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High-level ministerial segment and policy dialogue with heads of international organizations
Report of the Secretary General

¹ E/CN.18/2011/1
Summary

There are major issues before the UNFF9 high level ministerial segment of 2011, in particular, the increased importance of forests in various multilateral instruments and processes; the launch of the International Year of Forests; the forest financing process; the upcoming Rio+20 Summit; and other major forest related themes, challenges, and opportunities. The two-day High Level Ministerial Segment which is scheduled for 2–3 February 2011 represents a unique opportunity for Member States to address these important issues, and effectively provide policy advice and direction on these matters. The present report is prepared to facilitate thorough and productive discussions during the high-level segment, and contains a brief note on the outcomes and impacts of previous high-level segments of the UNFF, a brief overview of major global development challenges and the role of forests in improving this situation as well as future opportunities for forests. The report concludes by suggesting ways to strengthen and enhance the contribution of forests to the global development agenda, and ongoing and future major global events and processes.
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I. Introduction

1. The Forum at its seventh session adopted its Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2007-2015. Accordingly, the Forum decided to hold a high level ministerial segment at its ninth and eleventh sessions in 2011 and 2015. The high level ministerial segment of the UNFF9 is scheduled to be held on 2 and 3 February 2011.

2. The opening of the high level ministerial segment will feature the official launch of the International Year of Forests (Forests 2011) and series of special ceremonies and events, with the participation of high officials of Member States, the United Nations and other member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), as well as representatives of major groups. After the opening session, this segment continues its work in various high level round tables, each discussing a major issue related to forests. There will be also a high level dialogue among high officials and heads of the CPF member organizations in the second day of the segment. Finally, the high level ministerial segment is expected to conclude its work with the adoption of a ministerial declaration. It is expected that global media attention will focus on this high level segment with particular interest in the launch of Forests 2011.

II. Outcomes of previous high level ministerial segments

3. Two previous high level ministerial segments have been held, the first one during the second session of the Forum and the second, during the fifth session. The first UNFF high level ministerial segment adopted a ministerial declaration and message from the Forum to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD 2002, Johannesburg). This Declaration was transmitted by the Secretary-General to the Summit, through the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Summit. The operative part of the Ministerial Declaration was later incorporated intact in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

4. The next high level ministerial segment was held during the fifth session of the Forum. This meeting did not adopt any ministerial declaration. Ministers took note of a chairman summary of the discussions. One major policy recommendation highlighted in this summary was the need to set global forest goals to serve as a catalyst for action at all levels and stimulate countries to set their own target to fulfil this commitment.

5. The high level ministerial segment of the UNFF5 substantially paved

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2 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation- Paragraph 45:

the ground for a historic agreement by the United Nations General Assembly on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI, forest instrument) and the global objectives on forests later in 2007, by initiating the negotiation process and transmitting draft negotiating text to the sixth session of the Forum.

III. Major global development challenges

6. The collective efforts towards the achievement of the MDGs have made inroads in many areas. Encouraging trends before 2008 had put many regions on track to achieve at least some of the goals. Nevertheless, the progress is uneven and slow, and the global community has already missed meeting some of the goals.

7. Analyses indicate that the effects of the global financial crisis are likely to persist: poverty rates will be slightly higher in 2015 and even beyond, to 2020, than they would have been had the world economy grown steadily at its pre-crisis pace. As jobs were lost, more people have been forced into vulnerable employment: in 2009, 60 per cent of employed were in vulnerable jobs.

8. The devastating impact of climate change looms large and the risk of death or disability and economic loss due to natural disasters and environmental degradations are increasing globally and are severely affecting poorer countries. Between the beginning of 2008 and March 2010, 470,000 people were killed as a result of natural disasters; economic losses were $262 billion in 2008-2009.

9. Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women has been slow on all fronts—from education to access to political decision-making. Men still outnumber women in paid employment outside agriculture in almost all regions.

10. Aid remains well below the United Nations target of 0.7% of GNI for most donors. In 2009, only Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden had reached or exceeded the target. In 2009, net disbursements of official development assistance (ODA) amounted to $119.6 billion, or 0.31 per cent of the combined national income of developed countries4.

11. Deforestation and natural loss of forest continues at an alarming rate in several regions and countries. The area of primary forest is decreasing by about 4 million hectares each year. Employment in forest establishment, management and use declined by about 10 percent globally between 1990 and

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On average, 1 percent of all forests were reported to be significantly affected each year by forest fires. Outbreaks of forest insect pests damage some 35 million hectares of forest annually, primarily in the temperate and boreal zone.

Globally, staff numbers in public forest institutions are decreasing. Around 1.3 million people were reported to work in public forest institutions in 2008, 22 percent of whom were female. At the global level, the number of staff has declined by 1.2 percent annually since 2000. More than 20 000 professionals work in public forest research institutions.

