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**Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs to UNFF11**

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**Regional/Sub-regional Organization/Process:**

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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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

Adoption of the new ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work 2014-2017 of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) by the joint session of the Committee and the Commission Metsä2013", held from 9 to 13 December in Rovaniemi Finland. The overall goal of the Integrated Programme of Work is to "support member countries and relevant stakeholders in their efforts to sustainably manage the use ECE-region forests so that they provide products and ecosystem services to benefit society". The Programme is structured around four main work areas (pillars) WA1: Data, monitoring and assessment, WA2: Policy dialogue and advice WA3: Communication and outreach, WA4: Capacity-building.

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

It is important to have a joint programme of work between ECE and FAO to "deliver as one" avoid overlaps and rationalise resources.

Challenges in terms of substance:

- Divergence in conditions, resources and capacities among countries of the region,
- Financing
- Forest workforce (complex issues)
- Monitoring (diversified)
- Governance
- Fragmentation of forest ownership

Challenges in terms of implementation: weak coordination among international organizations.

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.

The principal effort undertaken at the regional level is the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy. The Action Plan was adopted at the COFFI and the EFC joint session in December 2013 in Finland. It describes how the forest sector in the UNECE region could lead the way towards the emerging green economy at the global level. It provides an overall vision and identifies objectives and specific activities, as well as potential actors, who might contribute to achieving the stated objectives. The Action Plan contains five pillars with their respective areas of activity: A. Sustainable production and consumption of forest products; B. A low carbon forest sector; C. Decent green jobs in the forest sector; D. Long term provision of forest ecosystem services; E. Policy development and monitoring of the forest sector in relation to a green economy. The implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section which will also explore ways and means to measure the contribution and the progress of the forest sector towards a

green economy.

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

It is essential to continue to communicate about the potential of the Rovaniemi Action Plan and its implementation and to keep it as a living document, otherwise it risks to become one of the many documents at the international level that easily become forgotten and obsolete. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section is working to make sure that the Rovaniemi Action Plan remains a framework and blueprint for action in the ECE region.

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

The UNECE, in close cooperation with Eurostat, ITTO and FAO collects data and statistics on forest products production and trade. Data for the UNECE region are published on the website: [www.unece.org/forests/fpm/onlineadata.html](http://www.unece.org/forests/fpm/onlineadata.html). The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section analyzes trends, drivers and policies influencing international trade of forest products. Findings are compiled in the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*. The content of the *Review* is available on the website [www.unece.org/forests/fpm/annualmarketreviews.html](http://www.unece.org/forests/fpm/annualmarketreviews.html). Additional information on production and trade is provided by member States in the *Market Forecast* and *Market Statement*. These documents serve as input to the market discussion by the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), which officially approves the *Market Statement* every year.

Guided by its Team of Specialists on Forest Products, the UNECE/FAO organized seven capacity building workshops on forest products marketing and trade in Western Balkan countries.

Two workshops were held on the potential of sustainable wood supply in Europe and publications on the European and North American Forest Sector Outlook Studies with supply-demand assessment for the period 2010 to 2013 were issued.

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

Challenges related to the publication of the Annual Market Review and the organisation of workshops is principally the need to find appropriate funding. On the substantial side: – many informal trade structures – difficult enabling framework conditions.

Lessons learned (taken from the Bled<sup>2</sup> declaration in 2011):

- Promote regional cooperation among forestry and industry associations to foster closer working and the development of a stronger regional identity for the forest sector;
- Encourage private forest owners to become more involved in the management of their forest resources;
- Recognize the importance of creation of sustainable supply chains in the upstream forest sector as a necessity for modern industries to be set-up within the individual countries and to secure retention of added value rather than exporting timber
- Strengthen national, regional and international training capacities in forest products marketing and information systems;

<sup>2</sup> Bled declaration is the outcome document from the Forest Products Marketing Workshop on the development of new cooperation for sustainable mobilization of forest based sector in the countries of South East Europe which took place in Bled, Slovenia on 30 November – 01 December 2011

- Facilitate training of and information exchange between National Correspondents e.g. on forest product market statistics;
- Promote and support innovation in the forest industries and the adding of maximum value to forest products through cooperation between research organization and industry;
- Foster the use of wood in higher value applications, especially construction;
- Gather and disseminate better and more reliable market data e.g. web-based market information systems at both the national and regional levels

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.

The Rovaniemi Action Plan includes some examples of actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to address illegal trafficking of forest products built in pillar E on policy development and monitoring of the forest sector in relation to a green economy:

*A.7 Objective: To ensure that only legally produced forest products enter the market.*

A.7.1 Exchange national experiences with regulations on illegal logging.

A.7.2 Analyse and monitor the effectiveness and long term impacts and consequences of the US Lacey Act and EU timber trade regulation on the sector (inside and outside the region), with participation from other regions.

