United Nations Forum on Forests
Eleventh Session
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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward
for the international arrangement on forests


Summary
Pursuant to paragraph 8 of the resolution 10/2, adopted at the tenth session of the Forum (see E/2013/42 - E/CN.18/2013/18, paragraph 2), the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests has held two meetings to provide recommendations on the future international arrangement on forests for consideration by the Forum at its eleventh session. The first meeting was held from 24-28 February 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya, and the second meeting was held from 12-16 January 2015 in New York. The present document will be made available to the Forum at its eleventh session, to be held from 4-15 May 2015 in New York.
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I. Background

1. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 10/2, adopted at its tenth session, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) decided to establish an Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests. Paragraphs 10 (a), (b), (c) and (d) in the annex to that resolution stated that the Group shall provide recommendations, in support of the mandate of the Forum at its eleventh session, on: (a) the international arrangement on forests, the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (the Forest Instrument) and the contribution of forests to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); (b) the review of the performance and effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests; (c) assessment of the implementation of the Forest Instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives on forests (GOFs); and (d) a full range of options for the future of the international arrangement on forests for the consideration of the Forum at its eleventh session (UNFF11).

II. Organizational and other matters

A. Venue and duration of the meeting

2. The second meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests was held in New York, from 12-16 January 2015.

B. Opening of the meeting

3. The second meeting was opened by the Co-Chairs elected at the first meeting, namely Mr. Charles Barber (United States of America) and Mr. Raymond Landveld (Suriname). In welcoming experts, they highlighted the need for the Group to narrow down the options in order to identify feasible, efficient and politically viable actions and options for the post-2015 international arrangement on forests, as well as providing views on what should be included in the UNFF11 resolution on the future of the international arrangement on forests.

4. On behalf of H.E. Mr. Noel Nelson Messone, Chair of the UNFF11 Bureau, Ambassador Marianne Odette Bibalou (the Gabonese Republic), reiterated the importance of this meeting and of securing a solid outcome that would help ensure that the role of forests is fully recognised in the post-2015 development agenda, as well as future climate change discussions. Mr. Messone attended the meeting in person during Thursday 15 January and during the closing session, and was briefed by the Co-Chairs on progress to date.

5. Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, also provided opening remarks, noting that this Forum, as the only universal, intergovernmental policy forum on forests, is in a unique position to monitor progress in implementation of the post-2015 development agenda related to forests, and to ensure the achievement of forest-related SDGs and targets.

6. In his opening statement, Mr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Director of the UNFF Secretariat said that the effectiveness of the UNFF would increase significantly if it had the means to assist Member States and stakeholders in accessing financing to implement the Forest Instrument.

C. Adoption of agenda and other organisational matters

7. The agenda (E/CN.18/AEG/2015/1) and the programme of work were adopted. It was noted there would be no negotiated outcome, and the Co-Chairs would prepare a summary of discussions, which is contained in the Annex to the present report. The UNFF Secretariat introduced the relevant documents for the session, noting that these documents were also available on the UNFF website.

D. Tasks of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group

8. In carrying out its tasks, the Group was guided by resolution 10/2 of the Forum, in which the Forum had tasked it with reviewing the performance and effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests within the context of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2000/35 and 2006/49 and the attainment of the multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007 to 2015. The Group was expected to review all inputs, including the outcome of its first meeting, the
outcome of the independent assessment of the international arrangement on forests (as mandated by resolution 10/2), and the second round of stakeholders’ views and proposals on the international arrangement on forests. It was also expected to take into account the interconnection of the international arrangement on forests with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. On the basis of this review, the Group was expected to propose a set of recommendations, for consideration at UNFF11, providing a strategic direction on the function and institutional arrangements of the IAF for the period beyond 2015.

9. The Co-Chairs invited the Co-Facilitators for the independent assessment of the international arrangement on forests, Mr. Hans Hoogeveen (The Netherlands) and Ambassador Saiful Abdullah (Malaysia), to introduce the report of the independent assessment team. This was followed by a discussion during which the consultants who had prepared the report, namely Mr. Juergen Blaser (Switzerland), Mr. Mafa Chipeta (Malawi), Mr. Jorge Illueca (Panama), Mr. Maxim Lobovikov (Russian Federation) and Mr. Ricardo Umali (the Philippines), responded to questions from experts.

10. Mr. Wu Zhimin (China) and Mr. Peter Besseau (Canada) summarised the outcome of the Workshop on the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015 that had been held as a country-led initiative from 29-31 October 2014 in Beijing, China.

11. Mr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Director of the UNFF Secretariat provided an update on the post-2015 development agenda process.

12. On Wednesday 14 January, Ms. Federica Pietracci, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and Ms. Lis Mullin Bernhardt, UN-Water Secretariat, outlined the role and modalities of UN-Water and responded to questions from experts.

13. On Wednesday 14 January, Mr. Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General and Head of the Forestry Department, FAO and Chair of CPF, gave a presentation on the views of CPF Members on the Future of the international arrangement on forests.

