United Nations Forum on Forests
Eleventh Session
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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
Regional and sub-regional inputs

**Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination and Regional and sub-regional inputs**

**Report of the Secretary-General**

**Summary**

The present report provides a brief overview of the activities undertaken since the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in areas related to enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues, as well as inputs from the regional and sub-regional organizations and processes to the eleventh session. First, the report highlights activities among relevant forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). Second, the report compiles views and inputs from the regional and sub-regional organizations and processes on the theme of the eleventh session, namely, “Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the international arrangement on forests”. Finally, the report summarises trends in activities reported by national governments and regional and sub-regional organizations on enhancing coordinated communications on forests, including celebration of the International Day of Forests in 2014.

Within the context of the future International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), the report modalities for regional and sub-regional cooperation as mentioned and/or proposed during the various intersessional activities between the 10th and 11th sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

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2 ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49

3 A/RES/67/200
The recommendations and key action points on these issues are included in the Secretary-General’s report on reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options, including the Secretary-General’s conclusions and recommendations (E/CN.18/2015/2) for consideration of the Forum in its decision on the future international arrangement on forests.

* E/CN.18/2015/1
I. Introduction
1. As one of the main functions of the international arrangement on forests (see Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 and United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Resolution 1/1), the Forum addresses issues related to promoting enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination among Member States, international and regional organizations and Major Group stakeholders, and provides guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests at each session of the Forum. The present report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the Forum Secretariat since the tenth session of the Forum, to enhance cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues. The report also provides a brief overview of such activities among relevant Member States, organizations, processes and stakeholders. A number of such activities are covered in detail in other relevant reports of the Secretary-General to the eleventh session of the Forum and in the information note on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework.

2. The report additionally showcases the points of view of regions and sub-regions regarding the overall theme of the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests, as well as on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and progress towards the implementation of the four global objectives on forests.

3. Finally, the report summarises trends in activities reported by national governments and regional and sub-regional organizations on enhancing coordinated communications on forests, including celebration of the International Day of Forests in 2014, drawing from information in 81 national reports, 16 regional reports, and 10 reports on International Day of Forests activities.

II. Cooperation, policy and programme coordination within the United Nations

A. Economic and Social Council and General Assembly

4. One of the main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, was the agreement by Member States to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). A 30-member Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly was tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs.

5. The Rio+20 outcome document, “The Future We Want”, requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to ensure all necessary input and support to the Open Working Group from the United Nations system, including by establishing an inter-agency technical support team. This UN System Technical Support Team (TST) consists of over 40 UN entities, works under the umbrella of the UN System Task Team on the post-2015 development agenda, and is co-chaired by UN-DESA and UNDP.

6. The United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat is a member of the TST and as such has been responsible for providing technical support to the members of the OWG on their forest-related deliberations on the SDGs and its associated targets, including through coordinating the preparation of the Forest Issue Brief, and preparing forest-related inputs on the negotiating documents of the OWG in collaboration with other members of the TST. Currently, the UNFF Secretariat, through the TST, is working on the elaboration of possible indicators for the proposed SDGs with assistance from the UN Statistical Commission. The UNFF Secretariat is also a member of the UN Communications Group Inter-Agency Task Force on MDGs/Post-2015/Post-Rio+20 communications, which has been set up by the UN Department of Public Information in order to share information, coordinate key messages, and develop UN System-wide communications campaigns.

B. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

7. As part of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFFS) works very closely with the other DESA divisions on various issues, ranging from policy research and analysis and capacity development to coordinated communications.

i. Policy research and analysis

8. DESA’s research and analytical work covers a range of economic, social and environmental issues and is disseminated through flagship publications and intergovernmental reports. Since the
tenth session of the Forum, the UNFF Secretariat has provided substantive input to DESA flagship publications, including the World Economic Situation and Prospects reports for 2014 and 2015, and provided input to innumerable intergovernmental reports and policy documents on issues related to sustainable development, financing for development, and environmental-economic accounting, to name a few.

ii. Capacity development

9. Capacity development is a key component of DESA’s operational work, and aims to develop capacities of developing countries to translate internationally agreed policy frameworks into strategies and programmes at the national level. In this regard, the connection between the Forum’s Secretariat and the United Nations Development Account, of which DESA is one of the implementing entities, is noteworthy.

10. The Development Account is a capacity development programme of the United Nations Secretariat aiming at enhancing capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the development agenda. Funded from the Secretariat’s regular budget, the Account was originally established in 1997, and since then has programmed 302 projects for a total budget of $181.3 million. Since the tenth session of the Forum, UNFFS has secured funding from the UN Development Account for two projects; one on climate change financing for forests, and the other on promoting implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (the Forest Instrument).

