

CONCEPT NOTE

Strengthening the engagement of the United Nations Forum on Forests with Regional Partners and Major Groups and other stakeholders

New York, 16-17 December 2021 (virtual)

16 December 2021 - 8:00am-11:00am EST

17 December 2021 - 8:00am-10:00am EST

Background and Rationale

The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030¹ provides a reference point for ambitious transformational actions by all actors, including regional and subregional organizations and processes and major groups and other stakeholders, to achieve its Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and targets. Accordingly, one of the core functions of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is to strengthen high level political engagement, with the participation of major groups and other stakeholders in support of sustainable forest management.

The Forum's 17th session (UNFF17) will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 9-13 May 2021. UNFF17's draft agenda item 3 (a) (v) includes, among the issues to be debated under the framework of the implementation of UNSPF, the "interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2022 and international forest-related developments"².

In this regard, the Bureau of the sixteenth session of the Forum decided that GFGs 1 and 2, together with three cross-cutting goals (namely, goals 4, 5 and 6), should be the main thematic priorities for the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum. Accordingly, the thematic priorities for UNFF17 are: (a) reversing the loss of forest cover; (b) enhancing forest-based economic, social, and environmental benefits; and (c) 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.

The 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will undertake an in-depth review³ of SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 14 on life below water, SDG 15 on life on land, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The HLPF 2022 will also consider the impacts

¹ E/RES/2017/4- United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030

² [N2109912.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

³ [High-level Political Forum ... Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform \(un.org\)](#)

of the COVID-19 pandemic across all SDGs and the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the Goals.

Moreover, in accordance with the general guidance provided in annex I to Economic and Social Council resolution 2020/14 of 17 July 2020, the proposals contained in the Chair's summary of the discussions of the sixteenth session of the Forum will be submitted for consideration by UNFF17. Among the proposals is "(g) Emerging issues: impact of COVID-19 on forests and the forest sector".⁴ The UNFF Secretariat is currently conducting a global assessment of the challenges faced by countries, and the strategies, recovery measures and best practices implemented for reducing the impact of COVID-19 on forests and the forest sector. The assessment will identify and elaborate on:

- a. the challenges faced by countries in addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector;
- b. the strategies and recovery measures being adopted by countries in combatting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector; and
- c. best practices adopted by countries and other stakeholders for reducing the impact of COVID-19 on forests and the forest sector.

Objective

The main objective of the meeting is to mobilize and strengthen engagement with major groups, regional and subregional partners, and other stakeholders in support of the implementation of the UNSPF, and to prepare for the forthcoming UNFF17 session. The main issues raised by the stakeholders will be forwarded to UNFF17 for consideration.

Format

The meeting will have a facilitator and be comprised of two main presentations: the linkages between the GFGs and targets and the SDGs under review by HLPF 2022, as well as international forest-related developments; and the current state of the COVID-19 impact assessment. A highly interactive discussion with participants on both issues will be encouraged and facilitated, with the support of the UNFF secretariat.

Outcome

The meeting will result in a summary of interactive discussions, including views expressed by the participants and their findings and conclusions. It will serve as an input to the Note by the UNFF secretariat to UNFF17.

⁴ [N2112062.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

Participants

It is expected that UNFF regional/subregional partners, major groups, as well as other stakeholders, will attend the virtual meeting.

Language

The meeting will be conducted in English.