E. Other matters

14. On Friday 16 January, the UNFF Secretariat launched the new interactive Facilitative Process website as an online platform for accessing and advertising information on all sources of forest financing, noting that experts had highlighted the importance of the Facilitative Process and the success of its project on small island developing states (SIDS) and low forest cover countries (LFCCs) in generating a common forest financing strategy and furthering regional and South-South cooperation.

15. Experts highlighted a number of forthcoming meetings that would provide additional inputs to UNFF11, including a country-led initiative on Governing Forest landscapes – lessons learned from ten years’ experience and the way forward post-2015, to be held in Interlaken, Switzerland from 3-6 February 2015, and a Major Group-led initiative on Designing vehicles for securing means of implementation of SFM, to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 2-6 March, 2015.

16. The expert from Switzerland announced that she was facilitating the work of an informal group that was examining the proposed SDGs/targets and their relationship to the GOFs; she invited other experts to contact her if they wished to participate.

F. Attendance and participation

17. The meeting was attended by 135 government-designated experts, from 79 countries, and 27 other experts designated by member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), other international and regional organizations, regional processes and major groups as well as the independent experts. A full list of participants will be issued as a separate document and posted on the UNFF website.
III. Outcome of the second meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG2)

18. The outcome of the meeting includes the summary by the Co-Chairs of the discussions that took place; the Group took note of this summary, as contained in the Annex to the present report. The present report was adopted by the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group at its closing plenary session on Friday 16 January 2015, and will be transmitted to the Forum at its eleventh session.

IV. Closing of the second meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group

19. During the closing session of the meeting, the expert from Latvia expressed his thanks to the Co-Chairs for the way in which they had conducted the two meetings of the Group, and other experts concurred by acclamation. Adding his thanks, the Bureau Chair, Mr Messone, informed experts that their discussions had laid important foundations for the deliberations at UNFF11, and that the Bureau would be meeting immediately after the meeting to discuss next steps.
ANNEX

CO-CHAIRS’ SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Introduction

1. This Co-Chairs’ summary reflects discussions during the plenary sessions and in the two Working Groups. There was emerging convergence of views among experts on a number of topics; however, as also noted below, there were issues where further discussion is required to explore ways in which differences might be narrowed. Some experts also mentioned the need for a fresh start in discussing all options. In their view, there is an opportunity for re-thinking to address shortcomings of the existing arrangement, such as inadequate implementation and inadequate linkages and coherence with other global forest-related policy fora.

II. Opening session

2. Key messages from the opening statements included the following:

   a. We have an unprecedented and positive basis to shape a solid post-2015 IAF at UNFF11.

   b. The intersessional activities highlighted the fact that the commonalities among countries on the way forward for the post-2015 IAF are more than at any time before.

   c. The pace of developments at the international level has never been as conducive as today to integrate forests into other major processes.

   d. A strong outcome of AHEG2, and solid outcomes of UNFF11 on the future IAF, would lead to higher placement of forests both in the post-2015 development agenda and the new climate change agenda.

   e. It is of vital importance to keep in mind that the UNFF11 resolution should be the framework for concrete agreements on the design, function, and future direction of all components of the IAF.

   f. Further consultations to agree details can be done in the intersessional period, after the September 2015 Summit and the December 2015 UNFCCC Paris COP, to ensure full coherence with the post-2015 development agenda outcome and the new climate change agreement.

   g. The integration of forests in the SDGs is important, in particular for the role this defines, for the forest sector and community, in implementing sustainable development around the world.

   h. UNFF, as the only universal, intergovernmental policy forum on forests, is in a unique position to monitor progress in implementation of the post-2015 development agenda related to forests, and to ensure the achievement of forest-related SDGs and targets in the post-2015 development agenda.

   i. Whatever form the future IAF takes, it should have a strengthened role in advancing implementation of SFM and in facilitating access to existing forest-related funds, in particular the GEF and the Green Climate Fund.
III. Discussion following presentation on the Report of the IAF Independent Assessment

3. Following the presentation on the Report of the independent assessment of the IAF\(^1\), points made in discussion included the following:

   a. The independent assessment team’s task was to “think outside the box” which means the options reflect creative conceptual approaches to address needs and gaps. Based on what options – or elements within the options – resonate with countries, operational issues can be further explored.

   b. The team’s premise was that there is fragmentation of forest institutional governance at the global level which is mirrored at the national level where different ministries and agencies have responsibilities for different aspects of forests.

   c. The team originally considered 10 options for the post-2015 IAF. The four options\(^2\) selected are all UN-DESA based and the most feasible and closest to the current arrangement. The other options require that another organization agrees on a mandate to pursue the option, which may not be realistic.

   d. The concept of “stewardship” means having the range of forest-related organizations and stakeholders working together under the umbrella of the IAF.

   e. The most difficult option to operationalize is Option 2 which proposes establishing a new intergovernmental body modelled after, for example, UN Water, IPCC or IPBES. Existing bodies and organizations would continue to have their own forest-related mandates.