11. The Development Account project entitled, “Climate change financing for forests: reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation – plus its impacts on financing for other functions of forests worldwide”, aims at assisting decision-makers in developing countries to effectively harness funding from new and emerging sources of forest financing, including REDD+, by addressing gaps in forest financing. Its period of duration was from 2012 to 2014, and the total funding available is US$600,000.00. Further information on the activities of this project is contained in the Secretary-General’s report on means of implementation for sustainable forest management and forest law enforcement and governance at all levels. (E/CN.18/2015/4)

12. The Development Account project entitled, “Strengthening national capacities to develop National Action Plans to implement the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests” has a duration period from 2015 to 2017. The project aims to address the fragmentation among countries in implementing the Forest Instrument due to the lack of national action plans (NAPs) for implementation of the Forest Instrument. Its period of duration will be from 2016-2017, and the expected funding is US$509,000.00.

13. Finally, support from DESA’s Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation Activity (RPTC), was instrumental in the holding of the Facilitative Dialogue Workshop on the International Arrangement on Forests, which took place 22-23 October 2013 in Vienna, Austria. The meeting, which was financed with regular budget, RPTC and the “Building awareness and consensus on the inter-governmental arrangements on forests and their contribution to economic development” project resources, facilitated a knowledge-based discussion on the future of multilateral polices and institutions related to forests, and the ongoing intersessional activities in preparation for UNFF11.

iii. Coordinated communications

14. DESA’s Communications and Information Management Service (CIMS) provides outreach, web and social media services for the Department, and facilitates the use of information technology and knowledge sharing for DESA. Since the tenth session, the UNFF Secretariat has worked in close cooperation with CIMS on producing online newsletters, and in social and multi-media outreach in support of the Forum meetings and the annual celebration of the International Day of Forests.

III. Cooperation and coordination with other international organizations, instruments, institutions and programmes relevant to the forest sector

A. Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)
15. The activities undertaken by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are described in E/CN.18/2015/7, entitled, “Information Document: Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2013-2014”.

B. Cooperation with international organizations, institutions and programmes

16. Between UNFF10 and UNFF11, UNFFS participated in the sessions of the main deliberative bodies of its CPF partners, as well as of several of the regional and sub-regional entities which collaborate with the work of the Forum. Those institutions also participated in UNFF activities.

17. An important collaboration regarding environmental issues coordination occurs within the context of the Environment Management Group – EMG, a United Nations System-wide coordination body on environment and human settlements, chaired by UNEP’s Executive Director and supported by a secretariat provided by UNEP. EMG membership consists of the specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations, including the secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements. The EMG works through technical meetings, Issue Management Groups and task forces. The Forum’s Secretariat participates in this coordination body with other DESA Divisions. Currently the key focus of the EMG is on Rio+20 follow-up, the post-2015 development agenda process and the outcome of the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA). Specifically, the EMG is working on a system-wide strategy on the environment, as well as on enhancing coordination on environmental issues in the UN system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Previous examples of where the UNFF Secretariat has provided input to EMG initiatives include the work on the “Global Drylands: A United Nations system-wide response”, which was developed following calls for a UN system-wide response to land challenges, and which addresses the underlying causes of land degradation.

18. The UNFF Secretariat has participated in all the Conferences of the Parties of the Rio Conventions and endeavours to continue to work closely with the Secretariats of those bodies within the context of CPF and bilaterally.

19. An area of growing collaboration with international organisations has been in the area of forest financing, and specifically in the context of the Secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) mechanism, which has been supportive of the Facilitative Process. The modalities of this cooperation are further detailed in the Secretary-General’s Report on Means of Implementation and Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (E/CN.18/2015/4).

20. Since the tenth session of the Forum, a notable new area of international collaboration has been the issue of illegal logging. The World Trade Organization (WTO) collaborated for the first time with UNFFS through its Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE). The UNFF Secretariat was invited to participate in the CTE meeting in Geneva in October 2014, to make a presentation on the activities of the Forum which are relevant to Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), as well as illegal logging. An overview of the Forum’s pertinent mandate was provided to the CTE’s members, including key areas of work with the focus on FLEGT, as well as the main provisions of the Forest Instrument which relate to FLEGT. In addition, highlights of relevant National voluntary reports were introduced as examples of actions taken up by countries to fight illegal logging at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels.

21. Given the policy-setting role of the Forum on all issues related to forests and the policy-setting role of the WTO on trade, including as it pertains to forest products, the collaboration between these two bodies is of strategic importance, especially taking into account the review of the IAF and the post-2015 development agenda.

IV. Cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations/processes

22. The multi-year programme of work of the Forum, in accordance with ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49, set a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. In paragraph 2 (c) of resolution

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7 A/RES/62/98
2006/49, the Council agreed to strengthen interaction between the Forum on 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.

