ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT ON FORESTS
IN PREPARATION FOR THE MIDTERM REVIEW OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS BY THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS

Topic I: Involvement of regional and subregional partners.

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Greetings from Malawi; my name is Mafa Chipeta, contacting you as a consultant for the UNFF Secretariat-managed independent **Assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests in Preparation for the Midterm Review of its Effectiveness by the UN Forum on Forests**. I have been retained by the UNFF Secretariat to contribute material under **topic I** (Involvement of regional and subregional partners) and **topic J** (Involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders). My draft report should be practically in final by mid-November 2022.

Under cover of a 9 August 2022 letter, **UNFF18 Chair Zephyrin Maniratanga** (copy attached separately) already sent you a consolidated questionnaire that covers all aspects of the ongoing assessment. I assume you have already received that consolidated questionnaire so my contacting you is to build on it (so far only government replies have started to come in).

I now appeal to you to give any IAF assessment-relevant supplementary material for the period since UNFF12;. ***I believe that your replies will simply sharpen what you may already have included in responding to the UNFF18 Chair's questionnaire***.

Section J: HIGHLIGHT QUESTIONS

[DO NOT FEEL OBLIGED TO REPLY TO THESE IF ALREADY ANSWERED THE UNFF18 CHAIRPERSON'S CONSOLIDATED QUESTIONNAIRE (Box below), EXCEPT TO CLARIFY IF NECESSARY]

What do you consider to be the top 3 key (a) achievements and (b) ambitions of the Regional and Subregional Partner Group for which you are the Focal Point or leader in **promoting policy and strategy change** beneficial to the IAF?

a. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GROUP OF REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PARTNERS:

- Submission of Regional Reports to UNFF10, UNFF11, and UNFF15.
- Participation in the different sessions of the UNFF, with greater participation throughout the Forum's sessions.
- Adoption of the IAF for the formulation of the Regional Programs or Projects of each regional organization.

b. AMBITIONS OF THE GROUP OF REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PARTNERS

- To give continuity to regional reporting for the UNFF.
- Increased development of regional actions that cannot be addressed by individual countries.
- Greater participation in the sessions of the forum, as well as the CPF, in intersessional activities. Promotion of regional political dialogue between forum sessions that promotes greater input to the Forum.

ACTO's ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Submission of ACTO Regional Reports to UNFF10[1], UNFF11,[2] y al UNFF15[3].

[1] https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ACTO.pdf
[2] https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/acto_es.pdf
[3] https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ACTO.pdf

- Formulation and approval by the eight ACTO Member Countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela) of the "Regional Forest Program for the Amazon Basin and Region". This program is aligned with the SDGs and the Global Forest Goals.
- Formulation and technical approval by the eight ACTO Member Countries of the "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance for Integrated Fire Management among ACTO Member Countries (MOU MIF)" and development of actions for the formation of the "Amazon Network for Integrated Fire Management".
- Progress in the implementation of the Forest Module of the Amazon Regional Observatory (ARO). The ARO is an Amazon Information Reference Center that facilitates the flow and exchange of information between institutions, government authorities, the scientific community, academia, and civil society in the Amazon countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO).[4] The purpose of the Forestry Module is to integrate official information on forests in the Amazon territories of ACTO Member Countries.

ACTO'S AMBITIONS:

- Presentation of the next regional report, incorporating advances in the implementation of the "Regional Forestry Program for the Amazon Basin and Region" that will benefit the IAF.
- Develop a financing strategy for the ACTO Forestry Program to the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network GFFFN and manage the participation of the eight ACTO Member Countries.
- Institutionalize at the regional level the Dialogue of National Forestry Authorities in the Amazon Region and promote the institutional interaction of national authorities related to forestry in the Amazon Region as defined in Component 1 of the "Regional Forestry Program for the Amazon Basin and Region".

What do you consider to be the top 3 key (a) achievements and (b) ambitions of your Regional and Subregional Partner Group in **promoting practical action and/or investment into SFM** in line with the ambitions of the IAF (e.g., under its Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030)?