   f. Option 1 has the least “barriers” to implementation. There are precedents for the approaches reflected in Options 3 and 4.

   g. Under Option 3, the dual tracks would be expected to have the same objectives and a shared overall strategy or strategic plan.

   h. The consultants clarified the intended purpose of the Special Envoy proposed in their report, which would be to strengthen political commitment, raise the profile of the future Forum within the UN, and promote coordination on forests within the UN system and with other partners.

   i. It would be useful to have a presentation of the independent assessment report at UNFF11

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\(^2\) These four options are: Option 1 an enhanced IAF that includes updating the Forest Instrument, establishing a UN Forest Assembly to replace UNFF, Regional Fora, creating UN Forest as a science-policy interface, appointing a Special Envoy on Forests, developing UN Trust Funds (including the Strategic Trust Fund) and strengthening the secretariat; Option 2, incorporating many elements of Option 1 and further developing the concept of UN Forests as a new institution/mechanism; Option 3, which builds on Option 1 by offering individual Member States the option of making legally-binding commitments to SFM by having a parallel political track; and Option 4, a variant on Option 3 that includes regional level legally-binding agreements.
IV. **Views and proposals on the IAF**

4. During a discussion about the views and proposals on the IAF that had been submitted by countries and other stakeholders, general points were raised about:
   
a. The significance of financing for implementation of SFM and the need for increased coordination with both UN and non-UN agencies and entities in this regard.
   
b. The need for policy dialogue and implementation relating to governance at multiple levels to be supportive of national actions.
   
c. The need for agreed objectives, functions and principles for the future IAF and for “form to follow function”. It is important to clarify the functions and mandate of the future IAF and its components, and to specify the value added of the future IAF.
   
d. The question of to what degree the UNFF should position itself as a “multi-stakeholder forum”, given both its strengths and constraints as an intergovernmental forum functioning under ECOSOC rules of procedure, and the impacts of this on the participation of major groups and other stakeholders.

5. During discussion, areas of emerging convergence included the following:
   
a. “Business as usual” is not a viable option and would put the existence of UNFF at risk, particularly in a competitive institutional atmosphere as the post-2015 UN arrangements take shape.
   
b. The substance of the Forest Instrument/GOFs remains relevant and should be reaffirmed (whether non-legal binding or legally binding). A few tweaks and updates may be needed, but there is no appetite to renegotiate the bulk of the substantive provisions.
   
c. There is a strong potential role for the post-2015 UNFF with respect to the forest aspects of the SDGs. UNFF could position itself to be the body reviewing forest-related elements of the SDGs and providing the review outcomes to High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
   
d. CPF retains vitality, is a good idea, and is a needed coordination and catalyzing institution. However, there is scope to improve it.
   
e. Coordination and dialogue across proliferating UN and other international institutions dealing with forests is an important role for UNFF/IAF. However, there is no hierarchy between the UNFF and other forest-related institutions and processes; therefore UNFF cannot control such institutions and processes, which have their own political mandates and governing bodies.
   
f. UNFF needs a plan (whether it is called a “strategic plan”, “MYPOW” or something else). A roadmap is needed to say where we are going, why that is important to the wider world, and how we are going to get there.
g. Challenges on the ground include forest finance, which remains key; the focus now is not only on mobilizing new and additional financial resources but also on improving the ability to access them, including making better use of existing finance, and ensuring that it flows to a complete range of forest needs (e.g. not just REDD+), along with ensuring that it is utilized effectively.

h. The four options presented by the IAF independent assessment report represent a useful summary of possible options and actions and provide a useful input for discussions, although the discussion should necessarily not be limited to those four options.

6. Areas where there seemed to be differences of views at this stage included:
   a. The future legal character of the post-2015 IAF (the legally binding instrument question).
   b. The desirable degree of regionalization and role assumed by regional organizations and processes.
   c. The degree to which UNFF should focus on promoting, reviewing, or actually doing “implementation” versus focusing on policy dialogue and coordination.
   d. The types of concrete institutional changes that might be needed, including UNFA, “UN Forest”, a Special Envoy, and potential financial mechanisms.

V. The Forest Instrument after 2015: Proposed actions and options

7. Areas of emerging convergence during discussions in Working Group 1 and/or Working Group 2 included the following:
   a. Need to better promote and strengthen the visibility of the Forest Instrument and its GOFs; this could include e.g. changing the title of the instrument to a more dynamic one which would send a more positive message, improve communication and facilitate wider understanding of the instrument.
   b. Need to update the Forest Instrument, including by replacing references to MDGs with SDGs and extending the timeframe of the GOFs to e.g. 2030. Further updates to the text should be approached with caution to avoid re-opening negotiations on the substantive text of the Forest Instrument.
   c. A resolution, addendum to the Forest Instrument or the strategic plan could address forest-related developments since 2007, and also highlight the importance of cross-sectoral approaches in addressing deforestation and serve as a basis for inter-sectoral discussions.
   d. Need to establish a clear link between the Forest Instrument and the SDGs/post-2015 development agenda (including clear time-bound targets) and explore how to do this.
   e. A concise strategic plan or similar strategy could be a useful way to focus the work of the IAF, set priorities (including low cost-high value actions), and increase visibility for implementation of the Forest Instrument. Each country could develop its own strategy based on the global strategy.
8. Additional views and proposals put forward by experts included the following:
   a. Developing an addendum could be a useful way to address forest-related developments since 2007 (e.g. SDGs and role of forests in the sustainable development agenda, REDD+ and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, etc.)

