

Date of submission: October 10, 2014

Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs to UNFF11

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General Information

The multi-year programme of work – MYPOW (2007–2015) of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) sets a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. Since its eighth session in 2009 the Forum has solicited inputs from relevant regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, organizations and processes as an integral part of session deliberations.¹

¹ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the parent body of the Forum, through its resolution 2006/49, agreed to “Strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes, with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum.” (paragraph 2)

The eleventh session of the UNFF (UNFF11) will be held from 4 to 15 May 2015 in New York. In accordance with the Forum's MYPOW, the overall theme of UNFF11 is *Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward on the international arrangement on forests (IAF)*, with the following sub themes:

1. Reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options
2. Reviewing the progress towards the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (hereinafter referred to as the "Forest Instrument")
3. Reviewing the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

In completing this questionnaire, you may choose to extract the relevant information and include it in your submission, if information is already available in existing reports and/or documents. Otherwise, you may provide the reference or document itself to the UNFF Secretariat, indicating the relevant section. Please note that the Year 2007 – the year of the adoption of the Forest Instrument (2007), should be used as a baseline throughout the document.

Moreover, in view of the limitation of sizing of the pertinent Secretary-General's report, the Forum Secretariat suggests no more than 250 words of written input per answer. We would be most grateful if you could send your inputs to **unff@un.org**, fax: +1 917-367-3186, by **30 September 2014**. In light of time constraints and financial limitations, you are kindly asked to provide your input in English.

Section I: Progress towards the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the GOFs as well as the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs

A. Progress towards implementation of the Forest Instrument

1. Briefly describe actions (e.g. regulatory, financial/economic and informational/educational) taken by your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process to foster political commitment for sustainable forest management (SFM).

The African Forest Forum, being a platform for stakeholders in African forestry has contributed to this effort by first supporting African delegates, technically and logistically, to participate in different meetings and other forums that deal with this instrument, for example through UNFF Country Led Initiatives and Ad-Hoc Expert Group meetings and other global and regional avenues that discuss issues that relate to this instrument. AFF has also participated in such discourses in its own capacity. Additionally AFF has initiated an initiative that looks into forest financing, an issue at the heart of implementation of the forest instrument.

Secondly AFF continues to foster political commitment for sustainable forest management by providing sound and reliable scientific and technical information that guides decision making and technical application for forest and tree management in Africa, forestry aspects that are key in the forest instrument. For example AFF has undertaken several studies on how climate change features in African forestry, produced reports and shared the same to various stakeholders in the African continent specifically to:

- foster awareness on forests and climate change issues and promoting appropriate changes in policies and practices;
- build and improve capacity to address forest related climate change issues;
- ensure that production, adaptation, mitigation and policy processes involving forests and trees are backed by sound information.

AFF maintains a listserv and website that shares considerable information that relates to the instrument

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

The main challenge in this endeavour is lack of adequate funding for activities that will raise further the political commitment as well generate information necessary for SFM. Also on the implementation side, rights and tenure issues are not well addressed and constrain implementation of some activities related to the instrument.

considered in most cases;

On the pan-African level the inadequate availability of experts with wide knowledge and experience that covers the continent or its sub regions constrains the conception, development and implementation of sub-regional and regional activities relevant to the instrument.

Availability of sufficient and reliable relevant information continues to be a serious constraint in working on some issues related to the instrument.

2. Briefly describe efforts taken at the regional level to foster economically, socially and environmentally sound measures that act as incentives for the sustainable management of forests.

AFF has been promoting forest law enforcement, good forest governance and fair trade in forest products in the context of the Yaounde Declaration on FLEG (that is different from the EU FLEGT). Already the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries have developed a FLEGT programme to guide implementation of activities along these broad areas. In addition SADC countries have adapted a concept that will allow for the development of a SADC Timber Association, which is expected to further develop the private sector in forestry into a cohesive entity. These efforts will contribute to reducing illegality in forestry practises, increase incomes at various levels, reduce unwanted deforestation and degradation of forest lands, and all will eventually combine to improve SFM. In addition these efforts will also contribute to give form and structure to the largely informal and disorganised private sector in forestry.