A. ACTO's ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Support for the development of the 1st Virtual Forum on the potential of NTFPs for a Bioeconomy in Latin America and the Caribbean "BioForetALC" (March 2022).
- Within the framework of the Cooperation Agreement in force between ACTO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the PS/ACTO is contributing to the development of one of the sections of the "Biennial Report on the State and Prospects of the Bioeconomy in Latin America and the Caribbean", an initiative that is being coordinated by IICA, and which will have contributions from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), among others. The section being developed by the PS/ACTO addresses the use of natural products in the Amazon Region.
- Joint work with the CITES Authorities and Forestry Authorities of the ACTO MCs for the formation of Working Groups within the framework of the activities of the regional consultancy "Support for the implementation of CITES for Amazon tree species".

B. ACTO's AMBITION:

- Develop a financing strategy for the ACTO Forest Program to the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network GFFFN, and management for the participation of the eight ACTO Member Countries.
- Regional forest monitoring and harmonization and uniformity of regional criteria in the Amazon Region (Component 2 of the Program on Forests).

[4] ACTO's Amazon Regional Observatory website. https://oraotca.org/sobre-ora/

- Implementation of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management in the Amazon Region (Component 2 of the Forestry Program).
- Carry out a regional forest inventory of both timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

What top 3 successes has your Regional and Subregional Partner Group achieved in more fully **engaging the private sector and philanthropic entities** in your work and (especially) supporting implementation of the IAF ambitions by civil society and member states?

A. ACTO's ACHIEVEMENTS:

- The Amazon Regional Observatory (ACTO 11.2021) has been made available to interested parties, both from the private sector and philanthropic entities, with timely and accurate information related, among others, to forests and biodiversity, as well as indigenous peoples.
- The ARO's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Module (MYPIMES) is currently being implemented. The purpose of this platform is to consolidate, through the development of a Virtual Regional Information Window, all the work done to strengthen sustainable/sustainable management initiatives and traceability mechanisms for Amazon CITES species and forest products other than timber (NTFPs). It is expected to be completed in the first half of 2023. It will provide information on existing and potential markets for Amazon products, with updated online and automatic information on the historical behavior of these markets and product prices; and a mechanism for linking producers and buyers of Amazon products linked to CITES species (linkage with local, national, regional, and global fairs and platforms).
- The private sector and philanthropic entities can access the Regional Platform for Exchange and Knowledge (PRIC 2019) that among others offers training and virtual courses on SFM; promotes the systematization and exchange of experiences on practices and technologies of indigenous peoples, local communities and other tribal communities on sustainable/sustainable forest management; and Identify and promote the articulation of technological supply and innovation in forest management of international entities.
- Training and support to the ACTO MCs (i) in the development of the Non-detriment Findings (NDF) required by Appendix II of CITES for Cedrela spp. and (ii) implementation of CITES for tree species in the Amazon Region.

What are your key **suggestions for sourcing reliable funding for continuing participation of your** Regional and Subregional Partner Group **in IAF dialogue** and collective sponsorship by MGs of fora for IAF/SFM-related dialogues?

- Promotion of the importance and impacts of the participation of the Regional and Sub-regional Groups in the IAF dialogue, based on the regional forest programs and work plans developed and approved by the regional organizations in conjunction with their member countries.
- Development of financial proposals with projections of amounts to be funded by UN Member States for the development of IAF/MFS related dialogue forums.
- Leverage virtual platforms for the development of IAF/MFS-related dialogue forums.
- Develop a funding strategy for the ACTO Forestry Program to the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network GFFFN, and management for the participation of the eight ACTO Member Countries.
- Formulation of projects to address the implementation of specific strategic actions.
- Have funded projects evaluated with indicators to identify their contribution to the IAF.
- Develop a funding strategy for the ACTO Forestry Program to the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network GFFFN, and management for the participation of the eight ACTO Member Countries.
- Formulation of projects to address the implementation of specific strategic actions.
- Have funded projects evaluated with indicators to identify their contribution to the IAF.

What are your Regional and Subregional Partner Group's **most useful experiences in partnering with selected key IAF players**, including especially (a) Member Country Governments, (b) the Collaborative

Partnership on Forests (CPF), and (c) Regional and Subregional Partners in all or selected regions of the world, with top 3 suggestions each for improving them further?

(a) Member Countries Governments

ACTO is an intergovernmental organization formed by the eight Amazon countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela, which signed the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), becoming the only socio-environmental bloc in Latin America.

Strategic partners: various ministries or institutions responsible for the MCs, such as Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of the Environment, Forestry Directorates and other authorities and entities of the eight Member Countries.

