UNFF 13 CHAIR'S SUMMARY FOR TRANSMITTAL TO HLPF 2018:

FOREST-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR ACCELERATING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SDGs AND TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES

1.   During the 13th session of the UNFF (7-11 May 2018), a Ministerial Roundtable explored and highlighted forest-based solutions for accelerating achievement of the interlinked SDGs under review by the HLPF2018, notably Goal 6 (water and sanitation), Goal 7 (energy), Goal 11 (human settlements), Goal 12 (production and consumption) and Goal 17 (means of implementation), as well as Goal 15 (life on land, including sustainably managing forests) which is a key foundation for the other Goals. An interactive plenary discussion also focused on the contribution of forests to transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. This Chair's Summary reflects those discussions and constitutes the input of the UN Forum on Forests to the HLPF2018.

A. Key Messages: Areas where political guidance by the HLPF 2018 is required

2.   Key messages emerging from the discussions at UNFF13 include:

   a. Forests are crucial for food, water, wood, energy, biodiversity, health and climate change. The Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved if forests are sustainably managed and forest landscapes are restored.
   b. Halting deforestation and restoring degraded forests by 2020 (SDG15.2) requires urgent action now. Best practices and tools are available but their application must be upscaled and progress accelerated.
   c. Fragmentation in global forest governance remains a challenge. Enhanced synergies are needed across the United Nations system and beyond the Collaborative Partnership for Forests.
   d. Implementing the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and achieving its Global Forest Goals and targets is an effective means to accelerate achievement of all SDGs.

B. Lessons learned, challenges and emerging issues related to accelerating achievement of the SDGs and transforming to sustainable and resilient societies

3.   Forests cover 30% of the Earth's land area (about 4 billion ha) and are the world's most productive land-based ecosystems and essential to life on earth. When sustainably managed, forests are resilient and renewable systems which provide essential goods and services to all people and contribute to and support resilient communities. Today, at least 1.6 billion people (25% of the global population) depend on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation.

4.   While global rates of deforestation have decreased in recent years, rates in some regions are still high. Many drivers of deforestation lie outside the forest sector and are often rooted in policies that favor land uses which produce higher and more rapid financial returns, including energy, mining, transportation and especially agriculture which is responsible for 80% of forest loss globally. Tackling these drivers is a major challenge for all sectors.

5.   Forests are also being degraded by unsustainable and illegal logging, dependency on fuelwood, mining, swiddon agriculture, invasive alien species, fragmentation and climate change, as well as by

unmanaged fire, storms, pests and disease. These disturbances seriously undermine forest health, resilience and productivity. In many countries, forest degradation is a more pressing challenge than deforestation.

6.   With world population projected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050, immediate solutions are needed to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation if the livelihoods of future populations are to be maintained and enhanced. Only by accelerating progress on SDG15 can we expect to make significant progress in achieving the other SDGs and transforming to sustainable and resilient societies

Forests and ecosystems services, including water

7.   Forests provide essential ecosystem services to rural and urban populations. They stabilize soils; reduce the risk of flooding, landslides and avalanches, droughts, dust storms, sandstorms and other disasters; prevent land degradation; cleanse the air; contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation; conserve biodiversity, providing habitat for 80% of all terrestrial species and serving as storehouses of genetic materials for the development of medicines and improved crop strains; and have cultural, spiritual and recreational values in many regions. Forests contribute to increased rainfall and flood mitigation, and through their roots and soil act as a filter, and store and supply freshwater. Forested watersheds supply 75% of the world's freshwater for farms, industry, homes and nature itself.

8.   Sustainably managed forests provide a broad range of wood and non-wood forest products and offer unique opportunities to promote sustainable natural resource use through their production, consumption and replanting. While the benefits to people of forest products, particularly wood products, are generally reflected in domestic and international markets, the values of water and other ecosystem services often are not. This results in the conversion of forests to what are thought to be more profitable land uses. Available data suggest that the value of the services provided by forest ecosystems globally may be as much as USD 16 trillion annually. The challenge is to fully capture the value of such services in markets and public policies at all levels.

