputs were, the CPF Advisory Group on Finance 2012 Study and other forest finance-related activities; promotion of the International Year of Forests, 2011; the “Rio+20 and Forests” e-booklet; and a series of eight fact sheets on aspects of sustainable forest management. The CPF also agreed to evolve the annual Forest Day event into a Landscape Day, with the aim of addressing forests and agriculture in a cross-sectoral approach. Close collaboration in the CPF also helped lead to the adoption of a resolution on the International Day of Forests in the UN General Assembly in 2012. In addition, members of the Partnership presented the first CPF Wangari Maathai Award.

The CPF continued to develop and expand existing initiatives including the: Task Force on Streamlining Forest-Related Reporting; the forest degradation initiative; the Global Forest Expert Panels, and the Global Forest Information Service. Recognizing the importance of cross-sectoral solutions to sustainable forest management, members cooperated on a variety of additional issues, such as forest landscape restoration, forest governance and law enforcement and forestry education. Cross-sectoral linkages are becoming increasingly crucial to the achievement of forest management goals.
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I. Introduction

1. CPF Framework 2011-2012 presents an overview of the activities undertaken by the Partnership, and its achievements in response to UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) resolutions and decisions. Established in April 2001 by resolution 2000/35 of the Economic and Social Council of the UN to perform under the guidance of the Forum, the CPF brings together fourteen international forest-related organizations, instruments and secretariats1, on a two-fold objective: 1) to support the work of the UNFF and its member countries and 2) to enhance forest cooperation and coordination among CPF members.

2. To further advance its common mission to promote sustainable management of all types of forests and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end, the Partnership organized a retreat in June 2011 to define its work for 2011-2012. CPF’s work plan focused on the invitations to CPF from UNFF9 and the UNFF Ministerial Declaration of 20112, along with other developments and outputs from major intergovernmental processes.

II. 2011-2012 progress update: CPF joint initiatives in support of UNFF resolutions and decisions

3. The following section presents CPF’s achievements in support of the work of the UNFF, since its last report, presented to UNFF9 in 2011.

A. Responding to UNFF9 invitations

A.1 Forest finance

4. Mobilizing and providing access to financial resources for forests remains a significant challenge for many countries. For close to a decade members of the CPF have been working on a full range of forest financing activities to improve data collection and access on forest finance flows, facilitate knowledge exchange, build expertise and develop stakeholder capacities in mobilizing and accessing funds. Actions have also focused on catalyzing small-scale market opportunities and promoting investments, not only in wood production, but to account for other forest values and benefits as well.

1 CPF consists of 14 organizations working in association to promote the implementation of sustainable forest management: the Centre for International Forestry Research, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Agroforestry Centre, the World Bank and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

2 ECOSOC decision 2011/248
5. Given the expertise and knowledge base of CPF member organizations, at the ninth session of the Forum (UNFF9) in 2011, the UNFF invited members of the CPF to report to the tenth session in 2013 (UNFF10) on their ongoing work and future actions on forest finance, and to deepen and broaden their work in support of actions to finance sustainable forest management.

6. The CPF was invited to convene an Organization Led Initiative (OLI) on forest financing in support of the work of the UNFF and to support the implementation of all functions of the UNFF Facilitative Process. The CPF Advisory Group on Finance (AGF), composed of twelve CPF member organizations\(^3\) was also invited to carry out work during the intersessional period, between UNFF9 and UNFF10.

7. In response, the CPF convened a two day retreat in June 2011, in Orvieto, Italy, where it reached agreement on its 2011-2012 work plan, including its contributions to forest finance-related activities, the AGF work plan, and the venue and date for the OLI.

8. The UNFF Secretariat played a lead agency role in coordinating the AGF work plan which included updating and expanding the 2008 AGF study on forest financing and organizing the substantive preparations for the CPF-OLI, in consultation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other AGF members. The updated 2012 AGF study took approximately one year to complete, from June 2011 to June 2012, and involved intensive inter-agency collaboration. Contributions from FAO, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/Global Mechanism (UNCCD/GM), the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBDS) and the World Bank were constructive in preparing the 2012 AGF study\(^4\).

