

## Questionnaire on the Mid-Term Review of the International Arrangement on Forests

### Introduction

In accordance with its programme of work, the UN Forum on Forests at its seventeenth session (UNFF17) adopted an omnibus resolution. The annex to this resolution contains the actions to be taken in preparation for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The resolution calls for these actions to be implemented in a transparent and independent manner, and in close consultation with Members of the Forum, as well as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) member organizations and other relevant stakeholders. To facilitate the process, the UNFF Secretariat has hired several consultants to assist in the preparation of background papers and assessments. This questionnaire is prepared by the consultants to solicit views from UNFF national focal points and representatives of relevant stakeholders, for use in their assessments. You are kindly invited to send your responses to the UNFF Secretariat at: [unff@un.org](mailto:unff@un.org), with copy to [yan.lang@un.org](mailto:yan.lang@un.org) **by 30 September 2022**.

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### A. Questions related to the United Nations Forum on Forests and its members

**Question A-1:** Considering the objectives of the IAF, what progress has been made by the UNFF and its Members towards:

- a. Implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests? At the global level, SFM is far from universal and seems to be in decline in some places while on the rise elsewhere. At this rate, we are unlikely to reach our goals.
- b. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels? There is growing awareness of the need to cooperate and coordinate at across levels but progress is painfully slow, despite many years of calling for landscape approaches.
- c. Promoting North-South, South-South, triangular cooperation, public-private partnerships, and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels? Cross sectoral cooperation has been slow. Agriculture sector in some countries is unwilling to accept the sector as the leading cause of deforestation. More is needed to halt deforestation and the UNFF and UNFFS should be playing a stronger role in this effort.
- d. Strengthening forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI) Need improvement
- e. Strengthening long-term political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives? There seems to be a groundswell of support for forests in the context of climate change and biodiversity, which is positive. Our sense is that this support coincides with the IAF but does not result from it. UNSPF and GFGs remain lesser known and UNSPF is not yet the guiding document on forests across the UN system.

While there has been progress in addressing global forest issues since the development of the UNSPF and IAF renewal, it has not been enough keep pace with emerging crises such as deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change. The result is that other initiatives have emerged to do just that. The recent efforts from the United Kingdom have resulted in leader level conversations on forests that should have been able to take place throughout the UNFF.

Ministerial segments during policy sessions rarely attract Ministers. And, in the philanthropic world, there are many organizations poised to address both the challenges and opportunities that forests are facing but they've not been cultivated enough to join UNFF discussions (Bezos Foundation being the exception. That was excellent).

**Question A-2:** Could you list the objectives that have not been achieved, and how can this be improved? The UNFFS has been through a period of upheaval and, while things have stabilized, this is the time for bold leadership. Moving forward we recommend standing joint Bureau meetings between the Bureaus of the UNFF and COFO, and periodically the UNECE, as a starting point to better harmonize efforts.

**Questions A-3:** Has the IAF beyond 2015 been operating in a transparent, effective, efficient, and accountable manner? It has improved. It remains difficult to understand which tasks are done by UNFFS and which are done by consultants. Trust Fund and GFFFN are much improved. CPF work planning is very helpful.

**Question A-4:** Considering the functions of the UNFF in paragraph 3 of resolution 2015/33, what has been the progress made by UNFF towards:

Providing a coherent, open, transparent, and participatory global platform for policy development, dialogue, cooperation, and coordination on issues related to all types of forests, including emerging issues, in an integrated and holistic manner through cross-sectoral approaches? Some progress in this area. Opening and prepared statements remain an issue detracting from substantive discussion.

- a. Promoting, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of SFM, in particular, the UNFI? Monitoring and reporting on SFM via the GFGs and FRA is improved. The Flagship was a very good initiative that we would like to see continue. One improvement would be to include policy recommendations
- b. Mobilizing, catalyzing, and facilitating access to financial, technical, and scientific resources? The GFFFN seems excellent and we encourage continuation of this mechanism.
- c. Promoting governance frameworks, enabling conditions at all levels to achieve SFM?
- d. Strengthening high-level political engagement, with the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, in support of SFM? High level engagement is often lacking. See Q A1e. UNFF tends to speak to the converted. Can improve high-level engagement through relevance

**Question A-5:** Are you satisfied with the current level of engagement of Members and stakeholders in the Forum's intersessional activities, and what are your suggestions to improve the use of the UNFF's annual sessions, including intersessional activities? Yes, intersessional work seems ok. Improvement to annual sessions would include opening statements being provided in writing rather than in plenary. Also, the UNFF 17 panel was excellent – experts from non-traditional organizations were very welcome.

**Question A-6:** What do you suggest could be done to encourage more Members of the UNFF to submit voluntary national reports and voluntary national contributions?

**B. Questions related to the Forum secretariat**

**Question B-1:** What are the achievements of the Secretariat in carrying out its functions and in making progress towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, as defined in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33? GFFFN was a good achievement. The high-level panel at UNFF17 was also very good. Intersessional activities have continued through challenging circumstances.