With respect to the important area of climate change and forestry, AFF has undertaken the following:

- Identified, with relevant stakeholders, gaps and needs in terms of climate change and forestry;
- Developed training modules on forest based climate change adaptation, mitigation, carbon trading, and payment for other environmental services. These modules have been disseminated widely and are already being used by various institutions and individuals.
- Conducted training sessions on rapid forest carbon stocks appraisal and on development of necessary documents to bid for forest carbon finance. Already eight countries have benefitted from this training.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

The main challenge in this endeavour is lack of adequate funding for activities in the broad area of FLEGT as well as for climate change activities, both for AFF and other institutions that work with these issues.

There is also lack of adequate capacity to work with these issues, and especially the relatively new area of climate change in forestry.

3. Briefly describe actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to promote international trade in forest products from sustainably managed forests harvested.

The African Forest Forum has undertaken studies in the four sub-regions (Central, Eastern, Southern and West Africa) in 2012-13 that examined production, consumption and trade in forest products. The emerging picture in Africa's wood processing industry and trade sectors is one of forest-rich sub-regions that have scanty value adding industrial development of the resource. Superimposed on this is the failure to build intra-African trade in forest products due to poor infrastructure that hinders broader continental economic integration. Also there is an apparent serious neglect of the potential of firewood and charcoal production to be a legitimate, dynamic and fully legalised, mainstreamed, modernised activity - anchored on sustainable raw material provision, given that these energy products are essential for Africa's rapidly growing population both in rural and urban areas. Charcoal is not a fuel of history but of the African future. There is therefore need to develop legally organized sustainable production and marketing systems. Further, Africa cannot successfully promote it's too numerous and diverse NTFPs simultaneously; it is therefore recommended that instead it gives absolute priority initially to top 3 to 5 NTFPs and allocate adequate resources and efforts to organise national and regional-scale entrepreneurial attention for these.

These findings have been shared very widely through workshops organised by AFF and

others, and the relevant documents will be posted on AFF's website.

Also the SADC Timber Association will go a long way in streamlining trade between the SADC countries and between the sub-region and countries outside it.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

- The private sector in wood processing, marketing and trade, is in many countries not well organised, its actors remain scattered, remains low in national government priorities and lacks a champion for its cause. In other words the private sector in forestry in the majority of African countries has yet to be established as an entity that one can dialogue with; much as national policies put the private sector as the engine of growth and development in market oriented economies.
- Given the above, the Africa's forest products industry does not get significant national government support as well as support from external development partners, or even financial institutions that could extend credit to it.
- Africa has to reverse the existing situation where trade remains stuck in export of raw materials to the benefit of non-African importers who therefore benefit from jobs in processing African timber and from incomes that arise from value-addition to it.
- In some cases, local entrepreneurs that want to add value to timber raw material remain marginalised by their own governments and are at times reduced to operating as clandestine informal small/medium enterprises. These small players need positive wealth-creating technical and financial support.
- Where partners express interest in supporting "livelihoods" it is often for low-level activity which focuses on local low-value extraction of NTFPs which generate (at most) "poverty-cushioning" rather than "prosperity-generating" levels of profits – these enterprises too often operate on the margins of formality and many are clandestine.

4. Briefly describe actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to address illicit international trafficking in forest products through the promotion of forest law enforcement and good governance.

AFF has been promoting forest law enforcement, good forest governance and fair trade in forest products in the context of the Yaounde Declaration on FLEG (that is different from the EU FLEGT). Already the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries have developed a FLEGT programme to guide implementation of activities along these broad areas. In addition SADC countries have adapted a concept that will allow for the development of a SADC Timber Association, which is expected to further develop the private sector in forestry into a cohesive entity, and will also curb illegality in forest products trade.

In the East African Community (EAC) countries the East African Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources (ATNR) and the African Forest Forum (AFF) are in discussion on a draft forest management bill that has been developed by the Committee. This bill, if adopted by member states, will contribute to further sub-regional integration in forestry and contain illegality in forest and related activities.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

- Inadequate cooperation and coordination of policy response among countries;
- Inadequate law enforcement within and among countries;

- Corruption is a serious challenge to overcome.
- Inadequate funding to develop and/or strengthen, as well as operationalise, institutions that can promote good forestry stewardship, including containing illegality in forestry and related activities.