9. The OLI which took place in Rome, Italy, at FAO Headquarters in September 2012, was held in part due to the generous contribution of a few donors, and active fundraising on the part of UNFFS and FAO. It was attended by about 150 experts from 69 countries and 21 regional and international organizations and major group stakeholders. Nearly all CPF members attended. Keynote and panel discussions were held throughout the two days, with the 2012 AGF study serving as the basis for discussions during the meeting. As a result new work has emerged among CPF members on forest finance to address data gaps and reporting on the cash and non-cash contributions of forests.

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\(^3\) AGF members: UNFFS, FAO, WB, GEF, ITTO, UNFCCC, ICRAF, CBD, CIFOR, IUCN, UNEP, UNCCD/GM.

\(^4\) Based on the Resolution of UNFF9, input focused on forest financing trends and potentials with regards to climate change, biological diversity, sustainable land and forest management, land degradation and desertification, financial resources associated to FLEG processes, as well as the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity building.
10. CPF members’ input is captured in the co-chair’s OLI summary report and the 2012 AGF study on forest financing. In the course of 2011-2012, several CPF members also provided input and support to the UNFF Facilitative Process workshops on SIDS and LFCCs. Further details concerning the co-chair’s OLI summary report\(^5\), the 2012 AGF Study\(^6\), and results of the UNFF Facilitative Process are included in the Report of the Secretary General on means of implementation (E/CN.18/2013/11).

11. The 2012 AGF Study\(^7\) was recognized as a rich source of information for the CPF-OLI, and the second meeting of the UNFF Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing (AHEG2), held in January 2013, in Vienna, Austria\(^8\).

12. CPF members continued to provide support to the issue of forest finance at AHEG2. Besides presenting key recommendations of the 2012 AGF study, several members shared their ongoing work on this subject with participants, and significantly contributed to AHEG2’s discussions and deliberations. The need for continued support from CPF member organizations to member countries to strengthening forest finance, including building their necessary capacities at the country-level was reiterated. The report of AHEG2 is contained in document E/CN.18/2013/12.

13. Despite the successes, it is important to note that financing to carry out these requests were significantly limited, and put extreme pressure especially on the lead agency to carry out the tasks. Further guidance from the Forum is therefore needed to remedy this in the future.

### A.2. Reporting on the forest instrument and streamlining reporting formats

14. In 2011 targeted collaboration between UNFFS and FAO focused on harmonizing UNFF’s reporting formats to improve data collection and analysis, and improve understanding of the forest instrument and its implementation at the country level.

15. A series of regional workshops on national reporting, conducted jointly by the UNFF Secretariat and FAO, played a key role in this regard. These workshops, funded through the UN Development Account, aimed to strengthen reporting capacities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, by presenting guidelines and measures for implementation, forest-related definitions, and monitoring, reporting and assessment tools. Following the successful implementation of these workshops, the UNFF Secretariat developed a streamlined

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\(^8\) http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc.html
reporting format, which to date has led to 55 countries submitting national reports to UNFF. The number of submitted reports has more than tripled in comparison with last two UNFF sessions.

16. The workshops also helped to build greater awareness of the importance of the implementation of the forest instrument. This resulted in an increase in interest from India, China, Nigeria, Zambia, Swaziland, Mongolia and Gabon to implement the instrument with support from FAO, and continued support to the initial four FAO pilot projects on the implementation of the forest instrument in Liberia, Nicaragua, Ghana and the Philippines, with support from the Governments of Germany and Japan.

17. Greater support from CPF in utilizing national forest programmes and other strategies for sustainable forest management to further implement the forest instrument in the current and future country pilot projects will remain a significant focus for the next biennium. It is also expected that this work will generate a collaborative basis for further work between the UNFF secretariat and FAO to explore potential approaches to incorporate the elements of the forest instrument and the global objectives on forests into the 2014 report on the state of the world’s forests. In 2012, FAO provided a secondment to the UNFF Secretariat to contribute to the reporting-related work of UNFF and FAO. FAO will continue this support through most of 2013.

18. CPF as a whole has also continued to look at new approaches to reduce the reporting burden on countries. Mindful of reporting requests from UNFF9 and other governing bodies of CPF members, the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest Related Reporting met in Rome, Italy in April 2012 9. The meeting was hosted by FAO, which serves as the Task Force Chair, and included representatives of the Secretariats of the CBD, the UNFCCC, the UNFF and United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).10 The overall objective was to identify ways and means to reduce country reporting burdens and improve the quality of data and analysis.

19. At this meeting, FAO’s Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) program informed Task Force members of the progress made on joint data collection through the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ), produced by FAO and regional data collection partners. The potential for the CFRQ to streamline forest-related reporting, and further engage intergovernmental processes, including UNFF, to support joint data collection and analysis was also discussed. In this regard, information was shared by Task Force members on their plans to harmonize country reporting requirements, including variables and timing, in their respective governing bodies. The CFRQ is already being used by Forest Europe, the Montreal Process, FAO, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, ITTO and L’Observatoire des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale (OFAC), and the data collected will contribute to the assessment of the international arrangement of forests in 2015.

9 http://www.cpfweb.org/73035/en/
10 Of the seven Task Force members, two members could not participate: ITTO and the Secretariat of the UNCCD
20. Given the evolving needs and priorities of countries, members decided to update the Terms of Reference of the Task Force and develop a work plan for 2012-2015. This covered both operational aspects, including a roster of experts on reporting, opportunities for joint meetings and capacity building activities. It also addressed strategic priorities on the use of FRA indicators, including crafting “soft indicators” for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

21. Preparing for the 2015 review of the effectiveness, bearing in mind the pace of events and developments in other major intergovernmental processes, including the follow up to the Rio+20 Conference and post-2015 UN development agenda, will be a high priority on CPF’s agenda. Since these processes are set out to devise a new development vision after 2015, it is critical for CPF to provide both technical and strategic input from a broad natural resource perspective.

A.3 Demonstrating the full values of forests through a cross-sectoral approach

22. The CPF has promoted a landscape approach across sectors for several years, to optimize the nexus among land management, agriculture, forests, and water, and integrate natural resource issues, ensuring biodiversity safeguards, climate change mitigation as well as people’s resilience, to unforeseeable changes in the environment.

23. By promoting an agriculture-forest interface, CPF has been demonstrating the potential of forests in restoring depleted lands, supporting sustainable agricultural productivity and biodiversity preservation, while contributing to poverty and hunger eradication and to achieving a greener economy. The importance of these inter-linkages was emphasized in CPF inputs to side events at the Rio+20 Conference.

24. Agro-forestry is an overlapping area of growing attention for many sectors, and food security has served as a bridge linking energy, agriculture, forestry, environment and development sectors. Trees on farms enhance food security directly through fruits, nuts and edible leaves and indirectly through increased crop production from ‘fertilizer trees’ and increased milk and animal production through fodder trees Income from trees on farms and forests is also significant and is used to purchase food. Forests also provide environmental benefits vital for agriculture, from watershed protection, to the prevention of soil erosion, and climate regulation. Agro-forestry policy guidelines were produced in 2012 by FAO in collaboration with ICRAF to enable countries to develop and promote policies that encourage tree cultivation in order to stem forest degradation and deforestation. Complementary to this, a guideline on the assessment of tree resources outside forests was also developed.
25. Given the likelihood of increasing human population trends, economic challenges, natural disasters and climate change impacts, CPF has been attentive to how this could influence the reliance of local communities on other forest types and woodlands in different regions. CPF has begun to explore areas for cooperation, on drylands and wetlands, to enhance its work in this regard. Individual initiatives from specific CPF member organizations related to cash and non-cash values of forests are covered in the Report of the Secretary General on Forests and Economic Development (E/CN.18/2013/4).

B. CPF, Rio+20 and Post 2015 UN Development Agenda: Positioning forests at the centre of sustainable development agenda

26. In preparing for the Rio+20 Conference, CPF identified a number of activities, at its 2011 retreat, to provide country-based analyses demonstrating the multiple functions and values of forests and their contribution to sustainable development.