The persistence of these as well other challenges calls for much stronger commitment on the part of countries and the whole global community to work together to effectively accelerate their efforts to achieve global development goals, in particular, the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Without a major push forward, many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed in most regions. Old and new challenges threaten to further slow progress in some areas or even undo successes achieved so far.

**IV. Forests for People**

“Forests for people” is the overall theme for the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. A focused discussion on this theme among ministers and high officials of Member States during the launch of the Forests 2011, and at the time that “forests” are considered a major ingredient of any panacea to current global challenges, provides the Forum with the opportunity to go deeper into the meaning and different dimensions of “forests for people”, and to better understand the benefits of all types of forests to all people and all countries, even those countries that do not have forests or have small forest areas or trees outside of forests.

The imperative for a people-centred approach to forests is for a close look at the interlinkages of forests and issues that have major impacts on the daily lives of people and their future including poverty eradication, finance, governance, green economies, employment, social integration, as well as the global development challenges. In practical terms, forests are the intersection for all aspects of human life. Forests provide goods and services that are essential for civilizations and are crucial for economic development, access to clean water, agricultural productivity, soil conservation and flood control. Forests are home to at least 80 per cent of terrestrial biodiversity, and are a major carbon sink for regulating global climate. Forests contribute intensively to poverty eradication, and over 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forest resources for their livelihoods.

The global objectives on forests as well as the 2007 UN non-legally

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5 FAO-Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2010
binding instrument on all types of forests are illustrations of an evolution in thinking from a sector-centred to a people-centred approach to forests. The high level segment of the UNFF9 is the first high level meeting of the Forum that is being held after the adoption of the forest instrument and the global objectives on forests. Moreover, this meeting is being held both as a 2010 post MDG summit and a pre Rio+20 event. In this context, the high level segment of the UNFF9 can be highly significant, to address the links between forests and other ecosystems and sectors, and to ensure that forests play their full part in contributing to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

A. Forests and poverty eradication

17. Poverty is a multi-dimensional condition. It means more than not having an adequate income; rather it includes a measure of the state of health, level of education, sense of security, quality of governance, respect for justice and human rights, and equality. In many countries, rural poverty is the consequence of the depletion of natural resources upon which previous generations depended. This is seen in increased soil erosion and loss of soil fertility, unrestricted deforestation, and diminished water supplies. In terms of their impact on poverty, these factors combine to produce diminished agricultural production and increased food insecurity, reduced firewood to meet household energy needs, lack of adequate supplies of water for consumption and sanitation, and the loss of valuable forest capital for economic development and environmental stability.

18. Forests contribute directly to the goal of reducing poverty and hunger by providing cash, income, jobs, and consumption goods for poor families. According to World Bank estimates, approximately a quarter of the world’s poor are dependent on forests for their livelihoods. The livelihoods of the approximately 240 million of the world’s poor that live in forested areas of developing countries depend on the protection and, often, the rehabilitation of these forests. What needs to be stressed is that forests contributions are not limited to reducing hunger and crisis but when managed sustainably can have a greater impact through an increased and more sustainable income resulting in poverty reduction. In Zimbabwe, for example, by collecting and selling Baobab seeds to a processing company, local producers doubled the income they previously earned from growing cotton. In Malawi, households tripled their per capita income from 3,000 kwacha (US$22) to 9,000 kwacha (US$67) by shifting to sustainable forestry activities, including guinea fowl rearing, baobab fruit juice production and beekeeping. Moreover, forests contribute to environmental sustainability by providing a variety of environmental services.

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf
and by furnishing renewable wood and non-wood forest products.\(^7\) Non-timber forest products can also play an important role in gap filling for the rural poor, and under certain conditions can provide a stepping-stone out of poverty\(^8\).

19. Where forests play a critical role in enabling people to cope with poverty, their rights should be safeguarded by providing and securing tenure and access to wood and non-timber forest products. Protecting vulnerable forest-dependent people is an important element of sustainable forest management as is the creation of an enabling environment for poverty alleviation. As the indigenous populations residing within forest regions represent some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world who also have limited access to the outside world, they need specific priority attention. Some important steps need to be taken to ensure that people within forests are protected through land tenure reforms, provision of financial services for forest activities, and revision of the forest regulations that marginalise poor people\(^9\).

B. **Forests financing**

20. Finance is an integral element of the global partnership for development and sustainable forest management. The resolution of the special session of the ninth session of the Forum on means of implementation set a sound framework that helps countries to avoid a repetition of the debate on concepts and measures that have already been agreed, and assists them in narrowing down the scope of their differences and approaches, looking at forest financing in a very strategic manner. In the resolution the Forum reaffirmed that financing for forests was not adequate and that forest financing strategies should be inclusive of all types of resources, from all sources.