5. List and briefly describe activities aimed at mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources for SFM.

FAO and AFF collaborated in organising an expert meeting on national forest funds (NFFs) in 2013 in Mombasa, Kenya. The meeting brought together 22 participants from 10 African countries including 4 from outside Africa. The meeting gave opportunity for knowledge sharing by specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities involved in establishing and successfully managing NFFs, conservation trust funds and climate/REDD+ funds. The activities that are currently financed are mainly afforestation/reforestation, forest protection/conservation, policy review/development, value addition, marketing and trade as well as training and research.

These funds are accessed through loans, grants, special windows, direct payments, and revolving funds, among others. The specific funding sources were identified for the participating countries. The major beneficiaries in these countries are mainly government ministries, communities, CSOs, and the private sector.

It was observed that the amount of interest charged for revolving funds needs to be reasonably low in order to prevent exclusion of the poor. Also improving awareness and decentralising access points will prove to be an effective way of improving access to these funds. Good fund governance is a crucial element to boost confidence of fund providers and ensure that funds are used for intended purpose only. In this regard, clear quantifiable targets, focusing on SMART activities, working with stakeholders outside the sector and focusing on value for money are important. Strong management for the funds, independent external evaluations, capacity building and clear accountability and reporting will greatly improve the governance of NFFs. All this, and other relevant information has been shared widely by FAO and AFF.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

The current progress in terms of establishing effective and efficient NFFs in Africa is highly uneven, with some countries having consolidated gains made over the last few years while others are behind.

B. Progress towards the achievement of the GOFs

1. Please describe actions taken by your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process and/or by other major stakeholders in your region/sub-region to help achieve the following:

GOF1, “Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation”

Many of the activities of the African Forest Forum have targeted reversing the loss of forest cover at various scales by participating in and supporting African delegates in forums that address this issue and identify measures to contain it. For example AFF participates in COPs of UNCCD and participates in preparing African delegates to these COPs which address most of these issues.

AFF has also undertaken and continues to undertake activities that promote SFM, restoration of degraded lands as well as making efforts in sensitizing forest degradation prevention. In this regard AFF has undertaken studies in 2012/13 on experiences, techniques and technologies in restoring degraded woodlands and drylands in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Also, in the same vein AFF has undertaken studies relevant to REDD+ and climate change related activities in the major forest formations in Sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in REDD+ and related activities, but most are in the Readiness Phase of REDD+. Only in some woodland and savanna countries and in a pilot project in mangrove on the eastern coastline are REDD+ projects fully developed to the point of receiving carbon payments and applying these to local community needs.

Africa has serious challenges to overcome including low awareness of the REDD+ and CDM mechanisms, poor data base on forest carbon stocks, weak institutional arrangements and capacity for climate change work in forestry, and availability of sufficient funding required to realize the full potential of REDD+ in Africa.

The results of these studies have been shared widely.

GOF2, “Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people”

The dry African forests and woodlands support the livelihoods of the majority of Africans on the continent in both the rural and urban areas, through the provision of both wood and non-wood products, including supply of the bulk of the energy consumed on the continent, support to agriculture, livestock husbandry, wildlife and tourism, and supply of water, to mention a few. These resources support virtually all life forms on land in these areas. However, Africa is losing these resources very rapidly. Luckily there are recognized traditional forest management practices and technologies that have the potential to promote rehabilitation and/or restoration of degraded woodlands. In this regard AFF has undertaken studies in 2012/13 on experiences, techniques and technologies in restoring degraded woodlands and drylands in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The study results, inform, among other things, the existence, in various African countries of experiences with natural regeneration of different forms, including complete coppice; coppice with standards and selective cutting; pollarding, pruning and lopping. These techniques hold potential to raise the forest/tree-based incomes and livelihoods in these regions as well as improve the environment in which the people live, as well as cultivating social harmony.

Policies promoting participatory natural resource management are in place in most countries of the dry forest region, but their implementation has mostly taken a pilot project based approach, and with no clear strategies for up scaling. Also enabling policies for community based approaches, including clear cut land tenure and equitable benefit sharing, are still very wanting in most countries.

The results of these studies have been shared widely.

GOF3, “Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests”

The highest deforestation and forest degradation rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) occur in the dry forests and woodlands where the pressure for land is continuously increasing, poverty is rampant, livelihood options are few and climate change effects are severe and are expected to become even more severe. In addition, land and forest tenure and rights of access to forest and woodland resources are either not clearly defined or are non-existent to many people. Restoration of degraded forest and woodland areas therefore may contribute to both peoples’ livelihoods and environmental quality.

