



**CONCEPT NOTE | Panel Discussions**

**Items 3 (a) Thematic priorities for 2021-2022 in support of the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests & 3 (d) Interlinkages between the Global Forest Goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by 2021 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the work towards post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and other international forest-related developments**

**Sixteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests**

**Tuesday 27 April 2021, 9:00-11:00 a.m. EDT**

**I. Background**

The Forum at its sixteenth session (UNFF16) will hold a technical session that includes an interactive exchange of experiences and lessons learned on thematic priorities among Members of the Forum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and its member organizations, regional and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups and other relevant stakeholders. The interactive exchange will include consideration of the science-policy interface and cross-sectoral and emerging issues, and will take into account youth, gender and regions perspectives.

For the biennium 2021-2022, the Bureau of the Forum decided to focus on Global Forest Goal (GFG)1 and GFG2 as the substantive goals, along with GFG4, 5 and 6 as cross-cutting goals. In this respect, the Bureau decided the thematic priorities for UNFF16 and UNFF17 to be: (i) reversing the loss of forest cover (GFG1); (ii) enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits (GFG 2); and (iii) mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence, for sustainable forest management (GFG 4, 5 and 6)<sup>1</sup>. As part of this panel, UNFF16 will hold technical discussions on its thematic priorities (item 3a).

In addition, UNFF16 will discuss item 3(d) on the Interlinkages between the GFGs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review by 2021 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), as well as the work towards post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and other international forest-related developments<sup>2</sup>. As in the past, a summary of the discussions of the Forum on the interlinkages of the GFGs and the SDGs under review of the HLPF 2021 will be included in Chair's summary of UNFF16 technical discussions for transmission to the ECOSOC President. The UNFF16 Bureau's input will also serve as a basis for this part of the discussions<sup>3</sup>.

**II. Context of the Discussions**

Members of the Forum have advanced implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) through various means. These measures are contained in their respective Voluntary National Contributions and voluntary national reports to the Forum<sup>4</sup>. A brief overview of the current status of progress made towards the achievement of the thematic priorities of UNFF16, namely GFG1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 is contained in the Note by the Secretariat in document E/CN.18/2021/2<sup>5</sup>. While the availability of data across all countries and all targets remains a challenge, the initial analysis of the activities carried out and reported by countries indicates that countries are taking action to advance implementation of the UNSPF, with some progress regarding GFG1, 2, 4, 5 and 6. Despite some progress and the breadth of actions and initiatives that the UNSPF has inspired, the shift to generate the transformation required to meet the GFGs and their targets by 2030 is not yet advancing at the scale and speed required. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic could imperil the gains made towards the GFGs and targets. Despite the challenges, the present crisis also offers an unprecedented opportunity to integrate forest-based actions in

<sup>1</sup> Further information about UNFF16-UNFF17 thematic priorities is available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/UNFF16-17-Thematic-Priorities-rev.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> For additional information on the interlinkages between the thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2021-2022, the GFGs, the SDGs and international forest related developments, please see the Note by the Secretariat, contained in document E/CN.18/2021/2 at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> The UNFF16 Bureau's input to the 2021 HLPF is available on the Forum website at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Voluntary National Contributions are available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vnccs/index.html>; National reports to UNFF15 is available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/unff15/index.html>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>



various response measures and recovery efforts, thereby reducing the risk of future outbreaks and accelerating the progress towards the achievement of the thematic priorities.

This year, the United Nations launches its Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. Member States are also expected to finalize the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and discuss the follow up steps on climate change. The HLPF also meets in July 2021 and reviews SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 in depth. These provide excellent opportunities for Member States and all relevant partners to build the momentum and take actions to accelerate the progress towards the achievement of all GFGs, including GFG1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, as well as the ways and means to promote synergy among various forest-related global processes.

### **III. Objectives and modalities of the Panel**

The main objectives of the panel discussions are to identify:

- i) fundamental transformations/actions that are needed to be undertaken by countries, organizations and stakeholders to ensure achievement of the UNFF16 thematic priorities by 2030, namely; GFG1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, and
- ii) ways and means to promote synergy among various forest-related processes, taking into account the interlinkages of the UNFF16 thematic priorities with the SDGs under review of the 2021 HLPF, and other major forest related developments.

After the initial address by the panelists, the moderator will open the floor for interactive discussion on the above-mentioned objectives. There will be no pre-determined list of speakers for the interactive discussions. Delegations who wish to speak should request the floor using a dedicated speaker request form. The link to the form will be circulated in advance of the panel and will be made available in the chat board of the virtual platform.

The form will only be activated during the panel when the moderator opens the floor for questions or comments. The maximum duration of each intervention is five minutes for national delegations and 7 minutes for delegations, speaking on behalf of a group. In the event of high number of requests for the floor, the Chair may further limit the duration of the interventions. The time limit will be strictly enforced. Due to the interactive nature of the discussions, prepared statements are strongly discouraged. Interested delegations, if they so wish, could submit their prepared statements to the Secretariat, in advance of the session, for posting on the UNFF website. Key points and proposals on the way forward from the panel discussion will be reflected in the Chair's summary of discussions, including input to the 2021 session of the HLPF.

### **IV. Composition of the Panel**

Moderator: Mr. Tomasz Markiewicz, UNFF16 Vice-Chair

Panellists:

1. Ms. Ivonne Higuero, Secretary General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (seven minutes)
2. Mr. Gustavo Fonseca, Director of Programmes, Global Environment Facility (GEF) (seven minutes)
3. Ms. Sheam Satkuru, Director of Operations, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) (seven minutes)

### **Panel Coordinator**

For further information, please contact Mr. Ryo Nakamura ([nakamura@un.org](mailto:nakamura@un.org)) at the UNFF Secretariat.