

Submission of the European Union to the 14th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF14)

Good practices, success stories and lessons learned on implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and the Global Forest Goals

15-01-2019

Background:

The theme of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2019 is “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. The set of SDGs under review are SDG4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), [SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

In light of this, the technical discussions and exchange of experiences at UNFF14 will focus on the three thematic priorities i) Forests and climate change, ii) Forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment and iii) Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education, and inclusive institutions at all levels. The UNFF14 chair informed the UNFF member states on these three thematic priorities by his letter of 12 September 2018.

The UNFF member states are asked to share good practices, success stories and lessons learned on forests as a contribution from the UN Forum on Forests to the 2019 Session of the HLPF and the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (with reference to the Call for submission by the UNFF Secretariat via e-mail from 27 August 2018 and the letter by the Secretariat on behalf of Juwang Zhu from 30 July 2018.)

Responding to the above mentioned calls, the EU would like to provide the following submission to the 14th session of the Forum:

Main key messages:

RECOGNIZE that the sustainable management of all types of forests and trees outside forests can contribute to the achievement of all SDGs and the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests can contribute to the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNDERLINE the importance of stepping up actions to protect forest biodiversity and therefore developing an ambitious and realistic post-2020 global biodiversity framework, given the fact that biodiversity loss continues.

i) Forests and climate change (SDG 13 “Climate Action”)

Key messages to HLPF2019:

1. Sustainable forest management (SFM) through appropriate practices, including forest restoration and the maintaining and enhancing of forest biodiversity, contributes to the successful adaptation of forests to climate change and to strengthened forest health and resilience, including to forest fire, which is a prerequisite to maintain the mitigation potential of forests and other ecosystem services.

2. Halting conversion of forest into other land uses, ending forest degradation, and restoring peatlands would avoid accumulation in the atmosphere of around 30% of global anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. Additionally, by increasing CO₂ removals from the atmosphere, expanding forests is critical to reaching carbon balance by mid-century and limit global warming to 1.5°C or not exceeding 2°C. The long term climate goal of the Paris agreement cannot be met without the contribution of forests and SFM. This has also been highlighted in the Ministerial Declaration on the climate adopted during COP24, which calls for further action.

3. Sustainable sourced renewable materials offer a potential to substitute materials, fuels, while providing a long-term carbon storage in forest products.

4. It is important to strengthen the strategic role of urban and peri-urban forests and trees to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to make cities more resilient to climate change, while also contributing to reducing pollution and furthermore improving the social interaction, mental health and cultural wealth of citizens.

Key message to UNFF14:

1. Contributions from forests are essential to meet the Paris agreement goals on climate change.

2. Highlight the significance of forest ecosystems, including soils, as sinks of greenhouse gases and the possibilities of their further enhancement, in particular through afforestation.

3. Further strengthen the carbon storage and substitution effects of medium and long-lived harvested wood products and some of non-wood forest products, such as cork.

4. Highlight the role of forest-based biomass, including residues, from forestry and wood-processing industries, as alternative energy sources.

5. Sound scientific knowledge will help to optimise the role of forest ecosystems in climate change adaptation and mitigation and in halting the loss of biodiversity.

6. Encourage the member organisations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to strengthen their cooperation to support the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for forests.

7. Fighting illegal logging and related trade and halting deforestation and forest degradation are essential components of mitigating climate change.

ii) Forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment (SDG 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth”)

Key messages for HLPF2019:

1. To stress the economic importance of forests and wood and non-wood forest products, along the value chains contributing to the sustainable development of rural, peri-urban and urban areas.

2. To upscale the potential of forests for sustainable economic growth and employment - through afforestation, restoration and rehabilitation- as well as of agroforestry, to cope with the increasing demands on forests.

3. To highlight that the forest-based sector provides jobs and generates income, not only in rural areas but also in urban and peri-urban zones. However adequate education and training are required, focused on skills and guaranteeing economic livelihoods, work safety, and sustainable use of natural resources.