23. In the Forum’s programme of work, relevant regional and sub-regional entities are invited to address issues and agenda items planned for each Forum session, and to submit a concise summary of their deliberations to the Forum Secretariat prior to the session. Such entities are also invited to contribute to the discussions of the Forum sessions, according to their respective mandates, while the Secretary-General is requested to prepare a report summarizing the entities’ submissions. As far as the eleventh session of the Forum goes, the Bureau decided that the summary would be incorporated to the current report on “Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination”.

24. To facilitate the submission of inputs for the current session, the UNFF Secretariat prepared an information note and a questionnaire; the sixteen inputs received from the regional and sub-regional entities are published in full on the UNFF website, and their highlights are below.

A. Progress towards the implementation of the Forest Instrument

25. The submissions from UNFF’s regional and sub-regional partners make it clear that the purpose of the Forest Instrument is a priority in their work planning, organization and implementation. FAO submitted individual inputs from each of its seven Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs), accompanied by a cover note containing general comments, where it is stated that, even though the RFCs do not use a mechanism specifically designed for addressing the implementation of the Forest Instrument, their work and the guidance given both to their members and FAO are directly relevant for the implementation of the Forest Instrument and the progress towards the achievement of the GOFs.

26. Funding is a challenge to most regional and sub-regional entities, and the lack of appropriate financial resources may create obstacles to the full implementation of their work programmes. Regarding SFM financing, some entities focus on the establishment or improvement of existing national forest funds in their respective member countries. Others believe that a solution may be found in a global forest fund, to be eventually established. Finally, several entities report a close collaboration with the UNFF Secretariat in the organization of and participation in events related to the Forum’s Facilitative Process.

27. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) reported that it is developing and implementing at the regional level projects which contribute directly to the implementation of the Forest Instrument. Regarding efforts taken at the regional level to foster economically, socially and environmentally sound measures that act as incentives for the sustainable management of forests, the ACTO’s Permanent Secretariat highlighted pertinent initiatives and projects, such as: (a) “Strengthening of border integration between the regions of Acre (Brazil) and Ucayali (Peru)”, built and reinforced the government and non-government capacities on both sides of the Brazil-Peru high forest covered border and contributed to its shared governance by, for instance, promoting coordinated action for environmental monitoring and control, as well as carrying out actions for the sustainable use of non-timber forest resources by the indigenous and other local communities, and; (b) “Development of the Cosmetic Productive Chain based on Natural Pigments ‘Carayarú’ (Arrabidaea Chica) and ‘Véé’ (Palicourea Triphylla D.C.) in the municipality of Mitú, Department of Vaupés, Colombia”, which helped the development of an indigenous-created agricultural processing business to produce, process and commercialize cosmetics based on traditionally used wild and domestic plants.

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8 Regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes are referred to as “entities” in the present report.
11 http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff11.html#regions
28. The African Forest Forum (AFF) reported that it is contributing to the implementation of the Forest Instrument by providing a platform for stakeholders in African forestry, and providing technical and logistical support to African delegates in their participation in different meetings that deal directly and indirectly with the Forest Instrument. The AFF highlighted their work on fostering political commitment for SFM, through provision of sound and reliable scientific and technical information that guides decision-making processes in Africa; for example, AFF has undertaken several studies on how climate change affects African forestry, which helped to raise awareness on forests and climate change issues and to build capacity to address them. AFF collaborates with other regional and sub-regional entities in the African continent, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), particularly in the area of forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG) in the context of the Yaoundé Declaration, and the East African Community (EAC), which, together with AFF and the East African Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources (ATNR), are in discussion on a draft forest management legislation. If adopted by Member States, the legislation will contribute to further sub-regional integration in forestry and contain illegal forest-related activities.

29. The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), an organization proposed at the 15th Economic Leaders’ Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), noted that it values regional high-level cooperation in the efforts to implement the Forest Instrument. In their report to UNFF11, APFNet shared how they had worked closely with Peruvian authorities to help insure the success of the Second APEC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry, which was held in Cusco, Peru, in August 2013. On that occasion, Ministers and senior officials of 19 APEC economies adopted the Cusco Statement, which addresses the challenges related to green growth and sustainable development. Also concerned in fostering economically, socially and environmentally sound measures to promote SFM, APFNet developed a project named “Demonstration of Sustainable Upland Agroforestry Systems in Chinese Taipei”, which aimed at developing sustainable agroforestry systems adaptable to upland areas in Chinese Taipei. The project, which ended in 2013, was able to demonstrate that sustainable agroforestry can bring economic benefits, and caused the return of youths from urban areas to their villages, which became economically viable.

