



United Nations
Climate Change Secretariat

Executive Secretary

Nations Unies
Secrétariat sur les changements climatiques

Secrétaire exécutive

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Dear Mr. Filho,

I am writing to thank you for your letter of 28 July 2016 in which you enclose a letter from the Co-Chairs of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG).

The initial proposals of the AHEG Co-Chairs on (i) options and building blocks for the 2017-2030 Strategic Plan of the International Arrangement on Forests; and (ii) the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020 have been considered by the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat and I am pleased to hereby enclose our views on these documents.

I look forward to further strengthening our cooperation in the years to come, as we strive to secure a sustainable and resilient future.

Yours sincerely,



Patricia Espinosa

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Moeini-Meybodi, moeini-meybodi@un.org
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ATTACHMENT

Views from UNFCCC secretariat on the Building Blocks/Options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and 4POW

Page/Section	Text in the SP	Views/Proposal by UNFCCC
3/Contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda	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.	Since this bullet refers to the role of forests as carbon sinks, it may be more appropriate to use terms found in IPCC assessment reports. Supply-side mitigation options are not limited to sustainable management and use of forest products (which may include other non-wood forest products). <i>“Sustainable management of forests, reducing deforestation and forest degradation, enhancement of forest carbon stocks, conservation and use of forest wood products are economically viable and cost effective mitigation options, with many economic, social and environmental co-benefits. Mitigation actions and associated co-benefits in the forest sector may also contribute to a broader global sustainability agenda”</i>
3/Trends & Challenges	The most important challenge is to address the drivers of forest loss and degradation, including economic development, shifting agriculture, conversion to other land use, climate change, population growth and poverty.	Climate change need not be a “driver” of forest loss per se, like other socio-economic, land use change (agriculture, infrastructure development), technological or policy related drivers. Climate change could exacerbate biophysical drivers such as fires, pest, droughts, floods (which could be worsened by underlying causes relating to demographic, economic, political, institutional and cultural factors) which in turn hasten forest loss and/or degradation. Measures to address drivers will relate to these latter events rather than addressing climate change itself.
4/Opportunities for enhanced action	The landmark Paris Agreement of 2015 “aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty” and opens the door to looking at forest benefits holistically in the climate context, building on existing REDD+ initiatives under the UNFCCC ⁹ . Forests are expected to feature in many of the Parties’ intended “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs) to the aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Convention also recognizes the importance of sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of terrestrial ecosystems, including forests, for the mitigation of climate change in its Article 4.1(d) on commitments. The Paris Agreement in its Article 5 recalled this Article in the Convention and enhanced the political significance of the role of forests in addressing climate change.

Page/Section	Text in the SP	Views/Proposal by UNFCCC
	<p>of the Agreement. In this regard, broader recognition of the values of forests both in carbon pricing and as carbon sinks is important.</p> <p>Footnote 9: 9 The Paris Agreement is a protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). REDD+ adds “forest conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks” to REDD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is only ONE REDD+ framework under the Convention. There are no existing REDD+ initiatives (plural) under the Convention. • Mitigation and adaptation measures in the forest sector have been identified in many INDCs. 73% of the INDCs identified the land use, land-use change and forestry sector, including REDD+ as part of their mitigation measures. At least 70 Parties in their INDCs referred to forestry and land as priority areas for adaptation. • First, it is more important to recognize forest as a carbon sink. C pricing is secondary and related to markets and hence, also a sensitive matter in the UNFCCC negotiations. It is equally important to recognize the other co-benefits that come with conserving and enhancing forest carbon sinks. • Footnote 9: “Protocol” is a politically sensitive term and it is not used in the Paris Agreement. It may be better to refer to Decision 1/CP.21, para 1 on the adoption of the Paris Agreement: “an Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC”. • Footnote 9: It may be better to define all the activities under REDD+ instead of just the activities on the “+” side. Readers may not be familiar with what REDD+ is. REDD+ refers to the activities in paragraph 70, decision 1/CP.16 – the acronym is not used in formal COP decisions. This is the standard footnote that the secretariat uses in reference to REDD+: <i>“In decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, the COP encouraged developing country Parties to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities: reducing emissions from deforestation; reducing emissions from forest degradation; conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forests; and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (also referred to as REDD-plus).”</i>
9/B. Options for global targets/deliverables	SDG 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity of forests to climate-related hazards and natural disasters. (Supports GOF1. Contributes/links to SDG 13.2, ABT 15, GEF SFM Objective 2, provisions of Paris Agreement)	The relevant provisions or modalities are under negotiations, it is important not to prejudge the process by implying that provisions are already available. It may be more appropriate to refer in general to the relevant Articles in the Paris Agreement.