27. CPF’s official input, “The Earth Summit 2012 and Forests”, a contribution to the Preparatory Process for Rio+20, was submitted to UNDESA in November 2011. Given its strategic message, the CPF decided to expand the submission into an e-booklet, underscoring existing cases on how to approach 21st century challenges from the forest sector and scale up efforts in other sectors.

28. The CPF Rio+20 e-booklet was presented at the Conference during a High Level CPF Side Event, which included the current and former Presidents of Guyana, the Secretary of Biodiversity and Forests of the Ministry of Environment of Brazil, the Minister of the Korea Forest Service, the Director General of the Forestry Commission of the United Kingdom and the Heads of the CPF member organizations. The event depicted the importance of an integrated management approach and cross-sectoral coordination, providing insightful country experiences on how to operationalize the concept of sustainable development with respect to natural resources.

29. The UNFF Secretariat, on behalf of the CPF, provided substantive support to the negotiations in the Rio+20 outcome on the section of forests, during the preparatory process and during the Conference itself, and played an important role in facilitating inclusion of a consensus agreement on forests in the outcome of the Conference.

30. The Rio+20 Outcome Document stressed the importance of sustainable forest management in meeting many of the most pressing sustainable development challenges. Reference was made to the UNFF, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, and its vital role to address forest-related issues in a holistic and integrated manner and to promote international policy coordination and cooperation to achieve sustainable forest management. In this context, CPF was invited to continue its support to the Forum and through the governing bodies of member organizations of the Partnership to integrate, as appropriate, the sustainable management of all types of forests into their strategies and programmes.
31. In light of the potential implications from some of the Rio+20 outcomes on forests, CPF is actively following the debate on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 UN development agenda. At its December 2012 meeting in Doha, Qatar, it designated the UNFF secretariat to produce a concept note on this matter which will be submitted to the CPF prior to UNFF10 in April 2013, in Istanbul, Turkey. The Report of the Secretary-General on Emerging Issues (E/CN.18/2013/6) provides an initial assessment on the implications of the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference and the post-2015 UN development agenda to the International Arrangement on Forests.

C. Communication and outreach

C.1 CPF- International Year of Forests thematic issues

32. CPF’s outreach and awareness raising campaign during the course of the International Year of Forests was a unique collaborative output, which drew significant attention to a suite of forest issues around the world. The CPF Communicator’s Group, led by FAO, UNFFS and CIFOR, met periodically throughout the year to discuss approaches to maximizing CPF outreach, including through a series of CPF press releases, joint videos and events.

33. Members identified a total of 24 forest-related thematic issues which were featured in CPF’s joint press releases, throughout the twelve months of 2011, conveying shared messages on forests. The process for identifying the themes, as well as their preparation and dissemination took into account their relevance and added value to other forest-related events. All in all, the press releases delivered messages which had a strong cross-sectoral appeal. As a result many releases were picked up by broader media providers and channels of distribution.

34. The CPF Communicator’s Group continued to meet in 2012 to discuss follow up actions from the International Year of Forests, the rebranding of the CPF and improved use of the CPF website to continue the momentum gained during 2011.

C.2 International Day of Forests

35. The meaningful participation of different stakeholders in the year-long celebrations of the International Year of Forests in 2011 provided a strong impetus to continue recognizing the innate relationship between people and forests. The awareness generated throughout 2011, along with the feedback and experiences from countless people, from all corners of life, was significance evidence of the value attached to forests and their resources.
36. Linked to UNFF9 resolution on Forests and People, in 2011, the Forum recommended ECOSOC, and through it the General Assembly, to consider the establishment of an International Day of Forests to recognize the significant contribution of forests to sustainable development, the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, and the corresponding need to strengthen the sustainable management of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations. In 2011, the report of the FAO Conference at its thirty-seventh session\(^\text{11}\) supported the idea of the Day, following earlier decisions in November 1971 that endorsed the establishment of World Forestry Day on 21 March of each year.

