Concept Note
High Level Roundtable (1) on Integration of Forests in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

High Level Segment
Eleventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF11)
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Thursday, 14 May 2015

Background

The High Level Segment of the eleventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF11) will be held from 13 to 14 May 2015 at UNHQ, New York, with the objective of deliberating on the future International Arrangement on Forests and its integration in the broader context of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda. The High Level Segment will adopt the UNFF11 ministerial declaration enunciating the Ministers agreement on transformative actions and commitments on and for The Future International Arrangement on Forests We Want. The UNFF11 High Level Segment is of particular significance for multiple reasons:

(i) UNFF11 will decide on the future of the international arrangement on forests (IAF);
(ii) Forests’ contributions to global sustainable development are being widely recognized, as evidenced by their integration in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated targets; and
(iii) UNFF11 is a timely opportunity for the forest community to provide input for inclusion in the ongoing negotiation of the post-2015 development agenda and final adoption by the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development, which will be held from 25 to 27 September 2015, at UNHQ in New York.

The UNFF11 High Level Segment has the theme of “The Future IAF We Want”, and will be organized in plenary sessions and parallel high level roundtables. The High Level Segment will also include dialogues with the heads of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), the heads of the regional organizations and senior representatives of major groups.

The High Level Roundtables will provide a unique opportunity for senior officials of Member States of the Forum to provide their vision on the integration of forests in the broader post-2015 development agenda, and to renew their commitment to a strong international arrangement on forests beyond 2015. The topics of the two high level roundtables are “Integration of Forests in the Post-2015 Development Agenda” and “Renewed Commitments to Implementation of the IAF beyond 2015”, respectively.

Context

2015 is the time for global action on forests, as it offers a unique opportunity to integrate forests in the broader post-2015 development agenda. The international community is poised to adopt the new development agenda for the period 2015-2030, along with a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at the special UN Summit on Sustainable Development in New York in September 2015. This is also the year in which Member States will meet to realize a compact for a global partnership at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be convened in Addis Ababa in July 2015. Finally, at the end of 2015, Member States are expected to adopt a new agreement to address climate change at the Twenty-first Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December.

The proposal of the United Nations Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs will be the basis for integrating SDGs into the post-2015 development agenda. In the OWG proposal, forests are prominently featured under proposed SDGs 6 and 15. The forest-related targets under these proposed SDGs highlight the multi-functionality of forests and their contributions to the sustainable
development agenda. In addition to the direct references to forests in the two SDGs, forests and trees provide multiple economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits essential to achieve the SDG targets in many other goal areas, such as poverty eradication, food security and nutrition, health, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, among others.

These important forest-related SDGs targets, and their interlinkages with the four shared Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs), are key element in the design of the future IAF, and the integration of this arrangement in the broader post-2015 development agenda.

This high level roundtable is an opportunity for Ministers and other Heads of Delegation to provide their vision and guidance, as well as suggested actions on advancing further integration of forests and the IAF in the post-2015 development agenda.

The roundtable discussion is expected to highlight possible ways and means for the future IAF to effectively contribute to solid implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, and to strengthen the monitoring, assessment and reporting role of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

Objectives

The objectives of the roundtable discussions are to:

- Share knowledge and lessons learned on the challenges in integrating forests in broader development goals and strategies;
- Exchange views and perspectives on making the future IAF complementary to and supportive of the post-2015 development agenda implementation; and
- Identify actions to enable the future IAF to effectively contribute to monitoring, assessment and reporting on the implementation of the forest-related components of the post-2015 development agenda.

Modality

The discussions during the roundtable will be co-chaired by two senior Co-Facilitators (one from the North and one from the South). The Co-Facilitators will kick off the interactive discussions with some questions. Ministers and other Heads of Delegation are strongly encouraged to engage in interactive discussions under the topic of the roundtable.

Member States will be asked to limit their statements to three minutes each, with additional five minutes allocated for each statement of representatives of the regional political groups, in order to accommodate maximum participation in the three-hour period. Countries should indicate their preference to attend one of the roundtables through the arrangement to be announced in the UN Journal.

Co-Facilitators (tbd)

The UNFF11 Bureau will invite Co-Facilitators for the High Level Roundtable, in due course.

Expected Output

A Co-Facilitators’ summary of the main issues and ideas highlighted throughout the discussions in the roundtable will be included in the final report of the UNFF11.