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Regional and subregional inputs

Regional and subregional inputs

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary
This report highlights the importance given by regional and subregional entities to the social component of sustainable forest management and points out that forest-dependent people benefit from everything that forests have to offer, including livelihoods. It was also noted that, at the regional level, there is an effort to enhance the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making, awareness-raising and capacity building initiatives. From the submissions it was also clear that in the case of means of implementation, especially the availability of funding, this remains a major challenge. In particular, the report emphasizes that sustainable forest management can be widely implemented in all regions and, consequently, would enhance people’s livelihoods. Finally, the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (forest instrument) and the four global objectives contained therein are being taken into account universally in the design and implementation of policies, as well as providing a basis for new instruments at the regional and subregional levels.

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I. Introduction

The multi-year programme of work (2007–2015) of the UNFF, in accordance with the ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49 and its Resolution 7/1, sets a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. Through Resolution 2006/49, member States agreed to “Strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes1, 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.”2

In this regard, the Forum invited relevant regional and subregional entities “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 upcoming Forum sessions. UNFF also encouraged such entities to contribute to the discussions of the Forum sessions, according to their respective mandates3, and requested the Secretary-General to “prepare a report summarizing these submissions”4. The Secretary-General’s report on regional and subregional submissions was first prepared for the Eighth Session5.

For the preparation of this report, regional and subregional forest-related entities were invited to address the issues and agenda items planned for consideration at its Ninth Session and to submit a concise summary of their deliberations to the Forum secretariat. To facilitate the submission of inputs, the Forum secretariat prepared an information note and a questionnaire. The present report summarizes the submissions received from the entities listed in Annex 1.

II. Overview

The responses to the questionnaire forwarded by the Forum Secretariat were prepared in a variety of manners. Some were reported by secretariats following the general guidelines provided by Governments and other partners. Others were able to promote a specific meeting with their membership to discuss their contributions to UNFF. Some United Nations Economic Commissions took advantage of the outcomes of regional meetings on matters related to the Commission on Sustainable

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1 Forest-related mechanisms, institutions, instruments, organizations and processes will be referred to as “entities”
2 Paragraph 2 (c), Resolution E/2006/49
3 Paragraph 7, UNFF Resolution 7/1
4 Paragraph 8, UNFF Resolution 7/1
5 E/CN.18/2009/3
Development in order to provide input to the UNFF process. In the Central African region, the various entities coordinated with the **Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC)**. A few entities tried to involve civil society in the preparation of their reports to the Forum.

The responses clearly reveal that the forest instrument and the four global objectives contained therein are being taken into account universally in the design and implementation of policies, as well as a basis for new instruments.

As far as the social aspect of sustainable forest management goes, the responding regional and sub-regional entities were convinced that forests should benefit the people that depend on them for their livelihoods, but progress differs between the reporting regions and the integration of livelihoods into sustainable forest management (SFM) programmes is affected by economic, social and historical aspects that should be taken into consideration in the global forest policy dialogue.

It was also noted that, at the regional level, there is an effort to enhance the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making, awareness-raising and capacity building initiatives; the entities seem to be more and more convinced that overall involvement of partners outside of their entities is necessary if progress is to be achieved. Further investment in the engagement and empowerment of multiple stakeholders is desired and will change the way business is being done.

Regarding means of implementation, in particular financing, the challenge is in making sure that sustainable forest management can be widely implemented in all regions and, consequently, enhance people’s livelihoods. Regions stated that the need is still very much present; however they also stated that there is a need to look holistically at forest sustainability, not losing track of the linkages between the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable forest management.

### III. Substantive matters to be considered by the Forum

#### A. Assessment of progress made on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests

The entities agreed that the forest instrument is an important international accomplishment in the promotion of sustainable forest management and is already having an impact in the field. The instrument addresses all issues related to forests in a coherent manner and the four global objectives on forests are being taken into account for policy decision making and implementation in the various regions and subregions.

The **Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management (APFNet)** Framework Document states that the Network is intended to support the Multi-Year Program of Work of UNFF, as well as the implementation of the forest instruments and the four global objectives on forests. Thus, it can be said that the mission of the Network is to regionally promote sustainable forest management within the framework of the forest instrument.

It is interesting to note that three regional entities - the **Carpathian Convention**, the **Central African Forests Commission** and **Forest Europe** are considering or have recently developed a legally binding instrument on forests. During the elaboration of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the **Carpathian Convention** the
provisions of the forest instrument and the four global objectives on forests were taken into account.