37. Through concerted efforts and substantive support provided by the UNFFS, together with FAO, and other members of the CPF Communicator’s Group, the UN General Assembly convened consultations in fall 2012, leading to an endorsement of the 21\(^{st}\) of March, as the International Day of Forests\(^\text{12}\). Further information about the process of the International Day of Forests is contained in the Note by the Secretariat on the International Year of Forests 2011 Activities (E/CN.18/2013/9).

### C.3 Wangari Maathai Award

38. Drawing from the success of the International Year of Forests in 2011, the CPF Chair proposed and CPF members agreed to expand its joint work through its Communicator’s Group with a new initiative honouring the life and work of Ms. Wangari Maathai. CIFOR, ICRAF, ITTO, FAO, UNFFS, IUFRO and UNEP contributed to the financing of the Award in 2012.

39. The CPF Wangari Maathai Award was presented at a ceremony during the 21\(^{st}\) Session of the Committee on Forestry / 3\(^{rd}\) World Forest Week meetings in September 2012, in Rome, Italy. The top prize was awarded to Dr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha for his efforts in forming and promoting community forestry in Nepal and internationally. His dedicated work in guiding efforts to create a more participatory approach to community decision-making, reaching out to women and low-caste villagers, led to the initiation of his country’s first user-managed community forestry group.

40. The Jury also awarded Ms. Kurshida Begum of Bangladesh an Honourable Mention prize for forming a female community patrol group, alongside forest department guards, to protect the Tenkaf Wildlife Sanctuary’s forest and its biodiversity from illegal logging and poaching. Her work has helped women gain an effective voice in their community, providing them with a steady source of income. The results of the Award indicate that Wangari Maathai’s efforts in Africa are reaching other parts of the world.

### C.4 Forest Day 5 and 6 and the birth of Landscape Day

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12 GA Resolution A/C.2/67/L.46
41. CPF’s Forest Day, led by CIFOR, has evolved to become an important discussion forum and networking opportunity on forests. Its success is due to many factors, among others, effective planning, coordination and communications, acute response to the demand and availability of new information on the role of forests in the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and collaborative efforts among CPF members.

42. The past two Forest Days were critical to the UNFCCC process in many ways. At Forest Day 5, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2011, Forest Day achieved to inform the UNFCCC COP 17 agenda and forest stakeholders on ways to implement the REDD+ agreement, reached the year before in Cancún, Mexico, to produce social and environmental benefits, and integrate forests into adaptation strategies on the ground. Organizers, made up of both CPF and non-CPF members gave special attention to issues relevant to sub-Saharan Africa, to REDD+ in the humid forests of the Congo Basin, and the improved management and use of Africa’s dryland forests areas for mitigation and adaptation. Also for the first time, Forest Day 5 placed a special focus on gender.

43. Forest Day 6, held in December 2012, in Doha, Qatar shifted its approach further in teaming up with non-CPF members in its organization and delivery. While building on the success of the past five events, Forest Day 6 acknowledged the need for a landscape-based approach, focusing on synergies and trade-offs to better manage a range of resources while providing solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation. Along these lines, the organizational structure and design of Forest Day shifted to be co-branded with the Agriculture, Landscapes and Livelihoods Day, and co-implemented on subsequent days at a shared venue. A survey result of Forest Day 6 will be made available in 2013 to determine Forest Day 6 outputs and the effect of its new structure and design.

44. Against this backdrop, two major decisions regarding the future of Forest Day were announced during Forest Day 6. First, CPF agreed that CIFOR, acting on behalf of the Partnership, would join forces with the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), acting on behalf of the sponsors of Agriculture, Landscapes and Livelihoods Day, to create a new, combined event at the UNFCCC COPs that would integrate forests and forestry within the wider development agenda of landscapes for sustainable development and climate mitigation and adaptation. Secondly, CPF noted that future Forest Days would be held outside of the UNFCCC COP, reaching beyond REDD+ and climate change to encompass broader issues and stakeholders.

45. The period 2013-2014 will address important details concerning the governance structure of future Landscape Days and Forest Days in the context of the CPF’s work. While this organizational shift provides new opportunities to reach across sectoral boundaries on integrated approaches and policy measures to sustainably manage natural resources, it will require further analysis and discussion on the implications of its broader scope and expected outcomes.

