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**UNCCD Secretariat's views and comments on
Building Blocks/Options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030**

1. page 1, the introduction should be concise, engaging, and well-written, in particular the stated purpose of the strategy in the first bullet should be rewritten for more clarity and to be more accessible to a non-UN audience.

2. page 2, under A. Importance of forests to people and the planet: the last bullet could be revised to better capture the three dimensions of sustainable development as:

Sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests is vital to transformative change to address development challenges, ~~from such as~~ poverty eradication, ~~and~~ economic growth, land degradation, ~~to~~ food security, biodiversity loss and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

3. page 3, Under the heading of “Contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda”, the services provided by forests could be grouped according to their functions/benefits (economic, social and environmental). For example:

Economic

- Wood is an important source of renewable energy providing over 9% of the total global primary energy supply and 27% of the primary energy supply in Africa. More than 2 billion people depend on wood energy for cooking and/or heating.
- Forest products contribute significantly to the shelter of at least 1.3 billion people.
- Forests provide the raw material for a broad variety of everyday uses, including paper, packaging and construction materials -- all of which are widely recyclable.
- Foods from forests –leaves, seeds, nuts, fruits, mushrooms, honey, insects and wild animals– provide nutrition and health to millions of people who depend on forests for subsistence.
- Trees outside forests cover 284 million hectares worldwide and provide critical supplies of wood and non-wood products to many local communities.

Social

- Forests and tree-based systems support agricultural production by protecting soil and water, maintaining soil fertility, regulating micro-climates and providing habitat for wild pollinators and predators of agricultural pests.
- Forested catchments supply 75% of all the freshwater for farms, industry and homes.
- Forests have important cultural and spiritual values for people in many regions of the world.

Environmental

- Forests control floods, landslides, droughts and dust storms, significantly reduce risks of disaster, and are a key factor in achieving the global goal of a land degradation-neutral world.
- Forests sequester more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem. Sustainable management and use of forest products present a highly effective and cost-competitive natural carbon capture and storage system.
- Forests are rich in biodiversity and home to 80% of all terrestrial animals, plants and insects.

4. page 3, under the heading of “Trends and challenges”, consider add a sentence and revising the first bullet to read:

- Despite the crucial contribution of forests to life on earth, deforestation continues in many regions of the world. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015, the global forest area fell by 129 million hectares (3.1 percent) in the period 1990–2015, to just under 4 billion hectares.

5. page 3, under the heading of “Trends and challenges”, in the second bullet, suggest avoid using any country name and consider comparing the area of forest loss to the size of 6 million football pitches/fields or other globally understood benchmark.

6. page 6, under Vision for 2030, we would concur with Option 4 as it is concise, comprehensive and easily understood.

7. page 6, under mission of the IAF, we would suggest merging Options 2 and 3 to read:

Protect and expand earth’s forests and promote equitable sustainable forest-based development; promote policy dialogue and encourage intersectoral and inter-agency collaboration for the achievement of the sustainable management of all types of forests and trees outside forests.

8. page 7, we support Option 1 (Global Goals), but the issue of protection and conservation strategies is neglected and we would suggest considering integrating or adding to the list of 6 the following:

“Protect forests and their biodiversity, water, soil, and cultural and heritage aspects”

9. page 12, under Implementation Framework action areas/thematic priorities, we suggest including the following bullet:

- Biodiversity conservation, combating desertification and restoring degraded lands

10. page 12, under Actions to achieve global goals, we strongly support the development of a matrix and stand ready to contribute.

11. page 24, under B. Progress in implementation of the UNFI, regarding the GEF, should it read?:

The Forum will invite the GEF and other forest funding institutions to provide resources to support preparation of national reports of eligible Member States of the Forum.

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