   b. Ways of updating the Forest Instrument other than through an addendum should be explored, e.g. updating in the context of a strategic plan or Forum resolution.

   c. It would be useful to have a strategy or mechanism to upscale lessons learned and successes from pilot implementation of the Forest Instrument, as well as to create guidelines on how to implement the instrument.

   d. The four options put forward in the independent assessment report are a point of departure, in addition to other options. Their elements are not a package and can be looked at individually.

   e. Options 1, 3 and 4 are not mutually exclusive and could be pursued in a mutually supporting way.

   f. If Option 4 is considered, regional strategies, including legally binding commitments, could be encouraged under the umbrella of the Forest Instrument, which would build on existing agreements and conventions.

   g. There is a need to promote a common understanding of SFM, including across CPF member organizations, as well as a global set of SFM indicators supported by all.

   h. Need a practical mechanism to catalyze implementation of the Forest Instrument, SFM and other decisions of the Forum, including by building/influencing political will, building capacity within countries, and involving local and indigenous communities.

9. Remaining areas of difference included the issue of whether transitioning the Forest Instrument to a legally-binding agreement would ultimately benefit implementation of SFM on the ground.

VI. Implementation and financing of SFM after 2015: Proposed actions and options

Financing of SFM after 2015

10. Areas of emerging convergence during discussions in Working Group 1 and/or Working Group 2 included the following:
   a. The UNFF should form closer ties to all existing financing mechanisms to promote coherence, and to allow and improve access by countries to forest funding.
b. Funding the institutional aspects of the IAF is a separate issue from funding efforts to implement SFM on the ground. Both should be strengthened under the future IAF.

c. The Facilitative Process, including staffing capacity, could be strengthened as a catalytic mechanism, building on experiences to date and to realize its full potential.

d. The Facilitative Process could advise and assist countries in: developing short-, medium- and long-term financing strategies for implementing SFM/the Forest Instrument/GOFs; accessing financing from a range of sources; attracting investment, including improving enabling environments; brokering funding and connecting with potential technical cooperation partners; overcoming financing obstacles; encouraging South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation; and encouraging the private sector to play a greater role in interconnected sectors.

e. The UNFF should encourage financing from all sources to strengthen capacity to support the implementation of the Forest Instrument, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Possible mechanisms for attracting funding include creating a voluntary strategic trust fund, or sub accounts under the existing UNFF Trust Fund. The UNFF could create a voluntary strategic trust fund to strengthen capacity to support the implementation of the Forest Instrument through the Facilitative Process, for example by providing priority support to develop national action plans for implementation of the Forest Instrument, to prepare national reports on implementation progress, and to help mobilize further resources for the implementation of SFM, including the further development of forest inventory baseline information taking into account ongoing work in this area.

11. Additional views and proposals put forward by experts included the following:

a. There is scope to improve management of the Facilitative Process through, for example, operating rules, transparency in priority-setting and governance (e.g. a steering committee).

b. The Facilitative Process should be a core function of the future IAF, and the secretariat should have the capacity to fully manage a strengthened Facilitative Process.

c. A future Facilitative Process / voluntary strategic trust fund should be flexible enough to accommodate contributions from a wide variety of sources, which may have different rules governing their contributions.

d. There is a need to clarify the enabling conditions that governments need to have in place to attract investors (e.g. transparency, secure land tenure, stable economic policies, anti-corruption measures) and recognize that creating these conditions have costs.

e. The Facilitative Process could be renamed to better convey and communicate its purpose and attract interest.

f. There may be duplication in the functions of the Facilitative Process and the proposed strategic trust fund. Perhaps these mechanisms can be merged or linked in some way.

g. The proposed strategic trust fund could provide seed money to help countries develop project proposals for submission to existing funds.
h. The feasibility of creating sub-accounts within the UNFF trust fund for specific purposes (e.g. to support CPF, Facilitative Process, etc.) should be explored since there may be some resistance within the UN to creating new trust funds.

i. Trust funds could be used to strengthen the science-policy interface (through the future CPF), as well as to strengthen the human and budgetary resources of the post-2015 IAF Secretariat in its extended tasks.

j. A clear results-based roadmap or strategy could be an important tool for attracting forest financing from a variety of sources to facilitate implementation of the Forest Instrument, including mobilizing resources for monitoring.

