

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: Sheam _____

Name of country/organization: _____

E-mail: _____

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?
ITTO can only speak on behalf of its own members which make up a subset of UNFF members (while accounting for 80% of tropical forest area and over 90% of global tropical forest products trade). ITTO members continue to progress towards SFM in tropical forests. The most recent comprehensive assessment showed almost all countries with a rigorous process for approving and monitoring forest management plans in place. Conservative estimates still place the area of tropical forests in ITTO member countries under SFM at less around 20% of the total forest area in these countries so there is still plenty of work to be done.
- b. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels?
Not clear. There is still a significant amount of incoherence in international forest policy and while the ITTO aims to promote coherence amongst its members at the national, regional and international level, also through the CPF members through Joint Initiatives with select partners, much work remains to be done.
- c. Promoting North-South, South-South, triangular cooperation, public-private partnerships, and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels?
UNFF and others (FAO, ITTO, etc) continue to promote and strengthen such cooperation.
- d. Strengthening forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI)
Unclear how UNFF does this since it implies field level interventions, especially to strengthen implementation.
- e. Strengthening long-term political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives?

Unclear on how these long term political commitments are strengthened towards the achievements of the IAF. For example, the ITTO encourages political commitment amongst its membership but can this be said to contribute towards the achievements of the IAF objectives?

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

See above, work remains to achieve coherence in international policies (including those aimed at improving legality/governance) and strengthening political commitment (which means more than going to meetings).

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

For ITTO and other international organizations, probably yes, as evidenced by the progress made by these organizations in their fields of work, often reflecting elements of the IAF. For other stakeholders (especially at field level), probably no.

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?
Definitely an effort has been made, but even the so-called “Major Groups” are often not representative of stakeholders living and working close to forests in the field. The coordination of emerging issues is also not very clear as it takes quite some time for any coordinated approach to be discussed, decided and materialize.
- b. Promoting, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of SFM, in particular, the UNFI?
UNFF does not promote implementation of SFM to my knowledge. Perhaps assisting countries to access funds for SFM work through the GFFFN might play this role, but I am unclear of the extent of funding mobilized through that mechanism and what has actually been funded.
- c. Mobilizing, catalyzing, and facilitating access to financial, technical, and scientific resources?
See above comment. Also, not clear how much technical and scientific resources an inter-governmental UN body like UNFF can bring to bear in the field.
- d. Promoting governance frameworks, enabling conditions at all levels to achieve SFM?
Progress in raising awareness of enabling conditions for SFM and country self-assessments of progress or lack of it. Organizations like the ITTO work with its members, most of whom also attend UNFF meetings, to further raise awareness and promote enabling conditions
- e. Strengthening high-level political engagement, with the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, in support of SFM?
See above relevant comments.

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?

Consider holding more intersessional activities (and even UNFF sessions) away from UN headquarters in countries/regions with forest resources – this will encourage further understanding of conditions on the ground in the different regions and potentially assist the UNFF in gauging the needs of members in pursuit of SFM etc..

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?

Provide funding and consultant support for at least baseline reports which could then be updated more easily by countries.

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?

Not really relevant for another IGO to comment on, but having the position for Director of the UNFF Secretariat vacant for around 2 years amid a lot of uncertainty about the position was not a positive impact on the Secretariat’s ability to carry out its functions, etc and led to doubts amongst some observers about the commitment to strong/continuous leadership for UNFF.

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?

Not enough knowledge of Secretariat structure and functions to comment, but see about general comment about importance of strong/continuous leadership.

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?

Make the Director post higher level within the UN system so that UNFF has a louder voice in UN staffing and budget decisions. This will naturally form an attraction for other bodies to engage more and jointly influence perception on forests at the international level and within the UN system.

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?

Mixed – depends on whether we consider CPF as a whole (which doesn’t really function as a unit) or subgroups of members who can work well together.