**C.5 CPF Website and New Logo**
46. Building on the achievements of 2011, CPF’s Communicator’s Group identified additional activities and products ranging from joint films and video releases to a number of interviews and opinion pieces which were featured in publications, journals and articles of relevant proportion. Most of these outputs are available on the CPF’s redesigned and updated website, hosted by FAO.

47. In addition, FAO facilitated discussions among members of the CPF to select its new logo, working hand-in-hand with professional designers to ‘rebrand’ the CPF. The new CPF logo was in full use by 2011. In conjunction with the redesign of the CPF website, FAO on behalf of the CPF, and with assistance of the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS), worked to optimize existing databases and events calendars to generate and share the most relevant information on forests, and will continue this work in 2013.

D. Advancing a Common Message on Sustainable Forest Management

48. In June 2012, the CPF Working Group on Advancing a Common Message on SFM, led by ITTO and the CBD Secretariat, and represented by all CPF members, released a set of eight fact sheets on Sustainable Forest Management, in English, Spanish and French. ITTO, UNEP, FAO and the Secretariats of the CBD and the UNCCD/GM provided significant support to this work.

49. Drawing from the UN General Assembly definition of Sustainable Forest Management as a “dynamic and evolving concept, which aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations”, these fact sheets depict relevant SFM aspects, including: the multiple functions of forests, primary forests, food security and livelihoods, indigenous peoples, REDD+, biodiversity, gender and adaptation to climate change. They also emphasize the important role of forests and sustainable forest management for human well-being, sustainable development and a low carbon bio-based economy.

50. Serving as a useful reference point for many stakeholders, the fact sheets have presented a clear analysis of forests’ role in sustainable development and green growth approaches. They have helped visualise complex and often marginalized issues through real topical examples.

51. CPF has already started to identify additional SFM fact sheets for preparation and dissemination in the 2013-2014 biennium.

III. Additional joint initiatives of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

A Forest degradation initiative
52. Forest degradation is a serious problem which not only fuels carbon emissions and climate change, but eliminates habitats for plants and animals, and results in soil erosion and siltation of rivers and streams. Adding to this, forest degradation often destroys the livelihoods of poor forest dependent people.

53. Given information gaps on degradation, members of the CPF, led by FAO, prepared studies on forest degradation to identify potential parameters and best practices for assessing them. Released in 2011, the brochure “Measuring forest degradation” described persistent challenges in this field. It also provided recommendations for monitoring the state of changes in forests for the development of measures that could lead to the restoration of degraded forests and the rehabilitation of degraded forest lands.

54. In addition, a FAO working paper “Assessing forest degradation: towards the development of globally applicable guidelines” provides stakeholders with information on measuring forest degradation, using four key criteria: Growing stock and biomass, biodiversity, production of forest goods and soil erosion. FAO will include data on some of the indicators of degradation in its 2015 Global Forest Resources Assessment report (FRA 2015).

B. Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) and its third thematic assessment report

55. The Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP) initiative was established within the framework of the CPF, and is led and coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). It builds on the political recognition provided by the UNFF (ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49) and the CBD Decision IX/16.

56. The mission of GFEP is to support the UNFF and other forest-related intergovernmental processes by assessing available scientific information in a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, objective, open and transparent way and by producing reports on forest-related issues of high concern, including emerging issues.

57. In 2011, UNFF9 invited the CPF to continue to provide scientific information relevant to the themes of future sessions of the Forum, through modalities, including the GFEP. Contributing to intergovernmental discussions on climate change and biodiversity conservation, GFEP released a full assessment report in 2012 on “Understanding Relationships between Biodiversity, Carbon, Forests and People: The Key to Achieving REDD+ objectives”. Preliminary results of the assessment were presented at the CBD COP 11 in October 2012, in Hyderabad, India, and the official report was released at Forest Day 6, on the margins of the UNFCCC COP18 in Doha, Qatar. The full report has been endorsed by all CPF members, and the summarised policy brief is recognized as an IUFRO document.
C. Global Forest Information Service

58. The Global Forest Information Service (GFIS)\textsuperscript{13}, a CPF initiative since 2004 led by IUFRO brings forest-related information from a network of partners to stakeholders in a single web accessible gateway. Users of the service easily navigate and access relevant forest and tree-related information, including news, events, publications, job vacancies, among other. Data made available through GFIS has grown to encompass information supplied by over 400 partner institutions from around the world.

