

UN FORUM ON FORESTS / AD-HOC EXPERT GROUP ON STRATEGIC PLAN AND WORK PROGRAM

UNHQ 25-27 April, 2016

DRAFT STATEMENT

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Markku Aho on behalf of IFFA

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the important work ahead of us all to develop a strategic plan and a work programme for the UN forest process.

The outcome of the 11th Session of the UNFF is much appreciated for launching this process, including the fact that it takes on board the UNGA 67/290 resolution on participation of major groups and other stakeholders, *mutatis mutandis*, enabling them to, inter alia, submit documents and present contributions as well as to make recommendations and organize events and round tables in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman,

The description of the *private sector* in the UNFF documentation, as well as in the draft strategic plan under review, should benefit of some precision and revision. As it now reads, it is quite unbalanced as it does not specifically recognize the widest segment of the *private sector* in the agriculture and forest sector, namely the small and medium size forest and farm producers and their organizations.

One critical observation on the draft strategic plan is that it does not adequately recognize the role of major groups as active participants in the UNFF process. Consequently, the draft lacks concrete and measurable targets and indicators that would enable a time-bound assessment of progress and achievements, including the extent to which the major groups such as IFFA and their broad constituencies have been enabled to contribute to the process and the achievement of results.

The Tokyo expert panel report among others states that “*the potential role as well as incentives and added value of IAF-related activities for major groups and other stakeholders, including the private sector and industries, need to be clarified, operationalized and promoted so as to enhance their engagement and contribution to the achievement of the IAF objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and targets. Partnership and engagement with regional and subregional organizations may be an important tool to support national action and mobilize major groups and other stakeholders.*”

This observation in the expert panel report is correct.

UNFF will meet in odd-years on implementation and technical issues, and in even-years on policy issues. There will be two AHEG's in 2016 (April and September) leading to a meeting of the UNFF working group to be followed by a full session of UNFF in 2017 for completion and adoption of the strategic plan.

From the MG/IFFA perspective, analytical work on implementation and technical issues will work efficiently if a clear and realistic focus is applied and UNFF work is informed by verifiable data and information.

The strategic plan should enable realistic and concrete exchanges of information and knowledge on implementation of forest-related objectives, targets and programmes at country and regional levels in order for it to be based on verifiable data and measurable criteria and indicators. We are convinced that a country and regional focus will best serve the purpose of implementation- and technical-orientated dialogue, which is the thrust of UNFF sessions for odd- years. Consequently, policy-level work to be carried out in even-years could be well-informed for global conclusions and target-setting through a cumulative process leading towards 2030.

IFFA suggests that in 2017-2020, data and information should be applied to the sub-regional / regional level analysis and country focus. Summaries at the global level will also be informative but the emphasis should be on country/subregional/regional levels.

As conditions vary a lot between continents/ regions and countries, verification of actions should be done at the regional level and for countries before policy conclusions could meaningfully be arrived at. Major group stakeholders, in particular forest and farm producers and communities, could identify their own targets and indicators and make submissions at the UNFF AHEG in order to have them taken into account in the forthcoming continued preparatory work for the strategic plan and 4-year work programme.

Tentatively, and depending on what kind of targets finally will be included in the strategic plan, some possible targets/indicators pertinent to forest and farm producers' contribution towards SFM and the Sustainable Development Goals are outlined for further consideration at this AHEG and forthcoming meetings.

[to be circulated in writing]

- extent to, and manner in which forest and farm producers' organizations have been verifiably empowered to engage in defined implementation programs for SFM and forest conservation at country and regional levels
- extent to, and manner in which forest and farm producers' organizations have been able to formally establish themselves at the local and national levels in order to engage with governments on land, agriculture and forest policies as recognized entities
 - frequency of producer organizations access to/invitation to participate in specified policy issues with the designated Government Ministry/Department
- verifiable increase/decrease of access to financial services and capital for investment by small and medium scale producers and enterprises, and to knowledge/skills and other capacity building services
- extent of both female and male producers as beneficiaries of incentive schemes
- extent of improved access to markets for their sustainably produced products of forest and farm producers, and the impact this has had on livelihoods
- extent to, and manner in which forest and farm producers have engaged in renewable forest-based energy development
- extent to, and manner in which forest and farm producers have participated in and benefited from mechanisms and instruments on climate change adaptation and mitigation
- extent to, and manner in which forest and farm producers have engaged in measures for conservation of biological diversity in forests, and of water resources
- the extent to, and manner in which member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests engage in concrete endeavours with forest and farm producers, in accordance with their policies, strategies and work programmes
- extent to, and manner in which forest and farm producers have been able to contribute to the fulfillment of the mission and vision of the UNFF [as in the strategy]
- extent to which security of tenure for forest land and trees has been strengthened for forest and farm producers

More specifically,

- the existence of a national-level structure representing local/regional forest producers / organizations
- the existence of local-level / regional-level producer organizations (number; size of membership)
 - share of producer organizations with common lines of business / common financial management (number; size of membership)

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to continue working forward constructively together with everyone for a successful, result-oriented and verifiable strategic plan and work programme for the UN forest process.

Thank you for your attention.