ACTO works through the coordination and articulation of the Permanent Secretariat (PS/ACTO) whose main roles and functions are to facilitate the exchange, knowledge, cooperation, and joint projection among the Member Countries to fulfill the mandates of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. Therefore, it is:

- Articulating: consensus is generated among Member Countries to enable the implementation of activities, programs and projects involving national, regional, and international actors.
- Facilitator: establishes spaces for political and technical dialogue among the Member Countries to ensure that the mandates granted are fulfilled, including issues of interest in international forums such as those related to climate change, forests, biological diversity, and international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora.
- Coordinator: regionally administers and manages the execution of activities, programs and projects based on the mandates of the Member Countries.
- Manager of regional and international cooperation support: financial sources are identified to carry out specific activities of a regional nature that have been entrusted to it based on the priorities of the Member Countries, with full respect for national sovereignty and promoting South-South cooperation.
- Executor of programs and projects: progress is being made in the process of consolidating ACTO as an agency for executing regional programs and projects.
- Generator of regional information: regional reference information for the Amazon is produced from an exchange of experiences and knowledge of the Member Countries.
- Promoter of actions: it strengthens the institutional and management capacity of the Member Countries according to their requirements.
- Facilitator of participation and strategic alliances: it promotes the effective participation of the Amazon population and actors through dialogue and broad, democratic, intercultural, transparent, pluralistic, diverse, and independent interaction, strengthening the construction of strategic alliances.

(b) Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

ACTO does not belong to the CPF, however, to a greater or lesser degree, it has interacted with most of the organizations that make up the CPF and has maintained close collaboration with some of them over the years.

Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)	
Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of	• Regional Project for the "Management, Monitoring and Control of Wildlife Species Threatened by Trade" CITES BIOAMAZONIA (KfW 2016 - 12.2022)[5]

[5] Increased efficiency and effectiveness of management, monitoring and control of wildlife species threatened by trade in ACTO Member Countries, and interoperable national and regional information and knowledge management systems.

Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	● ACTO has been supporting Amazon countries to coordinate efforts for the implementation of CITES for tree species in the Amazon Region.
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	● Cooperation Agreement 2019-2022. ● FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC). ● ACTO participates as an observer in the meetings of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC).
Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)	
ICRAF	
International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)	● ACTO - ITTO Letter of Intent 2019 -2022 ● Criteria and Indicators of forest sustainability [6] ● Monitoring of Deforestation, Forest Harvesting and Land Use Changes in the Pan-Amazon Forest Project (2011 - 2018)[7] ● Project "Institutional Strengthening of ACTO MC in ecologically responsible forest management and biodiversity conservation in managed forests in the Amazon" ITTO / CBD (2015 -2019)[8]
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	● ACTO-IUCN Memorandum of Cooperation in process.
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD)	● Biomaz Project: Supporting the Implementation of the ACTO Biodiversity Program (2020 -2022)[9] ● Biodiversity Program/ Scoping Document for Rapid Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services under IPBES format.
Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	

[6] Development of a strategy for the implementation of the C&I of SFM based on a regional proposal for the harmonization of systems. ACTO and ITTO.

[7] Implementation of a regional forest cover monitoring system through the development of information on the extent and quality of Amazon Forest cover.

[8] Strengthen and develop capacities for the sustainable management and conservation of the Amazon Forest biodiversity in the different actors of the forestry sector of the member countries to implement forest management models and ecologically responsible good practices, with a territorial management approach that favors the conservation of forests and forest biodiversity.

[9] Provide a regional strategic framework for the coordinated management of biological diversity and ecosystem services for the Amazon, mainly through scientific information on the state of biological diversity and recommendations on action needs at the regional level.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	● ACTO/UNEP/GEF Project- Integrated and Sustainable Management of the Transboundary Water Resources of the Amazon River Basin Considering Climate Variability and Change[10] ● Project for the Implementation of the Program of Strategic Actions to Ensure the Integrated and Sustainable Management of the Transboundary Water Resources of the Amazon River Basin Considering Climate Variability and Change (GEF UNEP 2020 -2024)[11]
Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	● Amazon Regional Platform of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the ACTO Framework" (European Union 2022 - 2023).[12]
Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)	● Participation in Forum sessions and other expert meetings. ● Workshop for a regional financing strategy with the GFFFN (January 2023).
World Bank	

(b) Other regional and subregional partners.

According to the list presented as an attachment to this form, ACTO has participated in experiences with:

Interamerican Development Bank	● Grant to support the Forestry Sector Law Enforcement Initiative in the Amazon Region – ALFA[13] ● Strengthening Joint Regional Management for the Sustainable Use of Amazon Biodiversity (2006 -2010)[14]

[10] Successful regional initiative as an example of the benefits of regional cooperation at the basin level aimed at strengthening the institutional structure for the planning and implementation of strategic activities for the protection and sustainable management of water resources in the Amazon Basin in the face of climate change in the Region.

[11] The Strategic Actions Program (PAE) currently promotes Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) enabling Amazon countries to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of environmental agreements.

[12] Strengthening the different knowledge systems, technologies, practices, and efforts of Indigenous Peoples to address climate change in the Amazon Region. In addition to promoting the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices of the peoples that contribute to the protection, conservation, recovery and restoration of the Amazon Forest and its biodiversity, within the framework of the Amazon Regional LCIPP.

[13] Strengthen forest sector governance and law enforcement in the Amazon countries through solid information, data, and analysis to guide political, legal, and institutional dialogue and increase the sector's competitiveness.

[14] Promoted knowledge about regional biodiversity in the Amazon and its potential uses, supporting conservation and sustainable use tasks that require transboundary collaboration and benefit all countries in the Amazon basin.

	• Indigenous Peoples in Border Regions, with a focus on Traditional Knowledge and Health in Border Regions (2016 - 2019)[15] • Contingency Plan for the Protection of Health in Highly Vulnerable Indigenous Peoples and in Initial Contact (2020 - 2023)[16] • IDB- ACTO Technical Assistance Project. ACTO is developing with the IDB the "Regional Action Plan for Drinking Water, Basic Sanitation and Solid Waste Management in the Amazon Region".
European Commission	• Amazon Regional Platform of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the ACTO Framework (2022 -2023). See footnote 12. • The PS/ACTO participates in the Expert Group Meetings on Forest Fires in Latin America and the Caribbean promoted through the Joint Research Center/JRC and the Foreign Policy Instruments Service/FPI Regional Team Americas, in collaboration with the European External Action Service/ESAE.
Organization of American States – OAS	

REMINDER OF QUESTIONS YOU ALREADY RECEIVED
[as part of the consolidated questionnaire you received from the UNFF18 Chairperson on 9th August 2022]

Question I-1: In your view, what are the top three areas in which regional and subregional partners have made the most important contributions to SFM policy development and dialogue since the 15th session of the UNFF?

The three main areas in which regional and sub-regional partners have made the most significant contributions to policy formulation and dialogue on sustainable forest management since UNFF15 are:

- Forest governance
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by decreasing rates of forest degradation and increasing forest restoration.
- Sustainable forest management that promotes regional, national, and local development and contributes to the livelihoods of local populations.

[15] To continue with actions focused on health issues and territorial management of indigenous peoples in the regions adjacent to the territories inhabited by the PIACI in order to contribute, especially in border regions, to the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly the PIACI, facilitating dialogue between governmental actors on issues such as the pressure on their territories and livelihoods; exposure to epidemiological risk factors of viral and bacterial origin; and the need to complement public policies and legal frameworks for greater efficiency in the protection of their rights and their territorial, physical and cultural integrity.

[16] Cooperation in border territories of the Amazon Basin to create a favorable context to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and the threats of emerging and endemic tropical diseases in highly vulnerable Indigenous Peoples that inhabit these areas, with special emphasis on Isolated and Initial Contact Indigenous Peoples and populations adjacent to these peoples.

Question I-2: What are prime examples of regional and subregional partners successfully contributing to the practical achievement of GFGs under the UNSPF 2017-2030? [*alone or in partnership with governments or business community*]
The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization has been consistently and permanently supporting the achievement of the Global Forest Goals.

Other examples are FAO (Headquarters and Regional Forestry Commission Secretariats), the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) and the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR). Also, ITTO.

Q**uestion I-3:** Given the power for good of the business and philanthropic communities, what are the key efforts of regional and subregional partners to partner with them? [*both within and outside the Business Council for Sustainable Development (UN-BCSD)*]
While the business and philanthropic communities provide financial and technical inputs for actions on forests, in some cases the acceptance of such inputs by regional organizations may be limited by the regulations, legislation, political will and sovereignty of the organizations' member countries.

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