



Concept Note

Panel Discussions on the Contribution of Forests to the Achievement of the SDGs and Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies **Tuesday 8 May 2018, 10:00 a.m.**

Background

Forests cover 30 per cent of the Earth's land area, nearly 4 billion hectares, and are essential to human well-being, sustainable development and the health of our planet. They provide wide-ranging social, economic and environmental benefits that sustain human well-being and help to build the resilience of communities and individuals, particularly for an estimated 1.6 billion people, 25 per cent of the global population, who depend on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation.

In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the UN Forum on Forests, the thirteenth session of the Forum (UNFF13) will focus on policy dialogue on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017–2018 under agenda item 3a.

UNFF13 is the first policy session of the Forum since the adoption of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 (UNSPF) by the UN General Assembly in 2017, and will provide a timely opportunity for the Forum to provide input to deliberations at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2018. The theme of HLPF2018 is "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". The set of goals to be reviewed in depth at HLPF 2018 are:

- ❖ Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
- ❖ Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
- ❖ Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- ❖ Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- ❖ Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; and
- ❖ Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

In preparation for UNFF13 input to the HLPF 2018, several activities were carried out during the intersessional period. These activities are: inputs from Member States of the Forum, partners and stakeholders on forest-related contributions to the SDGs under review at HLPF 2018; four background analytical studies on contribution of forests to the achievement of the SDGs under review at HLPF 2018; and an international conference on "Working across sectors to halt deforestation and increase forest area: from aspiration to action".¹

Objectives

The panel discussion aims to supplement the discussions of the UNFF13 Ministerial Roundtable and, thus, will focus on the contribution of forests to the theme of the 2018HLPF. The panel will include presentation of findings of the UNFF13 background analytical studies and the outcome of the CPF International Conference. Following these presentations, participants will discuss how sustainable forest management can accelerate implementation of the SDGs under review by the HLPF2018, and contribute to transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

¹ The detailed information is available on the Forum website at <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/current-session/index.html>. The Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (E/CN.18/2018/2) also contains their summary information.



Modalities and expected output

These presentations will be followed by an interactive discussion among Forums' participants. A summary of the key issues, ideas and recommendations highlighted during the discussion will be included in the Chair's summary of the Forum's discussions on its input to the HLPF2018.

Examples of questions that could be considered during the panel discussion

- ❖ What measures can be taken to enhance contribution of forest ecosystem services to the achievement of the SDGs?
- ❖ How can the role of forests be enhanced in ensuring availability and sustainable management of water?
- ❖ How can forest and energy policies be better aligned to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all?
- ❖ What types of consumption and production practices of wood and non-wood forest products can be promoted to enhance their sustainability?

Panel composition

Moderator: Chair or Vice-Chair of UNFF13

First group of presenters: Hiroto Mitsugi (Collaborative Partnership on Forests), Michael Jenkins (Forest Trends), David Ellison (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences), Meine van Noordwijk (International Union of Forest Research Organizations)

Second group of presenters: Duncan Brack (Chatham House), Gary Bull (University of British Columbia), Jitendra Vir Sharma (Energy and Resources Institute)