A 7.3 Assess the gap between *sustainability* and *legality* in the relevant law of UNECE region countries.

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

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

One of the Rovaniemi Action Plan principles for the UNECE region forest sector in the emerging green economy aims to mobilize new sources for SFM: The forest sector takes all externalities fully into account in policy making, introducing payment for forest ecosystem services (PES) whenever appropriate. Some activities in support of the development of PES are listed in Pillar D: to take all externalities fully into account in policy making, introducing payment for forest ecosystem services whenever appropriate and, in particular under the second objective: Payment and markets for forest ecosystem services: moving from theory to practice.

Other activities in the past:

- Workshop and publication on PES ([www.unece.org/index.php?id=35574](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35574))
- Workshops on wood mobilization
- Workshop on climate change accounting
- Promotion of traditional and new forest products and of wood energy

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

Forests are a natural capital. PES is not a solution *per se*, but is a complementary tool to legislation and regulations. Valuation is a prerequisite but can be done in a more pragmatic way. PES are often unique, innovative, linked to local conditions and developed from the demand side. They need up scaling rather than mainstreaming.

Some traditional forest products (paper) are declining and alternative uses or products have to be developed to secure production and related revenues. There is still potential for increasing provision for wood.

Competition for products (industrial wood-energy) can stimulate growth of prices and revenues. However, can affect economic viability of some branches of industry.

### **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”

In July 2013, UNECE and FAO jointly launched a project on “Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia” whose objective is to support the national capacity of countries in the region to enhance the contribution of their forest sector to greener economies through sustainable forest management. The project will help countries in the ECE region to respond to key capacity gaps, by providing knowledge, capacity building, training materials and advisory services on:

- Strengthening forest sector policies and institutions, to facilitate sustainable forest management's contribution to a green economy and mitigating climate change;
- Developing action plans and implementing sustainable forest management in three pilot countries (Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan);
- Promoting sustainable forest products, including for bioenergy production.

The project is tackling the issues related to forest protection, restoration, degradation and illegal logging by organizing a series on capacity building workshops in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Some of the countries represent forest poor countries, and forests are very low on their national agenda. The project highlights the importance and possibilities provided by forests and the forest sector. The project has succeeded already to create new linkages at the national level to include forests as a key element of the green economy strategies. Through the national and series of local workshops (four in each project country) the project is providing knowledge, tools, and examples from other countries how to develop the forest sector towards sustainable forest management.

Other activities include: promotion of sustainable forest management, monitoring forest cover and resources through reporting on criteria and indicators on SFM.

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

The UNECE-FAO UNDA project on “Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia” includes all elements of sustainable development, and discusses the economic, social, and environmental benefits of forests. The project workshops stress the importance of social inclusion of local communities. In addition, segments of the workshops are designed for local communities in different regions, and their aim is to collect stakeholder input from the farmers and villagers. Furthermore, the project is increasing the knowledge and understanding of ministries and forest agencies on the realities of poor rural communities, who depend on forests for heating and cooking, often as their only source of energy. The project is relying on participatory methods, which are designed to ensure the participation of all stakeholders, and to make it easier to anyone to express their opinions. Governments of forest agencies tend to blame villagers on the destruction of forests by illegal use, and on the other hand they have not offered alternative options to use the forests sustainably. Forest ownership changes and long term land tenure might be possible options to solve the challenges, and the UNDA project is offering information on a variety of policy incentives in other countries to promote sustainable use of forests. The project supports the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia to see forests as a resource instead of a reserve.

Other activities include: monitoring on socio-economic aspects of forest management. Work of the Team of Specialists on Green Jobs (and JEN). Work on forest ownership reporting.

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”

- Work on reporting on state of forests and forest management (FRA and SoEF).
- Work on development and implementation of European Forest Types.
- Work on the assessment of SFM (in the past) and the current *SEMAFOR* project (the System for the Evaluation of the Management of Forests) being developed to report in an interactive way on sustainability of forest management at the pan-European level.

#### *SEMAFOR*

The method is based on data collected by the current reporting system intends to provide a scientific and transparent system of accountability. The system aims to report on the sustainability of forest management at the national or subnational<sup>3</sup> level. It aims to answer two questions: 1) *what are the areas of concern with regard to sustainability (in a given country)?* 2) *how are the areas of concern (in a given country) being addressed now?* It also aims to identify strong and weak aspects of a given country’s situation with regard to sustainable forest management, on an objective basis, helping national policy makers to compare their situation with that of other countries and undertake corrective measures, if necessary. *SEMAFOR* builds on the section’s experience in monitoring and evaluation of forest functions and sustainable forest management developed over the last 15 years. It is currently in the phase of pilot implementation and is using the information collected through the current UNECE/FAO/Forest Europe reporting process 2015.

<sup>3</sup> For instance in provinces or autonomous regions which have responsibility for forest policy. It is not applicable at the level of counties, communes or forest management units.