4. There is need to decouple economic development from deforestation and forest

degradation.

Key messages for UNFF14:

1. The concept of SFM integrates economic, social and environmental aspects.
2. Multifunctional, sustainable forest management, including sustainable management of forest soils, can contribute to a wide range of ecosystem services.
3. Sustainably produced forest-based materials and products form an important contribution to a circular bioeconomy.
4. The potential of forests for sustainable economic growth and employment, taking into account the fact that millions of people depend on food, fodder and materials from forests for their livelihoods and income.

iii) Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education, and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDGs 4 “Quality Education”, 10 “Reduced Inequalities”, 16 “Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions”)

Key messages for HLPF2019:

1. To achieve good forest governance depends on effective institutions, in particular for law enforcement and knowledge management.
2. The specific knowledge of women on the many benefits that forests provide -as well as gender equality in management positions in the forest-based sector- needs to be better reflected in forest related policies, strategies, frameworks and programmes. The first step is to better understand the issues is to get, gender-disaggregated and socioeconomic data.
3. Forest related education should be an integral part of general school education and curricula to ensure awareness and responsibility of current and future generations. Involvement of youth should be thus further promoted in the activities.
4. Technical and academic forest education needs to be maintained and enhanced at national and global levels to ensure the necessary knowledge base for implementing national and global forest-related development goals.

Key messages for UNFF14:

1. Clear land tenure and property rights are important tools for guaranteeing transformational development, in particular in relation to peace, justice, equity and equality.
2. Systematic generation and dissemination of knowledge on SFM (research, development, innovation, education, training, advisory, life-long learning and training) is an integral component of forest governance.
3. Developing and applying equitable educating-to-nature outdoor programmes, such as forest pedagogy, to foster holistic understanding of forests, their ecosystem services and their sustainable management among children and the wider public.
4. Broad participation of stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, local communities and small landowners and producers, in forest related policy formulation and implementation (e.g. through national forest programmes) is essential for making SFM operational on the ground.
5. Forest and agroforestry-based and sustainably sourced income contributes to resilience of societies in rural areas.

Annex 1 Good practices and success stories in relation to achieving the Global Forest Goals and the SDGs in the EU¹.

<u>Good practices in the EU</u>	Short description/website	Global Forest Goals (GFGs) Contribution	SDGs contribution
<p><i>Land use, land use change and forestry Regulation for 2021 to 2030 (EU LULUCF Regulation)</i></p>	<p>Under the LULUCF Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2018/841), EU Member States have to ensure that greenhouse gas emissions from land use, land use change <i>and</i> forestry are offset by at least an equivalent removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere (“no debit” rule) through action in the sector, in the period 2021 to 2030.</p> <p>The new accounting rules provide Member States with a framework to incentivise more climate-friendly land use, without imposing new restrictions or red tape on individual actors. This will help farmers to develop climate-smart agriculture practices and support foresters through greater visibility for the climate benefits of <i>sustainable forest management and wood products</i>, which can store carbon sequestered from the atmosphere and substitute for emission-intensive materials.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/clima/lulucf_en</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG3</p>	<p>SDG 13, SDG 15</p>

¹ While the Treaty on the Functioning the EU makes no reference to specific provisions for an EU forest policy, the EU has a long history of contributing through its policies and different instruments (Regulations, Directives, Strategies etc.)- to implementing sustainable forest management and to Member States’ forest-related decisions.

<p><i>Land use, land use change and forestry Decision for 2014 to 2020 (EU LULUCF Decision)</i></p>	<p>The LULUCF Decision (Decision No 523/2013/EU) sets out accounting rules applicable to emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from LULUCF activities, following the rules under the Kyoto Protocol second commitment period. The Decision covers Afforestation/Reforestation, Deforestation and Forest Management, as well as Cropland Management and Grazing Land Management. Moreover, Member States must also submit reports on their ongoing and planned agricultural and forestry policies deemed to have a mitigation impact in the LULUCF sector; the analysis of these reports gives an overview of forest-related policies with climate mitigation potential in the European Union.</p> <p>https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013D0529&from=EN</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG3</p>	<p>SDG 13 ,SDG 15</p>
<p><i>EU support for REDD+ activities</i></p>	<p>The European Union and its Member States are among the main sponsors of REDD+, providing between 30% and 35% of the global finance related to REDD+.</p> <p>Further information at: http://www.euredd.efi.int/initiatives and https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6f8dea1e-b6fe-11e8-99eehttps://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6f8dea1e-b6fe-11e8-99ee-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-8064504601aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-80645046</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG3, GFG4, GFG5, GFG6</p>	<p>SDG 13, SDG15</p>
<p><i>Recast of the EU Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (Renewable Energy Directive) for the period after 2020</i></p>	<p>The new EU directive, inter alia, sets a new, binding, renewable energy target for the EU for 2030 of 32% and reinforces the EU sustainability criteria for bioenergy, including forest biomass.</p>	<p>GFG1</p>	<p>SDG 7, SGD12, SDG 13</p>

<p>The EU Forest Strategy</p>	<p>The EU Forest Strategy sets the EU framework to coordinate and ensure coherence in forest related policies and enhance the contribution of forests and the forest-based sector to EU objectives. Sustainable forest management (SFM), the multifunctional role of forests, resource efficiency and global forest responsibility are its guiding principles.</p> <p>It sets two key objectives for 2020: (i) ensuring that all forests in the EU are managed according to SFM principles, and (ii) strengthening the EU's contribution to promoting SFM and reducing deforestation at global level. The Report on the progress in the implementation of the strategy highlights that the EU forest strategy is achieving its aims of encouraging sustainable forest management both in the EU and globally.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/strategy_en</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG2, GFG3,</p>	<p>SDG1, SDG7, SDG8, SDG11, SDG12, SDG13, SDG14, SDG15</p>
<p>The EU Nature Directives (Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive) and Directive on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive))</p>	<p>The Nature Directives aim to ensure healthy nature in the European Union by providing a framework to protect species and natural habitats of conservation interest. The Directives establish the largest coordinated network of biodiversity-rich protected areas in the world, called Natura 2000, which covers 18 % of the land area and 6 % of the sea area of the EU. They protect about 1 500 animal and plant species and some 200 rare habitat types inside and outside these protected areas and combine nature protection with sustainable land use and economic activity.</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/directives_en.htm</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG3</p>	<p>SDG13, SDG15</p>
<p>The EU Biodiversity Strategy</p>	<p>The EU Biodiversity Strategy aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU and help stop global biodiversity loss by 2020.</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/strategy/index_en.htm</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG3</p>	<p>SDG13, SDG15</p>

<i>The EU Action Plan for nature, people and the economy</i>	The EU Action Plan aims to rapidly improve practical implementation of the Nature Directives and accelerate progress towards the EU 2020 goal of halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, including in relation to climate resilience and mitigation. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/action_plan/index_en.htm	GFG1, GFG3	SDG13, SDG15
<i>EU Strategy on Green Infrastructure</i>	On 6 May 2013, the Commission adopted an EU-wide strategy promoting investments in green infrastructure, to restore the health of ecosystems, ensure that natural areas remain connected together, and allow species to thrive across their entire natural habitat, so that nature keeps on delivering its many benefits to us. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/strategy/index_en.htm	tbs	SDG15
<i>The EU Soil Thematic Strategy</i>	The EU Soil Thematic Strategy aims to promote soil sustainable management, ensure soil protection (including forest soil protection) and the good functioning of soil.		SDG15 SDG2
<i>The EU Rural Development Policy, 2014-2020</i>	The EU's rural development policy helps the rural areas of the EU to meet the wide range of economic, environmental and social challenges of the 21st century. The EU Member States draw up their rural development programmes based on the needs of their territories. The EU Rural Development policy continues to be the main source of support for the protection and the sustainable management of EU forests, committing an amount of 8.2 billion EUR (cofunded by the EU and its Member States) of public expenditure in period 2014-2020. https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020_en	GFG1, GFG2, GFG3, GFG4, GFG5	SDG1, SDG7, SDG8, SDG9, SDG10, SDG12, SDG13, SDG14, SDG15