21. The resolution places cooperation, participation and responsiveness as the bedrock for any eventual solution to forest financing. It frames forest financing in the context of global development goals, and not in the context of a political confrontation between South and North or national versus international resources. The gaps in and needs for forest financing in developing countries, in particular in those countries with special needs, are very much recognized.

22. By adopting this Resolution, the United Nations Forum on Forests set up a new vision in which financing sustainable forest management was recognized as a critical action for advancing the global development agenda. This Resolution specifically mandates the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad

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\(^8\) Marshall and Schreckenberg, 2007; Pinto and May, 2007

\(^9\) [http://www.etfrn.org/etfrn/newsletter/news4748/nl47_oip_02.htm](http://www.etfrn.org/etfrn/newsletter/news4748/nl47_oip_02.htm)
Hoc Expert Group to make proposals on strategies to mobilize resources from all sources to support the implementation of sustainable forest management, the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, including, inter alia, strengthening and improving access to funds and establishing a voluntary global forest fund, taking into account, inter alia, the results of the Forum’s review of the performance of the Facilitative Process, views of Member States, and review of sustainable forest management-related financing instruments and processes.

23. On the other hand, the international architecture of financing for forests has undergone major changes. Significant expectations have emerged concerning the potential of forest carbon financing to mobilize unprecedented additional resources and, to a lesser extent, concerning other payment schemes for environmental services to support sustainable forest management. If properly designed, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD-plus) financing could be a catalyst for broader and transformative sustainable forest management investment, including public and private investment.

24. REDD-plus financing offers a great opportunity for forest financing. In spite of its huge potential, REDD-plus financing flows are highly unlikely to address all the gaps and constraints of financing for the implementation of the UN non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. REDD-plus financing would not address the needs of huge number of countries with dryland forests. These countries are excluded from REDD-plus resources, in spite of the fact that their forests have a crucial role in water management, erosion control, biodiversity protection and mitigating climate change. In addition, various definitions of sustainable forest management, different interpretations of that concept and a lack of consensus among countries and organizations to agree on a specific definition has diminished countries’ ability to develop a full comparison of what has been done for forests and what else should be done. There are also concerns that REDD-plus activities in developing countries may substitute greenhouse gas mitigation commitments by developed countries.

25. The first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing (AHEG1) was held from 13 to 17 September 2010 at the United Nations in Nairobi, Kenya. In essence, discussions in AHEG1 highlighted the need for further collaboration and sharing of experiences among governments to develop innovative financing mechanisms, as well as deeper collaboration with the private sector, and the need for an enabling environment for private sector investments. The discussions also underscored the need to engage more substantively governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and its Advisory
Group on Finance (AGF) in identification of forest financing options, modalities and their possible structures, prior to AHEG2. Participants in AHEG1 felt the need to have an assessment of different options for the forest financing architecture, including a global forest fund, to be prepared by the secretariat for consideration of the AHEG2.

C. **Forests; a means for social integration and job generation**

26. Sustainable forest management has economic, environmental and social dimensions. In efforts to strengthen sustainable forest management, more attention has been given to economic and environmental issues, and the social dimension of this work and of its environmental impact has been less explored and understood. Understanding is growing of the importance of the economic activities of indigenous, community and family forest rights holders, managers, and owners, and within and beside these groups, of labor, women, and youth.

27. The social dimension of forests is concerned with the quality and extent of the relations that exist between families, communities, and regions with regard to forests. These relations are the foundation for sustained progress in forest management practices and the generation and distribution of increased economic benefits from sustainably managed forests. The relative strength or weakness of this foundation has a profound effect on the ability of communities to contribute to lasting improvements in management practices and the resulting improvements in economic benefits, conservation of biodiversity, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

28. Local communities and people, including indigenous peoples, women, and girls contribute immeasurably to the benefits that derive from sustainable forest management and sustainable forest management-based economic activities. That contribution can be greatly increased with greater investment in a range of capacities, and the integration of these groups into forest policy setting, policy development and policy implementation. Other measures include improved management skills for forest-dependent people and communities, improved market access and marketing structures and related networks, and strengthened forestry extension training and, education programs.

29. Improved management of scarce environmental and natural resources offers significant economic opportunities. Realizing the opportunities from green growth and more environmentally sustainable areas of job creation has thus become an important macroeconomic policy priority for many governments. This implies substantially increased investments across a range of economic sectors that build on and enhance the Earth’s natural capital or reduce ecological and environmental risks.

30. Around 10 million people are employed in forest management and conservation – but many more are directly dependent on forests for their
livelihoods. Reported employment in forest establishment, management and use declined by about 10 percent between 1990 and 2005, probably because of gains in labor productivity. Europe, East Asia and North America saw steep declines (15 to 40 percent between 1990 and 2005), while in other regions, employment increased somewhat. Most countries reported increased employment in management of protected areas. Given that much forestry employment is outside the formal sector, forest work is surely much more important for rural livelihoods and national economies than the reported figures suggest.

31. Eighty percent of the world’s forests are publicly owned, but ownership and management of forests by communities, individuals and private companies is on the rise. Despite changes in forest ownership and tenure in some regions, most of the world’s forests remain under public ownership. Differences among regions are considerable. North and Central America, Europe (other than the Russian Federation), South America and Oceania have a higher proportion of private ownership than other regions. This proves the significance of the role of governments in devising appropriate policies and measures that increase the job-generation potential of forests. Of course, in some regions, there is an increasing trend toward involving communities, individuals and private companies in the management of publicly owned forests. It is necessary to encourage greater involvement of these non-public sectors in managing forests, within sound regulatory frameworks to ensure sustainability of forest resources as well as the rights of people whose lives are dependent to these forests.

D. Forest governance

32. Significant progress has been made in developing forest policies, laws and national forest programmes. Of the 143 countries that have a forest policy statement, 76 countries have issued or updated their statements since 2000. Of the 156 countries that have a specific forest law, 69 countries – primarily in Europe and Africa – reported that their current forest law has been enacted or amended since 2005. Close to 75 percent of the world’s forests are covered by a national forest programme, i.e. a participatory process for the development and implementation of forest-related policies and international commitments at the national level.

33. Good governance, with a clear articulation of the principles of environmental and social responsibility is prerequisite for sustainable forest management. Efforts should also be made to improve law enforcement and to curb illegal forest-related activities, which often result in the destruction of ecosystems and deprive forest dependent communities of their livelihoods.

34. It is necessary to incorporate the voices of people into forest governance if the goal is to ensure that people benefit from forests, and to maintain long term and sustainable benefits from forests. It is crucial to involve
those who live in or in close proximity to forests in decisions about what happens to forests, and to ensure the security of livelihoods of poor and marginal peoples that depend on forests. There is growing evidence that transferring authority and responsibility for sustainable forest management to communities leads to both a significant reduction of poverty and improved forest conditions. Studies also show that shifting of authority and responsibilities have resulted in improvements in livelihoods and forest conditions.\(^{10}\)

35. Strengthening national legislation and enforcement is another important area. Clarification and strengthening of tenure and access rights related to forest lands and use, decentralization and promotion of partnerships between Governments, forest owners and communities, industry and trade and civil society also contribute to better forest governance. Countries should be further encouraged to promote certification of origin of timber and timber products, chain-of-custody systems and voluntary codes of conduct, as these are important tools in combating illegal practices in forestry. On the other hand, market access to legally and sustainably produced forest products, including public procurement rules need to be enhanced, together with transfer of technology and sharing of experiences.

36. Management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests involves reconciling diverse and sometimes conflicting interests and is the concern of Governments, public and private owners, managers and other stakeholders. No single agency or class of actors has the knowledge and capacity for enhanced forest management globally. In this context, collaboration across different forest managers and users, across different scales of decision making related to forests should be promoted as this is the most effective way for improving the different benefits that forests provide to humans and the planet.

E. **Forests and green economies**

37. The road towards recovery from global financial crisis is proving to be long, sinuous, and bumpy. After a year of fragile and uneven recovery, growth of the world economy is now decelerating on a broad front, presaging an even weaker growth for 2011. The weakness of major developed economies continues to drag on global recovery. There seems to be no quick fix to many of the predicaments these economies are facing in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Credit remains short in supply and more broadly financial fragility continues. Unemployment remains elevated and domestic demand is anaemic.\(^{11}\)

\(^{10}\) Hardin & Agrawal-Forests, people, and tenure-Culture, communities &sustainable development

38. In mitigating and responding to the risks posed by the financial challenges, some countries have implemented economic stimulus packages to tackle the crisis and to promote a move towards a greener economy. Even though a greening of the global economy, aiming at higher sustainability through the reduction of negative impacts on the environment and climate change, was already under way before the economic crisis, the crisis was seen as an incentive to some Governments to accelerate the process towards building green economies. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication is also a theme of the Rio+20 Conference.

39. There is no agreed definition on “green economies” at the global level, and this report does not attempt to define green economy. Initially, green economies imply linking economic growth and environmental sustainability, and may imply realizing growth and employment opportunities from less polluting and more resource efficient activities, including in energy, water, waste, buildings, agriculture and forests; and managing related structural changes such as potentially adverse effects on vulnerable households and traditional economic sectors. However, the question remains whether these are the only issues that countries have to take into consideration in building green economies. One major issue that has to be fully taken into account within global policy debate on building green economies is the fact that green economies and the associated policy implications will apply differently across countries, depending on their national circumstances, priorities and capacities.