Forest Europe is considering the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on forests in the pan-European region. Two Working Groups are currently exploring the potential added value of and possible options for a legally binding agreement on forests in the pan-European region, as well as on preparing options for a decision on a possible legally binding agreement on forests. A non-paper setting out example options for a legally binding agreement is also expected and the issue will be considered at the ministerial level during the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, which will take place in Oslo, Norway, on 14-16 June 2011. Forest Europe also forwarded to the Secretariat an analytical table comparing the main points of the forest instrument with previous commitments of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE); since these might serve as the basis for an eventual legally binding instrument, it is possible that the thrust of the forest instrument might be incorporated into a future regional convention.

The joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Forestry and Timber Section collects and validates information related to forest resources, as well as policies and institutions to assess progress made and challenges remaining on forest management. The UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work, with its activities in the areas of forest products markets, resources, policies and institutions as well as outlook, is directly contributing to the implementation of the forest instrument and the four global objectives on forests, notably as they concern sustainable forest management and forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) stressed the importance of projects currently being developed or implemented by Central African States in collaboration with various bodies, aimed at the achievement of the four global objectives. These include the mobilization of funding by ECCAS, the COMIFAC and the Global Mechanism for the implementation of the subregional plan of action against desertification and land degradation in Central Africa; the implementation of the Programme in Support of the Conservation of Congo Basin Ecosystems (PACEBCo), which contributes to the strengthening of economic, social and environmental aspects of the targeted landscapes; the development of lines of cooperation, particularly with the African Development Bank, European Union and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) in order to mobilize new and additional financial resources; and the implementation of the regional REDD project with funding from the World Bank (GEF project) in 6 Congo Basin countries.

The Réseau des parlementaires pour la gestion durable des écosystèmes forestiers de l’Afrique Centrale – Conférence sur les écosystèmes de forêts denses et humides d’Afrique Centrale (REPAR-CEFHDAC) refers to the COMIFAC legally binding agreement, adopted on 26 October 2008 in Brazzaville, which deals with the administrative, legal, technical, economic, social, and environmental aspects of conservation and use of forests. In view of its parliamentarian background, REPAR-CEFHDAC informs the Forum that, with the strong and comprehensive participation of Members of Parliaments in the negotiation, the agreement aims at promoting the development, conservation and the
sustainable management of forests of Central Africa, as well as the trade of forest products. Those objectives are being pursued mainly through the COMIFAC.

The responses demonstrate that all Central African States are strongly committed in the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives on all types of forests through the strengthening of regional cooperation and the promotion of the trade of products from sustainably managed forests.

The Secretariat of COMIFAC adds, in this regard, that the Commission’s Member States are committed since 1999 to the sustainable management of their forests. On top of existing subregional instruments and mechanisms, those countries implement the Forest Instrument and have incorporated its essence, as well as the global objectives on forests, in their national and subregional planning frameworks. The commitment of countries, accompanied by strong action, has already provided visible progress as far as the sustainable management of central African forests go.

As reported by the International Model Forest Network (IMFN), most Model Forests are very biologically diverse, and often include landscape areas with significant conservation or preservation values, such as national parks and world heritage forests containing species at risk. By promoting a landscape-level approach, Model Forests foster a reduction in forest-fragmentation, enhanced wildlife habitat and the development of collaborative strategies with local communities for managing biodiversity, contributing to the implementation of global objective 1; objectives 2 and 3 are dealt with by the implementation of sustainable forest management strategies which enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent populations, as well as by the establishment of local and successful enterprises, contributing to both the sustainability and generation of income for forest-based communities throughout the IMFN, thus illustrating that the pursuit of economic opportunity is not incompatible with environmental conservation.

A non-legally binding entity, the Montreal Process, launched in 1994, predates the forest instrument. Montreal Process member countries represent about 90 per cent of the world's temperate and boreal forests which equates to 60 per cent of all of the forests of the world. In 1995 member countries developed 7 criteria and 67 indicators, revised in 2007, as guidelines for assessing forest trends and progress toward sustainable forest management. Montreal Process countries continue to work on the implementation of the Montreal Process criteria and indicators (C&I) and, through this process, support the intent of the forest instrument.

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) is developing and implementing at the regional level initiatives and projects which directly contribute to the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives on forests. Similar to APFNet, the entity has the mission to promote cooperation towards and among its Parties and does that by supporting the implementation at the national/regional level of international commitments, in particular the forest instrument.

Regarding global objective 1, for instance, a project that aims at monitoring the deforestation and land use change in the Amazon forest supports ACTO Member States to improve governance through the development of forest-cover national monitoring plans with a common regional methodology; moreover, an initiative to harmonize criteria and indicators (C & I) of sustainable forest management seeks to
bring together the complementarities of the Tarapoto C & I and the ones approved by ITTO.

As far as the global objective 4 goes, ACTO notes that a significant part of the financial support the entity receives for its activities come from Governments of countries which belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ACTO also promotes a financial initiative which aims at developing and consolidating financial mechanisms composed by investments and payment for environmental services, as well as the development of methodologies and shared tools regarding the role of forests in climate change.

Some entities mentioned that it is important to properly account in national economies the effective contribution of the economic, social and environmental benefits of forests; this has been identified by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as one of the key issues to be tackled in the near future, and that it is important that the forest sector work with national development planning, statistical and other authorities to identify and in a timely fashion identify both the qualitative and quantitative contributions of forestry to poverty alleviation to support enhanced integration of forestry plans into national development plans.

The contribution of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives can be seen by the organization of activities raising awareness of international forest activities. From 12 to 15 October 2009 the Secretariat brought together representatives of Governments and major groups in the event “Regional Workshop/Training on Forest Policy Processes for the Sustainable Management of the Forest Resources in the Pacific”, held in Nadi, Fiji. The training, based on actual developments at the international level, introduced good practices from other parts of the world and tailored to the specific situations/developments of Pacific Island Countries.

The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) Commission has provided support for three Member States (Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger) in order to obtain funding from the European Union for the implementation of a regional park programme, which will be extended to Togo. In this context, the creation of a foundation aiming at raising funds for the promotion of the sustainable management of savannah ecosystems in the UEMOA area has been proposed. Moreover, within the implementation of the UEMOA’s Agriculture Policy, the Union established an agriculture development fund which contributes to activities related to the sustainable management of forests.

B. Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication

All regional entities emphasized that forests need to be sustainably managed to serve the multiple functions of forests for the good of people’s livelihoods. The focus on people is clear, even though it is implemented in different manners. Through the UNECE/FAO Joint Expert Network on Implementing Sustainable Forest Management, for instance, the UNECE/FAO Timber Section addresses a variety of social and cultural aspects including working conditions, contract labour and training standards and networks.

APFNet states that the Asia-Pacific, a dynamic region with rapid development and large forested areas, a home to more than half of the world population, is a special example of how forests contribute to people. The entity is making the greatest
endeavour in promoting SFM, including through forest rehabilitation, capacity building, information sharing and regional policy dialogue, as well as pilot projects.

The **Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)** reports that Congo Basin forest countries have undertaken serious efforts aimed at improving forest-dependent people’s livelihoods and investment conditions for forest-concession holders. But while community-based forest management for production forests is still poorly developed throughout the region, concessions adjacent to communities and marginalized forest communities are beginning to benefit from forest certification. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards and principles require that the logging company respects traditional land rights and indigenous peoples, and that they take care of the social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities. According to FSC, some 5 million hectares of forests are certified in the region (878,896 ha in Cameroon, 1,873,505 ha in Gabon, and 1,907,843 ha in DR Congo), making up more than 10 percent of the 41,636,677 ha of production forests mapped out into concessions and thus making the Congo Basin the largest certified natural forest block in the world. A regional FSC standard has been developed through intensive stakeholder consultations throughout 2009, and is about to be validated.

According to its Secretariat, some of the **COMIFAC** Member States have adopted legislation over the last decade in order to strengthen the contribution of forests in the fight against poverty and, for that reason, community-based forestry initiatives now exist in those countries and, progressively, throughout the subregion. The giving back of a portion of the royalties or forestry taxes to the local and riparian communities is also part of the efforts of the Governments of the countries of Central Africa in the fight against poverty. However, some of the main challenges faced regarding the eradication of poverty in the subregion are related to capacity building: on the one hand, to ensure the training of stakeholders on local techniques and tools for SFM and, on the other, on the marketing of forest products.

**SPC** reports that in the larger Melanesian countries, forests provide significant revenues, employment and livelihood among its people. Likewise, in the smaller island states and the atolls, the limited forest and tree resources provide them with food, medicines, construction materials and fuel wood. In spite of all of these benefits, the sustainable management of the resource continues to be a major challenge and significant forest loss and forest degradation continues. Emerging global issues including the international financial crisis and its aftermath, and climate change have created a more complex set of challenges for Pacific Islanders to overcome.

In the Fiji Islands, **SPC**, in collaboration with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), has assisted the country in revising its 1950 forest policy that resulted in a more broad-based policy targeting the adoption of a sound and sustainable forest management system and the need to ensure the aspirations of the resource owners on the management of their resources are met. Similarly, the Vanuatu Government is holding its provincial and national consultations with assistance and support from SPC and GTZ with the aim of reviewing its current forest policy to reformulate their vision and strategies that will reflect the best interests of the people of Vanuatu.
The UNECA is intensifying its work in the climate change arena in order to ensure that forests are for people. Together with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, UNECA is acting towards the full implementation of their joint Climate Information for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme; it sets out to scale up the capacities of key institutions and stakeholders with a view to improving climate-related data and observation, information services, policies, investment processes and risk-management practices in climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, water, forests and other natural resources, energy, and health.

The UNECA-based African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) serves as the knowledge-management, policy and project-facilitation arm of ClimDev-Africa. ACPC’s work on climate change information, policy analysis and advocacy is expected to enhance awareness and strengthen the capacities of Member States, regional and subregional bodies to better integrate climate concerns into development, hopefully resulting in the elaboration and implementation by Member States of national development policies, strategies and programmes, including poverty reduction strategies that integrate and prioritize climate change concerns. By the same token, development and implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative continues. This initiative is also a priority action of the African Union - European Union Partnership on Climate Change and has evolved from tree planting to the promotion of sustainable land management practices focusing on the Saharan and Sahel dryland ecosystems.

In Africa there is poor coordination and collaboration among actors, as well as a lack of in-depth understanding and appreciation of SFM and sustainable land management (SLM) issues. Moreover, there is inadequate reform and enforcement of policies and legislation to guarantee clear legal ownership and access rights to land, water and other natural resources. Finally, the lack of financial resources is systemic and one of the most pressing constraints to most countries and regional programmes in the implementation of SFM and SLM programmes.

ECCAS reports that the forest-dependent people will strongly benefit from the forests if they can provide more economic income and if forest governance is improved. Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations in the context of the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) by countries, as well as the efforts of companies to obtain certification should be stimulated, according to this report. Information should be shared and made available to all, forest laws should be enforced. Capacity should be built and, in this regard, a special need is identified for climate change.

ACTO facilitates cooperation among its Parties in the Amazon region through, for instance, pilot-projects which intend to: (i) promote the sustainable development of the region with emphasis on the improvement of the quality of life of local communities; (ii) generate inputs for the national and regional political dialogue with emphasis on the practice of cooperation processes; (iii) record and disseminate lessons learned, results and impacts; (iv) assess the possibility of initiatives’ replication; and (v) serve as concrete instruments of action of regional cooperation on forests.

The participation of stakeholders in the management of forests is stimulated through several specific projects. Moreover, all the projects developed and implemented by
the entity, especially those of an economic nature take into account the social and
cultural aspects of the different indigenous and local communities who benefit from
them. Finally, through its Indigenous Issues Coordination, ACTO constantly
provides dialogue opportunities which, in the past, helped in the drafting of the
Indigenous Regional Agenda.

i Community-based forest management

Community-based forest management is a priority for regional and subregional
entities. While some invest in awareness raising and capacity building, others
develop specific models and indicators; the objectives, however, are all the same,
with the promotion of broad stakeholder participation and management coordination
which, in the case of the Carpathian Convention, for instance, is being encouraged by
the establishment of private owner associations.

According to APFNet, in most countries in the region, especially developing
countries, farmers account for a large portion of national population, while forested
lands extend in larger areas than lands for agricultural use. Thus, community-based
forests play indispensable role in supporting farmers’ survival and livelihood
improvement and, to this end, APFNet promotes training workshops, themed as
“forestry and rural development” to enhance capacity in the region, as well as to
provide a platform to share knowledge and practical experiences to improve
community-based forest management, including forest land tenure.

Besides these examples, APFNet also financially supports pilot projects in the region
to showcase good practices in terms of community-based forest management in rural
areas. Experiences and lessons learned are included in publications and brochures
shared in the region and beyond. Finally, APFNet is now in a 5-year collaboration
agreement with the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the
Pacific (RECOFTC) on technical support to promote community-based forest
management.

The Montreal Process member countries published in 2007 the Second Edition of
Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable
Management of Temperate and Boreal Forest. This Second Edition contained a range
of indicators related to “community-based forest management”. Specifically the
indicators covering the: resilience of forest-dependent communities (Indicator 6.3.c),
area and percent of forests used for subsistence purposes (Indicator 6.3.d) and
distribution of revenues derived from forest management (Indicator 6.3.e). Each
individual Montreal Process member country, in preparing their second Montreal
Process Country Reports, has the option of reporting against these indicators.

According to the SPC, the community-based and participatory approach for
sustainable forest management is seen as imperative in the Pacific where the majority
of land is customarily owned. Forests and trees play an important role to the
economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being to the Pacific Community.
Its Drawa Model for Community- Based Natural Resource Management was initiated
in 1997, under the then SPC/GTZ Pacific-German Regional Forestry Project) and the
Fiji Forestry Department and promotes a community-based management system,
defining a timber harvesting regime that is socially and environmentally appropriate
whilst at the same time economically viable. The participatory assessment of
community needs and wants, the analysis of the socio-economic, gender and
customary and environmental status and the technical inventories and surveys of
forest resources all form the basis in the formulation and implementation of action plans and activities that are relevant, acceptable and truly reflective of the local community's interests.

Community-based forest management is a priority for many of the resource-dependent communities located throughout the Independent Model Forest Network (IMFN). Model Forest stakeholders prioritize the involvement of local people in decision-making processes, viewing their active participation as key to achieving sustainability, including realization of sustainable and meaningful incomes for forest-based communities. Over 40 Model Forest sites are involved in economic activities including community sustainability/economic development efforts, eco-cultural tourism, education and capacity building and the cultivation of non-timber forest products that support communities, livelihoods and reduce poverty.

For example, the Ngao Model Forest, located in Central Thailand’s Lampang province, promotes Community-Based Forest Management to encourage local communities' involvement in the conservation of nearby forests and to practice sustainable forest management to enable livelihood development. Capacity of the local communities has been strengthened to support the management and improvement of forest resources. Rules for sustainable utilization and equal benefit sharing of forest resources have been developed based on mutual agreement. Non-timber Forest Products such as bamboo shoot, mushroom, medicinal and edible plants etc. from managed forests will guarantee food security and supplies for sustainable economic development of local communities according to this report.

In the Central African context, the CBFP reports that countries are encouraged to develop appropriate policy frameworks for community-based forest use and timber transformation. The regional Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) office is very much engaged on this topic. It is, however, difficult to engage in an organized dialogue the forest-dependent communities; in some countries the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations in the context of the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) program will hopefully represent another momentum for triggering additional stakeholder participation in the forest sector. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) facilitates a number of FLEGT platforms.

The REPAR- CEFDHAC has as its main mission to ensure the good governance in the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa, a difficult task due to the fact that the Congo Basin forests are subject to many interventions by a multitude of actors with sometimes conflicting objectives. Throughout the years much has been achieved in the region in terms of policy and mentality change. However, it is very clear from historical observation that successful sustainable management of those forests can only be achieved with the involvement of active and informed stakeholders. No doubt the various national Governments have important roles to play through, for instance, proper taxation and use of economic instruments.

ii Social development and indigenous and other local and forest-dependent communities, including forest land tenure

As mentioned before, APFNet gives attention to the issue of forest land tenure. The training workshop in 2010 under the “forestry and rural development” series has forest tenure reform as the focus, as the forest land tenure has proved to be an
effective means to mobilize farmers for the protection and good management of forests to improve their livelihoods. Many countries in the region, including China and Vietnam are accumulating constructive experiences in land tenure security and reforms. In addition, APFNet and the Research Centre of Forestry Economy of the State Forestry Administration of China are jointly working on a book, which is to be published soon, entitled *Forest Land Tenure Reform in China*, which showcases the performance and experiences gained in the reform process in China, emphasising the importance of having farmers and forest workers actively involved all the way.

In the Carpathian countries, the traditional pattern of small- and medium-sized forest properties has been lost during the period of state control of forests, along with knowledge of forest management. Currently the restitution process – the return of the State-owned forests to their original owners is taking place in that region, to various degrees. The ‘new’ owners lacking proper knowledge, and in light of the economic difficulties, are prone to clear their forest for other land uses, in order to make a rapid economic gain. Thus, education, capacity building, coordination as well as financial incentives to the new forest owners are critical to ensure sustainable forest management practices.

In this regard, the Carpathian Convention countries’ forest policies include some form of assistance and capacity building to the forest owners. In addition, most countries’ policies incorporate public participation and information in their decision-making processes, through platforms for dialogue among stakeholders and people interested in forest use and conservation. However, in practice no efficient mechanisms for public information and participation are in place. During the elaboration of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Carpathian Convention the need for cooperation between national institutions and regional and local authorities and involving communities and forest owners and managers directly in development and implementation of the forestry policy was highlighted.

The COMIFAC Secretariat reports that the Commission recently elaborated subregional guidelines on the participation of local and indigenous communities in forest management. Those guidelines will be submitted for adoption during the next ministerial council of COMIFAC. Several issues should be dealt with in order to properly include those communities in the decision making process, as well as on the management of forests per se, such as the absence or insufficiency of a legal framework as far as rights of indigenous communities go and questions regarding land tenure.

By the same token, the CBFP informs the Forum that Congo Basin forest countries have undertaken serious efforts in implementing forest sector reforms aimed at improving forest-dependent peoples’ livelihoods and investment conditions for forest-concession holders. As an example, the review of forest land titles in the Democratic Republic of Congo was concluded in February 2009. Forest law enforcement can be enhanced by engaging all stakeholders and raising awareness for regional conservation and sustainable management policies with potential buyers. Crucial to continuing investing in the forestry sector and to secure regional and international markets for sustainably produced, legal forest products, and at the same time enhance credibility of forest certification, several donors are financing extensive forest certification promotion projects in the region.
The **REPAR-CEF DHAC** closely follows the governance, taxation and benefits received from the forests by local and indigenous communities in the Central African countries. Generally speaking, the decentralized management of forests spread rapidly in the region. Due to the failure of centralized management in improving the welfare of the local and indigenous populations, certain powers were passed to local communities through new policies and legislation. This new trend has certainly contributed to the alleviation of poverty in the local and indigenous communities. However, so that those benefits can be maximized, local governance mechanisms should be improved and more transparency is needed.

According to **IMFN**, indigenous partners bring a unique understanding of the forest ecosystem—one developed over centuries of close contact with the land. With both traditional and contemporary forest experiences, indigenous peoples are well positioned to contribute to today’s SFM practices for the benefit of their communities and others. Indeed, Model Forest stakeholders recognize that without the involvement of indigenous partners the sustainable development of forest-dependent communities is unlikely to occur. Over 20 Model Forest sites include active indigenous participation in areas such as: representation on the Board of Directors; the design of forest management plans aimed at reducing deforestation and illegal logging; and the development of the Model Forest’s strategic plan.

**IMFN** reports that government representatives from boreal countries have identified climate change, biodiversity and aboriginal issues as policy priorities. Through collaborative research between the Prince Albert Model Forest (Canada) and Vilhelmina Model Forest (Sweden), aboriginal perspectives on climate change and caribou/reindeer habitat in the circumboreal forest are being sought and an analysis of knowledge gaps surrounding these three issues and their interactions is providing policy relevant information required for the development of adaptation strategies for northern communities. This information is of interest to aboriginal people of the Circumboreal North whose lifestyles are or may soon be affected by impacts of changing climate. Industry, such as mining, forestry, tourism and peat extraction will also derive benefits from the information generated in this research as they are impacted by climate change, biodiversity and climate change issues and need to be involved in adaptation strategies.

The Second Edition of *Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forest*, contains a range of indicators related to “Social development and indigenous and other local and forest-dependent communities, including forest land tenure”. Specifically the indicators cover the issues of resilience of forest-dependent communities (Indicator 6.3.c), property rights, land tenure arrangements, customary and traditional rights of indigenous people and means of resolving property disputes by due process (Indicator 7.1.a). Each individual **Montreal Process** member country, in preparing their second Montreal Process Country Reports, has the option of reporting against these indicators.

### iii Social and cultural aspects

Forests serve a multitude of economic and social functions. **APFNet** aims to promote forest management in a sustainable way to further help enhance the role that forests play in promoting social development. Through Activities and Programs under **APFNet**, a platform of culture exchange in the region is also built up, based on which a better understanding among stakeholders can hopefully be achieved.
The Carpathian countries place great importance on preserving and supporting the cultural and social dimension of forests. To reach these objectives, the policies maintain and enhance various functions of forests, such as recreational and tourism activities. The unique traditional and cultural heritage of the Carpathians is especially well preserved in the rural areas, which provides an opportunity for tourism development but also a challenge to ensure its sustainability. On the local level, the non-timber uses of the forest constitute part of livelihoods, such as berries and mushroom collection and medicinal plants.

During the elaboration of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Carpathian Convention the need of the countries to take into consideration other policies, including rural development, tourism, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, as well as biodiversity conservation and spatial planning, were taken into account.

The CBFP states that it is often hard to define cultural heritage, to distinguish, for instance, between poaching and traditional hunting; in modern days, autochthon communities tend to lose their traditional knowledge, but new technologies can help them to preserve and transfer it; therefore, the exchange of communication between stakeholders is important also for this aspect of sustainable forest management.

According to Forest Europe, after the adoption of the resolution on Social and Cultural Dimensions of Sustainable Forest Management (Vienna Resolution 3) was endorsed at the Ministerial Conference on the protection of Forests in Europe in Vienna, Austria in 2003, a set of scientific guidelines, produced by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) in 2007, have been developed to facilitate the implementation of social and cultural values in sustainable forest management throughout the pan-European region.

Model Forests are based on a flexible approach that combines the social, cultural and economic needs of local communities with the long-term sustainability of forest landscapes. Offering a platform for the free flow of ideas, data and resources for informed decision-making about economic alternatives to current practices, IMNF informs the Forum that Model Forests provide the opportunity for those traditionally left out of the decision-making process to have an equal voice around the discussion table. Most sites include indigenous peoples in their stakeholder base and work toward a common vision for sustainability that takes indigenous history, culture and knowledge into account. Such an inclusion of social and cultural aspects allows for the sharing of experiences and lessons learned while promoting initiatives that reconcile economic priorities, social concerns and environmental considerations.