In this regard AFF has undertaken studies in 2012/13 on experiences, techniques and technologies in restoring degraded woodlands and drylands in Sub-Saharan Africa. The intention is not only to increase forest cover but to also improve livelihoods from increased forest products and services.

Also, in the same vein AFF has undertaken studies relevant to REDD+ and climate change related activities in the major forest formations in Sub-Saharan Africa. By definition proper implementation of REDD+ will not only reduce deforestation and forest degradation, but will protect the forests, enhance carbon stocks and promote the sustainable management of the forest resources.

AFF has been promoting forest law enforcement, good forest governance and fair trade in forest products in the context of the Yaounde Declaration on FLEG (that is different from the EU FLEGT). This holds potential to better manage and protect as well as use forest resources on the continent; in addition to developing the private sector in forestry into a cohesive entity, which could also curb illegality in forest products trade.

The results of these studies have been shared widely.

GOF4, “Reverse the decline in ODA for SFM and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM”

The African Forest Forum continues to evaluate forest financing and climate financing with the objective of guiding its stakeholders to relevant sources of financing for forestry activities.

In addition FAO and AFF organised an expert meeting on national forest funds (NFFs) in 2013 in Mombasa, Kenya. The meeting brought together 22 participants from 10 African countries including 4 from outside Africa. The meeting gave opportunity for knowledge sharing by specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities involved in establishing and successfully managing NFFs, conservation trust funds and climate/REDD+ funds. The activities that are currently financed are mainly afforestation/reforestation, forest protection/conservation, policy review/development, value addition, marketing and trade as well as training and research.

These funds are accessed through loans, grants, special windows, direct payments, and revolving funds, among others. The specific funding sources were identified for the

participating countries. The major beneficiaries in these countries are mainly government ministries, communities, CSOs, and the private sector.

Good fund governance was identified as a crucial element to boost confidence of fund providers and ensure that funds are used for intended purpose only. In this regard, clear quantifiable targets, focusing on SMART activities, working with stakeholders outside the sector and focusing on value for money are important. Strong management for the funds, independent external evaluations, capacity building and clear accountability and reporting will greatly improve the governance of NFFs.

All this, and other relevant information has been shared widely by FAO and AFF.

2. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on progress towards the achievement of the GOFs.

AFF and FAO have jointly worked on a number of issues related to GOFs, including climate change issues in African forestry, as well as on work related to the Great Green Wall of Sahara and Sahel Initiative. ICRAF and AFF have also collaborated on climate change issues as well as others related to 'greening the Sahel'. Practically all the work done by AFF contributes to achieving the GOFs.

C. Contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs

1. Please describe studies or initiatives in your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process that capture the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

AFF has undertaken a study on how national governments in Sub-Saharan Africa are mainstreaming decisions from the multilateral environmental agreements, and including the Forest Instrument and relevant MDGs to forestry.

2. What indicators have been, or could be, used to assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs?

- More attention needs to be given to air---its quality to support life is increasingly being impaired - a great challenge to humanity. (quality of air as an indicator)
- Availability of quality water in sufficient quantities to human beings is emerging as a very serious issue, let alone the quality of water in many of the planet's water bodies. (quality of water as an indicator)
- The loss of forest cover continues to increase, diminishing its capacity to improve air quality, and support other environmental services like quality water supply.(capacity for forest to rehabilitate degraded lands as an indicator)

Achievement of the MDGs in many countries comes with other immense challenges of restoring and proper development of these resources: water, air, land and forests.

3. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on MDGs forest-related work.

- MDGs combined social, economic and environmental goals to make wise use of available resources to improve the welfare of people and their nations, as well as their environment.
- However, no MDG focused exclusively on any of the three most abundant and life supporting resources; namely water, air and forests.
- Also only the utility aspects of these resources feature in practically all MDGs without capturing the full value of these three resources to human, animal and plant survival.
- Forests and trees are implicit in the 'environment' MDG, and appear only at the indicator level. The MDGs therefore downplayed forests.
- Many global development goals are formulated to express a desired improvement in human well-being, and less so on the wellness of a specific sector or resource, hence the MDGs overlooked the forest sector.