40. Whether, as some believe, that considering the greening of the economy as the “process of reconfiguring businesses and infrastructure to deliver better returns on natural, human and economic capital investments, while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions, extracting and using less natural resources, creating less waste and reducing social disparities”, or as others consider it, as just a new way to promote “sustainable development”; or to call it “green growth”, forests are among the priority areas that are crucial for building green economies.

41. Forests have strong potential to contribute to a greener economy and a more sustainable society. If a more sustainable society is to be achieved, there is definitely a need to re-focus the global economy towards investments in protecting and managing sustainably natural resources, such as forests, as well as green industries and technologies. These are conducive to sustainable development and the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

42. There is a growing awareness and understanding by policy makers of the forests’ potential for development in and contribution to green economies.

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12 THE FOREST SECTOR IN THE GREEN ECONOMY-UNECE
Forests can make significant contributions towards building green economies in different ways including through mitigating climate change impacts, conservation of natural resources through the protection and delivery of water resources; through protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and introduction of schemes of payments for environmental services as well as by providing other social, environmental and economic services which are discussed earlier in this report. Building green economies also means reducing social disparities by fully realizing the potential of forests for creating green jobs.

43. Building green economies also provides necessary space for realizing the full potential of forests in generating more green and decent jobs, especially in light of the fact that the total number of jobs in the forest sector is expected to further decrease, the share of green jobs in the sector should increase with the transition towards green economies. There are other environmental services from forests beyond timber which should be better recognized and compensated for. There is a need to communicate better on forests role to raise awareness about the interlinkages of forests and green economies. We should find the right balance between what should be dealt with by markets and what requires Governments’ involvement. This raises the issue of the extent to which the private sector needs public incentives to foster some green activities.

44. Governments’ long-term visions are needed to enable a real shift towards green economies, benefiting fully from forests potential. To do this, designing the appropriate mix and balance of different types of policy measures that ensure best possible use of forests and forest services are essential. As energy, climate change and agricultural policies will likely have longer term effects on forests, there is a need to ensure intra- and inter-sectoral coherency among these policies.

45. The long-term development of the forest sector and its ability to improve social welfare will depend on, among others, the extent to which its roles are recognized, and supported by political will and adequate policies. The future of the forest sector, however, will not only be determined by Governments’ will to place the sector as a priority on its agenda, but also by the sector’s ability to improve the efficiency of wood use and to continue developing innovative and better marketed products in order to seize the opportunity of growing demand for green products. Therefore, it is important to know how countries can enhance forests contribution to green economies and how forests, at the same time, can benefit from increased green public spending in related fields. In this context, increasing cooperation with other sectors, such as energy, building and water management, and environment is essential.

46. Encouraging the transition to green economies requires a broad range of financial, regulatory, and, institutional and technological measures. Public
expenditure- current spending as well as capital investments in public infrastructure and R&D- also plays a critical role in shaping economic development. This is a specific area in which the capacity of developing countries has to be strengthened.

V. Forests: Multi-dimensional issue with broad cross-sectoral implications

47. Quite apart from directly consumable goods upon which billions of families depend- timber, firewood, fodder, food, medicine and non-timber forest products, forests also provide other incalculable indirect benefits and services – among them, carbon storage, biodiversity conservation, disease containment, and regulation of hydrological, carbon, and various nutrient cycles. Some of these benefits are public; others private; some are local, others global; and some are immediate, and others long term. Appropriate management is critically necessary for forests to continue to produce these diverse goods and services necessary for life and sustainability.

48. Forests cover 31 percent of world total land area. The five most forest-rich countries (the Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America and China) account for more than half of the total forest area. Ten countries or areas have no forest at all and an additional 54 have forest on less than 10 percent of their total land area. Around 13 million hectares of forest were converted to other uses or lost through natural causes each year in the last decade compared with 16 million hectares per year in the 1990s.

49. The area of planted forest is increasing and now accounts for 7 percent of total forest area. Between 2000 and 2010, the area of planted forest increased by about 5 million hectares per year. Most of this was established through afforestation (i.e. planting of areas not forested in recent times). Three-quarters of all planted forests consist of native species while one-quarter comprises introduced species. Large-scale planting of trees is significantly reducing the net loss of forest area globally.

50. Twelve percent of the world’s forests are designated for the conservation of biological diversity and has increased by more than 95 million hectares since 1990. These forests now account for 12 percent of the total forest area or more than 460 million hectares. Most, but not all, of them are located inside protected areas. Legally established protected areas cover an estimated 13 percent of the world’s forests. The area of forest within a protected area system has increased by 94 million hectares since 1990. Two-thirds of this increase has been since 2000.

51. Eight percent of the world’s forests have protection of soil and water resources as their primary objective. Around 330 million hectares of forest are

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13 FRA 2010
designated for soil and water conservation, avalanche control, sand dune stabilization, desertification control or coastal protection. The area of forest designated for protective functions increased by 59 million hectares between 1990 and 2010, primarily because of large-scale planting in China aimed at desertification control, conservation of soil and water resources and other protective purposes.

52. Around 949 million hectares, or 24 percent of all forests, are designated for multiple use, i.e. managed for any combination of the production of goods, protection of soil and water, conservation of biodiversity and provision of social services – or where none of these alone is considered as the predominant function. More than 1.6 billion hectares of forest have a management plan. The area of forest covered by a management plan – an important tool for achieving sustainable forest management – is steadily increasing, yet information is only available for 80 percent of the total forest area.

53. The management of forests for social and cultural functions is increasing, but the area is difficult to quantify. The only sub-regions and regions with fairly good data on the designation of forests for recreation, tourism, education or conservation of cultural and spiritual heritage are East Asia and Europe, where provision of such social services was reported as the primary management objective for 3 and 2 percent of the total forest area, respectively. Brazil has designated more than one-fifth of its forest area for the protection of the culture and way of life of forest-dependent people. Globally, 4 percent of the world’s forests are designated for the provision of social services.

54. According to FRA 2010, carbon emissions from forests have been reduced in recent years as a result of the decrease in the rate of deforestation combined with large-scale planting of new forests. There is now unprecedented awareness of the role forests play in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

55. There are many good signs and positive trends at the global level on forests, particularly in the last ten years, but many negative trends remain at regional, subregional and national levels. While the area of planted forest and conservation efforts are on the rise, the area of primary forests continues to decline at an alarming rate as these forests come under use or are converted to other uses. Forests under private ownership and the value of wood products showed a positive trend for the period 2000–2005.

56. These positive developments confirm the vision enshrined in the U.N. non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests in demonstrating the potential of forests for all aspects of human life. The instrument and its four objectives are major achievements of the international community adopted by
the General Assembly\textsuperscript{14} after the Millennium Summit of 2000 and the World Summit of 2005. The instrument symbolizes the beginning of a new era of international cooperation on forests, not as a sector but rather as a vital cross-cutting issue and ecosystem that advances the global development agenda, as stipulated by the most recent data and statistics.

57. Recognition of the important role of forests for global development goals has not been limited to the Forum. In fact, UNFF has been quite successful in bringing to the attention of the highest political officials, the significance of forests in addressing the global challenges. Five years from the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, leaders from around the world gathered at the United Nations, and undertook a comprehensive review of progress and together charted a course for accelerated action on the MDGs between now and 2015. World leaders during the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly held in September 2010 agreed on a comprehensive outcome in which they gave significant attention to forests. By referring to the global objectives on forests, the world leaders basically integrated the global objectives on forests in the outcome of the Meeting, and by that they recognized the value and contribution that forests provide to global development agenda.

VI. Forests 2011 and Rio+20: Golden opportunities

58. On 20 December 2006, the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/193, declared 2011 the International Year of Forests (Forests 2011) and invited Governments, the United Nations system, relevant non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other actors to make concerted efforts to raise awareness at all levels to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations\textsuperscript{15}.

59. The Forests 2011 offers a unique opportunity to raise public awareness of the challenges facing many of the world’s forests and the people who depend on them, as well as a means of promoting North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. Great success stories and valuable lessons on how to promote sustainable forest management already exist. Forests 2011 provides a means of bringing those voices together and building momentum towards greater public participation in forest activities around the world.

60. During this Year, Governments, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, regional and international organizations and major groups should contribute to and participate in the activities envisaged for the observance of 2011 as the International Year of Forests, and link their relevant

\textsuperscript{14} GA resolution 62/98

\textsuperscript{15} Secretary General report on the International Year of Forests, document E/CN.18/2011/7
activities to the Year, establish voluntary partnerships, and promote observance of Forests 2011 not as an isolated event but as part of a continuing process of advocacy and partnership to foster greater awareness and action towards sustainable forest management at all levels.

61. In December 2009, the General Assembly adopted a resolution in which the Assembly decided to organize the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as the Rio+20 Conference, in 2012 in Brazil. According to the Resolution, the objective of the Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges.

62. This conference should result in a focused political document, and the focus of the Conference will include the following themes to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

63. The Resolution also postponed consideration of the thematic cluster of issues which includes forests, by the Commission on Sustainable Development from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014. Accordingly, the CSD would review implementation of the A-21 and JPOI actions and commitments on “forests” in 2013 (normally early May) and would get into policy negotiations on forests in 2014 (normally in May). On the other hand, the UNFF10 in 2013 will decide on the issue of forest financing, and the UNFF11 in 2015 will decide on the future “international arrangement on forests”. In this context, it is necessary to take advantage of this continuity to address forests in different mechanisms and processes. However, there is also the need to avoid repetition and confusion of responsibilities of different bodies, and to recognize the unique role of the UNFF within the UN system in forest policy-setting. UNFF proposes practical measures, and identifies policy options and recommendations on forests to other bodies and commissions of the United Nations, but also to society as a whole, public and private.

64. The UNFF9 high level ministerial segment is the most effective tool for the UNFF to forward the substantive input of the highest forest policy making officials to the Rio+20 Conference. As a matter of fact, this is the only opportunity for the UNFF before the UNCSD. Fortunately, the UNFF2 ministerial segment has already set the precedent by providing substantive input on forests to the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. Given the current significant attention to forests at the highest political level, the high level ministerial segment of the UNFF9 has a historic responsibility to ensure that its outcome: a) addresses the challenges that threaten forests, b) explores opportunities for forests, c) and maximizes the contribution of forests to address global development challenges.
To this end, a ministerial declaration from the UNFF9 high level ministerial segment is strongly recommended, and it should be considered a matter of priority. The UNFF9 ministerial segment should adopt a comprehensive declaration, not only as an input to the Rio+20 Conference but also a commitment to look at the broader development landscape, and in particular the ways that forests contribute to build sustainable and prosperous future for all mankind. Such an input to the Rio+20 Conference should also recognize the role of the UNFF, as the most-widely representative and leading global body on forests.

VII. Conclusions

There is a need for a new paradigm on the interaction and linkages between people and precious natural resources. Forests are deeply entwined with other sectors of society and their management requires coordinated efforts and cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial approaches. In recent years, there has been an increasing tendency to look at the forest and its potential beyond the needs of the forest sector. Forests have incredible potential to help the global community to address and diminish the impacts of major global challenges such as the energy, food, water, desertification, climate change and financial crises.

Undoubtedly, the multiple values of forests now are recognized more than ever. Forests have a critical potential to decrease the enormous gap between the richest and the poorest households, if appropriate policy framework and enforcement are in place. It is important to promote a path to deliver the key message derived from the UNFF9 and Forests 2011 shared theme of “forests for people” through promoting a 360 degree perspective on forests that embraces all: the social, environmental, economic, cultural and spiritual services of forests.

The first ever international comprehensive agreement on forests, the U.N. non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the global objectives on forests, are the important contribution of the UNFF to the global sustainable development agenda and the fight against poverty, which have played important roles in devising a comprehensive approach to forests and in helping to clearly define the contribution of forests to the internationally agreed development goals.

This instrument is the first ever comprehensive and action-oriented global strategy towards achieving sustainable forest management, and contains specific actions, objectives, timelines and anticipated means for all relevant stakeholders at all levels. It is important to devise the necessary tools and mechanisms to deliver the commitments and actions contained in this instrument, and strengthen the implementation of this instrument and achievement of the global objectives on forests as the matter of high priority. The instrument and the global objectives on forests are effective tools to
enhance natural resource management, and to foster pro-poor development, long-term green investment and employment opportunities for all countries.

70. Participation, engagement and inclusion of those who have impacts on forest policies as well as those who are impacted by these policies in designing and implementing forest regulations and rules are of vital importance, and ensure the effectiveness of those policies. It is equally important to recognize the role played by regional processes, civil society, the private sector, and major stakeholder groups in promoting sustainable forest management worldwide.

71. The declining flows of ODA to the forest sector need to be reversed by focusing on the multiple functions, goods and services provided by forests as well as their contribution to achieving internationally agreed development goals.

72. REDD-plus financing offers significant opportunity for forest financing. REDD-plus financing is spread across countries and sectors, so it is important to understand what are the potential gaps, obstacles and opportunities, and the additionality of REDD-plus funding. It is extremely important to assess how to improve the effectiveness and transparency of existing REDD-plus initiatives, how to ensure broader application of forest financing to the huge number of countries that are currently excluded from REDD-plus financing, and how to make sure that policy advice, guidance and recommendations of the Forum are included in the operational programmes of the REDD-plus financing initiatives.

73. Forest governance is an important building block for sustainable forest management. It is important to enhance the transparency of governmental policies and actions directed to forest law enforcement and combating illegal logging, and to promote an enabling environment as a necessary foundation to fully explore forests potential for the sustainable livelihoods of people.

74. To ensure coherent efforts at the national level, clear linkages between national forest programmes and other plans, including poverty reduction strategy papers, are essential. National forest programmes must clearly identify the relevance and potential role of trees and forests in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and highlight opportunities for scaling-up good initiatives.

75. The world leaders in the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly which was held in September 2010 to review the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals called for strengthening political commitment and action at all levels to effectively implement the global objectives on forests and the sustainable forest management of all types of forests in order to reduce the loss of forest cover and improve the livelihoods of those that depend on forests through the development of a comprehensive
and more effective approach to financing activities, involvement of local and indigenous communities and other relevant stakeholders, promoting good governance at the national and international levels, and enhancing international cooperation to address the threats posed by illicit activities.

