

**Views and comments of ITTO
on the Building Blocks / Options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030
and the Quadrennial Programme of Work 2017-2020**

1. General comments

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) fully appreciates the Co-Chairpersons of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) established pursuant to paragraph 48 of the Economic and Social Council Resolution 2015/33 for producing and circulating the document, “Building Blocks / Options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030” and offered ITTO an opportunity to submit its views and comments on the document. ITTO recognizes that the document, which contains useful building blocks and options for consideration, was well drafted reflecting the discussion took place at the first meeting of the AHEG held in April 2016. The document provides a good basis for the further deliberation by the experts on the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (the Strategic Plan) at the second meeting of the AHEG in October 2016.

Because components of the Strategic Plan are closely linked to each other, ITTO sets out the following benchmark points to analyze the document, particularly the building blocks and options proposed therein for consideration:

- Sustainable forest management is an inclusive concept, as defined in the UN Forest Instrument (UNFI) and interpreted in seven thematic elements, which comprehends all operational practices carried out to deliver benefits from forests on a sustainable basis, such as conservation, protection, restoration and use of forests and forest resources;
- The main objective of the international arrangement on forests (IAF) is to promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, which is interpreted in the context of the IAF as the implementation of the UNFI, including the four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and the identified 44 actions regarding national policies and measures and international cooperation and means of implementation; and
- The contribution of all types of forests and trees outside forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including forest-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated targets and other internationally agreed forest-related goals and targets will be enhanced in principle through the implementation of the UNFI.

2. Specific comments

II. IAF vision and mission statement

A. A vision for 2030

ITTO supports **Option 1** based on the benchmark points above.

B. Mission statement

ITTO supports **Option 6** based on the benchmark points above.

III. Strategic approach/global goals/objectives/targets

A. Strategic approach/global goals/objectives/targets

The strategic approach should be described in a way that the implementation of the UNFI, including the four GOFs and the 44 actions, will contribute to the achievement of the forest-related SDGs and other internationally agreed forest-related goals and targets through the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, as mentioned above. A convincing and concise text is required instead of a listing of goals and targets.

B. Global targets/deliverables

In order to make the monitoring, assessment and reporting simpler and reduce burden on Member States and other actors, ITTO believes that a limited number of targets should be set up in association with the GOFs and some key actions contained in the UNFI. In this respect, ITTO supports **Option 2** in principle.

With the aim of demonstrating the close linkage between the UNFI and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in terms of their objectives and expected outcomes, ITTO suggests that the forest-related SDG targets should be used to the extent as possible as operational targets of the Strategic Plan.

ITTO fully supports the process to encourage Member States and other actors to voluntarily submit their intended contribution to the attainment of targets, as proposed in the document.

IV. Implementation framework

A. Actions to achieve global goals/objectives/targets/strategic approach

ITTO supports the development of a matrix to show the implementation framework, as well as actions and actors, and its inclusion in the document.

In this respect, the 44 actions contained in the UNFI may be categorized in relation to the four GOFs and their operational targets and indicators for the sake of increasing clarity of the logical structure of the Strategic Plan.

B. Roles and responsibilities

In terms of the order of listing in this section, ITTO believes that Member States should come first in consideration of their key role in implementing the Strategic Plan, as described in the document.

ITTO wishes to have clarification on the term, “UN wide system”, in the context of responsible actors and in relation to the IAF.

B.1 UN agencies, programmes, conventions and relevant secretaries and partners

ITTO is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) based on an international commodity agreement; therefore, it is not considered as a member of the UN family. There are several non-UN organizations actively engaged in the UNFF, as well as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). In this connection, ITTO wishes to have clarification on the terms used to describe various categories of IGOs, seeking the use of standard terms if any.

B.3 Member States

ITTO fully supports again the idea of the Voluntary Planned Contributions (VPCs), as presented in the document.

B.4 Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

ITTO believes that the part referring to the integration of the Strategic Plan into the strategies and programmes of the CPF member organizations and the provision of dedicated funds for the CPF activities should be placed in the section on Member States.

B.6 Major Groups and other stakeholders

ITTO fully support the exploration of innovative mechanisms that facilitate the greater engagement of the private sector in particular, with the recognition of the current state of its participation in the Major Groups.

C. Means and resources for implementation of the Strategic Plan

C.1 GFFFN

ITTO believes that an adequate target needs to be set up to monitor, assess and report on the performance of the Global Forest Financing facilitation Network (GFFFN) in order to make a set of quantitative indicators work.

V. Review framework

ITTO again wishes to have clarification on the term, “UN system-wide partners”. ITTO believes that active IGOs, including ITTO, should not be left behind from the review mechanisms and the implementation processes.

A. Evaluating progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan

ITTO support the use of a set of indicators to be developed to monitor progress in forest-related SDG targets, as referred to “a set of global forest indicators drawn from the SDG global indicator framework” in the document, in evaluating progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In order to do so, the operational targets set up for the Strategic Plan also need to be the forest-related SDG targets, as expressed in the comment of ITTO on Section III.

3. Comments on Quadrennial Programme of Work

The current draft format of the Quadrennial Programme of Work (4POW) 2017-2020 appears more like a four-year plan for the UNFF sessions, where major items to be discussed are listed. Although the Strategic Plan is yet to be developed, ITTO believes that 4POW must be systematically linked to the Strategic Plan. ITTO believes that it would be helpful to have better picture if linkages between the matrix mentioned under the IV. A and the 4POW is prepared for the AHED at its second meeting.