The Second Edition of Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forest, contains indicators related to the “Social and cultural aspects” of forests and specifically cover the issues of the area and percent of forests managed primarily to protect the range of cultural, social and spiritual needs and values (Indicator 6.5.a), the importance of forests to people (Indicator 6.5.b) and management of forests to conserve special environmental, cultural, social and of scientific values (Indicator 7.1.e). Each individual Montreal Process member country, in preparing their second Montreal Process Country Reports, has the option of reporting against these indicators.
One of the concerns in modern forestry has to do with the conciliation of conservation aspects with social/cultural development. According to its Secretariat, the Member States of COMIFAC place great importance to the social and cultural aspects of forest management and include local communities in the decision making process as far as managing forests go. However, their report observes, it is challenging to deal with competing uses of the same space by different economic activities (mining, agriculture and forestry) and, in this as well as in other contexts, the capacity of local actors has to be further built.

So far, REPAR-CEFDHAC considers that the participation of rural populations in the management and conservation of forest ecosystems is very low and the benefits they accrue from the use of their forest heritage are minimal. The involvement of local people in the drafting of management plans is still not enough, economic aspects are favoured in detriment of social ones; intellectual property rights related to traditional knowledge are not fully taken into account. In this regard, REPAR-CEFDHAC has sought the undertaking of several actions in the various member parliaments on issues related to the highlighting of social and cultural aspects in SFM.

C. International Year of Forests – Forests 2011

Several regional and subregional entities sent inputs regarding the International year of Forests – Forests 2011; those inputs will appear in the Secretary-General’s Report on the issue to be presented to the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

IV. Regional cooperation and partnerships

Each entity has specific objectives, mandate, composition and procedures of action. However, there are commonalities, such as the fact that all of them, some more than others, work closely with the various members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), which is a part of the international arrangement on forests. CPF member organizations are seen as fundamental in supporting the promotion of SFM, the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives.

All the regional and subregional partners of UNFF reiterated their support to open and transparent decision making processes including, whenever possible, the participation of civil society; moreover, all entities prioritize capacity building and awareness-raising as tools to achieve the promotion of SFM and many organize activities involving all stakeholders. ACTO, for instance, aims at building the capacity of national organizations in charge of forest management so that they can properly contribute to the coordinated regional effort.

APFNet’s mission to promote regional SFM is realized through capacity building, information sharing as well as pilot projects, through which efforts are made to enhance regional cooperation to pave the way towards SFM. By drawing on regional and international expertise to contribute to the thematic training for long-term development, APFNet has launched the scholarship programme offering opportunities to foresters and researchers for postgraduate education in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Carpathian Convention is in the process of developing an education and awareness – raising and information sharing component, to support and complement
already existing transboundary initiatives, and promote a regional - level approach, including as regards scientific exchange.

CBFP supports COMIFAC and Central African delegates in building capacity for international negotiations. CBFP works towards a coherent regional vision by channelling support to individual countries through the COMIFAC thematic working groups and by sharing information with other partners. CBFP also aims at improving knowledge on forests and people by producing and disseminating information about the Congo Basin forest ecosystems and livelihood systems

REPAR- CEFDHAC emphasises the need to take into account all uses of forests and how they interact with each other, as well as the work and priorities of other regional entities, such as COMIFAC, in order to build capacity and raise awareness of the various actors. The mining industry in forest areas, for instance, can help to improve the livelihoods of the local and indigenous people, but also brings new social and environmental aspects to the equation. It may also interact with more traditional activities such as agriculture and cattle-raising.

Capacity building activities by UNECE/FAO have played a catalytic role in addressing countries’ efforts to achieve sustainable forest management by addressing topical themes for the different regions, e.g. wood energy, forest products marketing and corporate social responsibility in Southeast Europe; policy developments and institutional reform in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

An important lesson learned is that the close cooperation with actors in the European forestry sphere is crucial to ensure effective outreach and impact of capacity building activities in the countries throughout the UNECE region.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), together with other regional partners, has been promoting capacity building in the area of payment for environmental services. Lessons learned from the experience include the sharing of country experiences, which is far more effective than other types of capacity building in terms of providing inspiration and practical solutions, as well as the realization that the countries which have been able to advance the furthest on the issue have been able to identify a specific challenge related to forest ecosystem services as a basis for policy development.

Communication and capacity building have been great strengths of the Montreal Process since its inception. Sharing of experiences and knowledge has enabled the development and application of the entity’s C&I framework used by all member countries. For example, through the IMFN, Argentina, Canada, Chile, China and Russia are collaborating on methods to demonstrate SFM using the Montreal Process C&I.

As far as financial support goes, most entities rely on official donors as well as regional and world development banks for their funding; some are able to obtain funds from private contributors as well. All agree, however, that more funding is needed and many see hope in obtaining new and additional resources through mechanisms such as REDD +.

For the Carpathian Convention, the majority of transnational projects are funded by the various programmes of the EU Funds for Territorial Cooperation. National financing is provided by the forest sector itself, through timber export, managed at large by the state forestry enterprises, as well as by the Ministries of Environment and Ministries of Agriculture, which are indirectly supporting sustainable forest
development through promoting regeneration, biodiversity conservation, and afforestation measures.

