

Concept Note

Workshop on Reporting on Global Forest Goals and targets of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2030

14-16 November 2018, FAO HQ, Rome

Background

The UN Forum on Forests Secretariat/DESA in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) is organising a three-day workshop on reporting on progress made towards the achievement of the Global Forests Goals (GFGs) and targets of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2030 (UNSPF).

At its 13th session in May 2019, the Forum adopted the format for voluntary national reporting and invited Members States to submit their voluntary national reports by mid-November 2019. The reporting format is structured around the GFGs and targets of the Strategic Plan and is largely qualitative in nature. In developing the format, due consideration was given to reduce reporting burdens and accordingly, quantitative information related to progress in the GFGs and targets will be retrieved from existing data sources.

Prior to UNFF13, the UNFF Secretariat conducted pilot testing of the reporting format and organized an expert meeting in Nairobi in November 2017. Both the pilot test and the Nairobi meeting stressed the need for further explanatory notes on reporting to the Forum, before the format was disseminated to Member States. These explanatory notes, along with briefing of national correspondents will ensure common understanding, notably, regarding the degree of detailed information required. Moreover, the explanatory notes will assist respondents in interpreting questions and terms in a consistent manner, explain/inform on the purpose of reporting and how the submitted information will be used.

As mandated by the Forum, the UNFF Secretariat continues to work to improve reporting on forests and to synchronise data collection with FAO's Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and other actors, to provide the best possible information on progress towards the achievement of the GFGs with the minimum reporting burden. When assessing progress, qualitative information submitted to UNFFS will be supplemented by quantitative data, to a large extent provided by FAO/FRA. The explanatory notes will include information on which indicators will be used to measure progress towards specific GFGs and which data will be derived, by the UNFFS, from FAO/FRA.

UNFF13 welcomed the progress in developing a global core set of forest-related indicators aligned with the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management (SFM) and acknowledged the value of this core set in assessing progress towards achieving the GFGs and targets and other internationally-agreed forest-related goals. The Forum encouraged member organizations of the CPF and other relevant bodies to apply the indicators which are currently ready for use and requested the Partnership to continue developing the remaining indicators. The Forum also requested the CPF to report on progress in this regard to the Forum at its 14th session.

The global core set of indicators contains a few indicators classified as "Tier 3"- which have been included in the set as they represent areas of strong policy commitment. However, these Tier 3 indicators still require further work on concepts and/or definitions. Among these indicators are Indicator 13: "Number of forest dependent people in extreme poverty" and Indicator 14: "Contribution of forests to food security".

Both Indicator 13 and 14 indicators are needed, *inter alia*, to support measuring progress toward Global Forest Goal 2: “Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people” in particular, targets 2.1 and 2.3 of the Goal.

Target 2.1 “Extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people is eradicated”. While “extreme poverty” is clearly defined in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, “forest dependent people” is not clearly defined. There are many different approaches to define forest dependent people, and data collection on the number of forest dependent-people and their degree of poverty is not in place in a harmonised way. Urgent work is needed to further develop these indicators to ensure availability of credible data to measure progress towards this target.

Target 2.3 “The contribution of forests and trees to food security is significantly increased”. While there has been extensive discussion on the contribution of forests and trees to food security e.g. in State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2016 and 2018 - it is not yet possible to monitor global progress towards this target, in an objective manner.

Purpose

The workshop will provide an opportunity to review and clarify terms used in the Global Forest Goals and targets and develop explanatory notes for national reporting to the Forum. In addition, the workshop will advance work on the development of Indicators 13 and 14 of the global core set of indicators and look into possible sources of forest related socio-economic data to report on progress towards achieving GFG2. The workshop will address the following issues:

- Explanatory notes, including, how to report on goals/targets with terms without internationally-agreed definitions;
- Reporting on Global Forest Goal 2;
- Types of data/information to submit and focus on while reporting to the Forum;
- Relation between information submitted to UNFF and to FAO/FRA;
- Types of data/information to be derived from other international data providers;
- Development of global core set of indicators 13 and 14.

Dates and venue

The meeting is scheduled to take place on 14 -16 November 2018, at FAO HQ in Rome (*tbc*).

Participation

The meeting is expected to gather national and international experts a) who work on forest inventory and/or data collection and reporting at the national level, b) have a good knowledge of forest related reporting requirements to UNFF, FAO and the Rio Conventions, c) are currently involved in UNFF project(s) related to monitoring and reporting on forests including Member States and CPF member organizations.

Expected outputs

The participants will have a better understanding of the reporting process and the relation between information submitted to UNFF and FAO/FRA data. Outputs will include:

- Agreed Explanatory notes for reporting to the UNFF
- Advanced work on Indicators 13 and 14 of the Global Core Set of indicators
- Possible sources/availability of forest-related data and agreed data-sharing arrangements.