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”

See point 5.

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

The International Day of Forests (IDF) 2014 was celebrated by the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section with a day-long event focusing on the contribution that the sustainable forest sector can bring to the fashion sector and vice-versa on 21 March 2014 in Geneva/Switzerland. This event, titled “*Forests for Fashion – Fashion for Forests*”, gathered artists, designers and representatives of the private, business, fashion, and forestry sector. The day included a conference to discuss potential of forests to supply sustainable fibres, but also potential impact of a fast growing sector. It also included a fashion show presenting clothes from sustainable forest fibres.

The cross-sectoral nature of this event and the level of the panel that put together experts from different industries, governments and organisations, allowed for a large and accurate picture to be drawn. The level of clarity and details of the event was a catalyser for great international exposure across new and old media, with over 100 among articles, blog posts and news reports. This coverage was crucial in raising awareness to the issues of sustainable forest management and sustainable fashion to non-forest related community.

The section organised also promotional activities related to the IYoF and a series of European Forest Week (Roma2009, Orman2011, Metsa2013, and upcoming Silva2015).

### **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.

- **The regional study on the status of forest sector in the UNECE region “Forests and Economic Development” was prepared as regional input to the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF10). UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission mandated the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section to develop the study to be presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the UNFF in May 2015. The study will reflect progress towards the achievement of the global objectives on forests and SFM, and on challenges for forests and the forest sector in the UNECE region.**
- In June 2006 The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section in collaboration with the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Commission (EC) launched the **Joint Wood Energy Enquiry**. The Enquiry aims at improving knowledge and understanding of wood energy consumption and tries to shed light on the potential and future perspective of wood energy in the region. It collects data of both sources and uses of wood and promotes cooperation between the energy and forest sectors, providing a

comprehensive framework on the role of wood energy in member States.

- **Forest Sector Outlook Studies** provide policy makers, analysts, as well as civil society and private sector decision makers with information and analysis about long-term trends in the sector, projections of future developments of forest sector, which can include the impact of relevant policy choices.

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

Several set of indicators are used for reporting on SFM and the contribution of forest sector to sustainable development:

- FAO FRA global forest variables (at the global level)
- Pan-European indicators at the regional level,
- Indicators of the forest sector contribution to a green economy
- Indicators on the forest sector contribution to achieving SDGs

Furthermore, the innovative method on SFM assessment (**SEMAFOR** – see GOF3 comment for more information) has been developed with the use of the set of pan-European indicators. The method is being applied on a pilot basis.

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

Forest loss (net) is not perceived as a major issue in the UNECE region; however, it can be still important for some countries or areas. For that reason more attention is paid to other aspects, e.g. improving state of forests, optimization of resources and their services. A wealth of activities is also oriented on strengthening the overall forest sector. This includes improving its economic and environmental performance as well as improvement of forest working conditions.

## **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.

The regional dimension has not been stressed enough and the role of Regional Commissions has not been fully utilised, in particular with regards to the implementation part of IAF. The current IAF was approved at the global level, and regional and technical guidelines on implementation, monitoring, reporting were missing. As a result, the current IAF has not been widely known and applied, in particular at the operational and field level.

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

The UNECE/FAO has contributed to the Forum's deliberations; however the input has not really been taken into account for future action.

3. What measures has your organization undertaken to strengthen the current IAF?  
Please list the most important measures (maximum five):

Due to the lack of mandate and mechanisms, the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section could engage in implementing the IAF to a limited extent, i.e. through the preparation of UNFF Study including reporting on GOFs, organization of discussions and panels on UNFF in our meetings whenever relevant not to lose sight of the global dimension. However, important work to strengthen the IAF, has been done in an indirect way, through activities to support, promote SFM and the sector.

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

Regional Economic Commissions are ideally placed to strengthen the regional tools for implementing the IAF at the regional level, guide the implementation and to monitor and assess progress in achieving its goals, but also could be mandated to "translate" and implement the UNFF decisions and the post-2015 forest agenda at the regional level. The joint ECE/FAO section could be more involved in assisting countries in the IAF implementation process, in particular if the role of RECs are formally recognised in the IAF implementary mechanism. This would have a synergy effect on the work of both global and regional organizations, help to coordinate work, avoid duplication and possible conflicts in implementing SFM at these two levels.

5. Has your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process worked jointly with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)<sup>4</sup> and/or major stakeholders to support the work of UNFF? If yes, please evaluate the overall collaboration.

ECE-FAO Joint section (as well as ECE) is not a member of the CPF. Thus the cooperation is done mainly through one of the parent organization – FAO. For example ECE-FAO looked at the role of forests in the post-2015 agenda (SDGs, targets and indicators) by organising two workshops in 2014 (January, June) to which the representative from the UNFF was invited and shared the UNFF work in this area.

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<sup>4</sup> 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)

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?

By fully including UNECE in CPF as a member.