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	Good	Relatively few members provide inputs
2	Streamlining forest reporting	Good (mainly FAO)	Unclear who is having forest reporting streamlined as a result of this work, has FRA questionnaire been significantly reduced in scope?
3	Global Forest Expert Panel	IUFRO led, good	

4	Global Forest Information Service	Unclear	Unclear
5	CPF meetings, side events & OLI	Good for those who participate (not all)	Joint side events at important forestry fora can be good publicity, as evidenced in the last few years. This needs to be enhanced, also at the high-level segments of other international processes such as the CBD, UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP etc.
7	CPF Communicators network	Some interaction but not regularized.	Same comment
8	Forest Landscape Restoration	Good progress between CPF members who joined forces under the JI – UNEP, IUCN, IUFRO and ITTO	Very good collaboration in pursuing the outputs of this initiative although funding was uneven amongst the CPF
10	Forest Finance Facilitation	Good idea but not much transparency on what finance is being facilitated, what funds are being used for, who is getting them, etc.	

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 document¹)

There should be a minimal annual membership fee based on a small percentage of a Partner’s annual operating budget or some other equitable formula. CPF needs an annual guaranteed budget to fund core activities agreed by members and shouldn’t have to rely on goodwill of a few members to fund all activities.

- b. the frequency for review of the criteria (e.g., below 5 years; 6-10 years; etc.)

Every 5 years sounds about right

- c. the process for triggering a review of the CPF membership

Agreement of at least a threshold number of members to undertake such a review, or a binding offer of prospective new member to provide significant funds for joint CPF activities.

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.

CPF members are to make further effort and commitments towards together as a group. Very often, members are quite polarized in their efforts. Additionally, to provide funding to developing countries for these efforts.

D. Questions related to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

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?

No

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

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?

NA

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

NA

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

NA

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?

NA but ITTO has seconded several officers to UNFF Secretariat over the years (none in last decade or so) due to a lack of resources.

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

Unknown but assumed positive.

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

Make contributions mandatory. Voluntary contributions will probably never be sustained, they will fluctuate with donor whims and priorities.

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

See above comments.

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?

See ITTO's recently approved SAP for what is envisaged over next 5 years. See recent BWP progress reports for recent activities.

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?

NA

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?

Not clear what is reported in addition to what is in the FRA, if everything needed is in FRA, why not just use that document for UNFF purposes, purely to avoid a duplication of efforts?

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

Climate change and continued forest loss in the tropics due to man made and abiotic factors. Trend for some countries/regions to restrict market access for developing country forest products which removes market access and trade-related incentives for sustaining forests. This intensifies land use challenges, especially in developing countries.

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

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

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)³ 3

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

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). Yes, where CPF members should be invited to present at the HLPF from their perspectives.

___ Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the Forum and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at HLPF regional and global preparatory meetings. Benefits are unknown, prefer not to comment

___ Enhanced coordination in capitals between UNFF focal points and those responsible for the HLPF and preparation of Voluntary National Reviews. The coordination with focal points for other IGOs (such as the ITTO) should also be considered as it will provide a more holistic preparation process relating to forests and their VNRs..

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

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

___ 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. Yes

___ 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). Yes, although will be challenging.

___ Enhanced coordination in capitals between focal points for UNFF and the Rio conventions. Yes, also with other IGOs

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>

_____ Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the UNFF and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at key meetings of the Rio conventions. The CPF will be better placed to do this.

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

_____ 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? The UNSPF has always been part of the ITTA 2006 and reflected in its Strategic Action Plans latest one is for 2022-2026.

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? The IDF has raised awareness to an extent on the importance of Forests but the audience needs to be widened to include international media. The shortcoming are mainly that the IDF remains within the rather closed forest community – we need to aim further to include those under all the other CPF members and their respective membership.

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? All CPF members communication channels, special editorial/Op-ed in The Economist, The New York Times etc. Twitter and other social media channels are also effective in reaching out to further audiences and perhaps should be a joint effort between CPF members.

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? Please see all comments above.

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? Legality and sustainability of supply chains, importance of SFM to underpin legality and sustainability, increased the interface between forestry and other competing land use but more needs to be done

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*] Progress towards several/respective SDGs, more interaction on the GFGs and UNSPF elements since 2015 to date. Efforts under the several CPF JIs have had some impact but more needs to be done in order to sustain these JIs short-medium term

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)*]

Unknown

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? Unclear – see relevant comment earlier on

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*]

Unclear

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)*]?]

Unclear

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?

Quite a good degree of funding independence has been achieved due to members supporting the Organization's participation in policy development and for projects on the ground contributing to SFM. Improvements to prioritize upon would be to secure sustainable and sufficient funding to focus on the further implementation of the ITTA 2006 in parallel to those under the GFGs, UNSPF and the SDGs 2030.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION
