

**Concept Note**  
**Ministerial Roundtable on**  
**Forests and Economic Development**  
**Ministerial Segment**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests**  
**9:00 am- 10:30 am**  
**Tuesday, 9 April 2013**

**Introduction**

A ministerial segment during UNFF10 will be held from 8 to 19 April 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey.

UNFF10's Ministerial Segment is of particular significance: (i) It is the first multilateral session on forests in the context of the growing significance of forests in addressing Economic Development and Financing; ii) It will be the first high level segment of the Forum to be held after the Rio+20 Conference and prior to the special event during the General Assembly on the MDGs and post-2015 UN development agenda in September 2013; (iii) it will be held after the adoption of 21 March as the first-ever International Day on Forests by the General Assembly and (iv) it is a timely opportunity for the Forum to begin the process of preparations for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (IAF) prior to the UNNF's eleventh session in 2015.

To maximize the available time of the Ministers and other Heads of Delegation and receive their leadership and vision, the Ministerial Segment has been organized into a High Level Plenary session and two Ministerial roundtables, with topics focused on the session's overall theme of Forests and Economic Development and the existing and developing international policy processes.

**Context**

"Forests and Economic Development" is the theme of this session and will be discussed at this highest-level event. Key issues related to this theme are:

**Recognising the full scope of forest products and services**

The cash benefits of forests tend to be better recognized, while the non-cash contributions of forests, including bartered goods, non-wood forest products, ecosystem services, tourism, and cultural benefits are largely unaccounted for - both in data and national economic development planning. When the full value of forest functions, products and services are factored in, the interlinkages of forests with agricultural productivity, soil protection, water supply and distribution, biodiversity conservation, other sectors and livelihoods will be understood and begin to be factored into policy and law – not only in the forest sector, but in economic and financing institutions, in GDP and in the values appreciated by other sectors.

## **Forests as a safety net - building resilience, reducing risks**

Important contributions of forests to economic development are not just in monetary income, but rather in the welfare they provide for marginalised and vulnerable forest-dependant communities. Forests provide rural households with energy, shelter, medicine, food, and nutritional security. They also play a vital role in building resilience against natural disasters: stabilizing mountain slopes to prevent landslides, buffering coastal communities against tsunamis, and maximizing flood regulation in wetlands.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the roundtable discussions are to:

- Provide an interactive platform to share lessons learned and best practices on sustainable forest management (SFM), as well as ways to enhance the contributions of forests and SFM to economic development, and to get support and recognition for these experiences and conclusions, and
- To create the opportunity to exchange views at the highest level.

### **Modality**

The discussions during the roundtables will be co-chaired by senior Co-Chairs (one from the North and one from the South). The Co-Chairs will invite Ms. Uma Lele, Independent Scholar and Former World Bank Senior Advisor, to kick off the interactive discussions with a keynote address. Ministers and other Heads of Delegation are strongly encouraged to engage in interactive discussions under the topic of the roundtable, as they can together influence decisions that will be taken by UNFF, and subsequently by the ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly. Prepared country statements, however, are limited to three minutes for individual Member States and five minutes for representatives of the regional political groups. Countries should indicate their preference to attend one of the roundtables through the arrangement announced in the UN Journal as of 28 February 2013.

### **Co-Chairs**

*(TBC)*

### **Expected Output**

A Co-Chairs' summary of the main issues and ideas highlighted throughout the discussions in the roundtable will be prepared and included in the final report of the Session.