<p>The updated Bioeconomy Strategy</p>	<p>The updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy aims to accelerate the deployment of a sustainable European bioeconomy so as to maximise its contribution towards the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Paris Agreement.</p> <p>It proposes a three-tiered action plan to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen and scale up the bio-based sectors, unlock investments and markets 2. Deploy local bioeconomies rapidly across the whole of Europe 3. Understand the ecological boundaries of the bioeconomy <p>https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=strategy</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG2, GFG3, GFG4, GFG5</p>	<p>SDG1, SDG7, SDG8, SDG9, SDG10, SDG11, SDG12, SDG13, SDG14, SDG15</p>
<p>The EU Official Development Assistance (ODA)</p>	<p>The EU and its Members States have been consistently in the lead of global efforts on development financing. Since 2015, year of the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, EU collective aid has grown by €7.8 billion that is 12%, while the ODA/GNI ratio grew by 6%, underpinning the EU's and Member States' sustained efforts to promote prosperity, peace, and sustainable development worldwide. The European Union and its Member States continue to be the world's leading provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA) with an overall amount of €75.7 billion in 2017.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news-and-events/eu-remains-worlds-leading-donor https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news-and-events/eu-remains-worlds-leading-donor-development-assistance-eu757-billion-2017 en</p>	<p>All GFGs</p>	<p>All SDGs</p>

<p>The EU FLEGT Action Plan</p>	<p>The EU FLEGT Action Plan sets out a range of measures in timber producer and consumer countries to facilitate trade in legal timber and eliminate illegal timber trading with the EU.</p> <p>Two policy measures are at the core of the FLEGT Action Plan: the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) and the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR):</p> <p>A VPA is a legally binding trade agreement between a timber-producing country and the EU to work together to stop illegal logging. The goal of a VPA is to ensure that all timber imported to the EU from the timber-producing country has been produced legally according to the laws of that country.</p> <p>The EUTR counters the trade in illegally harvested timber and timber products through three key obligations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It prohibits the placing on the market of illegally harvested timber (i.e. timber harvested in contravention of the applicable legislation in the county of harvest) or timber products derived from such timber; 2. It requires operators placing timber and timber products on the EU market for the first time to exercise 'due diligence', i.e. to undertake a risk management exercise to ensure that only legally harvested timber (timber harvested in accordance with the applicable legislation in the county of harvest) or timber products derived from such timber are placed on the EU market; 3. It requires traders of timber and timber products already placed on the EU market to keep records of their suppliers and customers ('obligation of traceability'). <p>http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/illegal_logging.htm https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/environment/sustainable-forestry/flegt_en http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber_regulation.htm</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG2, GFG3, GFG5, GFG6</p>	<p>SDG8, SDG12, SDG13, SDG15, SDG16</p>
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<p>Circular Economy Action Plan - Guidance on cascading use of biomass with good practice examples on woody biomass</p>	<p>This non-binding guidance on cascading use of woody biomass lays out principles of cascading use of woody biomass and identifies a series of good practices thus addressing the commitment of the Circular Economy Action Plan to 'promote efficient use of bio-based resources through dissemination of best practices on the cascading use of biomass and support for innovation in the bio-economy'.</p> <p>https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9b823034-ebad-11e8-b690-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-80148793b690-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-80148793</p>	<p>GFG1, GFG2, GFG3</p>	<p>SDG8, SDG9, SDG12, SDG15</p>
<p>EU Low-Carbon Strategy for 2050</p>	<p>On 28 November 2018, the Commission presented its strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy by 2050. The strategy recognizes that EU forests will act as essential carbon sinks and will play a central role in providing sustainable biomass.</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2050_en</p>	<p>tbs</p>	<p>tbs</p>