

Back ground paper: The United Nations Strategic Plan (2017-2030) and the Forum's Quadrennial Programme of Work (2017-2030)

Introduction:

This paper has been prepared for the expert meeting on major groups and other relevant stakeholders' contribution to the implementation of the UN strategic plan for forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030 and the Forum's quadrennial programme of work (4POW) 2017-2020. It provides a brief background on Major Groups engagement in the Forum's work. In addition, it elaborates on the Forum's decisions on engagement with major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Background and rational

According to resolution E/2000/35 that established the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the participation of a wide range of forest-related stakeholders is considered a key component of sustainable management of forests. Through this resolution, the UNFF was established to allow for continued policy development and dialogue among Governments, which would involve international organizations and other interested parties, including major groups, as identified in Chapter 23 of Agenda 21¹, to foster a common understanding on sustainable forest management (SFM) and to address forest issues and emerging areas of priority concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner.

Since the establishment of the Forum, Major Groups have played pivotal roles in the global policy debates as well as working directly at the grassroots level in promoting SFM and poverty eradication. The engagement of some Major Groups at the global policy level has also provided a unique opportunity for them to create awareness of policy decisions and their implications, as well as support the drive for implementation among peers at the grassroots level. In the past, the Forum ensured the opportunity to receive and consider inputs from representatives of major groups, in particular, through the organization of multi-stakeholder dialogues (MSDs) during the Forum session and major groups-led initiatives in support of the work of the Forum.

The Forum encourages major groups and other relevant stakeholders to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanism at all levels for interaction and participation in the Forum and other forest-related United Nations bodies. Further, at its twelfth session, the Forum welcomed the initiatives undertaken by major groups in contributing to the development and implementation of the

¹Major Groups as identified in Chapter 23 of Agenda 21: women; children and youth; indigenous people; NGOs; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological communities; and farmers and small forest land owners

UNSPF and the Forum's 4POW. It encouraged major groups and other relevant stakeholders to continue their involvement in the work of the Forum, including by elaborating proposals or work plans on how they can contribute to the implementation of the USPF and the Forum's 4POW, and to present such proposals or plans to the Forum at its thirteenth session in May 2018.

UN strategic plan for forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030

The Forum in resolution 2015/33 (22 July 2015) decided to develop a concise strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 to serve as strategic framework to enhance the coherence of and guide and focus the work of the international arrangement on forests and its components. In April 2017, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030²: the global framework for action at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests, and to halt deforestation and forest degradation. The UNSPF serves as a reference framework for the forest-related work of the United Nations system and for the fostering of enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies among United Nations bodies and partners towards the shared United Nations vision of a world in which all types of forests and trees outside forests are sustainably managed, contribute to sustainable development and provide economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for present and future generations. It also serves as reference framework for the shared United Nations mission to promote sustainable forest management and the contribution of forests and trees outside forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including by strengthening cooperation, coordination, coherence, synergies and political commitments and actions at all levels.

At the heart of the UNSPF are 6 global forest goals and 26 associated targets, including groundbreaking targets to increase forest area globally by 3% or 120 million hectares, and to eradicate extreme poverty for all forest dependent people, by 2030. These goals and targets fully encompass and build on the foundation provided by the 4 global objectives on forests included in the UN forest instrument. The global forest goals and associated targets are voluntary and universal. They support the objectives of the international arrangement on forests and are aimed at contributing to progress towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets³ the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals.

The UNSPF provides a reference for transformational actions by all actors, at all levels, to achieve its global forest goals and targets. The Forum endeavours to work with major groups and other relevant stakeholders to identify ways to enhance their

² A/RES/71/285

³ United Nations Environment Programme, document UNEP/COP/10/27, annex, decision/2, annex

contributions to the achievement of the global forest goals and targets at all levels and their interaction with the Forum and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, including through networks, advisory groups and other mechanisms, to raise awareness, foster information exchange and dissemination and facilitate coordinated inputs.

Quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (4POW) for the period 2017-2020

The Forum carries out its core functions on the basis of the UNSPF 2017-2030. The Forum's 4POW represents its contribution to implementing the UNSPF and sets the agenda for each Forum session within the quadrennium. The 4POW identifies thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and the resource needs. It also reflects the links between odd-year and even-year Forum sessions. Odd-year sessions focus on discussion on implementation and technical advice, including exchange of experiences among member States, CPF member organizations, regional and subregional organizations, major groups and other relevant stakeholders, and the science-policy interface. Even-year sessions focus on policy dialogue, development and decisions-making, taking into account the discussions and proposals of the previous session.

Odd-year and even-year session for a given biennium are thematically linked. Thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for a each biennium are identified by the Forum on the basis of the global forest goals and targets contained in the UNSPF, taking into account the annual theme and Sustainable Development Goals under review by the review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF).

Forum sessions and their outcomes and intersessional work and activities including major groups-led initiatives can contribute to the 4POW and the implementation of the UNSPF. The thirteenth and fifteenth Forum sessions will focus on policy dialogue, development and decision-making while the fourteenth session will focus on technical advice.

Opportunities for engagement

Both the UNSPF and the 4POW provide opportunities for civil society engagement. The elaboration of civil society contribution to the UNSPF and 4POW could consider the following areas:

- Implementation of SFM and the UN forest instrument
- Identifying ways to enhance civil society contribution to the achievement of the global forest goals and targets at all levels
- Major groups/civil society interaction with the Forum and the CPF including through networks, advisory groups or other mechanisms to raise awareness,

- foster information exchanges and dissemination; and facilitate coordinated inputs.
- Engagement and participation in the odd-year and even-year sessions