Section II: Review of the effectiveness of the current IAF and the future options

1. From the perspective of your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process, please provide a general evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement of the current IAF.

Areas for improvement:

Country-led Initiatives (CLIs) and Ad-hoc Expert Group (AHEG) meetings/sessions and side events will have more impacts if they:

- are informed by technical input by linking science with development,
- provide a good platform for a more technical and open discussion of issues,
- focus on key issues in forestry development,
- provide a basis for countries and relevant groups to raise issues they feel are important to forestry in their countries or institutions/groups;
- allow for a wider participation than would have been possible in regular UNFF biennial sessions,
- provide an opportunity for an early buy-in by countries and groups thereby cultivating a political momentum on the issues,
- allow more involvement of science based institutions, civil society and the private sector; these are largely absent at the biennial sessions of UNFF.

However, the sessions do not capture the breadth and depth of global discussions and other important events that are related to forests and trees.

2. Has the input of your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process been adequately taken into account in the Forum's deliberations?

Yes.

3. What measures has your organization undertaken to strengthen the current IAF?

Please list the most important measures (maximum five):

- Provided key note presentation at AHEG1;
- Participated actively in the development of forest financing strategy;
- Backstopping of African delegates in preparation and negotiation during the UNFF sessions;
- Provided inputs to the deliberations of COFO22.

4. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened regional/sub-regional component in a future IAF?

A future IAF will have to:

- Establish mechanisms for increased collaboration at regional level; for example, designating staff at the Secretariat to guide the organization of regional sessions that feed into the biennial sessions of UNFF
- Strengthen how the regional component collaborates with other key global players and initiatives that relate to GOFs and NLBI, like major groups (that are weakly represented at regular UNFF sessions) and UN-REDD.
- Strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on implementation of its activities.
- Significantly improve catalyzing, mobilizing and generating financial and technical scientific resources to activities. This is an area that UNFF should put substantially more work into capitalizing on regional financial institutions.
- Strengthening international cooperation of forestry by increasing the visibility, appreciation and inclusion of forestry in many regional initiatives, from global initiatives like SDGs, climate change, and green economy.
- Strengthen participation of major groups, academia, private sector and civil society, in regional sessions and other activities.
- Maintain momentum on key regional issues, until their reasonable resolution is achieved, through regular monitoring and reporting on them.
- Need to evaluate capacity at UNFF Secretariat, organisational structure to make it more focused, effective and efficient to support regional components.

5. Has your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process worked jointly with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)² and/or

² CPF member organizations: Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFF), Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), The World Bank, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

major stakeholders to support the work of UNFF? If yes, please evaluate the overall collaboration.

AFF works very closely with ICRAF, with which it has an MoU to guide technical collaboration. Key areas of collaboration have been climate change as it relates to forests and trees outside forests, as well as managing dry forests, especially in the Sahelian region. ICRAF is represented on the Governing Council of AFF.

AFF also works very closely with FAO, and key areas of collaboration have been on climate change and forestry, forestry education, supporting national governments in drawing up plans for activities in line with the goal of the Great Green Wall of Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI), and forest financing. FAO is represented on the Governing Council of AFF.

With UNFF and UNCCD the African Forest Forum has supported the preparatory meetings of African delegates to meetings of these two organisations, as well as providing the delegates with both logistic and technical support during negotiations. AFF also has participated in various Country Led Initiatives and AHEGs of UNFF. Also UNFF is represented on the Governing Council of AFF.

With IUFRO, AFF is an institutional member of IUFRO. It has collaborated with it in organising the African Chapter meeting of IUFRO in Nairobi. Also AFF has collaborated with IUFRO-led initiatives like Global Expert Panel on Forests and Food Security. AFF also participated in the XXIV IUFRO World Congress in Salt Lake City in USA in 2014.

AFF also collaborates with ITTO, and its Executive Secretary is a member of the Governing Council of AFF.

6. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened collaboration with CPF member organizations and/or major stakeholders in a revised IAF?

The UNFF Secretariat could be strengthened to deal more effectively with CPF members and major stakeholder groups. Specific UNFF Secretariat staff should be tasked with this role.

Also CPF members should be encouraged to strengthen how they work together, rather than protecting their turfs.