

United Nations Forum on Forests
Minutes of the First Meeting of UNFF18 Bureau (Virtual)
29 June 2022 (9:00–10:00 am, NY Time)

Participation

Bureau Members: Ambassador Zéphyrin Maniratanga (Burundi), Mr. Javad Momeni (Iran), Mr. Ismail Belen (Türkiye)

UNFF Secretariat: Ms. Juliette Biao, Mr. Hossein Moeini Meybodi, Ms. Afsa Kemitale-Rothschild

UNFF Secretary: Mr. Ziad Mahmassani

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

- 1. The Bureau decided that the thematic priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19 would be Global Forest Goal (GFG)2 and GFG 3, along with three cross cutting GFGs (GFG4, GFG5 and GFG6¹).**

¹**GFG 1:** Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change.

GFG2: Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.

GFG3: Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

GFG4: Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships

GFG5: Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the UN forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

GFG6: Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders

Provisional Agenda
First Meeting of the UNFF18 Bureau
29 June 2022

- 1. Adoption of the provisional agenda**
- 2. Introduction of members of the Bureau, the substantive and technical secretariats, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities**
- 3. Preparations for UNFF18:**
 - a. Date, venue, and provisional agenda of UNFF18**
 - b. Thematic priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19**
 - c. Steps in preparations for UNFF18**
- 4. Update on the implementation of UNFF17 resolution**
- 5. Update on the outcome of ECOSOC's review of the work of Council's subsidiary bodies**
- 6. Other matters**

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

Ambassador Maniratanga, Chair of the UNFF18 Bureau, welcomed members of the Bureau, the UNFF Secretariat and the UNFF Secretary to the first virtual meeting of the UNFF18 Bureau. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting. The UNFF Secretariat proposed to add an item to provide update on the outcome of ECOSOC's review of the work of its subsidiary bodies. The provisional agenda was adopted, as amended.

2. Introduction of members of the Bureau, the substantive and technical secretariats, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities

The Chair introduced himself and invited other Bureau members to introduce themselves. Following introduction by Mr. Belen and Mr. Momeni, the Chair invited the Director of the UNFF Secretariat to provide explanations on the roles and responsibilities of the Bureau and the UNFF Secretariat. Ms. Biao informed that the main responsibility of the Bureau of the Forum was to ensure timely preparations and sound organization of UNFF sessions. In this respect, the UNFF Secretariat provides substantive support to the Forum and the Bureau, including through: preparations of official documents for the UNFF sessions; organization of intersessional activities based on the guidance and decisions of the Forum; timely communication of information about logistical and substantive preparations for the UNFF sessions and related intersessional activities; and provision of assistance to the Bureau in ensuring smooth organization of the Forum's sessions. Ms. Biao informed the Bureau that the Director of the UNFF Secretariat works under the direct supervision of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations. Mr. Ziad Mahmassani, Secretary of the Forum, also informed that his office in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, works closely with the UNFF Secretariat. The responsibilities of his office fall mainly on procedural, logistical, and organizational issues, including advising on the rules of procedure and practices and supporting the conduct of the meetings of the Forum.

3. Preparations for UNFF18

a. Date, venue, and provisional agenda of UNFF18

The UNFF Secretariat reminded that the seventeenth session of the Forum (UNFF17) decided that UNFF18 would be held from 8 to 12 May 2023 at UN Headquarters in New York.

b. Thematic priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19

The Chair reminded that the Bureau had previously informally agreed upon the concept note and the suggested thematic priorities by the UNFF Secretariat for UNFF18-UNFF19 through e-mail exchange. During the discussions on the thematic priorities, Mr. Javad Momeni (Iran) emphasized the importance of inclusion of discussions on "sand and dust storms" as part of the discussions on the thematic priorities. The Bureau reconfirmed its agreement with the suggestions to have GFG2 and GFG3, along with the cross-cutting GFG4, 5 and 6 as the thematic priorities for UNFF18-UNFF19. The Bureau further agreed that the Secretariat would officially communicate the decision of the Bureau on the thematic priorities to Members of the Forum.

c. Steps in preparations for UNFF18

The UNFF Secretariat informed that steps in preparations for UNFF18 include, *inter alia*, preparations of official documents for the session. It is the responsibility of the UNFF Secretariat to prepare these documents to facilitate the discussions during UNFF sessions. Usually, the advance unedited version of these documents (in English only) would be made available ten weeks in advance of the Forum session. For UNFF18, the advance unedited version of these documents is expected to be sometime in March 2023.

In addition, the Secretariat would follow up on timely conduct of intersessional activities, including in relation to the preparations for the IAF midterm review, and the pilot phase for the use of the revised format for voluntary national reporting by interested countries as requested by Members in the UNFF17 resolution. In addition, the UNFF Secretariat would assist in preparing an initial draft organization of work for UNFF18 for consideration by the Bureau towards the end of the year or beginning of 2023. Moreover, the Chair of UNFF18 would organize a briefing session in March 2023 for Permanent Missions in New York to inform them of the latest information on the logistical, organizational and substantive matters related to UNFF18.

4. Update on the implementation of UNFF17 resolution

The UNFF Secretariat informed the Bureau that a Note Verbale would be sent to Members of the Forum in the coming weeks regarding the follow up to the outcome of UNFF17, and preparations for UNFF18. The Secretariat has initiated the recruitment of the competent consultants to begin conducting the relevant assessments, as per the provisions of UNFF17 resolution. In carrying out these assessments, the consultants will reach out to Members of the Forum and relevant stakeholders to ensure an inclusive and consultative process. In addition, some of these assessments are expected to be presented to intersessional meetings. Depending on the progress in preparation of the assessments, the secretariat will plan and inform the Bureau on the dates for those intersessional meetings in due course.

5. Update on the outcome of ECOSOC's review of the work of Council's subsidiary bodies

The UNFF Secretariat shared the outcome of the ECOSOC's review of the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies. The Secretariat informed that the Council adopted a decision on 8 June which takes note of the [summary of recommendations by the Vice-President](#), and invited the President of ECOSOC, the bureau of the Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies, all member states and the Secretariat to implement it to the extent possible and within existing mandates and resources.

The Secretariat reminded this work was initiated by the ECOSOC Vice President last year, and the former Bureau member of the Forum (Mr. Jesse Mahoney) was the focal point who followed up on this matter. Many of these recommendations have already been addressed by the UNFF and have been taken into account in its work. In connection to these recommendations, the Secretariat emphasized the importance of a harmonized ECOSOC system, and the importance of the guidance by the ECOSOC to its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies. The Secretariat also emphasized this process should be mutually beneficial to the functional commissions and the ECOSOC. In this respect, it is important that the Council avails from the expertise available in its subsidiary machinery. For example, when it comes to issues related to forests and forest-related SDGs and targets, UNFF as the expert body of the ECOSOC on forests, should be given the primary role in preparations of substantive documents for the HLPF and organization of related sessions.

6. Other matters

The Chair informed that he has been invited by the President of the ECOSOC to address the 2022 session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on 11 July 2022. He will be a Respondent in the session on SDG 15, and he has been invited to focus on concrete actions to halt global deforestation and promote implementation of the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030.

The meeting finished at 9:45 am