**Question B-2:** What are the gaps in and the existing capacity of the secretariat with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations, strengthening its capacities, gaining a better understanding of its decision-making processes and procedures, and amplifying the impact of its activities? It is difficult for members to understand who is doing what in the secretariat and why so many consultants are needed. Amplifying the impacts – see QA.4.b

**Question B-3:** What are your suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the UNFF Secretariat in carrying out its functions and in making progress towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, and enhance collaboration and synergies, and reduce duplication? See previous responses.

**General observation:** It is unfortunate that questions on secretariat performance have been addressed through this questionnaire. As expressed by many delegations during the last UNFF meeting, an independent review would have added credibility and objectivity (a survey developed and distributed by UNFFS should not be considered as independent, even if a consultant does the review).

**C. Questions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests –** difficult to assess. CPF could add great value to UNFF, have identified key initiatives, and we support continuation, but have concerns about how much they can accomplish without sufficient funding. An independent review of the initiatives below would be more effective than countries speculating on success.

**Question C-1:** Since 2015 what is your assessment of the extent of progress on CPF’s contribution to the IAF objectives as defined in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33?

**Question C-2:** In the table below kindly indicate your assessment of the effectiveness, impact and added value of the activities, in particular, Joint Initiatives of the CPF as outlined in its workplan (2017-2020).

Item	Key CPF activities as outlined in its 2017-2020 Workplan	In your view what has been the effectiveness of CPF in the following areas (please explain)	In your view what has been the Impact and value-added of the CPF in the following areas (please explain)
1	Contributions to UNFF documents & sessions		
2	Streamlining forest reporting		

3	Global Forest Expert Panel		
4	Global Forest Information Service		
5	CPF meetings, side events & OLI		
7	CPF Communicators network		
8	Forest Landscape Restoration		
10	Forest Finance Facilitation		

**Question C-3:** The CPF Policy Document recognises the need for periodic review of its membership given the evolving nature of its mandate. In your view what should be:

- a. the key elements in setting criteria for membership of the CPF (take into account CPF rules of procedure as annexed to the CPF policy document<sup>1</sup>)
- b. the frequency for review of the criteria (e.g., below 5 years; 6-10 years; etc.)
- c. the process for triggering a review of the CPF membership

**Question C-4:** In your view, how can the CPF provide greater support for policy development and implementation of UNFF resolutions/decisions and in particular assist countries in the implementation of the UNSPF.

#### **D. Questions related to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network – N/A**

**Question D-1:** Have you requested assistance from the GFFFN for mobilizing forest financing? If yes, how long did it take to receive a response and what was the outcome of your request?

**Question D-2:** If you participated in GFFFN capacity building/training workshops, did forest financing improve for your country as a result? If yes, how did it improve?

**Question D-3:** Was your country able to develop or update its forest financing strategy with the support of the GFFFN?

**Question D-4:** What funding sources have you targeted for forest financing with the support of the GFFFN and how successful were your efforts?

#### **E. Questions related to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests**

**Question E-1:** What are the contributions of your country /organization to the UNFF trust fund?

**Question E-2:** What is the impact of voluntary contributions to the UNFF trust fund on supporting the core activities of the UNFF?

**Question E-3:** What are the options to encourage sustained and adequate contributions to the trust fund?

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<sup>1</sup> CPF Policy Document: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-policy-document/index.html>

**Question E-4:** What are the key challenges and constraints with regard to mobilizing adequate resources for the trust fund?

## **F. Questions related to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030**

**Question F-1:** What significant actions has your country or organisation undertaken since 2020 to implement the UNSPF?<sup>2</sup> What are the main challenges and constraints your country or organisation is facing in implementing the UNSPF? See national report on UNSPF

**Question F-2:** What challenges and constraints did your country face in the preparation of its voluntary national report? If it did not prepare a report, what were the reasons? Issues with broad nature of the questions, ie, anything related to UNFI.

**Question F-3:** Do you agree with the submission of voluntary national reports to UNFF, 6 to 12 months after the publication of the next Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) in order to reduce reporting burdens and take full advantage of FAO's data? Yes

**Question F-4:** What, in your view, are the main “regional and global issues of concern with regard to forests” in the early 2020s? deforestation and its drivers (including ag supply chains), forest degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss, fire, sustainable production, financing

## **G. Questions related to the contributions of the Forum to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

It has been difficult to understand whether UNFF recommendations carry any impact on the HLPF and whether this should be the UNFF format going forward. A report to the Forum on how the input is used (ie, where we can find our recommendation in HLPF reports) would be helpful.

**Question G-1:** In your view, how well on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being very well) have the Forum's annual inputs to the HLPF on forest benefits and interlinkages with other SDGs been reflected in the HLPF declarations:

\_\_\_\_\_ HLPF ministerial declarations in 2018 and 2022 (SDG15 theme years)<sup>3</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ HLPF ministerial declarations in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (non-SDG15 theme years)<sup>4</sup>

**Question G-2:** In your view, which of the following should be considered to enhance the visibility of forest contributions at HLPF sessions and better reflect the interlinkages between forests and the SDGs in HLPF declarations (check all that may be useful):

Earlier input into relevant aspects of the HLPF preparatory process<sup>5</sup> by the UNFF, its members, secretariat and partners (CPF, Major Groups, regional/subregional organizations).

Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the Forum and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at HLPF regional and global preparatory meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> There is no need to repeat information which has already been supplied to UNFF, notably in your country's voluntary national report.

<sup>3</sup> See para 27 of HLPF 2018 declaration and paras 66, 67, 69 and 71 of HLPF 2020 declaration.

<sup>4</sup> No forest-related references in HLPF 2017 declaration. See para 34 of HLPF 2019 declaration; paras 7 and 19 of HLPF 2020 declaration; para 36 of HLPF 2021 declaration.

<sup>5</sup> The annual HLPF preparatory process is launched in March of each year with significant regional and global activities:  
<http://hlpf.un.org/2022>

Enhanced coordination in capitals between UNFF focal points and those responsible for the HLPF and preparation of Voluntary National Reviews.

Enhanced consultations between the UNFF and its secretariat and UN Regional Economic Commissions, particularly their Forums on Sustainable Development.

Enhanced coordination between the UNFF Secretariat and DESA's Office for Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, which supports the HLPF process.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question G-3:** In your view, which of the following should UNFF pursue to increase the political relevance of forests to the broader sustainable development agenda (check all that may be useful)?

Preparation of a report and associated targeted communication products on the multiple contributions of forests/SFM to the SDGs, including in the context of COVID-19 recovery.

Building on the momentum of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, foster enhanced coordination among forestry, agricultural and other sectors at all levels (GFG 6.3).

Enhanced coordination in capitals between focal points for UNFF and the Rio conventions.

Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the UNFF and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at key meetings of the Rio conventions.

Enhanced coordination in capitals on the preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions (UNFCCC), Voluntary National Contributions (UNFF) and Voluntary National Reviews (HLPF).

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **H. Questions related to the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030**

**Question H-1:** What progress has your Government/organisation made since 2015 in implementing the UNSPF communication and outreach strategy, as contained in Annex 1 of UNFF Resolution 13/1 (see E/2018/42)? How could any challenges, including achieving greater visibility of the UNSPF and the global forest goals, be addressed? Pithier communication of the GGFs similar to the SDGs (recognizable icons, for example) would be helpful. Opening or sharing a 20 page document to access the GGFs is cumbersome. Further, we understand the UNSPF is still not the guiding document for all forest-related work at the UN, which is also very problematic.

**Question H-2:** When considering the overall impact of communication and outreach activities, including the International Day of Forests, undertaken since 2015 by members of the Forum, the secretariat, the CPF, regional organizations and relevant stakeholders, to promote the UNSPF and global forest goals, what do you regard as (i) the main successes and (ii) the main shortcomings? From our perspective the key messaging for IDF, while important to some countries, could be boosted by emphasis on a wider array of opportunities and international days. The detailed communications updates at UNFF sessions are very helpful.

**Question H-3:** What additional communication opportunities, platforms and channels, including those that have come into prominence in recent years, should be used more effectively to better reach target audiences and achieve greater impact? The platforms are known. Does the UNFF Secretariat have a detailed comms plan to follow throughout the year? Could UNFF have its own Twitter handle?

**Question H-4:** What opportunities are there to make better use of the capacities of members of the Forum and other players and partners at the global, regional, and national levels to strengthen advocacy on the implementation of the UNSPF? Pithier comms products; policy recommendations that governments can follow resulting from GFG reporting.

#### **I. Questions related to the involvement of regional and subregional partners**

**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 15<sup>th</sup> session of the UNFF?

**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*]

**Question 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)*]

#### **J. Questions related to the involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders**

Major groups are important stakeholders. It would be good to understand how major groups reach out to their constituents, and to know if they are coordinating with each other where there is overlap or complementarity.

**Question J-1:** In your view, what are the top three areas in which major groups and other relevant stakeholders have made the most important contributions to SFM policy development and dialogue since the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the UNFF?

**Question J-2:** What are prime examples of major groups and other relevant stakeholders successfully contributing to the practical achievement of GFGs under the UNSPF 2017-2030? [*alone or in partnership with governments or business community*]

**Question J-3:** Given the power for good of the business and philanthropic communities, what are the key efforts of major groups and other relevant stakeholders to partner with them [*both within and outside the Business Council for Sustainable Development (UN-BCSD)*]?

**Question J-4:** What degree of funding independence have you achieved for participation in (a) policy development and dialogue or (b) practical SFM contribution? What improvements would you prioritise?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

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