Information Note on the work of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF9) including during the High Level Ministerial Segment (24 January-4 February 2011, New York)

This note is intended to provide general information on the UNFF9 including the high level segment. The note is prepared by the secretariat, taking into account relevant decisions and discussions of the UNFF9 Bureau.

Method of work during the ninth session

As in the past, the deliberation and discussion during the UNFF9 will be conducted in plenary session, and in two parallel working groups. All agenda items of the UNFF9 and relevant Secretary General’s reports and other official documents will be introduced in the plenary sessions on 24 and 25 January 2010. Two parallel working groups are planned to start their work from 26 January 2010, and are scheduled to finalize their work by the end of 1 February 2010, and before the High Level Segment of the UNFF9. Working group one will consider the main theme of the session (forests for people, livelihood and poverty eradication). This group will also conduct the discussions and negotiations on a draft ministerial declaration, as well as the discussion on the International year of Forests (IYF). Working group two would be responsible for agenda items on means of implementation; assessment of progress in implementation of forest instrument and achievement of global objectives on forests; regional input; and enhanced cooperation. The Bureau’s proposed draft programme of work will be posted on the web prior to the ninth session. At its opening session on 24 January 2010, the Forum will adopt an organization of work for the whole two weeks.

Major issues in the agenda of the ninth session

Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication

In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015, the overall theme for the ninth session is “forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication” with the following sub-themes: (a) community-based forest management; (b) social development and indigenous and other local and forest-dependent communities, including forest and land tenure; and (c) social and cultural aspects.

International Year of Forests (IYF)

The General Assembly, by its resolution 61/93 of 20 December 2006, proclaimed 2011 as the International Year of Forests (IYF) and further requested the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to serve as the focal point for the implementation of the year in collaboration with Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, as well as relevant major groups. IYF will be launched during the high-level segment of the Forum’s ninth session.

Means of Implementation

In accordance to the Forum’s multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) sub-item (a) means of implementation will be a recurring “crosscutting issue” for each session. In addition, “means of implementation” was dealt with as a specific agenda item in the eight session of the Forum which eventually resulted in the adoption of the resolution on means
of implementation for sustainable forest management at the special session of the ninth session of the Forum in October 2009. Accordingly, the Forum established an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group (AHEG) and a Facilitative Process. Under this agenda item, the Forum will consider the report of the first meeting of AHEG which was held from 13 to 17 September 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya, and will also review the performance of the facilitative process.

High Level Segment*

According to its multi-year programme of work (2007-2015), the Forum should hold high-level ministerial segments in 2011 and 2015. There are major issues before the UNFF9 high level 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. In this regard, the UNFF 9 will have a two-day Ministerial Segment which is scheduled for 2–3 February 2011 (Wednesday and Thursday). The high level segment includes an opening session with special ceremonies for the official launch of the IYF, two parallel round tables in the afternoon of 2 Feb. and two in the morning of the 3 Feb (in total four round tables with four different themes), a high level policy dialogue with the heads of the CPF, and finally adoption of the ministerial declaration. Each round table will accommodate a limited number of countries, on the basis of the first registered, first served. Countries will be invited to indicate their preference for speaking in one of the four round-tables.

Other important issues in the agenda

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, regional and sub-regional inputs, emerging issue†, multi-stakeholder dialogue, enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as some other budgetary and organizational issues will be discussed during the ninth session. Two mandated panel on food, energy, and economic challenges as well as the panel on regional input will also be held during the UNFF9.

Side events, logistical and organizational matters including travel support

Side events will be scheduled during the lunch hours of the session. Information on the side events is available on the following link: http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session-sideevents.html

General information on registration in UNFF sessions is accessible at:
http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session-access.html

Information about travel support for developing countries and countries with economies in transition will be provided in due course.

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* Organization of work for the HLS is still under work, and details will be provided in due course.
† Based on the UNFF9 Bureau decision, the discussion on agenda item 7 (emerging issue) would be integrated in the discussions of the high level segment, and in the discussion on forests for people.