30. In December 2013 the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy was adopted by the joint session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission. This Action Plan describes how the forest sector in the region can lead the way towards the emerging green bio-based economy at the global level with an overall vision, strategies and a number of areas of activity, with proposed objectives and specific actions. The implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, which will also explore ways and means to measure the contribution and the progress of the European forest sector towards a green economy. FOREST EUROPE (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) also contributed to the implementation of the Forest Instrument and of the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy through exploring a pan-European approach to valuation of forest ecosystem services; in this regard, a Workshop on Valuation of Forest Ecosystems took place in Belgrade, Serbia in September 2014. As far as Green Economy goes, under action 5 of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme, a Workshop on Green Economy and Social Aspects of SFM was held in Santander, Spain in April 2014. Finally, FAO’s North American Forest Commission members believe that appropriate attention is to be given to forests and green economy, in particular through optimizing forest value, innovation and sound use of wood; green jobs and green infrastructure; supporting forest sector competitiveness and measures to increase the sector’s productivity.

31. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) input to UNFF11 highlighted that ASEAN Member States had adopted a reference framework for timber legality, which define the criteria and indicators for legal timber, as part of the phased approach for timber certification for sustainability. Some ASEAN Member States work on additional measures for a more responsible and sustainable trade in forest products through the development of a national Timber Legality Assurance System, which is the core element for the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)
Voluntary Partnership Agreements with the European Union. Moreover, under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, which set targets for the implementation of a common ASEAN market by 2015 with free flow of goods and services, the timber sector is identified as one of the priority sectors for accelerated economic integration.

B. Progress towards the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs)

32. The Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) input noted that the Commission is mandated to guide, harmonize and monitor the forest and environmental policies in Central Africa, and is working towards the achievement of the GOFs in a number of ways. At the regulatory and institutional levels, a Sub-Regional Action Plan to Combat Land Degradation and Desertification was created, together with a Sub-regional Woking Group on the matter. At the operational level, with a view to improve the livelihoods of forest-dependant people, community and social forestry initiatives have been experimented with in some countries and there are mechanisms being nationally developed to share the benefits from forest use with the local communities.

33. For some regional and sub-regional entities, new financial mechanisms are being seriously considered. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is currently implementing three regional REDD+ projects which are providing new sources of funding to support countries towards the implementation of SFM and the achievement of the GOFs. The SPC supports member countries to enhance their capacity to better promote forestry internally, and consequently attract more domestic funding. In collaboration with the FAO, the SPC is implementing a Regional Forest Monitoring project funded by UN-REDD to support SPC member countries in establishing and maintaining forest monitoring systems. Member countries also receive support in establishing and maintaining community-based forestry projects, including regarding reforestation, which will provide better income to and improve the livelihood of the communities concerned. With regard to reversing the loss of forest cover, almost all SADC Member States are members of the National Forest Programme Process, which provides an analytical framework to achieve SFM, including mechanisms to reduce the loss of forest cover. Recently, five high-covered forest members joined UN-REDD and the Forest Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF) and are in various preparatory stages to achieve REDD+ readiness in the near future. All SADC Member States see REDD+ as an important mechanism to finance SFM and contribute to the socio-economic development of their nationals. Finally, FAO’s Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – Silva Mediterranea, with a view to the Fourth Mediterranean Forest Week, to take place in Barcelona, Spain in March 2015, launched a regional reflection on the mitigation potential of Mediterranean Forests, with REDD+ costs and benefits analysis in several Mediterranean countries, the adoption of a REDD+ and carbon financing regional road map and sessions on how to mobilize new and additional financial resources for Mediterranean forests.

34. FAO’s Near East Forestry and Range Commission serve countries that are not heavily forested; in order to achieve the GOFs, many of those countries are actively involved in tree planting programmes, and as a consequence, the region has shown some improvement in the area of planted forests. Most of the region’s forests are protected; only a few actually produce. Countries therefore developed plans for protected area systems, adopted pertinent legislation and trained protected area managers and rangers. Similarly, the Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries (TPS for LFCCs) focus on tree plantation and afforestation, forest rehabilitation, limitation of forest harvesting, a forest protection programme and research on specific LFCCs’ criteria and indicators (C&I) for SFM to achieve the GOFs. Other important elements are the promotion of non-wood products, medicinal plants and community participation in forest management. Finally, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) provided a report containing input from the Secretariat and three of its Member States. ECO’s members prioritize afforestation, bans on cutting green trees, seasonal tree planting campaigns and protection from forest fires. In order to improve the livelihoods of forest

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13 As per section IV of the Forest Instrument - A/RES/62/98
14 As per http://www.un-redd.org/AboutREDD/tabid/102614/Default.aspx, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation – REDD; REDD+ includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
15 The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
dependant people, one of ECO’s members makes a yearly transfer of State-owned forest land to the population, for both grazing and cultivation of crops.

35. The Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests’ (The Montreal Process) seven criteria and fifty-four indicators provide transparent data and information regarding progress towards reversing the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM; moreover, the fact that those criteria and indicators, as well as the Technical Notes on their implementation, now provide more attention to social and environmental benefits, progress towards improving the livelihoods of forest dependant people can be more easily identified, which help individual countries in measuring the progress towards achieving the GOFs.

