

Modalities for the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests at its 16th session

I. Introduction

1. In light of the foreseen limitations, particularly with respect to international travels, and with a view to ensuring broad-based participation of representatives from capitals and stakeholders, with a focus on the health and safety of the delegates and secretariat staff, as well as the successful conclusion of the work of the Forum, the Bureau recommends that UNFF16 conduct its work through virtual (informal) meetings and by correspondence.
2. These arrangements would only be applied as a temporary measure during the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic at the 16th session of the UNFF and would not create a precedent for the work of the Forum.

II. Virtual (informal) meetings

3. The deliberations of the Forum at its 16th session, including technical discussions on its thematic priorities, high-level roundtable, and presentations of documentation and subsequent general discussions, taking place under the relevant agenda items, will be held through virtual informal meetings. The modalities of the discussions would remain consistent with the practice of the Forum, including in relation to the composition of presenters, requests for the floor and time limits. The session will be convened in twice daily two-hour long virtual meetings. In this regard, as in the past, interventions will be limited to 5 minutes for national statements and 7 minutes for statements on behalf of a group of States. Participants would also have the opportunity to submit their remarks, including longer versions of their statements, to be circulated in writing through the e-statements portal.
4. The virtual meetings will have interpretation in six official UN languages. These meetings will be broadcasted on UN Web TV and announced in the UN Journal. The duration of virtual meetings requiring remote simultaneous interpretation is two hours, as opposed to the standard three hours for in-person meetings, due to the increased challenges of providing remote simultaneous interpretation in a virtual setting.

III. UNFF16 Outcomes

5. In accordance with Annex I of ECOSOC resolution 2020/14, UNFF16 will be a technical session. The outcome of UNFF16 will be a concise Chair's summary of the discussions that may include proposals for consideration at the Forum's policy session in 2022. The Chair's summary will also include a summary of discussions of the high-level round table. UNFF16 is expected to consider and adopt the proposed programme of work of the Forum for 2022-2024, as contained in Annex II of ECOSOC resolution 2020/14 by means of a resolution. Consultations on this resolution will be conducted virtually and/or through correspondence in advance of UNFF16. The Bureau will inform Members of the Forum on such consultations in due course. Apart from adoption of the programme of work of the Forum for 2022-2024, UNFF16 is not expected to take any other substantive decision.

6. The deliberations of the Forum during the virtual (informal) meetings and the Chair's summary would be reflected in the annexes of the official report of the Forum.

IV. Decision making

7. The Forum would proceed to take decisions on draft proposals by consensus through a silence procedure. Taking decisions through silence procedure would follow the process as described in ECOSOC decision 2020/205.
8. Statements in explanation of position would be circulated on the e-deleGATE platform and by the UNFF Secretariat and would also be reflected in an annex of the official report of the Forum.

Note: Proposals would be circulated by the Chair through the UNFF module in the e-deleGATE portal and placed under a 72-hour silence procedure. The communication circulating the proposal will include the contact information to be used by a delegation to break the silence, as well as the contact details to provide explanations of position. The Chair would send a letter following the conclusion of the procedure to inform the membership on the outcome as well as to circulate any explanations of position received by that time.

V. Organization of work

9. UNFF16 will be held within its original scheduled dates of 26 to 30 April 2020 and will cover the items mandated for the session. The Bureau will review, adjust and agree on the organization of work of UNFF16, according to the foreseen modifications described above.
10. The final modalities, including the organization of work of UNFF16 would be circulated to Members of the Forum. The modalities will be approved by an organizational decision to be adopted by silence procedure, as soon as possible before the session, taking into account any decisions that may be taken by ECOSOC with respect to the work of its subsidiary bodies.

VI. Side events

11. Information on the arrangements for organization of the side events during UNFF16 will be posted on the UNFF website at the following link in due course: [United Nations Forum on Forests » UNFF Side Events](#)