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	SDG 13.3: Improve education, awareness and human and institutional capacity on forest-related climate change mitigation, adaptation and impact reduction. (Contributes/links to SDG 16.6, provisions of Paris Agreement)	
12/ IV. Implementation Framework	Proposed action area/thematic area: Climate change mitigation and adaptation (Paris Agreement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UNFCCC secretariat will be pleased to share its knowledge and experiences relating to our Parties' actions on mitigation and adaptation to climate change. • In Paris, the COP requested the secretariat to support and further strengthen the technical examination process on mitigation and adaptation. The purpose of the technical meetings conducted under this process is to promote implementation of best practice mitigation and adaptation policies/actions that could lead to significant emission reductions and strengthened resilience and reduced vulnerabilities and also have significant sustainable development co-benefits. The process also encourages increased international cooperation and coordination and identification of opportunities that enable developing countries to effectively implement these actions on the ground. One of the thematic areas in the process relate to land use and forests. • In addition, UNFCCC Parties also report on their mitigation and adaptation policies and actions, including the land use, land-use change and forestry sector in national communications, biennial reports/biennial update reports and national adaptation plans. • The UNFCCC secretariat looks forward to collaborating with the UNFF secretariat, share relevant information and experiences pertaining to the role of land use and forest in mitigation and adaptation to climate change as being reported by the Parties.
16-17/B. Roles and responsibilities	The Strategic Plan will be implemented by the UN wide system, The Strategic Plan is intended to enable UN system organizations, their secretariats and partners to work more coherently and collaboratively on forests with a shared strategic approach/toward a shared set of global goals/objectives/targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHEG may need to define more clearly which aspects of the SP that will be implemented by the UN wide system. • While it is important and there is agreement that UN system organizations should work more coherently and collaboratively to address issues relating to forests at all levels

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	<p>UN organizations and partners are encouraged to implement the Strategic Plan, consistent with their mandates, to help ensure forest policy coherence and program coordination and to more effectively respond to and support the efforts of Member States to implement SFM.</p>	<p>(global/regional), however, working towards a “shared” strategic approach/ “shared” set of global goals may not be realistic. Each Convention/Agreement has its own goals/purpose/objectives and mandates. Secretariats of these Conventions have to support the intergovernmental processes in accordance with the mandates agreed by their Convention bodies. Deciding on a shared set of goals or targets (deciding whether there should be shared goals and targets and if so, what these goals and targets will be) will have to be negotiated and adopted by the Parties to the relevant Conventions. It cannot be decided at the level of the Strategic Plan. It may be more efficient if UN organizations work towards a common understanding and ensure coherence in measures to achieve the goals of individual and global processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed text changes: <i>“UN organizations and partners are encouraged to implement the Strategic Plan, as appropriate and in accordance with their mandates, consistent with their mandates, to help ensure forest policy coherence and program coordination at the global level and to more effectively respond to and support the efforts of Member States to implement SFM.”</i>
<p>The 4POW 2017-2020</p>	<p>UNFF 12 will also consider a proposal from the Secretariat, developed in consultation with CPF members and C&I processes, on the cycle and format for national reporting (para 16.c).</p>	<p>The UNFCCC secretariat will be pleased to share its experiences and lessons learned from the measurement, reporting and verification process under the Convention (relating to national communications and greenhouse gas inventories by Parties) with the UNFF secretariat.</p>