76. The Rio+20 Conference and Forests 2011 provide extraordinary opportunities to strengthen political commitment and promote international cooperation in advancing the implementation of the U.N. non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and achievement of the global objectives on forests, through concrete and specific initiatives on the ground among interested Governments and stakeholders, including the private sector, indigenous and local communities and non-governmental organizations.

VIII. Recommendations

77. The Forum may wish to:

a. Recognize the role of forests and trees in the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including their benefits for the livelihoods of over a billion people living in extreme poverty, and their vital role in promoting climatic stability, conserving biological diversity, and protecting coastlines, watersheds and soil.

b. Advance implementation of the U.N. non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests as well as achievement of the global objectives of forests at all levels, as an effective means to advance global development agenda.

c. Reaffirm the unique leading role of the UNFF, within the UN system, in forest policy-setting and in the implementation of the UN non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and for the achievement of the global objectives on forests at the national, regional and global levels.

d. Invite all governments, international and regional organizations, major groups and other relevant stakeholders to take immediate steps towards implementing the outcome of the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on MDGs, in particular, on forests.

e. Recognize the significance of forests in moving towards sustainable development and the formation of green economies, and invite countries to promote green economic development through investment in sustainable forest-related industries; and a fair multilateral trading system that allows countries to take advantage of its opportunities.

f. Emphasize that efforts to build green economies should result in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly
reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and advancing achievement of global development goals, in particular poverty eradication, both nationally and internationally.

g. Highlight the importance of the enabling environment and means of implementation for promoting sustainable forest management, and call for strengthening cooperation in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of environmentally sound technology and capacity-building.

h. Accelerate cooperation in addressing the financing needs of countries to sustainably manage their forests, in particular developing countries with special needs and circumstances, and take actions to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, as crucial factors to mitigate climate change and reduce the loss of forest resources.

i. Renew its commitment to find a lasting solution to forest financing, as envisaged in the resolution of the special session of its ninth session on means of implementation, in its tenth session, and to support the intersessional activities on forest financing, as reflected in the AHEG1 report.

j. Promote cooperation on forest law enforcement and governance, and invite Member States to improve the access of local communities to markets, and to strengthen the inclusion of local people, including indigenous peoples and women, in decision-making, benefit sharing, and preservation of their cultural and social values, as a means to enhance the economic, social and environmental values of forests for the benefit of present and future generations.

k. Recognize the importance of the REDD-plus financing as a new opportunity for forest financing, and the need for understanding the implication of REDD-plus financing on broader forest financing, and whether or not this financing will cover the broader financing needs for forests.

l. Invite REDD-plus initiatives to take full advantage of the UNFF policy recommendations, as the only forest policy setting universal body in the United Nations, in their activities and programmes.

m. Emphasize the importance of the evolving concept of sustainable forest management provided in the U.N. non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, as a U.N. agreed widely accepted global expression for SFM.

n. Call for enhancing cooperation with relevant instruments, intergovernmental organizations and public and private processes, both within and outside the United Nations system.
o. Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to strengthen its support for the work of the Forum and to contribute actively to the implementation of the U.N. non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the achievement of the global objectives on forests, including through providing technical and financial resources, and ensuring that measures to support the implementation of the instrument and the Objectives therein, are addressed by their governing bodies.

p. Invite countries to fully integrate their national forest programmes with broader national priorities and development planning programs and plans, including poverty-reduction strategies.

q. Further invite Member States, international and regional organizations and development banks, major groups and other relevant partners to use the International Year of Forests, and the Rio+20 and its preparatory processes, as important platforms for highlighting the multiple advantages of sustainable forest management and for achievement of the MDGs through announcement of new initiatives and commitments.

r. Encourage Member States, CPF member organizations and other relevant stakeholders, in cooperation with the secretariat, to actively engage in and contribute to the preparatory process of the Rio+20 Conference, as well as during the IYF including through convening various meetings, events and workshops to further discuss and elaborate the potential of forests in e.g. eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable livelihoods for people, resulting in the building of true green economies.

s. Invite the Rio+20 Conference to:

   i. Reiterate the potential of forests for the achievement of the sustainable development goals and targets, and the role of forests in promoting sustainable development and the eradication of poverty through contributing to building green economies.

   ii. Support the UNFF and its multi-year program of work, and to recognize the added value provided by the UNFF, in particular the U.N. non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the global objective on forests.

   iii. Further support the ongoing work of the UNFF on forest finance and provide a major political boost for solid conclusions on forest financing at the UNFF10 in 2013.

t. Request the Secretary General to transmit the outcome of the high level ministerial segment of the UNFF9 to the Rio+20 Conference.