

27 June 2018

“Forest-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies; lessons learned and success stories”

Event on Forests

(An initiative by the UNFF13 Bureau)

Co-Sponsored by Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Malaysia, Russian Federation

Sunday 8 July 2018, UNHQ, New York

Concept Note

Background

Forests cover 30 per cent of the Earth’s land area, nearly 4 billion hectares, and are essential to human well-being, sustainable development and the health of our planet. An estimated 1.6 billion people, 25 per cent of the global population, depend on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation.

Forests provide social, economic and environmental benefits that sustain human well-being and help to build the resilience of communities and individuals. They affect many facets of our daily lives, providing wide-ranging benefits which are particularly critical for the subsistence and livelihood of rural poor in developing countries.

2030 Agenda recognized the importance of forests to global sustainable development, particularly through SDG15 and SDG6. Forests are widely recognized as vital to the integrated achievement of all the other SDGs.

The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2017, provides a global framework for actions at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests. At the heart of the UNSPF are 6 Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and 26 associated targets to be achieved by 2030, in line with the 2030 Agenda. Member States may, on a voluntary basis, determine their contributions towards achieving the GFGs and targets through Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs).

The theme of the 2018 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF, 9-18 July, UNHQ, NY) is “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. Forests under SDG15 will be reviewed at this session of the HLPF, along with SDGs. At the 2018 HLPF, SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 117. Forty-eight countries will conduct Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the meeting, to share progress, experiences, lessons learned and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

In preparations for HLPF2018, the UN Forum on Forests at its thirteenth session (UNFF13, 7-11 May 2018, UNHQ, NY) will hold a policy dialogue on its thematic priorities in the context of the implementation of the UNSPF and finalize its substantive input to the 2018 HLPF, taking into account inputs provided to the Forum.

To further highlight the significance of forests for the achievement of the SDGs, and discuss avenues to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 15, and based on the initiative of the UNFF13 Bureau, a one-day event on forests entitled “Forest-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies; lessons learned and success stories” will be held on Sunday 8 July 2018 at the UN Headquarters, New York.

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Key Objectives

The overall purpose of the event is to stimulate partnerships and create long-lasting synergies among a wide range of stakeholders in accelerating the progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs. Key objectives of the event include:

- Promote greater recognition and significance of the implementation of the UNSPF, as an effective vehicle, to achieve forest-related SDGs and address related challenges;
- Explore ways and means to accelerate progress towards achievement of forest related SDGs, and the Global Forest Goals of the UNSPF by promoting success stories; and
- Foster enhanced cooperation, partnership, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest issues.

Building on the outcome of the CPF International Conference “Working Across Sectors to Halt Deforestation and Increase Forest Area: from Aspiration to Action” (20-22 February 2018, FAO HQ, Rome), and the outcome of the thirteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (7-11 May 2018, UNHQ, New York), the event will present a unique opportunity to raise the profile of forests and provide the momentum needed to accelerate the progress towards the achievement of SDGs and other related issues to be highlighted during the 2018 HLPF.

Format

The one-day event will include a panel discussion, followed by interactive dialogue among participating representatives at the HLPF, representatives of international organizations, forest stakeholders and other relevant partners. High-level officials, prominent figures and renown experts, from different sectors, will be invited as keynote speakers and panellists.

The proposed theme of the panel discussion is “Forest-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” in line with the 2018 theme of HLPF and ECOSOC.

Participation

The event shall be open to participation by all States Members of the United Nations and relevant stakeholders. The invitation could be circulated to the High-Level dignitaries at the ministerial level and considered to invite respective ministers responsible for HLPF.

Outcome

A concise summary of the discussions, highlighting lessons-learned and success stories on forest-based solutions for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, by the Chairperson will be transmitted to the HLPF. This summary will be also shared with the members of the UNFF.