Forests and energy

9.   Forests are a critical source of bioenergy and play an essential role in creating options for affordable and clean energy, particularly in developing countries. Energy from wood is the single most important source of renewable energy, representing 9% of the total primary energy supply worldwide, 27% of the supply in Africa, and about 80% of the energy derived globally from renewable sources. An estimated 2.4 billion people depend on forests for cooking and heating. Nearly 90% of all fuelwood and charcoal are consumed by the rural poor, particularly in Africa and Asia, where fuelwood collection is increasingly degrading forests and smoke from fires is affecting health, which in turn adds to human hardship. Since the demand for forest-based biofuels is projected to rise sharply with population growth, the challenge is to find renewable and sustainable wood-based solutions as well as wood energy alternatives to meet the basic needs of rural populations.

Sustainable consumption and production of forest products

10.   About 30% of forests are used primarily or partially for the production of industrial roundwood for domestic consumption and international trade. Forests provide the raw material for a wide variety of everyday products, including paper, packaging and construction materials, which are widely recyclable and contribute to a green economy, including the shelter of an estimated 1.3 billion people. Planted forests play an increasingly important role in balancing competing needs for forest goods and ecosystem services and contribute to alleviating the pressure on natural forests. Substitution of fossil resources by renewable wood materials, products and energy from sustainably managed forests are vital in the transition to a low carbon economy. While the area of forest under sustainable forest management is increasing as demonstrated through certification, unsustainable and illegal harvesting remains a significant challenge in many countries, sustainability assurance mechanisms and verification of legal and sustainable value chains of both forest and agricultural products is increasing in response to consumer demand in some markets. However, other markets continue to fuel unsustainable production, which is a major challenge.

Sustainable and resilient human settlements

11.   Urban forests and trees constitute a natural infrastructure that provides multi-faceted benefits to urban communities, including cooling micro-environments and reducing energy costs, supporting clean drinking water, reducing run off, providing wildlife habitat and enhancing real estate values and the quality of urban life. Today, more than half the world's people live in towns and cities. By 2050, this will increase to two-thirds. The challenge is to integrate forest areas and trees into urban landscapes as an essential aspect of urban planning and development and improve the resilience of rural-urban interfaces (e.g. by preventing/combatting wild fires which threaten human safety).

C. Forest-based solutions to accelerating achievement of the SDGs and transforming to sustainable and resilient societies

12.   Accelerating achievement of SDG15 and realizing the vital contribution of forests and the forest sector to other SDGs and sustainable and resilient societies requires urgent action now in the following closely interconnected areas.

1. Upscaling best practices and tools

The following best practices and tools are available but their application must be upscaled and progress accelerated by governments, the private sector and civil society:

a. Integrated landscape management approaches to land use planning and decision-making within and across jurisdictions, which look at forests, water and other land uses in an integrated, participatory and transparent way to maximize long-term benefits to communities.

b. Transboundary and regional integrated water management frameworks which look at upwind and downwind supply-side approaches to forest-water interactions to address areas of declining water supplies and restore and improve groundwater recharge.

c. Integrated forest and landscape restoration to regain ecological functions and livelihood opportunities across deforested and degraded landscapes.

d. Diversified agricultural systems which utilize agroforestry and silvo-cultural approaches to increase agricultural productivity and resilience, food security and local incomes, generate biomass energy

co-benefits and reduce land use <u>competition</u>.

e. Promotion and verification of <u>sustainable forest management</u> practices and legal and sustainable <u>value chains</u> in agriculture and forestry commodities.

a. Models for strengthening small-scale forest and farm producers, developing <u>alternative livelihoods</u> and sources of income for forest-dependent populations, and building capacity of local communities, women and youth to participate in sustainable commodity value chains.

f. Sound data and technical tools to calculate in financial terms the benefits of <u>urban forestry</u>.

2. Harnessing innovation and technology

The widespread use of innovative mechanisms and technologies will help accelerate achievement of the SDGs and transformation to sustainable and resilient societies. These include:

a. Innovative technologies for forest inventory, <u>land use monitoring</u> and mapping using remote sensing to identify and assess changing forest conditions and land use dynamics in real time.

b. Clean energy technologies which increase the share of renewable energy, improve the <u>energy efficiency of wood</u>, and provide alternatives to unsustainable fuelwood collection.

c. Improvements in <u>wood utilization</u> and processing technologies which improve product uses and allow for better rates of recovery, re-use and recycling.

d. Innovative <u>traceability</u> mechanisms, including timber tracking technologies, which enable transparency and accountability along commodity supply chain.

e. Emerging approaches to <u>natural capital accounting</u> to capture forest assets, including ecosystem service assets.

f. Delivering various forms <u>renewable energy</u> (solar, wind, biofuels and wood) in a complementary way to maximize outputs and reduce costs.

