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

Switzerland

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**.

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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?

It was interesting to have the reports on the impact on SFM of the covid pandemic as we all had to reflect how to do a better job by signalling some issues we might not have seen before. The collective inputs from the countries into a document and through a seminar was a progress in our way of working together. It showed that under a common threat we could provide information and have a fruitful discussion about it. For example, the need for digitalisation for forests data came out as a very positive outcome of the crisis.

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

There are still initiatives that do not take UNFF into account /or use it as a platform. The CPF is very important to this end for coherence but it seems challenging to get support from members (ie Member States) of these organisations (that are actually the same countries as under UNFF).
There is still a great lack of coordination at capital level.

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

There is still much to do to attract the private sector into the work of the IAF

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

The means of implementation have been reinforced through partners such as UNFCCC through the Glasgow conference for example.
Nevertheless, the communication from the secretariat should be improved. The GFFFN should be visible when you open the UNFF page.

e. Strengthening long-term political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives?

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

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

UN Member States have little information on how many staff members work in the secretariat, their tasks, and further the on-going level of available finance.
The yearly budget document (PBI Subprogramme 8) encloses items we do not discuss and gives a false account of what is being done; as it does not take into account the real work of the IAF. The website needs a proper and thorough reshuffle.
The D1 post was decided against the will of the UN Member States.

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?

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

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

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

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

The UNSPF 2017-2030 and GFFFN for facilitating Finance were adopted. However, the project of an institutional set-up for GFFFN in 2 locations has slowed down the scale and effectiveness of the implementation of GFFFN.
In the meantime the construction of the clearinghouse (ie databases on finances) continues.

For example: only 2 million USD have been facilitated in the period between 2015-2018.

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?

This answer concerns Question A-4 and A-5:
We need to restart the region-country-organisation-led initiatives. It allowed to analyse specific topics in more depth, given we do not have sufficient time during regular UNFF meetings.

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?

There should be only one email name coming out of UNFF to the communication to UNFF focal points, i.e. "UNFF" so it is easily recognizable. This questionnaire was sent by Ms Ninon Williams thermidor@un.org, so it was not seen on time. A reminder should be sent after 2 weeks. Sufficient time should be for the reporting. For example, this year (email from 11.10.22) , a mere 3 weeks for the reporting is going to be too short.

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?

UN Member States have little information on how many staff members work in the secretariat, their tasks, and further the on-going level of available finance.
The yearly budget document (PBI Subprogramme 8) encloses items we do not discuss and gives a false account of what is being done; as it does not take into account the real work of the IAF. The website needs a proper and thorough reshuffle.

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?

As mentioned above under B-1: a list of all secretariat staff members with their tasks and phone numbers and mails would be good when we have to ask questions), the level of available finance. The website must be fully reshuffled.

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 above. It would also be good to have secondment of the CFP members as in the past.

Stronger communication and outreach, including modernisation of the UNFF website urgently required. Social media presence to be improved.

C. Questions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

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

The UN Strategy on Forests has improved. But it seems often the contribution of the CPF is very much linked to the persons leading activities, rather than its program.

The global forest goals are not well known in other forest-related process, as the UNFCCC, CBD, etc.

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).

This question is not formulated in a way to enable Member States to give a proper answer. This table should be first prepared by the UNFF secretariat and then verified/assessed by the member states.

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 & OLIs		
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[1])
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

The document has been prepared for 2017-2020, and updated in 2020.

The review of the CPF membership has not the utmost priority, but should be foreseen later on.

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.

The document has been prepared for 2017-2020, and updated in 2020.
This document needs a review/update, since in the last 3 years little progress has been made due to covid restrictions.

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

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?
N/a.
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?
N/a.

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

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

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?

Switzerland mainly contributes to the GFFFN

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

It is difficult to say as we only get a one year report.
Core activities of UNFF should be funded by the UN budget.

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

Activities under UNFF should be need-driven. Needs must be identified during the meetings or before by way of questionnaires so as to discuss it during the UNFF sessions.

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

Funding will be easier to provide based on an agreed programme of work/ activities

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 have developed a document between all ministries working on forests that is based on the UN strategy for forests. This has brought the national government institutions relevant to forests closer and has shown the complementarity of our tasks and actions.

[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-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?

We need sufficient time. The 3 weeks for the 2022 report will be difficult.

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?

Proposal by Switzerland to support resolution UNFF 17: "24. Requests that the Forum secretariat, in the context of preparations for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests, and in consultation with members of the Forum, prepare a road map and timeline for the next reporting cycle, in conjunction with the Global Forest Resources Assessment cycle, and explor e options for establishing an online reporting platform for the Forum, recognizing the need for streamlined reporting and minimizing the reporting burden, including the challenges faced by developing countries";

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

Impact of Pandemic (governance and supply chains, interruption of capacity building)

Extreme events due to climate change (forest fires, insects, drought, invasive species, etc.)

High demand for wood products due to missing global transport capacity, impact of Ukraine war, etc. resulting in overexploitation in some regions

Institutional and diplomatic crisis in the UN due to war in Ukraine.

Continuation and increase of deforestation, particularly in some regions of the tropics

Increasing interest in topics addressing trees out the forests, including recreation, urban forestry , agroforestry,

Increased role of forest management to mitigate climate change through growing voluntary market and emerging regulatory carbon market

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 HLPF ministerial declarations in 2018 and 2022 (SDG15 theme years)[3]
1HLPF ministerial declarations in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (non-SDG15 theme years)[4]

[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.

The inputs from the UNFF sessions sent to the HLPF had not much effect. The HLPF might not be the venue to promote the forests…

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[5] by the UNFF, its members, secretariat and partners (CPF, Major Groups, regional/subregional organizations).

Yes, the UNFF focal points should be more vocal and engaging

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

No, it is up to the UNFF focal points should be more vocal and engaging

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

Definitely but one has to realize that the HLPF ministerial declarations are mainly negotiated in New York and tend to be longer and longer, loosing much of the expected impact

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

This should be done at the level of focal points

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

Not sure this will be helpful for this purpose

____ 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.

Rather than a report, well-tailored communication products should be discussed during the next UNFF

____ 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).

Definitely. The last UNFF session had also very interesting presentations – we should cooperate with such organisations further

[5] 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 focal points for UNFF and the Rio conventions.

This is a prerequisite to get a better coordination and commitments from the CPF

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

No. This belongs to the tasks of the director of UNFF

____ 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?

Switzerland has implemented the elements of UNSPF through our national forest policy. This is not directly related to the UNSPF communication and outreach strategy.
We are rather following rather the regional communication from UNECE/ as well as Forest Europe.

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?

Switzerland welcomes the IDF and its coordinated thematic focus. We organise national events and communication, using the material from UNFF, UNECE and FAO.

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?

See answer G-3

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?

Switzerland is committed to create and use synergies through the existing regional forest related processes.

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?

EFI Integrate Network: development of policy briefs on the integration of SFM and biodiversity
UNECE/FAO joint programme: support of recommendations for inclusion of urban foresty in SFM
Forest Europe: starting a process of adapting criteria and indicators for SFM due to impact of climate change

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*]

UNECE: urban forestry initiative with the organisation "Trees in cities"

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)*]

N/a.

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?

The private sector-trade
The agriculture sector

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*]

N/a.

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)*]?

UNFF is not attractive at present. We need to talk to them to see why and see how we can attract them.

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?

Question not understood.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

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