12. Areas where strong differences of view between experts remain include the need for a dedicated global forest fund for the IAF/UNFF.

Implementation of SFM after 2015

13. Areas of emerging convergence during discussions in Working Group 1 and/or Working Group 2 included the following:

a. On monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR), institute data-sharing arrangements with CPF partners, explore synergies and synchronize the reporting process with the cycle of other relevant processes, such as the Forest Resources Assessment, for better harmonization and minimization of reporting burdens.

b. Consider using Forum trust funds to support, *inter alia*, countries in preparing national reports and Forest Instrument implementation plans.

c. Strengthen capacity to support implementation at national and regional levels and improve coordination on forest-related matters within Member States, across ministries and between departments, to deal with forests in a more coordinated, integrated and comprehensive manner.

14. Additional views and proposals on monitoring, assessment and reporting included:

a. Engage in the post-2015 development agenda discussions and help to develop measurable targets and associated indicators for the GOFs and SDGs.

b. Use an ad hoc expert group, subsidiary implementation body or a global forest indicators partnership under the Forum to review progress on implementation of the Forest Instrument after each reporting cycle.

c. Establish a streamlined standard reporting format with a core set of indicators and a time-bound programme of work including a focus on specific aspects of the Forest Instrument, and identify sets of achievable and measurable actions (linked to the Forum strategic plan).

d. Strengthen capacity of Member States to gather information needed to establish baseline levels for indicators to report on.
e. Better understand and promote the potential role of the UNFF in the SDG monitoring and review process as related to forests.

f. Use MAR to assess the value-added of the Forest Instrument and exchange experiences and success stories.

g. Strengthen the relationship between the resolutions/decisions of the Forum and the work of CPF and have accountability on implementation of UNFF resolutions/decisions.

h. Identify what UNFF11 decisions need to be taken on MAR and what can be decided later.

VII. UN Forum on Forests and its Secretariat after 2015

15. Areas of emerging convergence during discussions in Working Group 1 and/or Working Group 2 included the following: UN Forum on Forests

a. Maintain the current name of the Forum, retaining universal membership and the status of Forum as a functional commission of ECOSOC.

b. Clarify the roles and functions of all components of the IAF, including the Forum, secretariat and CPF, as well as the roles/functions of AHEGs and CLIs.

c. The functions of the IAF could include focusing on promoting SFM and implementation of the Forest Instrument, including the GOFs and SDGs.

d. Policy dialogue/development should continue to be a key function of the Forum.

e. The Forum should have a specific role vis-a-vis other intergovernmental bodies and interact with those bodies on an equal footing.

f. Need for a cost-effective IAF that adds value, avoids duplication, promotes coherence.

g. Need to streamline and better focus the functions of the Forum,

h. The Forum should develop a strategy on how to add value, strengthen links and seek synergies with other processes, to engage actors across sectors, within the UN system and across the development agenda.

i. The future IAF should place forests firmly within the post-2015 development agenda, strengthen links with the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and use the SDGs to build bridges to other treaties and processes.
j. The Forum needs to have the power to “respond, deliver and guide” and to reach out to other forest-related processes, agreements and conventions. It also needs to be more action-oriented and attractive to non-government actors, including the private sector.

k. Make greater and creative use of intersessional mechanisms to move things forward, including through possible subsidiary bodies, informal bodies (e.g. working groups, expert groups, task forces, friends of the chairs), and virtual groups.

UNFF Secretariat

l. UNFF needs a strengthened secretariat, based in New York, as part of DESA.

m. The secretariat needs adequate financial and human resources, commensurate with the functions assigned to it by the Forum.

n. The main purpose of the secretariat is to support the Forum’s intergovernmental process. Other functions will flow from the functions of the Forum and decisions at UNFF11 related to, for example, financial mechanisms (Facilitative Process, UNFF trust fund, strategic trust fund, global forest fund) and the future CPF.

o. The Forum should set clear priorities for the secretariat to ensure tasks are commensurate with resources. This could be done through a work plan that identifies priority actions.

16. Additional proposals put forward by experts included the following:

a. Maintain the original functions of the Forum while identifying two central functions as proposed in the independent assessment report regarding (i) providing high-level leadership in order to secure effective stewardship of forests within the global sustainable development agenda; and (ii) promoting and facilitating the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests.

b. Explore options to raise the profile of the Forum, to attract participation at the highest political level, including Heads of State.

c. Develop a flexible strategy/strategic plan to guide the work of the Forum.

d. Improve the role and functioning of the Forum Bureau and make greater use of the Bureau to facilitate the work of, and provide feedback to, the secretariat.

e. The Forum should provide a platform for exchanging experiences and lessons learned (e.g. through voluntary peer reviews of countries’ efforts) and might also provide a clearinghouse mechanism for facilitating SFM (e.g. for Facilitative Process projects).
f. Have a dedicated position in the secretariat to support MAR-related activities.

g. The Forum Secretariat should develop a communication strategy targeted at promoting SFM to the most important constituencies, in collaboration with the future CPF and the Major Groups Partnership on Forests.

h. Greater transparency and accountability in the secretariat operations is needed, including regarding the use of the UNFF Trust Fund.

i. Greater technical capacity within the secretariat would be useful.

j. Available resourcing options and secondment arrangements should be considered as part of the actions to strengthen the Forum Secretariat.

k. Virtual secondments (e.g. involving 25% to 50% of a person’s time) could be a cost-effective way to supplement the secretariat’s capacity, including technical capacity.

l. The IAT proposal for a UN Forest Assembly goes beyond a name change to capture the potential to strengthen the Forum, by including key non-government actors in high level segments and having greater involvement of major groups and regional mechanisms.

m. The interface of policy with science, research and practice is an area where UNFF could forge a very useful role, working with CPF.

17. Areas where differences remain include the role of the Forum in implementation, recognising the differences between for example facilitation and project implementation.

VIII. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests after 2015

18. Areas of emerging convergence during discussions in Working Group 1 and/or Working Group 2 included the following:

a. Strengthening international cooperation on forests is one of the main pillars of the post-2015 IAF. The CPF is an important component of the IAF and should continue to exist in a strengthened format.

b. Retaining CPF’s voluntary nature enables the Partnership to maintain flexibility, while receiving overall guidance from the UNFF.

c. Review links between the Forum and the CPF: clarify the role of the CPF within the IAF and its relationship to the Forum; establish basic guidelines on its method of work and operation; clarify responsibilities, expertise, gaps, common expectations and division of labour, including for the Forum Secretariat.
d. Develop a strategy and costed workplan for CPF to provide a basis for prioritization, which will also provide clarity to eventual donors.

19. Additional views and proposals put forward by experts included the following:
   a. Strengthen science-policy interface to enable systematic interaction that takes into account the overall role of forests in sustainable development and links policy to latest scientific results and assessments; in this regard, science and research related CPF members, such as CIFOR, ICRAF and IUFRO may play an important role.

   b. Formalize further the current CPF arrangement, including through inter alia a GA resolution or multilateral/bilateral memoranda of understanding among CPF members that reflect the CPF mandate, priorities, procedures for increasing or decreasing membership, as well as arrangements for chairmanship and co-chairmanship.

   c. Develop a CPF strategic plan that is consistent with the overall IAF/UNFF strategic plan, and includes focus on implementation of the Forest Instrument, the GOFs and the SDGs.

   d. Increase transparency of CPF work and structure so that all parties, including Member States, can have a better understanding of the Partnership, including on how CPF outputs link to UNFF decisions and resolutions.

   e. Have a dedicated position in the secretariat to support the CPF Secretariat.

IX. Involvement of Major Groups after 2015

20. Areas of emerging convergence during discussions in Working Group 1 and/or Working Group 2 included the following:
   a. Maintaining the multi-stakeholder nature of the Forum, and strengthening the broad and active participation of all stakeholders is fundamental for the successful promotion of SFM.

   b. Finding ways to enhance participation of Major Groups in UNFF sessions and intersessional activities, as well as their contributions to the IAF.

   c. Promote Major Groups participation in regional groups, recognizing the value of joint work by Major Groups and regional groups can contribute to SFM on the ground.

21. Additional views and proposals put forward by experts included the following:
   a. Encourage collaboration between governments and Major Groups at the national level, including the representation of Major Groups in the official delegations to Forum meetings.

   b. Encourage business and industry participation by raising the profile of the Forum in the private sector, including through joint activities and the Major Groups Partnership on Forests.

   Consider establishing thematic task forces / advisory group as an additional mechanism for strengthening stakeholder engagement.
c. Consider interactive sessions with both civil society and private sector and build partnerships with other stakeholders, including international environment and development NGOs.

d. Consider establishing cooperation and collaboration mechanism between the CPF and the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF).

e. Sufficient resources should be provided to Major Groups and MGPoF for effective participation in the UNFF process including implementation of IAF at national, regional and global levels.

X. Involvement of Regional entities after 2015

22. Areas of emerging convergence during discussions in Working Group 1 and/or Working Group 2 included the following:

a. Provide a framework to encourage closer linkages between regional/sub-regional and thematic (such as SIDS and LFCCs) organizations/processes and global forest policy processes responsible for policy dialogue at the global level, recognizing that regional/sub-regional and thematic organizations/mechanisms can help to share information about UNFF and to channel information from regions to UNFF; and that rules of procedure may allow greater stakeholder involvement in meetings at the regional/sub-regional and thematic level.

b. The Facilitative Process proved to be an important vehicle to strengthen and advance regional cooperation, in critical areas of forest financing, including mobilization, and access to funding, in particular in regard to thematic and regional groups of countries such as SIDS, LFCCs, African countries and Least Developed Countries. This role of the Facilitative Process could be further strengthened.

c. Clarify roles for regional and thematic processes, including with regard to the modalities for their input into the Forum.

23. Additional views and proposals put forward by experts included the following:

a. Strengthen the engagement of the regional and thematic bodies and processes in the Facilitative Process as a platform of regional and thematic cooperation.

b. Strengthen the linkages with the existing sub-regional, regional and thematic bodies and processes, including the UN Regional Economic Commissions and FAO Regional Forestry Commissions.

XI. Discussion of elements/components to include in the UNFF11 Resolution on the future IAF

24. Experts discussed elements/components to include in the UNFF11 Resolution. However, experts also stressed that this draft text should not prejudge negotiations at UNFF11. There was also discussion about whether the UNFF11 Resolution should update previous Resolutions (2000/35 and 2006/49) or supersede them.
25. During discussions, experts suggested that the preambular part of the Resolution should include:

a. A statement of the “problem” (such as the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation).

b. A positive narrative on the role of SFM the potential role of the future IAF in relation to SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, and the importance of cross-sectoral engagement.

c. The benefits of the universal membership of UNFF.

d. The need for a cost-effective IAF, that adds value, avoids duplication and promotes policy coherence.

e. The importance of implementation of the Forest Instrument and the role of different components of the IAF in implementation.

f. A reference to the IAT independent assessment report.

26. Experts also made suggestions regarding the operative paragraphs of the Resolution, including the following:

a. It should set out the overall rationale for the IAF, including its objectives, purpose and functions.

b. It should set out the components of the future IAF, clarifying their roles, functions and working modalities (including meeting frequencies). This should include clarification regarding the role of the Forum with respect to implementation as well as political dialogue.

c. The need for clear references to the importance of capacity-building, technology transfer and other means of implementation.

d. The need to include reference to a global forest fund (which is different from the proposed strategic trust fund). Experts were reminded of the concrete proposals presented by G77/China to UNFF8 about a Global Forest Fund (see http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/session_documents/unff8/G77_Global_Fund.pdf).

e. The need to make clear that contributions to the strategic trust fund would be voluntary.

f. The need for more prominent reference to SDGs, including to those SDGs and targets which do not refer explicitly to forests.

g. The need to address the importance of strengthening cross-sectoral linkages.
h. The need to raise the profile of the Forum with respect to other processes and Conventions etc. dealing with forest-related matters.

i. The need for a mechanism to address emerging issues.

j. The need for a “road map” setting out the process between UNFF11 and the commencement of the future IAF, as the strategic plan may not be completed at UNFF11.

k. The need to retain all options discussed in AHEG1 and at the China CLI, as well as the independent assessment report (including UN Forests and the options for legally binding and non-legally binding agreements).

l. The need to describe components of the future IAF in neutral language (e.g. inter-agency collaboration mechanisms) at this stage. However, some experts said that it was important not to lose specific reference to the CPF given its good reputation.

m. The question of how much detail should be included in the UNFF11 Resolution, and what should be left for later negotiation.

n. Regarding the CPF and its relationship with UNFF, there was discussion about whether there should be a rotating chair, with some experts stating that this would improve transparency and others stating that it would reduce effectiveness; and there was discussion about the need for a CPF work plan and dialogue with the Forum regarding deliverables.

o. The need to recognize Programme Budget Implications of proposals.

p. The need for better engagement by IAF components (including CPF) with regional and sub-regional entities, including UN Regional Commissions and FAO Regional Forest Commissions.

q. The need to strengthen Major Group engagement, including by recognizing the Major Group Partnership on Forests; providing more time for multi-stakeholder dialogue at Forum Sessions; providing adequate resources for Major Group engagement at national, regional and global level; and introducing independent accreditation for Major Groups participating in UNFF activities.

27. Given the important distinction between the roles and cost implications of possible intersessional mechanisms, such as Working Groups, AHEGs, and Subsidiary Bodies, the secretariat was requested to prepare an information note on this matter for UNFF11.

XII. Recommendations by the Co-Chairs on the Future IAF

28. In performing the mandate of the AHEG, the Co-Chairs would like to put forth a set of recommendations providing a strategic direction on the function and institutional arrangement of the IAF for the period beyond 2015. The AHEG Co-Chairs would like to invite the Bureau of UNFF11 to consider the best ways and means to conduct informal consultations between the AHEG2
and UNFF11, building on the following proposed elements and components that are proposed by the AHEG Co-Chairs for inclusion in the resolution of UNFF11 on the future IAF:

Preambular Section

1) Acknowledging the contributions of the current IAF, including lessons learned and shortcomings;
2) Stressing the significance of maintaining universal membership for the future UNFF, as defined in ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35;
3) Emphasizing the need for a strengthened IAF beyond 2015, building on the achievements of the current IAF, and taking measures to strengthen it, in particular, in areas related to advancing implementation and mobilizing financing for SFM/Forest Instrument, including the Facilitative Process, promoting synergy, coordination and collaboration on forests at all levels and providing guidance on cooperation among forest related organizations;
4) Acknowledging the developments and policy decisions related to forests in other forest related fora including the UNFCCC, CBD, CCD;
5) Stressing the critical significance of the future IAF to position and integrate itself in the broader context of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular, in regard to the achievement of the forest-related SDGs and targets;
6) Further emphasizing that the future IAF should work based on the principles of promoting cooperation and value-addition by continuing to be a universal body to hold policy dialogue on the multi-functional role of forests and all issues related to all types of forests.

