



UNFF17 High Level Round Table on:

**UNFF response to, role in, and expectations
from forest-related multilateral developments**

9 May 2022, 9:00 - 11:00am EDT

Conference Room 4, UNHQ, New York/Hybrid format

Concept Note

I. Introduction

1. Following the decision of the Bureau of the seventeenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF17) a High-Level Round Table (HLRT) on “UNFF response to, role in, and expectations from forest-related multilateral developments” will be organized during the opening meeting of UNFF17 on 9 May 2022. The High-Level Roundtable will be on items 3 and 6 of the provisional agenda of UNFF17.

II. Context for the discussions during the High-Level Roundtable

2. As highlighted in the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), 31 per cent of the Earth’s land area is covered by forests. When forests are healthy and well managed, they hold the potential to address many of the most pressing global crises.
3. Forest ecosystems are critical to the ecological integrity of our planet and the sustainable future of people everywhere. They are home to an estimated 80 per cent of all terrestrial species and contribute substantially to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to the conservation of biodiversity. An estimated 1.6 billion people, or 25 per cent of the global population, depend on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment, and income generation. Forests provide us with timber, food, fuel, fodder, non-wood products and shelter, and contribute to soil and water conservation and clean air. During the COVID-19 pandemic, forests and the forest sector have provided essential services that support the health and wellbeing of people.
4. Given their contributions to addressing global pressing challenges, forests have been high on the agenda of many key multilateral conferences and events—but we need coherence. The strategy for the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration,¹ identifies forests as one of the key ecosystems to be restored and considers target 1.1 of Global Forest Goal 1² of the UNSPF 2030 to be relevant to the Decade and its objectives.
5. The Glasgow Climate Pact³ references to forests and recognizes the important role of protecting, conserving, and restoring forests and other ecosystems in delivering benefits for climate adaptation and mitigation, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards. But it was the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use, adopted by over 141 countries during the World Leaders Summit, with ambitious commitments that may advance collaborative actions to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.⁴

¹ The UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration was launched in June 2021. The strategy for the Decade is available at: <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/strategy>.

² Target 1.1 of GFG1 is set to increase forest area by 3 per cent globally by 2030.

³ This Pact was adopted during COP26 of UNFCCC in November 2021 in Glasgow, United Kingdom. More information is available at: <https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/COP26-Presidency-Outcomes-The-Climate-Pact.pdf>

⁴ See <https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use/>

6. The first draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework⁵ does not contain reference to forests but encompasses them under the terms such as "nature", "natural ecosystems" and "natural systems" in its range of 2030 and 2050 visions, goals, missions, milestones, and action targets.
7. The Fifteenth World Forestry Congress⁶ will focus on defining the role of forests in the global developmental agenda and other major forest agreements and discuss key measures that must be put in place as the forest sector adjusts to the new reality and aims to help 'build back better'.
8. The SDG15, which contains several forest-related targets, will be also reviewed during the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) in July 2022. The HLPF will consider the different impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all Sustainable Development Goals and discuss the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the Goals.
9. As the responsible body for implementation of the UNSPF 20230, and as the only universal body dealing with all issues related to forests within the UN system, the UN Forum on Forests, is best positioned to review all these developments in a holistic manner and discuss the future course of actions that it can take.

III. Objective of the High-Level Round Table

10. The HLRT will provide an opportunity for senior officials from governments, United Nations entities and other international organizations, as well as representatives from the private sector, and civil society, including youth and women to discuss the Forum's response to major forest-related multilateral developments, as well as its role and expectations related to these developments.

IV. Modalities of the High-Level Round Table

11. The Chair of UNFF17 will preside over the approximately 1 hour and 40-minute HLRT. In opening the HLRT, the following senior officials are expected to make opening remarks:
 - H.E. Collen Vixen Kelapile, President of the UN Economic and Social Council
 - H.E. Abdulla Shahid, President of the UN General Assembly
 - Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs and Acting Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology (speaking on behalf of the UN Secretary-General)
12. Following the opening segment, a high-level panel discussion will be held which will be moderated by the Director of UNFFS. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to respond to a question posed by the Moderator. The following senior officials are expected to be part of the panel:
 - Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
 - Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity
 - Ms. Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President, International Fund for Agricultural Development
 - Mr. Andrew Steer, President and Chief Executive Officer, Bezos Earth Fund
 - Ms. Anne Nuorgam, Chair, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
 - Ms. María Alexandra Moreira López, Secretary-General, Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
 - Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth

⁵ The second part of COP15 of CBD is scheduled to be held later in 2022 in Kunming, China where parties are expected to finalize and adopt the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

⁶ The Congress will be held from 2-6 May 2022 in Seoul, the Republic of Korea.

13. After the panel discussion, the Chair will open the floor for the interactive discussion segment of the HLRT. Participants are invited to focus their remarks on their future actions and the potential role of the Forum, from now until 2030, to advance synergetic implementation of the commitments emanating from these global developments, in particular, with regard to turning the tide on deforestation, mobilizing financing for forests, and leveraging partnerships and strengthening stakeholder engagement.
14. There will be no pre-determined list of speakers for the interactive discussions. The HLRT is open to participation of Members of the Forum, observers, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, UNFF regional and sub-regional partners, and major groups representatives.
15. Delegations joining in-person who wish to speak during the interactive discussion should request the floor by pressing their microphone button. Delegations joining virtually should request the floor using a dedicated speaker request form through the link that will be made available in the chat board of the virtual platform. The online speaker form will only be activated during the HLRT when the Chair opens the floor for questions or comments. The maximum duration of each intervention is three minutes, which will be strictly enforced.
16. 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 UNFF17 website.
17. Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations will make closing remarks after the interactive discussion segment is concluded. There will be no negotiated outcome for the discussions of the HLRT. The Chair will prepare a concise summary of the key points of the High-Level Round Table, which will be included in the report of UNFF17.

V. Contact persons

18. For all inquiries related to the HLRT, please contact Ms. Mita Sen at: sen@un.org, and Mr. Ryo Nakamura at: nakamura@un.org.