36. Regarding increasing the area of protected forests in Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO acts as Secretary of the “Red Latinoamericana de Cooperación Técnica en Parques Nacionales, otras Áreas Protegidas, Flora y Fauna Silvestres” (REDPARQUES). In that framework, capacity building has been provided, including via an online course about protected area management. Also, an Amazonian Vision Project is being prepared to support the implementation of a regional strategy for strengthening the national parks’ management in the Amazon region.

C. Contribution of forests and the International Arrangement on Forests to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

37. FAO reported that, in collaboration with APFNet and the Asia Forest Network, they had implemented a multi-country project and policy study on “Making Forestry Work for the Poor: Adapting Forest Policies to Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Asia and the Pacific”. The study, covering 11 countries, assessed the extent to which poverty has been reduced through forestry activities in the region. FAO also worked in collaboration with the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) on a multi-country study on “Mainstreaming Gender Issues on Forest Policies of Developing Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission Member Countries”. The study comprises preparation of a baseline analysis of integration of gender in forest policies of representative member countries of the pertinent FAO RFC, including development of recommendations for mainstreaming gender within forest policies of countries in the region.

38. According to RECOFTC, the organisation holds a unique place in the world of forestry, since it is the only international non-profit organization that specializes in capacity development for community forestry and devolved forest management. RECOFTC suggests that there are three paths to assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs: (a) To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, the correlation of forest tenure to poverty levels, particularly in rural forest communities, could be an indicator; (b) To ensure environmental sustainability, the indicators could be the proportion of land area covered by forests, access to payment for environmental services of communities, quality of forest lands awarded to communities and forest-based local livelihoods; and (c) To promote gender equality and empower women, the disaggregation of male-female data in forest communities, social inclusion and gender equity practices, as well as gender mainstreaming policies could serve as indicators.

39. According to the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat, indicators that can be used to assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs could be the empowerment of communities surrounding forests through education, employment and sustainable use of forest resources. Periodic environmental audits on forests and their surrounding areas could be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented policies aimed at reducing and reversing forest degradation.

40. FAO’s African Forestry and Wildlife Commission proposes various indicators to assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs, such as the number of forest communities trained, the number of forest nurseries established, the number of plantations established, and the number of forest areas restored. The rates of land degradation, forest degradation and deforestation could be used for the same purpose, as well. The quantities and types of non-wood forest products for livelihood improvement, ratios of men and women participating in forest activities annually, forest-related
employment generated and contribution to food and nutrition security can measure social improvement.

D. Review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests and the future options

41. In the introductory note of the report that FAO submitted to UNFF11, the agency elaborates on the role of regional entities in a future IAF. It states that RFCs have been playing an active role in supporting the preparation and coordination for UNFF sessions at the regional level. The report states that several of those bodies even have as a standing item on their agenda the consideration of developments in the IAF and reports of UNFF sessions. As a generic recommendation regarding IAF future options, the note states that, depending on the will of Member States, the RFCs can provide a platform for: stronger coordination of regional actions aiming at the implementation of the Forest Instrument; or: any regional dialogue within the IAF.

42. UNECE considers that the United Nations’ Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) are ideally placed to strengthen the regional tools for implementing the IAF at the regional level, guide the implementation and to monitor and assess progress in achieving its goals; they could also be mandated to “translate” and implement UNFF decisions and the post-2015 forest agenda at the regional level. The UNECE states specifically that the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section could be more involved in assisting countries in the IAF implementation process, in particular if the role of the RECs is formally recognized in the IAF implementation mechanism. On the other hand, UNESCAP says that in the Asia and Pacific region, with the strong presence of FAO’s Asia Pacific Forestry Commission, Member States see little added value by having UNESCAP supporting intergovernmental dialogues on forest-related matters.

43. Some regional and sub-regional entities did not/could not fully answer the pertinent section of the questionnaire. FOREST EUROPE stated that the individual signatories will provide the requested evaluation and suggestions, COMIFAC did not provide its vision of a strengthened regional/sub-regional component in a future IAF, and SPC stated that a position on the IAF review is yet to be agreed upon. ECO’s three Member States which responded to the regional and sub-regional entities’ questionnaire did so in their national capacity, so their answers on this specific subject do not pertain to this report. The TPS for LFCCs did not comment on the review per se but stated that there is no suitable place for LFCCs in the current IAF, and a revised IAF should take into account the potential of LFCCs for plantations and vegetation cover.

44. The Montreal Process responded that the role of Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting (MAR) should be improved, and mentioning the Co-Chairs’ Summary of the discussions during the first meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad-Hoc Expert Group on the IAF – AHEG16, suggested that the addition of a MAR coordination position in the UNFFS could be considered; ASEAN also mentioned the UNFFS in its submission and suggested that its structure should be improved, including its human and financial resources so that the UNFF Secretariat’s role and functions can be enhanced, especially in view of the post-2015 development agenda.

