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The United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI) was adopted by the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) in May 2007 and by the UN General Assembly in December 2007. The Forest Instrument provides countries with a framework for promoting sustainable forest management (SFM). It recognizes SFM as a dynamic and evolving concept, which aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations.

The purpose of the Forest Instrument is to:

- Strengthen political commitment and action at all levels to implement the sustainable management of all types of forests effectively and to achieve its four Global Objectives on Forests.
- Enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, in particular with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability.
- Provide a framework for national action and international cooperation.

The Forest Instrument articulates a set of agreed policies and measures at the international and national levels to strengthen forest governance, technical and institutional capacity, policy and legal frameworks, forest sector investment and stakeholder participation. Promoting, monitoring and assessing implementation of the UN Forest Instrument and the achievement of its Global Objectives on Forests is one of the core functions of the UNFF.

Eighty-one countries provided voluntary national reports on the implementation of the Forest Instrument to the 11th session of the UNFF in 2015. At that session, the UNFF decided to strengthen the monitoring, assessment and reporting function, called for further streamlining and harmonization of reporting, and requested the UNFF Secretariat to develop a new reporting format and cycle.

The UN Forest Instrument is voluntary and non-legally binding. It recognizes that Member States are responsible for the sustainable management of their forests and for the enforcement of their forest-related laws.



UNFI

“A framework for national action and international cooperation for SFM”

SFM SUCCESS STORIES*

- ✓ Brazil's Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (launched in 2004) has decreased the annual deforestation rate from 1.29 million hectares in 2008 to 0.48 million hectares in 2014.
- ✓ China increased its forest area from 195 million hectares in 2009 to 208 million hectares in 2013. During the same period, the country achieved a 277 per cent increase in total forestry output and a 485 per cent increase in total investment in forestry.
- ✓ The Dominican Republic increased its forest plantation areas (60,000 hectares added since 2007) and its protected areas (123 sites cover 25 per cent of the land area) and allocated over US\$10 million to the reforestation and management of protected areas.
- ✓ Finland's "Wellbeing from Forests 2008-2012" research programme aims to integrate economic forest uses and the benefits of forest recreation and tourism.
- ✓ Ghana has established multistakeholder consultation platforms, such as the National Forestry Forum, and raised awareness of and political support for the contribution of forests to national development.
- ✓ Madagascar's local communities are responsible for the sustainable management of 2.4 million hectares of the country's forest area (1,248 forest contracts had been signed by 2013).
- ✓ Nepal gave local communities the authority to manage the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (in 2006), making it the first community-managed protected area in the country.
- ✓ Nigeria amended its forest policy, and conducted regional and national workshops to raise awareness on the Forest Instrument.
- ✓ The United States of America's "Farm Bill" (Agricultural Act of 2014) includes provisions to assist the US Forest Service in areas such as ecological restoration, community support, reducing wildfire risk, and addressing insect and disease threats.
- ✓ Viet Nam's policy on payments for forest ecosystem services has mobilized about US\$160 million since 2011, which has mainly been reinvested in forest protection and development.

* Information from UNFF11 national reports

GLOBAL OBJECTIVES ON FORESTS

OBJECTIVE 1

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

OBJECTIVE 2

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

OBJECTIVE 3

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.

OBJECTIVE 4

Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.