

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, with copy to yan.lang@un.org **by 30 September 2022**.

Name of the Respondent: Thomas Haußmann

Name of country/organization: FOREST EUROPE

E-mail: thomas.haussmann@foresteurope.org

General comment at the beginning: As Head of the Liaison Unit Bonn (LUBo) of the FOREST EUROPE process I would like to refer to the answers of our 45 signatory countries. I will restrict the following answers only on additional information and on general observations from LUBo.

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?

UNFF and its Members made in our view considerable progress towards the implementation of sustainable management of their various forests. This positive trend could be underpinned for the pan-European region by the results of the report "State on Europe's forests" (2020) where the forests are getting older, more divers with more biodiversity (e.g. deadwood). However the climate change effects might endanger this positive trend.

- b. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels.

FOREST EUROPE has increased for the pan-European region its cooperation with various partners for example with FAO, UNECE and many observer organisations such as the certification systems FSC and PEFC. We have no information is this is also true for other regions.

- c. Promoting North-South, South-South, triangular cooperation, public-private partnerships, and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels?

The cooperation with public-private partnerships has not been in the focus of the FOREST EUROPE process. Instead, we concentrate our efforts on cross-sectoral cooperation. For various workstreams of the FOREST EUROPE process we have enlarged our cooperation with partners e.g. in Africa for the topic on forest education. Also at the World Forest Congress in the Republic of Korea, we have cooperation for the Criteria and Indicator work with the Montreal Process and others.

- d. Strengthening forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI)

This is one of the important topics of the FOREST EUROPE signatories in order to translate the commitments signed by Ministers by the Ministerial Conferences (last was 2021 in Bratislava) into national policy.

- e. Strengthening long-term political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives?
Within the FOREST EUROPE process we are currently discussing a long term political commitment to support this process.

Question A-2: Could you list the objectives that have not been achieved, and how can this be improved?

We still see the need to enhance efforts to support countries with low GDP to sustainable management their forests. This should be done in terms of direct financial support, exchange of best practise example and latest research.

In addition, we believe that the political commitment should be enhanced to stop deforestation and forest degradation mainly due conversion into agricultural land. Forest deserves its own value and not just as a hinder for economic development.

We would invite UNFF also to increase its efforts to make forests more resilient against climate change and to offer the platform for scientific and political exchange of best practise examples hereto.

Questions A-3: Has the IAF beyond 2015 been operating in a transparent, effective, efficient, and accountable manner?

Yes, this can be supported. Also the evaluation with this present questionnaire is a good way forward.

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:

- a. 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?

We agree, that UNFF offered this platform. However the platform focused on the political debate. In addition, UNFF could offer this platform also to exchange best practice examples based on latest science on emerging topics of forest policy such as e.g. the increase of forest resilience against climate change or the loss of forest biodiversity.

- b. Promoting, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of SFM, in particular, the UNFI?

We do also agree the major efforts by UNFF here and would recommend to continue work on the key indicators for SFM.

- c. Mobilizing, catalyzing, and facilitating access to financial, technical, and scientific resources?

See above

- d. Promoting governance frameworks, enabling conditions at all levels to achieve SFM?

See above

- e. Strengthening high-level political engagement, with the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, in support of SFM?

We believe that the involvement of the major groups and other stakeholders is of utmost importance for an inclusive and transparent process. However, we recognized the lack of financial support for the major groups.

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?

In principle we are satisfied with the annual sessions including the intersessional activities. As a recommendation the UNFF session could start with a keynote of a renowned expert in a topic of emerging importance and a short panel discussion afterwards.

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?

No position as it is on Member issues

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?

We congratulate the Secretariat on a very professional and good work.

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?

See B-3

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?

As mentioned above we could imagine that the Secretariat would organize more thematic sessions/and or workshops on emerging issues with global relevance to offer its Members and observers to interact more.

C. Questions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

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?

No position

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).

We do not fill out the table in C-2 as we lack insights here.

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:

- the key elements in setting criteria for membership of the CPF (take into account CPF rules of procedure as annexed to the CPF policy document¹)
- the frequency for review of the criteria (e.g., below 5 years; 6-10 years; etc.)
- the process for triggering a review of the CPF membership

No position

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.

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

In our understanding, CPF should serve the forum and ease its discussions. This could be done by supporting the secretariat in preparing the annual sessions of UNFF or cross-sectoral workshops as proposed before. We would also appreciate joint position papers of CPF as a basis for further discussion at the sessions.

D. Questions related to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

As we have not profit from the GFFFN as a process we have no insights here and thus are not in the position to answer the following questions in D and E.

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?

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?² What are the main challenges and constraints your country or organisation is facing in implementing the UNSPF?

We are happy to have close contact with the UNFF secretariat and thus get the voice of UNFF present at our Expert Level Meetings or at the recently organized High Level Policy Dialogue. The Liaison Unit Bonn tries also to be present at the UNFF sessions and thus also actively participate at this evaluation.

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?

This question is more for our signatories and not for LUBO

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

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?

This question is more for our signatories and not for LUBo

Question F-4: What, in your view, are the main "regional and global issues of concern with regard to forests" in the early 2020s?

As mentioned before we believe that the main regional and global issues of concern with regard to forests is the ongoing conversion of forests into agricultural land or the ongoing degradation of many forests worldwide.

In Europe but also in other regions the climate change and the loss of biodiversity is a major threat to forests.

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

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:

3-4 ___ HLPF ministerial declarations in 2018 and 2022 (SDG15 theme years)³

3-4 ___ HLPF ministerial declarations in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (non-SDG15 theme years)⁴

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 process⁵ 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.

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: _____

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

⁴ 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.

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

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?

We try our best as LUBo of FOREST EUROPE to implement the UNSPF communication and outreach strategy but could for sure do better.

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?

We regard the International Days of FORESTS as a major opportunity to raise awareness of the public on specific topics around forests. Maybe the joint material for a proper promotion (e.g. policy brief based on latest science) could be improved and provided e.g. by CPF/UNFF secretariat.

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?

We made very good experiences with the social media (Instagram stories, twitter but also tic toc) to reach also other target groups.

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?

We believe that within their time restrictions members and other players are already quiet active.

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 15th session of the UNFF?

Regional and subregional partners are essential to give a complete picture of the situation of forests worldwide.

In our understanding the most relevant areas were:

- Further improvement of data quality and data completeness to report on SFM
- Further work on key indicators
- Report on regional forest situation

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)*]

We have no experience here

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

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 15th session of the UNFF?

1. Situation of the young generation in the forest sector
2. Situation of women in the forest sector
3. Voice of vulnerable groups into the policy debate which would not be included in Members statements otherwise

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*]

We have no experience here

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)*]?

We have no experience here

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?

FOREST EUROPE is an informal Ministerial process. The secretariat is funded by the four members of the General Coordinating Committee and thus the secretariat LUBo has a full degree of funding independence.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION
