

Preparations for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)

Assessment on actions related to the involvement of regional and subregional partners

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Assessment report prepared for the UN Forum on Forests

Through its resolution 2022/17, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), based on the outcome of the seventeenth session of the UN Forum on Forests, decided that the Forum would undertake extensive intersessional activities in preparation for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The resolution called for these actions to be implemented in a transparent and independent manner, and in close consultation with Members of the Forum, as well as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) member organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

To facilitate this process, the Forum Secretariat hired consultants to assist in the preparation of background papers and assessments. These assessments and outcomes of preparatory intersessional work related to the midterm review, will be submitted to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group on the preparations for the IAF-MTR, which will be convened in late 2023.

The views and opinions expressed in the assessment reports are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Secretariat. The designations and terminology employed may not conform to United Nations practice and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Organization.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTO /OTCA	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation
AFF	African Forest Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COFO	(FAO) Committee on Forestry
COMIFAC	Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (Central African Forests Commission)
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
DESA	(UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EAC	East African Community
ECOSOC	(UN) Economic and Social Council
EFC	FAO European Forestry Commission
EFI	European Forest Institute
EGILAT	Expert Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (of APEC)
EGM	Expert group meeting
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FRA	(FAO) Forest Resources Assessment
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GFG	Global Forest Goal
HLRT	High-Level Round Table
HLPF	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
INBAR	International Network for Bamboo and Rattan
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
LACFC	FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MG	Major Group
MTR	Midterm Review
NAFC	FAO North American Forest Commission
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
ODECA	Carta de la Organización de Estados Centroamericanos/ Charter of the Organisation of Central American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
POW/PoW	Programme of Work (of the UNFF)
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
S&T	Science and Technology
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SICA	El Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana/ Central American Integration System
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNFF	UN Forum on Forests
UNFFS	UNFF Secretariat
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSPF	UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WRI	World Resources Institute

Executive Summary

1. This is the Assessment “I” report; it is one of 10 such reports prepared by consultants to feed into the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) in meeting its objectives, as set out in paragraphs 28-31 of ECOSOC resolution 2022/17¹. The report, prepared by Mafa Chipeta, addresses actions set out in section I of the annex on “Actions related to the regional and subregional partners”. The report looks at the effectiveness with the IAF/UNFF of engagement by the regional/subregional partners.
2. The report comes against the backdrop of persistent efforts by the UNFF (the Forum) to collaborate with relevant regional and subregional partners, including with regard to policy dialogue and to the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and the Forum’s quadrennial programmes of work (4PoW). The Terms of Reference lean towards UNFF policy dialogue roles and less to practical action to achieve SFM; this report nevertheless attempts to address both aspects.
3. To secure input of information and views from IAF components and partners, the UNFF secretariat distributed a questionnaire; responses to it (which proved to be few) were supplemented by replies received by UNFFS before the fifteenth session of the Forum² in response to UNFF’s invitation directed at regional and subregional partners to submit written input, on a voluntary basis, on progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals and targets, as well as by other information available on websites. Analysis of this information has led to results which start with profiling the regional/subregional partners and how they work, followed by their engagement with the IAF first in policy dialogue then in other matters, including in field action. While the profile information is fully factual, that on engagement has been accompanied by consultant views on effectiveness and on how some of the profile features and attributes may have affected outcomes of cooperation with the IAF. The analysis of issues has been guided by specific questions the assessment was to answer; the recommendations are formatted to respond to such questions.
4. Regional/subregional partners are ever-present in the IAF process, especially regarding attendance at sessions of the UNFF but also at intersessional events such as Expert Group Meetings (EGMs). Upon invitation, they also attend meetings organised by other components of the IAF, such as CPF organisations. Engaging with the UNFF is only a supplement to the substantive focus of regional/subregional partners on serving their own constituencies on the forests agenda. They domesticate IAF messages and policy proposals in their constituencies and the broader society, which may contribute to IAF effectiveness in important but un-measurable ways. Some (with the activity most highlighted by the African Forest Forum), prepare delegations to UNFF itself but also to other multilateral environmental process meetings, like those under the UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC.
5. Being intergovernmental, many are assured of funding for their operations, but for a number of them (such as professional ones), funding (for action projects and meetings attendance and corporate survival) tends to be from donors, with mention not seen of reliance on membership fees or taxes on forest products/services trade. The non-intergovernmental members of the regional/subregional groups may face budget challenges to attend UNFF sessions and events and clearly, also, to support field action on SFM. However, these entities raised this as an issue only at the Nairobi 2017 Expert