45. ACTO also refers to the AHEG1 discussions and endorses several of the points raised there, such as the need to clarify the functions of regional processes, and to look into the possibility of transcending traditional regional processes to cooperate with other organizations on regional and sub-regional actions. Moreover, regions should incorporate UNFF’s resolutions and decisions and prioritize them on their work programmes; the Forum should organize “Regional Days” to highlight regional viewpoints and showcase regional success stories; web-based regional communication instruments should be devised, and; regional meetings should be held in years when the Forum does not meet, in coordination with regional organizations. Regarding the cooperation with CPF, ACTO has been implementing initiatives in conjunction with several of its members, but none were carried out to support UNFF’s work; in the future this link should clearly exist.

46. EAC states that the strength of the IAF is its increasing recognition by parties, since the Arrangement stimulates and spearheads the international forest conservation agenda; its major weakness is that there is no legally-binding instrument. SADC also believes that the IAF should be legally-binding to enforce its decisions; moreover, it should have a financing mechanism to facilitate implementation of SFM. Regarding its current and future role in the IAF, for the moment, the SADC Secretariat only has observer status in UNFF and therefore its views are not taken into account; in the future, it should be recognized as a full substantive member.

47. RECOFTC sees the non-legally binding nature of the IAF as a weakness; moreover, they highlighted the need for cross-sectoral linkages, as many of the root problems forests face lie outside/beyond forests. RECOFTC proposed that in order to improve the effectiveness of the Arrangement, linkages should be established with different stakeholders; greater and active involvement from civil society is needed, as well as more and stronger coordination with other regional efforts. Also, ASEAN mentions that, in order for the future arrangement to function more effectively, it should develop strategic engagement with actors from non-forestry sectors such as industry, mining, agriculture, public works and human settlements. AFF specifically notes the absence of science (the scientific community) in the current IAF. In the future, the IAF and all related activities will have more impact if they are informed by technical input linking science with development, provide a platform for a more technical discussion of issues, and allow for more involvement of science based institutions, civil society and the private sector.

48. Finally, APFNet suggested that regional fora should be organized periodically to assess regional needs, review current progress, discuss the common challenges and identify the regional priorities, which are to be consistent with the future IAF. Moreover, regional and sub-regional entities may organize training workshops to help the implementation of the IAF.

V. Initiatives in support of the work of the Forum

A. Member States’ support

49. Throughout the years, Member States have supported the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests in various ways, including through the organization of activities aiming at furthering the understanding among stakeholders of items in the Forum’s Programme of Work. Those activities are known as Country-Led Initiatives (CLIs).

50. Between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Forum, two Country-Led Initiatives were organized to support the work of UNFF. The first one, entitled “Country-Led Initiative on Elements for Strengthening the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015”17, took place from 29 to 31 October 2014 in Beijing, China. Organized and sponsored by the Chinese Government, the event had as co-sponsors the Governments of Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Switzerland and the United States. The event discussed various possibilities regarding the strengthening of the International Arrangement on Forests; and its report has been published under E/CN.18/2015/11. Sponsors’ financial contributions to the event totalled US$31,459.00, with the following breakdown: China US$133,370.00; Germany US$55,500.00; Austria and Canada US$40,000.00, each; Switzerland US$22,289.00; Finland, US$20,000.00, and United States, US$4,300.00.

51. “Governing forest landscapes: INTERLAKEN + 10, Lessons learned from ten years of experience and the way forward post-2015”18 is the second CLI. Organized and sponsored by the Government of Switzerland, co-sponsored by the Governments of Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and Ukraine, the Country-Led Initiative took place from 3 to 6 February 2015 in Interlaken, Switzerland, and, besides taking stock of the various regional events discussing forest governance in the last ten years, participants discussed how forest governance may be highlighted in a strengthened International Arrangement on Forests (E/C.N.18/2015/12). The Swiss Government provided US$470,000.00 for the organization of the event.

52. Member States also contributed to the work of UNFF through the financing of projects tackling various aspects of the Forum’s mandate, including the review of the IAF. In this regard, the

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17 E/CN.18/2015/11
18 E/CN.18/2015/12
following countries contributed financially to the work of the Forum: China, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

B. Major Groups’ support

53. Contributions of Major Groups supporting the work of the Forum, as well as relating to the review of the effectiveness of the IAF are reported on E/CN.18/2015/6 and E/CN.18/2015/6A. In order to contribute to the work of UNFF11, stakeholders are organizing a Major Groups-Led Initiative (MGI) in Kathmandu, Nepal from 2 to 6 March 2015, entitled, “Sustainable Forest Management: Designing the Vehicles for Securing the Means of Implementation”. The initiative is being hosted by the Government of Nepal and financed by the Government of Germany, which provided US$675,460.00 for the organisation of the MGI and a planning meeting for the Major Groups Partnership on Forests.