Operative Section

The UNFF11 resolution on the future IAF should include agreements on:

1) The rationale, objective, core functions and principles to follow for the future IAF

2) The core components of the future IAF, as well as their objectives, functions and their roles and responsibilities: (future UNFF, its Bureau, Member States and its Secretariat, its Trust Fund and its Facilitative Process, future CPF, regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, Major Groups, updated Forest Instrument, and post-2015 IAF Strategic Plan);

3) Strengthening the future IAF e.g. through:
   a. Reaffirming the universal membership, composition and headquarters of the future UNFF, as agreed in ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35;
   b. Defining the working modalities of the future UNFF including restructuring the Forum’s sessions to enhance its efficiency and impacts;

Means of Implementation
c. Establishing an effective intersessional mechanism under the future UNFF e.g. subsidiary bodies/committee(s)/virtual groups on Implementation and/or Financing SFM to meet intersessionally to advance the work of the future UNFF in these areas;

d. Establishing a voluntary Strategic Trust Fund under UNFF, or subaccount within the existing UNFF Trust Fund, whose operation to be guided by a steering committee/executive body, to advance implementation of SFM/Forest Instrument, in particular, through the UNFF Facilitative Process to assist countries in areas such as:

i. Capacity development and transfer of technology under mutually agreed upon terms;

ii. Development of financing strategies for SFM, as well as national action plans for implementation of the Forest Instrument and preparation of relevant national reports on implementation progress;

iii. Mobilization of financial resources including by designing programmes and projects to facilitate access to existing funds;

iv. Advancing collaboration among regional and thematic group of countries such as SIDS, LFCCs, African countries, etc. in accessing financing for SFM;

e. Consider other options such as establishing the Global Forest Fund to support developing countries by providing new and additional financial resources in order to achieve the four global objectives on forests, promote SFM, and implement the Forest Instrument;

**The Forest Instrument**

f. *Future of the Forest Instrument* (e.g. agreement on updating the Forest Instrument through an addendum or any other relevant means in regard to areas such as its title, changing the references to “MDGs” to “SDGs”, extending the timeframe of the GOFs to 2030, integrating forest-related SDGs and targets and the GOFs and the role of the future UNFF in monitoring, assessment and reporting on the forest related SDGs and targets, and reflecting on the other forest-related developments since 2007;*

**Secretariat**

g. *Strengthening the human and financial resources of the UNFF Secretariat*, ensuring these are commensurate with its defined functions;

**Collaborative Partnership on Forests**

h. *Strengthening CPF*, including through providing concrete guidance on its future workplan and to ensure consistency with the UNFF priorities and its future strategic plan, and through providing adequate funding for CPF;

**Regional Cooperation**

i. *Using the regional C&I processes* as a tool for implementation of the UNFF decisions and IAF Strategic Plan;

j. *Strengthening cooperation* between CPF and the Regional Entities, including UN regional commissions, with the future UNFF;

**Major Groups**

k. *Supporting greater involvement of Major Groups* and their coordinating networks by offering adequate opportunity for active participation in future UNFF activities and devote required resources for their involvement;
Post 2015 Development Agenda and Major Processes

1. Ensuring coherence with the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs, including through making the future UNFF to be a body to report on the implementation of the forest related SDGs and targets to the HLPF, including on the best ways and means to achieve them;

m. Advancing coordination and collaboration with other forest related processes in regard to GEF, the Green Climate Fund, REDD+, Aichi targets;

n. Strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting through data-sharing arrangements and synchronizing the reporting process with the FRA, relevant C&I processes etc.;

Post 2015 IAF Strategic Plan

o. Developing a Strategic Plan for the future IAF (the overall time horizon 2030 with periodic reviews in between) to include a time-bound programme of work, including a focus on priority actions which are achievable on the short-term (e.g. 2-3 years), with required resources, as well as agreed roles and responsibilities of core components of the future IAF;

4) Post UNFF11 Follow Up Measures e.g. through:

a. Establishing a working group of the Forum to propose, inter alia, an agreed:
   i. Updated Forest Instrument,
   ii. A Strategic Plan for the future IAF, and the modalities and operational rules of the Strategic Trust Fund and the Facilitative Process;
   iii. Interaction of the future CPF and the UNFF, and possible organizational matters related to the future UNFF sessions;

b. Submitting the agreed outcome of the working group to a Special Session of the Forum in 2016. The work of this working group can be facilitated by a Bureau–designated task force who will prepare initial proposals on the points 4a i, 4a ii and 4a iii for consideration by the working group.