¹https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2022/17

²E/CN.18/2020/6 section III (a)

Group Meeting - EGM. The paragraphs that follow summarise the assessment findings on regional/subregional partners' engagement with the IAF.

6. With specific regard to **assessing the regional and subregional entities' involvement in and contribution to the UNFF's sessions since UNFF12**, attendance at UNFF formal sessions is good and the entities freely make interventions and submit written inputs or reports.³ They even attend high-level events such as High-Level Round Tables⁴ Also, they are active at preparatory events, such as the four EGMs organised by UNFFS in September 2016 in Tehran; November 2017 in Nairobi; January 2019 in Bangkok; and December 2021 (virtually) – main report details on these EGMs are in Section I.3.2.
7. Regional/subregional groups are yet to sponsor “Regional/subregional partner-led Initiatives”, which may be a significant gap in their engagement with the UNFF. If they start, the events would enable them to deepen their footprint and to draw fuller attention to the specifics of opportunities at regional level.
8. On the matter of **establishment or strengthening of regional and subregional processes or platforms** (details in section I.3.1), the general tendency has been not to establish new organisations specifically for UNFF/IAF but instead to make fit for purpose⁵ existing ones by strengthening or adapting them. In this context, many pan-sectoral organisations (such as the African Union, Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum, or Southern Africa Development Community) have created or strengthened units within themselves that deal with forest issues – in a way emulating the UN itself having established the UNFFS in its pan-sectoral organisation.
9. There are regional/subregional partners in all geographic regions from areas with low forest cover to those with dense forest cover; this includes coverage by the FAO's regional forestry commissions. Additionally, there are specific regional/subregional entities dealing with forests, including those in the Amazon and Congo Basin (Section I.3.3), both for dialogue and (especially) field action.
10. As mentioned earlier, EGMs and other UNFF events (as well as attendance of FAO regional forestry commission meetings) give regional/subregional partners opportunities to share ideas and adopt common positions for the formal UNFF sessions. Indeed, the EGMs held in Tehran, Nairobi, Bangkok and virtually, mentioned in paragraph 6, allowed them to collectively call for: their preferred periodicity and content of reporting to the UNFF; desirability of regional focus segments at annual UNFF sessions; coordination of their inputs to the HLPF; and attention to funding challenges facing some entities.
11. Regional/subregional partners operate individually rather than under a common umbrella or shared workplan; ensuring synergy of their inputs may therefore not always be easy. However, joint presence at UNFF sessions and events, and participation at EGMs gives them opportunities to collectively propose better ways for improving the effectiveness of their work with the IAF. In the absence of purpose-made new structures, the FAO regional forestry commissions may potentially

³As an example, the UNFF16 report [Doc E/2021/42-E/CN.18/2021/8] mentions seven Regional/Subregional organisations as having made statements.

⁴UNDESA Report on UNFF17 High Level Round Table, UNFF17.

⁵The ECOSOC resolution is addressed to Member States so action to establish or strengthen would be by them for intergovernmental regional/subregional partners; it would have to be internal to the entities themselves if not if they wish to act on the resolution even if not addressed to them.

facilitate coordination, possible collective work planning, and sharing of ideas on intervention priorities and division of responsibilities.

12. The MTR is specifically expected to assess effectiveness of action on para 27⁶ of **ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33** which covers the role of regional and subregional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes in developing or strengthening programmes on SFM; it also refers to providing coordinated inputs and recommendations to sessions of the Forum. Its scope is so wide that in the report, the consultant has preferred to present it mostly under field interventions.
13. Finally, the MTR is expected to **identify options for the further involvement of regional and subregional partners in the work of the UNFF**. In the first place, the “selling” of forests as important for all mankind to act upon can be among the most important results of UNFF work. Jointly with the UNFF, regional/subregional partners can double down on encouraging this, so that “the forests agenda”⁷ finds complementary homes beyond its narrow sectoral origins.
14. Other potentially huge areas of opportunity for future involvement of regional and subregional partners could be presented under recommendations. Among these, three deserve mention here: (a) the holding of “Regional partner-led initiatives” to add greater regional/subregional specificity to aspects of the UNFF work; (b) the promotion of regional/subregional partner focus themes in the UNDESA flagship publication “Global Forest Goals Report” on implementation of the UNSPF; and (c) for financial and other self-strengthening, consider partnering⁸ with the following types of regional level Major Groups:⁹ (i) financial institutions (i.e. development banks also at regional level), (ii) the commercial private sector, (iii) philanthropies, and (iv) local authorities¹⁰.
15. Fuller presentation of **recommendations** comes in section I.4.2 “Recommendations”. In abbreviated form, it is proposed that the MTR highlights the following:
 - a. Regarding “**Assess regional and subregional entities’ involvement in and contribution to the UNFF’s sessions since UNFF12**”: Strengthen the regional specificity of inputs to the UNFF, based on coordinated messaging; secure more dedicated space for these inputs at UNFF sessions and events as requested in the past; prepare better coordinated inputs to UNFF, including by considering launch of Regional/subregional partner-led initiatives; and continue to associate with forests elements under non-UNFF umbrellas, such as the Rio Conventions;
 - b. On the issue of “**Assess the establishment or strengthening of regional and subregional processes or platforms**”: firstly for regions where an IAF-linked partner is absent or dormant, the UNFFS could explore which existing regional/subregional organisations can take up partnership

⁶E/RES/2015/33 - para 27 “Invites relevant regional and subregional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes in a position to do so to consider, consistent with their mandates, developing or strengthening programmes on sustainable forest management, including facilitating the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and relevant aspects of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as to provide coordinated inputs and recommendations to sessions of the Forum.”)

⁷ Including regional/subregional forests issues falling outside the IAF but under the Rio conventions and initiatives like the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

⁸ **Not necessarily get them as members** but as working partners or funders (which is a complex issue in the UN), since they are Major Groups.

⁹ UN protocols may make such “fraternisation” with Major Groups entities difficult so looser association formats may have to be sought.

¹⁰ The question of mentioning these outside their Major Groups home under the UN has been addressed under Section I.0.1 para 4, above.

roles. The first action could be to persuade the most appropriate FAO regional Forestry Commissions to increase activity levels in highly-forested regions that are at present not at the same level of exchanges with the UNFF as the Amazon and Congo Basin; for synergy, regional/subregional partners could collectively explore more shared workplanning and prioritisation of SFM action even if without joint workplans; explore to the limit use of FAO regional forest commissions and UN Regional Economic Commission Sustainable Development processes for their work;

- c. Regarding **“Identify options for the further involvement of regional and subregional partners in the work of the UNFF”**: partner more with UNFFS in fora, including under the CPF and its members; promote more region specificity in high profile activities such as preparation of the flagship GFG report; and (administratively controversial under the UN) consider expanding partnerships to regional-level financial, commercial private sector and philanthropic as well as local authorities groupings for greater outreach and more robust field action muscle.

I. Introduction

16. ECOSOC's Resolution 2015/33 decided to strengthen the International arrangement on forests beyond 2015, extend it to 2030 and clarified its functioning modalities; ECOSOC also defined the components of the IAF (para 1 (b)) as the United Nations Forum on Forests and its Member States (UNFF), the secretariat of the Forum (UNFFS), the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) and the Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests.
17. ECOSOC decided that the IAF should involve as partners "...interested international, regional and subregional organizations and processes, major groups and other stakeholders". Under paras 25-28, Resolution 2015/33 made provision for solid Regional and Subregional involvement, inviting these "regional and subregional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes" to develop or strengthen "... programmes on sustainable forest management, including facilitating the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and relevant aspects of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as to provide coordinated inputs and recommendations to sessions of the Forum"¹¹
18. This Section "I" report, being on involvement of Regional and Subregional partners, which is part of the **Midterm Review (MTR) of the Effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests** assesses how effective the engagement of the Regional/Subregional partners with the IAF is, with regard to SFM ambitions as set out in the UN Strategic Programme of Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030 and its Global Forest Goals (GFGs). On paragraph 41 of E/RES/2015/33, ECOSOC requested that the Forum undertake a midterm review of the arrangement in 2024 and a final review in 2030:

"41. Requests the Forum to undertake in 2024 a midterm review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in achieving its objectives, as well as a final review in 2030, and, on that basis, to submit recommendations to the Council relating to the future course of the arrangement."
19. The Forum at its 17th session decided to carry out extensive preparatory activities in preparation for the MTR in 2024. The annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17, contains ten areas for the assessment, including section "I" on regional/subregional partners that this report focuses on. In reporting on UNFF17, the IISD¹² highlighted that there are high expectations with regard to the MTR's independence, transparency and inclusiveness so as to give it legitimacy in the eyes of both UNFF members and other stakeholders.
20. Regional and Subregional Partners are a constituency located in the space between Member States and global institutions. In this constituency, there is a large variety of multi-national groups that have associated themselves with the IAF and its UN Forum on Forests. Labelled "Regional and subregional partners", they range from pan-sectoral intergovernmental institutions (such as the African Union (AU) or the Pacific Island Forum to sectoral intergovernmental groups (such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACTO)) or Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe also known as FOREST EUROPE), to commodity groups (such as International Network for Bamboo and

¹¹ Furthermore, ECOSOC invited Member States "(...) to consider, on a voluntary basis and as appropriate, establishing or strengthening regional and subregional processes or platforms for forest policy development, dialogue and coordination to promote sustainable forest management while seeking to avoid fragmentation".

¹²IISD (2022): **Summary of the Seventeenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests: 9-13 May 2022.**

Rattan (INBAR) and professional groups (such as the African Forest Forum (AFF)). They share a desire to play their part in influencing global policy through dialogue under the UNFF or facilitating field action on the UNSPF and GFGs.

21. Regional/subregional partners and MGs and other stakeholders were equally welcomed by ECOSOC in 2015 in resolution 2015/33 (Doc.E/2015/42 and Corr.1), at UNFF15 as stated in its report (ECOSOC Official Records, 2020 Supplement No. 22 Doc E/2020/42-E/CN.18/2020/9), and in UNFF11 paragraphs 10-11, [ECOSOC Official Records, 2022 Supplement No. 22. E/2022/42-E/CN.18/2022/8.Para 11]. [Box 1](#) gives the reference ECOSOC resolutions for regional/subregional engagement with the IAF; [Box 2](#) lists some exhortations for the same.

Box 1: ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 - extracts relevant to regional/subregional partners

Section I:

[the Economic and Social Council]....*decides*:

(c) That the international arrangement on forests involves as partners interested international, **regional and subregional organizations and processes**, major groups and other stakeholders;

United Nations Forum on Forests beyond 2015

3. Decides that the core functions of the Forum are:

6. Also decides to improve and strengthen the functioning of the Forum beyond 2015 by requesting the Forum:

(b) To restructure its sessions and enhance its intersessional work to maximize the impact and relevance of its work, including by fostering an exchange of experiences and lessons learned among countries, **regional, subregional and non-governmental partners** and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(g) In line with paragraph 6 (b) of the present resolution, to dedicate the odd-year sessions of the Forum:

(i) To serving as an opportunity for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations, **regional and subregional organizations and processes**, major groups and other relevant stakeholders to provide technical advice and input to the Forum.....

Section VIII:

Regional and subregional involvement

25. Requests the Forum **to strengthen its collaboration with relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes** in order to facilitate the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, including the achievement of its global objectives on forests, as well as to facilitate their inputs to sessions of the Forum;

26. Requests the secretariat of the Forum **to consult with relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes** on means to enhance collaboration between them and the Forum, including regarding the implementation of the strategic plan and the quadrennial programmes of work referred to in section XI of the present resolution;

27. **Invites relevant regional and subregional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes** in a position to do so to consider, consistent with their mandates, developing or strengthening programmes on sustainable forest management, including facilitating the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and relevant aspects of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as to provide coordinated inputs and recommendations to sessions of the Forum;

28. Invites Member States to consider, on a voluntary basis and as appropriate, **establishing or strengthening regional and subregional processes or platforms** for forest policy development, dialogue and coordination to promote sustainable forest management while seeking to avoid fragmentation.....

Box 2: UNFF Exhortations to Engage Regional/Subregional Partners in IAF work

UNFF17 Agenda: Inclusion in the UNFF 17th and 18th session agendas of (ii) **Regional and subregional organizations and processes**.

From the UNFF 17 report:

10. *Emphasizes* that effective implementation of sustainable forest management depends on the contributions of all relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to **regional and subregional organizations and processes**, . . . and in this respect encourages these stakeholders to continue to advance the implementation of the strategic plan and the achievement of the global forest goals, and to keep the Forum informed of their progress in that regard.

In UNFF 17 report Annex: Actions in preparation for the midterm review, in 2024, of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, included section “I” **“Actions related to the involvement of regional and subregional partners”** and “J” **“Actions related to the involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders”**.

In draft agenda for UNFF18:

(c) Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities:

(ii) **Contributions of regional and subregional organizations and processes** to achieving the thematic priorities.

The UNFF16 Report: [Doc E/2021/42-E/CN.18/2021/8] confirms as agenda items under UNFF17, 18 “Updates by stakeholders and partners on activities in support of the thematic priorities”, including:

(ii) **Regional and subregional organizations and processes**; and

(d) **Regional and subregional partners** had a key role in accelerating efforts to achieve the goals by exchanging information and data, and supporting capacity-building and training activities in their member countries. Regional and subregional collaboration for landscape restoration, including for forests and trees in drylands, and in arid and semi-arid regions, was also highlighted as essential to the success of countries in achieving the goals.

The UNFF15 Report: [Doc. E/2020/42-E/CN.18/2020/9] under Engagement and contributions of partners, includes:

17. *Emphasizes* the importance of multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral involvement in the activities of the Forum, . . . including at the sixteenth session of the Forum.

19. *Emphasizes the importance of involving relevant regional and subregional organizations and processes* in the activities of the Forum, including at its sixteenth session, to share lessons learned and best practices;

Under UNFF16 Programme of Work: In “Programme of work for the sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 2021 (technical session)”:

(ii) **Contributions of regional and subregional organizations and processes** to achieving the thematic priorities;

Under agendas of UNFF17 and 18:

(b) Updates by stakeholders and partners on activities in support of the thematic priorities.

(ii) **Regional and subregional organizations and processes**;

From December 2021 EGM:

the Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening the Engagement of the United Nations Forum on Forests with Regional Partners, Major Groups, and other Stakeholders, 16-17 December 2021:

The EGM objective was **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.

22. On the same issue of engaging with the IAF, the secretariat organised an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on 16-17 December 2021 on “Strengthening the Engagement of the United Nations Forum on Forests with Regional Partners, Major Groups, and other Stakeholders”. The EGM issued no message specifically directed at this MTR’s consideration of Regional/Subregional partners; it focused mainly on MGs and other stakeholders. This was the last of four EGMs involving regional and subregional partners of the Forum; the earlier ones took place in September 2016 in Tehran; in November 2017 in Nairobi; and in January 2019 in Bangkok. With their main shared proposals reported earlier in para 10.

II. Assessment Methodology

23. The following are among the sources of information used in the preparation of this report:
- a. A review of relevant documents and information posted on the websites of the UNFF, UN-related organizations and other relevant intergovernmental bodies and processes, including all web links contained in this report - of this, the 2020 UNFF questionnaire responses are still “current” when set against the endless timeframe of forest growth;
 - b. Discussions with and information and comments provided by the UNFF Secretariat;
 - c. Responses to a consolidated questionnaire containing questions developed by the consultants to elicit views from UNFF members and partners on the range of actions contained in the annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17.

The questionnaire was circulated by the UNFF18 Bureau Chair on 9 August 2022 with a request for comments by 30 September 2022, later extended to 14 October. Responses to the three questions on Assessment I are discussed in section I.3.2, with the responses themselves presented in [Annex 5](#).

24. The Secretariat facilitated preparation of this report by providing administrative support and relevant documentation and other information as requested, and by providing comments on its earlier drafts. However, the views expressed herein, including the conclusions and recommendations, are those of the consultant. Throughout the process of preparing this report, there was open sharing of drafts among the consultants by email and through virtual meetings, with the aim of promoting consistency in overall approach across the assessment reports.
25. Regarding questionnaires mentioned earlier, it was at UNFF17 that an MTR questionnaire was agreed upon. Subsequently, on 9th August 2022, the UNFF18 Chair sent out a finalised questionnaire on all aspects of the MTR to UNFF Focal Points, Member organisations of the CPF, UNFF Regional and Subregional partners, major groups and other relevant stakeholders. On 3rd October 2022, the consultant for Assessment I and J sent out supplementary questions requesting for only highlights; very few responses have been received either. Regrettably, as [Table 1](#) shows, as of 15th December 2022, only a few responses have trickled in, of which those which reacted under section I are: 9 Member States (2 Africa, 2 Europe, 3 Latin America-Caribbean, and 2 North America); 5 Regional/Subregional Organisations (including FAO for its regional commissions); 1 global organisation; and 0 Major Groups). With a view to improving the response rate, the consultant contacted selected focal points by telephone, with the results in [Annex 2](#).

Table 1: Questionnaire responses updated to 15December 2022

[excluding respondents that did NOT react on section “I”]

UNFF Global, Regional and Subregional partners & Others	Member States	Member States
FAO (for Regional Forestry Commissions) FOREST EUROPE OTCA/ACTO SADC ITTO	EL SALVADOR JAMAICA – responded to only 1 question under Regional partners KENYA MALAWI MEXICO	PANAMA ROMANIA – no opinion SWITZERLAND USA

III. Analysis and Findings from Collected Information

III.1 Profiling Regional/subregional organisations and how they function

26. As background for seeing how regional/subregional partners engage with the IAF, it appears useful to at least briefly first profile them and how they work as themselves as well as in partnership with other institutions. In geographic spread, regional/subregional partners cover practically the whole globe, from low forest cover areas to intermediates and dense forests both tropical and temperate. The detectable levels of activity with the UNFF however differ – Southeast Asian and Siberian massive forests are examples of areas belonging to one or other FAO Regional Commission that could act as proxy for regional/subregional partner in UNFF matters-cooperating as needed with national sovereign authorities for such forests or in partnership with organisations like ASEAN. More prominently reported upon at present are the humid forests of central Africa (the Congo Basin) and of South America (Amazon).

III.1.1 Diversity

27. Both by form and function, regional/subregional partners differ considerably. Some are intergovernmental while are professional associations or institutionalised long-term multi-country projects. Many bodies operate predominantly at the level of officials and experts, but FOREST EUROPE operates at ministerial level. There are some with focus upstream: on information, analysis, awareness-raising, policy advocacy and arbitration, exhortation of other players to action, without themselves being in practical field action. The AFF is one example; others like the ECE/FAO are even more into studies and analysis, which feed into their constituencies’ fora. But there are other entities, of which the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) is a prime example: they cover the entire value chain from information, its analysis, and awareness-raising to field investments. The Congo Basin’s Commission of Central African Forests (COMIFAC) is an ACTO equivalent but with more modest financial resources.