VI. Enhancing coordinated communications on forests, including celebrations of the International Day of Forests

54. From symposiums and competitions to field days and films on forests, 81 countries, in their national reports to UNFF11, reported wide-ranging communication activities to promote and encourage public awareness of important forest benefits.

(a) 75 countries published promotional materials on forests, such as brochures, pamphlets, leaflets and posters. China’s Eighth National Forest Inventory Report highlighted forests’ roles in socio-economic development, in maintaining ecological security, and in addressing climate change. Guinea raised public awareness through pamphlets in their national languages. Indonesia produced posters and brochures to engage youth at schools, Guatemala and Malaysia focused on mangrove protection and training forest producers, and New Zealand and Samoa released publications on SFM, while Portugal launched a national campaign to illustrate the socio-economic importance of forests to the national economy.

(b) 72 countries reported that they had broadcasted campaigns promoting forests on television and/or radio, including Azerbaijan, Belarus, Botswana, provinces across Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Iran, Jordan, Liberia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Niger, Pakistan, Panama and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Republic of Congo, Grenada and Lithuania broadcasted campaigns on SFM. China focused on achievements of the forest shelter belts, while Yemen ran weekly radio and TV programmes dedicated to the importance of afforestation and forest and soil conservation. Bolivia promoted awareness of forest benefits through TV commercials on ‘My Tree.’ Japan ran TV and radio programmes and supported production of forest-related novels and movies with the private sector. From documentaries to public service announcements to data-sharing and international cooperation for the Montréal Process, the USA also created 45 videos showcasing forest projects for the IUFRO World Congress and a new advertising
campaign on forest fire prevention. The State of Palestine created a film about the rehabilitation of degraded vegetation in dry areas.

(c) 59 countries held exhibitions and art events, including France, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritius, USA, a photo exhibit in Mexico, and Nigeria film festivals in Albania, theatre performances in the Republic of Congo as well as an open air museum on forestry in the Slovak Republic, and travelling exhibitions in Luxembourg and India.

(d) 67 countries reported on public events to promote the important benefits of forests, including Afghanistan, Angola, Canada, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, and Russia, and the participatory preparation of Finland’s Forest Policy Report 2050 involved regional meetings and wider public engagement through an online portal. Debates, seminars and conferences on developments and scientific research in the forestry sector were held in Malaysia, Niger, Romania, and the Slovak Republic as well as annual trade shows in Canada, Kenya and Tanzania.

(e) 18 countries reported hosting other activities to further engage the public, which included tree-planting events on a national scale in Botswana, Canada, China, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, and Liberia, and reforestation campaigns in Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritania, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria and Tanzania.

55. A number of countries established awards for excellence in the field of forestry. Austria awarded individuals the Forest Ambassador prize as part of its Forest Week celebrations. Similarly, Brazil instituted a Forest Service Prize in Forest Economics and Markets celebrated on 21 March – the International Day of Forests – to support forestry management in the country. Kenya awarded sustainable livelihood and integrated approaches to ecosystem rehabilitation. Mexico issued the National Forestry Merit Award, and in 2011 Portugal launched the National Prize for Architecture in Wood to encourage and promote the forest sector. Samoa focused on innovating for the future through the Participatory 3-Dimensional Modelling process.

i. The International Day of Forests

56. In 2014, the International Day of Forests was celebrated around the world, with national activities from Brazil to Bosnia & Herzegovina and the Kyrgyz Republic to Ethiopia and Vietnam. Most countries reported forming partnerships with NGOs, research institutions, UN entities, the private sector and development actors to extend the reach of their advocacy. UN officials called on countries to boost resources dedicated for forests. Local communities and civil society organisations with UN entities together raised awareness about forests, launching campaigns on the need for investing in forests, and forestry data and its interlinkages to managing climate change.

57. As depicted in the map below, 68 countries reported hosting activities to celebrate the International Day of Forests in 2014. Low Forest Cover countries (LFCC) like Armenia, Comoros, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Yemen also celebrated the International Day. In addition to the national reports, nine countries19 shared special reports of their celebration of the International Day in 2014.

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19 Argentina, Brazil, China, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Portugal, and the State of Palestine
58. Heads of State and Ministers participated in official IDF ceremonies, including Argentina, Kenya, Madagascar, the State of Palestine, Portugal and Zimbabwe. These advocacy efforts spanned a broad spectrum of activities, and included tree planting programmes of endemic species with school children and government officials in China, Grenada, India, Indonesia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Nigeria, the State of Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Samoa, Serbia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

59. Through its International Day celebrations, the Dominican Republic recognized the contributions of goods and services provided by forests for the welfare of society, the USA focused on the importance of forests’ benefits to all citizens, while Nepal celebrated forest conservation and management at the local level, and Jamaica raised awareness of the role of people in protecting and sustainably utilizing forests. Zimbabwe focused its celebrations on protecting forests for improved livelihoods and encouraged knowledge-sharing on community-based forest management and small and medium forest enterprises. The State of Palestine emphasized the socio-economic aspects of forests, and promoted afforestation activities. Madagascar promoted the multi-functional importance of forest ecosystems, through public advocacy campaigns through TV and radio.

60. To increase community awareness and promote sustainable management of forests, Indonesia ran a TV and radio campaign, a photo contest on Facebook, and an exhibition on forests and national development, and complemented the outreach with posters and banners to promote the International Day. Samoa ran radio and TV ads, as well as poster competitions and traditional singing for the International Day. Ukraine held a drawing and essay competition with students on forests and people.

61. The Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Madagascar organized forestry debates, seminars and conferences, as did Madagascar and Portugal, along with sculpture and painting exhibits. In addition to an Expo with environmental agencies and a radio campaign, Jamaica encouraged students to express their views on forests through a poetry competition. Switzerland along with ECE/FAO hosted an art event, “Forests for Fashion”, with day-long events focusing on the contributions of the sustainable forest sector. Artists, designers and representatives of the private, business, fashion, and
61. Zimbabwe organized an exhibition on the value of forestry in food security.

62. At UNHQ in New York, the UNFF Secretariat held a series of activities featuring a week-long series of film screenings, a two-week exhibit of award-winning photographs and children's art, and a Special Event on 21 March highlighting women as agents of change for forests and sustainable development. The Special Event included a panel discussion with inspiring speakers and award-winning short films. The event was well-attended by over 100 Member States, NGOs and experts, and the live webcast by UN Web TV engaged a global audience of over 5,000 viewers.

63. In their statements at the Special event, members of the Forest Eleven - Brazil, Gabon, Finland, Indonesia, Peru, Suriname and Turkey, called for the inclusion of forests in the post-2015 development agenda. They noted that the future development agenda needs to ensure the active engagement of women in planning, decision-making and management of forest resources through enhanced support in the areas of financing, capacity building and technology development and transfer related to sustainable forest management. Russia stressed that forests need to be adequately reflected in the post-2015 development agenda, and expressed support to multilateral cooperation for sustainable forest management, highlighting the review of the international arrangement on forests as an opportunity to further strengthen the UNFF as a central platform for multilateral dialogue on forests. Argentina emphasized the importance of forests not only as a central provider of ecosystem functions, but also as a source of life and culture for local communities and indigenous peoples. It noted that forests can play an important role in implementing mechanisms of the framework of joint mitigation and adaptation of climate change in favour of developing countries. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) emphasized that improving information on forest resources is a key factor in halting illegal deforestation and forest degradation.

64. To amplify the celebration of the International Day, a 21-day social media campaign, called “My Forest | Our Future”, was conducted by the UNFF Secretariat in partnership with DESA’s Communications and Information Management Service (CIMS) and the UN Department of Public Information. It focused on each individual’s personal and unique connection with Forests. Through highly visual content, from award-winning Forest Films to infographics and ready-to-print forest posters, the campaign cultivated a diverse audience. The campaign reached over 2.3 million Twitter accounts, making over 7 million impressions on 21 March 2014.

VII. Conclusions and the way forward

65. The IAF has been in place since 2000, and this report shows how UNFF and its Secretariat have enhanced the level of cooperation with many diverse stakeholders. The current proposals on the SDGs highlight the role that forests and SFM will continue to play in the post-2015 development agenda; combined with the current review of the effectiveness of the Arrangement, this points to further enhanced cooperation with stakeholders in the future.

66. The regional and sub-regional entities’ submissions to UNFF11 reaffirm the important role those actors play and their commitment in implementing the Forest Instrument and supporting the achievement of the four GOFs, as well as the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs. More significantly, though, the inputs received give a clear vision for the future from their own perspective.

67. The wide range of activities conducted on coordinated communications emphasise the continued importance of raising public and political awareness through data and information, intersectoral cooperation and targeted communication. Raising awareness of the importance of all types of forests and of trees outside forests is an integral component of effort to strengthen implementation of sustainable forest management, and in integrating forests in the post-2015 development agenda.
68. Based on the discussions occurred during AHEG1, the Independent Assessment of the IAF\textsuperscript{20} and the AHEG2, various ways and means to strengthen regional collaboration and involvement of the regional and sub-regional organizations and processes in the future IAF have been identified.

69. The recommendations and key action points on these issues are included in the Secretary-General’s report on reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options, including the Secretary-General’s conclusions and recommendations (E/CN.18/2015/2), for consideration of the Forum in its decision on the future international arrangement on forests.

Annex

Regional and sub-regional entities providing inputs to the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

- African Forest Forum
- Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
- Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- Central African Forest Commission
- East African Community
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Economic Commission for Europe
- Economic Cooperation Organization
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- FOREST EUROPE (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe)
- The Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (The Montreal Process)
- Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- Southern African Development Community
- Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries