

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**.

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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?

We commend the UNFF for its efforts to be a visible player in the forest sector and value the intergovernmental and universal nature of the Forum. The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF), including its six Global Forest Goals (GFG) and 26 associated targets, the GFG Report 2021, International Day of Forests, and Phase I of the GFFFN Clearing House are good examples of the Forum's and Member States' progress toward the implementation of sustainable forest management for all types of forests.

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

The creation and continued relevance of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), its Joint Initiatives, global meetings, and communication and outreach work through Communicators Network and the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award are significant achievements in enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels.

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

UNFF is not an implementation body but can promote information-sharing and networking in support of cooperation. UNFF is an opportunity to highlight cooperative efforts such as the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use. The GFFFN is also facilitating cooperation on forest financing and governance. Public-private partnerships are crucial, such as the Bezos Earth Fund, but further progress on private sector cooperation is an important goal of the Forum. An example of cross-sectoral cooperation is the examination by CPF members of commodity-driven deforestation.

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

The UN Forest Instrument (UNFI) and the UNSPF have strengthened the commitment to achieving sustainable forest management through good governance at all levels. Examples include UNFI principle (2e), global objective 4, national policies and measures (6n), and international cooperation and means of implementation (7h), which addresses cooperation on illicit international trafficking in forest products through the promotion of forest law enforcement and good governance at all levels.

In the UNSPF sustainable forest management is critically dependent upon good governance at all levels (15). An objective of the IAF (22e) is to strengthen forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the UNFI, in order to achieve SFM. And GFG5 (5.2) focuses on forest law enforcement and governance through strengthening national and subnational forest authorities, and reducing illegal logging and associated trade.

The GFFFN Clearinghouse Phase I and its online user-friendly video explanation showcase progress on means of implementation. The *Forest Financing Quarterly Highlight* summarizes well financing opportunities and recent achievements to help Members access existing financing from all sectors.

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

The GFGs strengthen political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives and should influence other UN and forest-related agenda and regional bodies. Although not a substitute for the commitment of Member States, the CPF raises the political commitment of the IAF objectives by enhancing communication across distinct fora. UNFF strengthens commitment by providing a platform to bring all relevant bodies together to form a voice on forest policy issues.

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

We note there has not been consistent participation in engaging stakeholders. Greater stakeholder engagement is an important objective of the IAF. Specifically, further progress on private sector cooperation is a widely stated goal of the Forum.

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

Transparency of the Forum's work, through reporting on the Trust Fund and budgets at the annual UNFF sessions, as well as throughout the intersession is important. This includes fundraising activities, independent MOU developments, and high level UN System representations.

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?

The universal membership of the UNFF provides a participatory intergovernmental platform for all types of forests. The Four-Year Programme of Work (4POW) allows room for thematic discussions and emerging issues at Forum sessions through planned alternate policy and technical-themed years. The creation and representation of CPF members helps ensure issues are discussed in a more integrated and holistic manner.

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

Voluntary national reports and other resources, such as the FAO FRA and State of the World's Forests, are an important part of monitoring and assessing the implementation of SFM. The UNFI is not the only resource to promote monitoring of SFM.

The creation of the Global Forest Goals Report 2021 is another example of progress made by UNFF towards promoting, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of SFM. The timing of the report's release during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted its dissemination, but the digital promotion of the report remains important.

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

The CPF plays a key role in mobilizing and facilitating access to financial, technical, and scientific resources. For example, GEF participation is an important source for financial resources and organizations such as FAO and IUFRO provide consistent technical and scientific input.

GFFFN's achievements have also facilitated access to financial and technical resources. Phase II of the Clearinghouse and its focus on best practices should augment this work.

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

In the UNSPF SFM is critically dependent upon good governance at all levels. The universal and nonbinding nature of UNFF has allowed all Member States and all types of forests to productively work toward effective enabling conditions for SFM and to promote appropriate governance frameworks. The nonbinding nature allows Member States to take actions based on their national circumstances.

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

UNFF Input into HLPF, ministerial statements and roundtables, and CPF and Major Groups input at UNFF sessions are key to support SFM. Input from stakeholders that are not often active in the UN system remains a challenge.

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?

Interactive dialogue and engagement on emerging policy issues in formal Forum settings remains difficult. Separating the ministerial statements from interactive high level panel discussions may allow time for Member States to share their key national updates and voluntary national contributions and to engage with guest panelists.

Time limits on interventions were strictly enforced in the Forum’s virtual setting during the ministerial segment. We suggest that these limits continue in person for all high level ministerial statements.

We suggest continuing hybrid and/or virtual intersessional meetings to allow for participation from those unable to travel and to reduce costs.

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?

We view submitting the voluntary reports 6-12 months after the publication of the FRA as one way to reduce reporting burden and engage greater submissions. A future GFG Report could provide an incentive to document and credit achievements, as well as raise challenges in a high profile UN report, if an examination finds significant outreach from the past publication and extrabudgetary funds are available.

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?

Achievements of the Secretariat include: management of the GFFN and assisting and connecting Member States with existing financial forest resources, as well as creation of communication products around the GFGs, including the concise GFG pamphlet and International Day of Forests.

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?

Transparency of the Secretariat's work, through reporting at the annual UNFF sessions and throughout the intersession is important to improve the effectiveness of its operations. This includes fundraising activities, potential MOU developments, and internal UN System representations.

At times, Forum discussions overly focus on administrative issues taking time away from policy discussions.

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?

An organizational human resources chart and historical timeline documenting staff size would be helpful to include.

We note in the past there were secondments to the Secretariat, which could be a useful way to increase Secretariat capacity with respect to technical and financial resources.

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?

CPF offers valuable contributions toward progress on IAF objectives through their expertise, programming, and distinct forest-related objectives. CPF is extremely important to Members and the Forum, and we view the CPF as a major achievement of UNFF. In practice, the CPF collaborates when opportunities and funding arise, taking the UNFF priorities into consideration, respective of their own governing bodies and mandates.

We appreciate the work by CPF members to improve internal functioning, planning, and communication with members.

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	CPF member input in UNFF documents and formal Forum sessions is crucial. Their input during formal and informal sessions provides technical and organizational insight into the negotiations.	CPF impact and value-added includes joint statements, such as the 2020, "Towards sustainability: forest solutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic."
2	Streamlining forest reporting	A major achievement of the UNFF Secretariat and CPF, especially FAO, has been streamlining forest reporting and syncing quantitative data with the FRA and reducing reporting burden.	CPF input into the voluntary national reports has created a comprehensive template focused on its GFGs and qualitative data niche. The coordination with FAO has prevented overlap with existing reporting and reduced reporting burden on Members.
3	Global Forest Expert Panel	GFEP supports the work of UNFF and its members through scientific and technical advice, including on emerging issues.	<p>The science-policy interface is important to many UNFF members, and GFEP helps Member States make science-based decisions and identify emerging concerns to forests while making progress on the GFGs.</p> <p>An example of a recent value-added is the GFEP titled, <i>Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and Limitations</i>, published by IUFRO and funded by Germany, Finland, Austria, and the United States, which is cited by the CITES Secretariat in their decision-making and background</p>

			documents for preparation for CITES COP19.
4	Global Forest Information Service	This CPF Joint Initiative has been terminated and incorporated into IUFRO's new website and knowledge management system, which is under development.	
5	CPF meetings, side events & OLI	CPF organized meetings, side events at UNFF sessions, and OLI provide coordinated and high level input into key forestry issues.	Past global meetings, such as 2018's "Working across sectors to halt deforestation and increase forest area: from aspiration to action" have convened key actors, which may otherwise work in silos.
7	CPF Communicators network	The CPF Communicators Network works toward achieving GFG6 by enhancing cooperation and coordination on key forest themes within and outside the UN System.	The Communicators Network value-added includes selecting themes for UN International Day of Forests, producing short videos and other social media content and key messages, which elevate the day's outreach.
8	Forest Landscape Restoration	CPF's FLR achievements are immense. Partnerships between IUCN, ITTO, ICRAF, FAO, CIFOR, and UNEP prove that FLR is cross-cutting and has an important role in progressing the GFGs. CPF members are active in the Bonn Challenge, which created significant awareness for the potential of degraded areas and the political will for FLR pledges at the highest levels.	CPF has an important value-add with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2023. The UN Decade represents greater outreach opportunities outside of the forestry community and is a major achievement for CPF members.

10	Forest Finance Facilitation	We view CPF developments on forest finance facilitation as a prominent achievement of CPF joint initiatives. Building upon FAO's SFM toolkit, the CPF provides key data and information for the GFFFN Clearinghouse databases providing valuable information requested by Member States.	CPF members provide extremely valuable information and identifying data sources and financing flows for Phase II of the GFFFN database.
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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)

The creation of the CPF is a major achievement of UNFF. While CPF members have their own mandates, governance structures, and strategic plans, we value the productive input from all CPF members at UNFF sessions, whether from the UN organizations, such as FAO, UNFCCC, or outside of the UN system, IUFRO, IUCN, CIFOR/ICRAF, amongst others. UN organization membership was never a condition for CPF membership and should continue not to be a qualifying criterion. We value the inclusion of CITES into the CPF and, along with other non-UN organizations, view their inclusion as progress to contributing to IAF objectives.

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

We seek CPF input on the details of their review, but a 6-10-year range is reasonable.

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

Either on a 6-10-year routine schedule, or if a majority of CPF members call for a review due to an extraordinary circumstance.

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 is crucial to the outreach of the Forum. we are interested to explore how the Forum and its members can better inform the development of CPF Joint Initiatives by providing input prior to the publication of the next CPF Work Plan.

We appreciate the work that have done to develop and improve the internal communications structure within CPF membership and with UNFF members, including sharing the work plan and regular meetings.

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?

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?

While we do not receive support from GFFFN, we follow the Network's developments closely. We note the landscape of forest-related funding and opportunities has changed over the last few years. We support the ongoing work of the GFFFN to connect existing forest financing options from all sources to UNFF Member States. The UNFF *Forest Financing Quarterly Highlight* is a good example of summarizing and sharing existing opportunities for financing.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, we see increased focus on forests by funding mechanisms such as the GEF and at UNFCCC COP26. However, it is necessary to continue to raise awareness of the existence of the GFFFN Clearinghouse and the utilization of its data and information to increase its benefits to all relevant stakeholders. For the development of the second phase of the database, we stress the need to reduce duplication and to continue to work closely with CPF members and other stakeholders.

We believe we have productive steps before we see full potential of GFFFN, GEF programming, and other efforts. The GFFFN continues to offer valuable support to countries to help them access financing, and these require time to show results given funding pipelines. The CPF and UNFF are working on augmenting the funding source database to include additional tools for forest financing planning and mobilization. We believe all of these require additional time to show results.

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?

The United States has been one of the largest and most consistent supporters of UNFF through our voluntary contributions 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?

We value the voluntary nature of contributions to the UNFF Trust Fund and the flexibility it provides for the Secretariat and Forum to meet its mandate.

We highly value the increased transparency of the trust fund through annual reports at each Forum session since 2009.

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

Few Members are consistent supporters of the UNFF Trust Fund. We are interested in charting historical data and contributions to the trust fund and their impact on core activities.

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

Complex internal government budgets and schedules and political priorities may create challenges or delays in voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund.

In recent years, decisions regarding the use of specific funds may have inhibited other member states from contributing.

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?

The United States is engaged in numerous and multi-faceted forest policy and management efforts undertaken at the national, state, and local levels by government bodies and private sector entities, often in partnership. Many of these activities seek to achieve the UNSPF and its goals. Since 2020, the US government has taken a number of significant actions:

1. The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, a milestone legislation which invests \$5 billion to protect communities from risks of extreme wildfires, conserve forests with significant carbon sequestration benefits, and cool communities vulnerable to threats of extreme heat. These investments will help to protect over 728,000 hectares of federally owned forests from wildfire and restore an additional 222,000 hectares. The Act also increases climate mitigation and forest resilience on non-federal and privately-owned lands.
2. President Biden's two key executive orders: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*, which includes the America the Beautiful initiative to conserve thirty percent of lands and waters by 2030, and *Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies*, directing Federal agencies to take actions to inventory old growth and mature forests, accelerate reforestation, and to create and sustain jobs in the sustainable forest product sector. These executive orders will help strengthen our economy, advance environmental justice, and tackle our interconnected climate and biodiversity crises.
3. US Department of Agriculture is investing up to \$2.8 billion to a diverse range of farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners through the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities. This cross-sectoral effort will expand markets for climate-smart commodities, leverage the greenhouse gas benefits of climate-smart commodity production, and provide meaningful benefits to production agriculture, including for small and underserved producers.

Our main challenges in pursuing UNSPF goals include:

1. Forest disturbance processes that are increasingly impacting forests in our country and are demanding increased institutional attention and budgetary resources, such as climate change, catastrophic wildfire, and epidemics of insects and disease. These challenges transcend land boundaries and affect people beyond the jurisdiction of any single national forest, state, or regional area.
2. Finding swift agreement on policy and management courses of action within complex, diverse stakeholders in a democratic society.
3. Competition for financial resources.

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?

Our main challenge in preparing the voluntary report was identifying and summarizing from numerous actions, assigning a given cross-cutting action to specific UNSPF goal, and collecting information from various relevant government agencies, state, and other non-governmental actors. Numeric questions were generally easier to answer if such data were part of our national reporting processes. Open-ended qualitative responses can be challenging; however, these qualitative responses were best able to characterize our actions. These examples also provide a niche role for UNFF voluntary reporting.

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. We think this is a good idea to reduce reporting burden and may help encourage greater submissions of voluntary national reports from UNFF Member States.

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

Some regional and global issues of concern in the early 2020s may be:

1. Forest disturbance processes, including wildfires, and potential ecosystem transitions under climate change, particularly in the temperate and boreal forests in North America.
2. Forest carbon management in conjunction with other ecosystem objectives.
3. Loss or degradation of forests in the tropics and southern hemisphere.
4. Engage major commodity-importing and commodity-producing countries to advance common interests in addressing commodity-driven deforestation
5. Restoration of degraded lands for critical ecosystem services.
6. Recovery of global forest products industries and legal trade post-COVID-19 pandemic.
7. Ongoing loss of biodiversity from deforestation, disturbance, and degradation from exogenous factors impacting 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:

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

(In 2022, the GFGs were referenced in the declaration and forests in general had around 10 references in the document.)

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

(In 2021, forests and deforestation were only mentioned once in reference to biodiversity. However, some years may have had more adequate references as stated in the footnote.)

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).

(Due to the schedule of annual UNFF sessions, we already work through the UNFF bureau to provide early input into HLPF before our formal discussions.)

Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the Forum and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at HLPF regional and global preparatory meetings. (Bureau members represent their region, but do not represent all Member States. The UNFF bureau has not always had consistent representation from all UN regions.)

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

X 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)?

X 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: UNFF should more actively provide inputs to regional economic commissions, regional environmental ministerial conferences, and other forest fora. UNFF Member States should include forest issues in those bodies' agendas.

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?

Since 2015, the US has organized and funded presenters, including federal and state government experts, academics, and youth from partner nongovernmental organizations, to speak at the UNFF and FAO Headquarters virtual and in-person to commemorate UN International Day of Forests (IDF). We produce IDF-themed newsletters, publication releases, social media and blog posts each year. On the local level, community and school visits are organized for March 21.

However, greater visibility of IDF and the GFGs amongst other UN bodies and international entities, both within and outside of the environment fields remains a challenge.

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 encourage the continued use of hybrid in person and virtual IDF planning to reach a wider audience. While greater linkages are possible, the US took advantage and produced and disseminated content with the aid of the UN social media toolkit, #IntlForestDay, FAO-produced videos, online quiz, key messages, as well as the UNFF-produced social media Trello board. We

view these communication products and the millions of digital accounts reached last year as a success.

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 suggest consultants connect with a communications expert and members of the FAO communicator's networks. We would be interested in compiling historical quantitative data regarding social media posts and retweets related to IDF tracking over the past few years.

We view other all communications (not only focused on IDF) with Member States and national focal points via the UNFF website, online key document searches, and other avenues as part of this review.

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?

Communication products could be even shorter, sharper, and reach new audiences through the greater use of infographics and multi-media.

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?

In the North American region, important areas of collaboration and contribution to SFM are wildfire, genetics, trade, and inventory and monitoring.

A top area of exchange of regional resources between Canada, Mexico, and the United States is through the FAO North American Forest Commission (NAFC) Fire Management Working Group. Cooperation on firefighting along the U.S.-Mexico border allows both countries to work together on the suppression of fire. Agreements between all three countries have led to coordinated wildfire policy and training requirements and the exchange of firefighters during peak fire incidents.

APEC's Expert Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT) covers the Pacific region and over 2 billion hectares of forest cover and significant amount of trade in forest products. EGILAT's steps to combat illegal logging and associated trade, promote trade in legally harvested forest products, and support capacities in member economies is a major contribution to SFM policy development and dialogue.

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*]

NAFC has raised the political profile of the GFGs within in the North American region by broadly discussing and examining the UNSPF with its three forest ministerial leaders.

On the technical level, since UNFF15 the NAFC Forest Genetic Resources Working Group (FGRWG) conducted research on assisted migration for tree species negatively impacted by climate change. Specifically, FGRWG is examining whether *Abies religiosa*, the endemic fir species in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve and a wintering habitat for the charismatic monarch butterfly, can survive at higher elevations due to changing climatic conditions. Preliminary results indicate an upwards shift is doable, with additional moderate mortality.

The FGRWG also created a Spanish and English bilingual online Seedlot Selection Tool to inform seed planting decision-making in a changing climate. The web tool accounts for future climate models and provides suggestions for matching planting locations and appropriate seedlots.

Another practical achievement is the NAFC Inventory and Monitoring Working Group, which developed a North American Forest Database in 2019, which establishes a platform for enhanced forest inventory and monitoring data integration and complements the national forest assessment tools of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, as well as the FAO FRA.

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)*]

The Amazon region and the Africa Forest Forum have provided key updates at past UNFF sessions and produce important policy briefs, reports, and factsheets. Africa Forest Forum's factsheet, "Leveraging Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Enhancement of the Ghanaian Forest Products Sector" is one recent example. We encourage the continued exploration of PPPs and efforts with the business and philanthropic communities.

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?

Major Groups input and contributions into UNFF sessions and implementation of the UNSPF are important. We appreciate the focus on women, youth, and indigenous programs, as these groups are vital to long-term SFM.

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 are encouraged by the use of practical technology to foster more youth and gender-inclusive communication that improves general knowledge of SFM. Major Groups, especially youth, played a large role at the 2022 FAO World Forestry Congress in Seoul, Republic of Korea through the “Youth Call for Action,” as well as during the lead up to the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille, Republic of France through the virtual Global Youth Summit on Nature in 2021.

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 encourage strategic thinking for continued private sector engagement and would like to explore the barriers to obtaining support from philanthropic organizations for Major Groups programs.

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