CBFP offers guidance for effective use and governance of additional finance made available by the international community to the Congo Basin. COMIFAC, as strengthened by CBFP members’ support, can help to orient and monitor allocation of new funds provided. However, effective use heavily depends on the concerned countries’ political ownership and determination to enforce forest protection through appropriate legal frameworks and the establishment of positive incentives for developing new technologies or alternative revenue sources.

V. Lessons learned from this exercise

Some regional and subregional entities shared the lessons learned through taking part of the current exercise and answering the questionnaire. APFNet considers that more efforts are needed to maintain and expand regional forest cover, through afforestation and forest degradation to realize its objective of expanding forest cover by 20 million ha by 2020; moreover, a monitoring system with effective data exchange and sharing for the regional forests should be established for measuring the success of policy implementation and developing management strategies accordingly. Finally, local communities can be the major allies for forest protection and sustainable use, and their participation should be encouraged and mobilized.

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention states that the identification and the securing of sources of funding for project implementation throughout the Carpathian Region will be a challenge. Future European Union (EU) transnational programmes should be based on macro-regional approaches, allowing that sustainable development priorities of the Carpathian Space be addressed through better coordination of existing (South Eastern Europe and Central Europe) or new EU programmes, such as a “Carpathian Space” (similar to the existing funding programme “Alpine Space”). The strategic and programme framework should address the Carpathians in their integrity.

Among the lessons learned by IMFN participants throughout the 16 years of its development is that additional funding – a difficult calculation that should be neither too much nor too little - is almost always necessary but it is typically far from sufficient in terms of creating the conditions that will generate lasting progress toward SFM. Money is one source of capital, but so too is the critical human capital represented by local and indigenous communities, local business and industry, governments and other stakeholders who must be provided with the opportunity to become full and meaningful participants in defining what SFM means and working together to achieve it. Ultimately it is the combined political will, trust, confidence, and fundamental listening and learning skills of these stakeholders that make an initiative a success or not.

The UNECE regards the questionnaire as a reminder of the need for consistency between actions agreed at the global level and those agreed at the regional level, and respective actions. In this context, it is important to strengthen synergies with other organizations and actors at the regional level, to work jointly towards the implementation of global goals, as well as regional commitments. Moreover it is particularly interested in being kept informed of global level activities, especially those of relevance to countries with economies in transition as far as financing sustainable forest management goes.

The REPAR-CEFDHAC expressed the view that the elaboration of the responses of the questionnaire was difficult, which might indicate that the questions were too many, too
complex and not targeted enough. The elaboration of the inputs was slowed by a lack of coordination and communication among the various actors involved and, as far as data go, when they were available, the information was unreliable and/or lacked consistency; despite all the difficulties and gaps, the preparation of the inputs showed that it is possible to unite divergent interests around a common product and to lay the groundwork for a real work, diagnostic and monitoring tool. In the end, it was possible not only to prepare the inputs but also to perform a significant exercise of researching forest-related information in Central Africa.

The Permanent Secretariat of the ACTO reported that all initiatives and experiences generate important lessons which feed back into the Organization's decision making process. One of the most important lessons is the need to apply significant effort in the consensual planning process of regional action, including the allocation of time for appropriate interaction and consultation. Moreover, all regional processes are specific and, as far as regional entities which implement global agreements go, the lessons learned have been broadly adopted as it can be seen by the results of the “Australian-Swiss region-led initiative on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests”6, which took place in Geneva from 28 to 30 January 2008.

From the partnership regarding capacity building in the area of payment for environmental services, UNESCAP learned that while subregional networking is valuable, networking within a country is just as important; sharing of country experiences is far more effective than other types of capacity building in terms of providing inspiration and practical solutions, and; the countries which have been able to advance the farthest on payment for environmental services policy have been able to identify a specific development challenge related to forest ecosystem services as a basis for policy development.

Finally, UEMOA stated that answering the questions forwarded by the UNFF Secretariat allowed the Union to list all its initiatives related to the sustainable management of forests and to realize that there is room for improvement. The elaboration and implementation of a regional forest action plan will allow UEMOA to contribute more to the efforts of its Member States in promoting and achieving the sustainable management of their forests.

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6 E/CN.18/2009/18
Annex I

Regional and subregional entities providing inputs to the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

- Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management
- Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
- Carpathian Convention
- Central African Forests Commission
- Congo Basin Forest Partnership
- Economic Community of Central African States
- Forest Europe
- International Model Forest Network
- Montreal Process
- Réseau des parlementaires pour la gestion durable des écosystèmes forestiers de l’Afrique Centrale – Conférence sur les écosystèmes de forêts denses et humides d’Afrique Centrale
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- West African Economic and Monetary Union