59. Building on a common standard for sharing forest-related information resources, data is aggregated using online syndication methods to automatically bring the latest information onto the gateway. GFIS promotes this collectively agreed upon system of web-based tools for information exchange and dissemination. It also draws on the participation of information providers and users, through capacity building measures, networking and partnership for sharing forest-related information.

60. With a growing number of information providers, CPF has benefitted from the GFIS gateway to improve the functionality of its own website. IUFRO has actively been overcoming challenges related to the evolving nature of technologies and tools for managing meta data-base information resources. Nevertheless, greater involvement of CPF member’s RSS feeds and additional resources to better manage information technology among CPF member organizations has been encouraged in 2013.

IV. Other collaborative activities

61. Given the wide range of issues related to sustainable forest management, members regularly engage in other collaborative activities, which due to the Partnership’s work plan for 2011-2012 required other arrangements for such work to be carried out.

62. Recognizing the importance of cross-sectoral solutions to sustainable forest management, several members invested significant time and resources on the planning, funding and implementation of other activities related to the Global Forest Partnership on Landscape Restoration, forest law enforcement and governance, including combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, education and learning platforms to re-strengthen CPF’s engagement with stakeholders. Studies were carried out by some members on forests, fragility and conflict, and alternative REDD+ financing regimes. Additional work included guidelines on assessing public

\textsuperscript{13} GFIS can be accessed at www.gfis.net
expenditure in the forests sector, an analysis of benefit sharing opportunities resulting from forest management and support towards the development of networks of small and medium sized forest enterprises.

V. Strengthening CPF’s working modality

63. In response to the growing number of invitations to the CPF from the Forum and other intergovernmental processes, at its Retreat in 2011, the Partnership revisited its working modalities, building on the existing ones of 2002. The importance of sustained and as high as possible participation in CPF meetings was strongly emphasized.

64. So far, CPF’s joint initiatives and other functions have been possible due to voluntary contributions from members, who assigned their staff and utilise external resources for specific tasks. However, this approach proves to be extremely difficult to continue due to resource limitations and other mandated activities of the members of the Partnership. Ensuring sustained financial resources for CPF members to support its work plan in responding to UNFF’s decisions and invitations will be critical in the 2013-2014 biennium, especially ahead of the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests. The contrary could limit the Partnership’s ability to take on additional requests, causing it to fall short or regress on significant progress already made.

65. To this end, the CPF agreed to continue structuring its work plan, depicting not only what CPF can commit to and jointly deliver, but likewise reporting on funding needs to undertake such activities. Linked to this, CPF members have been reminded of the practice set at the inception of the CPF to second staff, or contribute, to the staffing of the UNFF Secretariat. Since 2012, the Secretariat has benefitted from a secondment from FAO to contribute to forest reporting and other technical areas. This arrangement is expected to continue through most of 2013.

66. Among operational enhancements, in 2011 a Vice-Chair position and function was added to CPF’s organizational structure, consisting of the Chair, FAO, and the Secretariat, UNFF. ITTO was nominated to serve as Vice-Chair from July 2011 to December 2011 and UNEP, from January 2012 to July 2012. UNEP’s term was subsequently extended until the end of December 2012. Accordingly, at the CPF meeting in December 2012, the period of the vice-chair was revised to serve an annual term. Future Vice Chairs will be: IUFRO, 2013; ICRAF, 2014, and UNCCD, 2015. When necessary, the Chair can assign the responsibility of chairing a meeting first to the Vice-Chair and then to any other CPF member.

67. Meetings of the CPF in 2011-2012 were held back-to-back with other key events, in different locations, where a majority of CPF members could participate. Tele-conferences on targeted issues were also introduced throughout the biennium. Summary reports of all CPF meetings are available the CPF website.