Concept Note
High Level Roundtable (2) on
Renewed Commitments to Implementation of the IAF beyond 2015

High Level Segment
Eleventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
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 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

Despite many efforts made by countries and other stakeholders to advance sustainable management of all types of forests, the continued loss and degradation of forests in many regions pose significant challenges to sustainable development for current and future generations.

A number of calls have been made throughout the intersessional period since the tenth session of the Forum in 2013, for the future IAF to further advance implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) to make a real and effective impact on the ground work to reverse the current trend of loss and degradation of forests at all levels.
These calls underscore the need for the future IAF to ensure: enhanced political commitment at all levels in support of concrete actions on SFM, in regard to catalyzing financing for forests from all sources, enhancing collaboration and coordination and coherence on SFM, expanding technical and scientific cooperation and capacity building, strengthening forest-related governance and law enforcement, enabling investment environments and supporting cross-sectoral approaches across sectors and stakeholders.

As the Forum at its eleventh session will decide on the future direction, function and design of the IAF beyond 2015, the roundtable discussion should highlight the actions and commitments by the senior decision-making officials in support of a more effective, influential and proactive post-2015 IAF.

Objectives

The objectives of the roundtable discussions are to:

- Share best practices and lessons learned on sustainable forest management and forest policy in the context of the current international arrangement on forests;
- Exchange views and perspectives on key priorities, issues and actions for inclusion in the IAF beyond 2015; and
- Explore required actions and commitments to design and support a strong and effective IAF beyond 2015.

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.

Individual Member States will be asked to limit their prepared statements to three minutes, with an additional five minutes allocated for each statement of the representatives of the regional political groups, in order to accommodate maximum participation in the workshop’s three-hour duration. Countries should indicate which of the two scheduled workshops they wish to attend, through the procedures 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.