3. Transformational information, communication and education

Information systems can transform how people think and act and are powerful tools for accelerating forest-based solutions to today's global challenges, including through:

a. Using social media and other modern <u>communication</u> and outreach tools to raise awareness and increase the visibility at all levels and ages and across all sectors of the multiple economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits provided by trees and forests, including in <u>urban landscapes.</u>

b. Integrating forest and development issues into <u>formal education</u> curricula from primary school to advanced studies, with a focus on integrated and cross-sectoral approaches.

c. Expanding and re-tooling forest information and monitoring systems to generate socio-economic data about the <u>informal forest economy</u>, cash and non-cash, and the value of local ecosystem services and non-wood forest products.

d. <u>Educating consumers</u> so buying decisions reward sustainably sourced and produced agricultural and forest commodities.

e. Strengthening <u>training and extension</u> for forest owners, workers, communities, women and youth.

f. Generating and communicating <u>scientific information</u> to support evidenced-based policies and implementation frameworks, including on hydrologic cycles and forest-water interactions.

4. Mobilizing financial resources for sustainable forest management

Achieving the SDGs, including SDG15, is costly and requires strong and stable institutions. Mobilizing financial resources from all sources to build capacity, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, is essential to accelerating progress now and global success by 2030. A number of options are available in this regard, innovative financial instruments and catalytic public-private partnerships among them. These include:

a. Developing and implementing national <u>forest financing strategies</u> which maximize opportunities for blended finance (public and private, domestic and international).
b. Strengthening <u>domestic resource mobilization</u>, including through international support to developing countries and partnerships between developed and developing countries.
c. Developing <u>integrated approaches</u> to domestic forest finance mobilization.
d. Offering <u>guaranteed returns</u> on private sector investments in sustainable forest management, sustainable agriculture, and renewable forest-based biofuels.
e. Supplementing commercial bank capital available for sustainable land practices with <u>concessional finance</u> to extend loan repayment periods and reduce commercial risk.
f. "Greening" <u>public finance</u> by better aligning public investments in agriculture and forests and reallocating commodity subsidies to discourage forest conversion.
g. Leveraging <u>social capital</u> through partnerships with foundations and philanthropic organizations.
h. Setting up payments for ecosystem services (<u>PES) schemes</u> that generate predictable revenues from users and beneficiaries to directly compensate forest owners for conservation measures, and creating ecosystem markets and enabling environments for investment in PES.

5. Good governance

Good governance is essential to achieving all SDGs and mobilizing financial resources to build the capacity needed to apply best practices and harness innovation, technology and the power of information. Accelerated progress can be achieved when countries:

b. Recognize <u>tenure</u> rights and establish clear, secure and consistent tenure arrangements to forest land and resources for people, both men and women, and communities.
c. <u>Mainstream forest</u> considerations into development decisions, strategies, plans and priorities at all levels and create "forest smart" policies that optimize forest benefits and contributions across sectors and authorities and minimize impacts on forests.
d. Address cultural, socio-economic and institutional factors that may be obstacles to achieving <u>gender equality</u> and empowerment of women and girls at all levels in the forest, water and energy sectors.
e. Utilize participatory and inclusive <u>multi-stakeholder processes</u> and partnerships to inform decision-making, foster compromise solutions and empower civil society, especially women and youth, to act as agents of change for realizing the full value of forests.
f. Remove agricultural and other subsidies harmful to forests and create <u>positive incentives</u> for small, medium and large-scale producers to sustainably manage forests.
g. Establish clear and consistent <u>enabling conditions</u> for investments in sustainable commodity production and value chains and support corporate <u>zero deforestation</u> commitments.
h. <u>Enforce laws</u> governing and affecting the forest sector at all levels, including eliminating illegal logging and associated trade and wildlife trafficking.