III.1.2 Institutional location

28. Both for the purposes of discharging IAF-related and their own mandates, information accessed suggests that for regional/subregional partners that are inter-governmental, Member response to the ECOSOC exhortation in 2015/33 –para 28¹³ has been less by creating new organisations specifically for UNFF/IAF and more by making existing ones fit for purpose. In the spirit of Para 28, this is “strengthening” rather than “establishing”. In this context, many pan-sectoral organisations have created units within them that deal with forest issues not just under the UNFF but also for global frameworks on climate, biodiversity and desertification. No information has been found showing new non-intergovernmental regional/subregional partners having been created so they too must be adapting and possibly “strengthening” rather than “establishing”.
29. What happened in the UN itself may have influenced this trend: the UN has after all brought the forests dialogue into the pan-Sectoral Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and created a UNFF Secretariat there. The UN lesson has not been lost on other bodies: from continental bodies like the African Union to subregional ones like the Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum, or Southern Africa Development Community, they have inserted forestry elements into their agendas or established units to handle it. Even before the UNDESA incorporation of forests, however, other pan-sectoral UN bodies, especially the UN ECE, hosted active forestry units.

III.1.3 Coordination and partnership

30. Each entity coordinates internally and with its activity partners. For all of them, the constituency they serve most is most important partner to coordinate with: governments, civil society, contractor/subcontractors in action. Foreign partners can include sector think tanks or academia, civil society organisations, donors or financial/technical development partners.
31. FAO making its regional forestry commissions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America) into fora whose inputs have direct regional import for UNFF, there is great potential for networking and coordination. FAO Regional Forestry Commissions are UN bodies that bring together directors of national forestry agencies (they at times have ministerial segments) but also officials of other government departments and many other players, including regional/subregional players. These FAO regional fora can potentially facilitate coordination, possible collective work planning, and sharing of ideas on intervention priorities and division of responsibilities.
32. Both for policy dialogue and field operational engagements, there is no evidence of regional/subregional partners coordination whether at the behest of Member States or voluntarily, so the impression is of a tendency for each entity to work in relative isolation. The regional/subregional partners are clearly willing partners but are not a “coalition” in their approach to IAF-relevant operations. Each may have partnerships for their own work – but the collectivity of IAF-linked regional/subregional entities do not have either a joint workplan or priorities that are deliberately selected to synergise among themselves or with the plans of a major IAF component, such as the CPF.

¹³ E/RES/2015/33 para 28 “(...) invites Member States to consider, on a voluntary basis and as appropriate, establishing and strengthening regional and subregional processes or platforms for forest policy development, dialogue and coordination to promote sustainable forest management while seeking to avoid fragmentation”.

33. However, Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) organised from time to time by the UNFFS allow them to share ideas and communicate each one's core interests. Section 1.3.2 (para 52/53) expands upon the following main areas of apparent shared interest from the EGMs in Tehran, Nairobi, Bangkok and virtually: periodicity and content of reporting to the UNFF; desirability of regional focus segments at annual UNFF sessions; coordination of their inputs to the HLPF; and funding challenges of some entities.
34. Even though within their group the regional/subregional partners lack a structured coordination mechanism, they can probably individually benefit from external partnerships and coordination. Those which are funded by donors already reveal one type of partnership; some have technical partnerships with external bodies. Additional opportunities to explore must surely include: local governments, the commercial private sector, and philanthropies. Such bodies are classified by the UN as "Major Groups" and therefore - even if they are themselves regional in character - they cannot administratively be members of the "regional/subregional partners" category. Also, some of them may be unwilling come under a UNFF umbrella. The following are relevant considerations.
- a. While UNFF already has the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA) as Business and Industry MG focal point, it may access much higher investment scale through other groups in the *commercial private sector*. These groups (such as under WBCSD or philanthropies) already have their own frameworks for action and will probably insist on retaining those [See for example¹⁴] so the UNFF could seek partnership for common purpose which does not imply subordination of either party to the other;
 - b. According to the OECD, the *philanthropic sector* does not prioritise environment in general and forestry in particular so the UNFF will have to be particularly selective in promoting its engagement under especially compelling circumstances: they may never become a mainstream supporter.

III.1.4 Financial independence

35. With the predominant institutional type being intergovernmental, many regional/subregional partner institutions may be at least minimally financially assured, at least for attendance of UNFF sessions. Certainly, at sessions appeals for funding assistance has been a repeating message from major groups, but regional/subregional partners have not raised this as an issue except at the Nairobi 2017 EGM. But for some non-governmental regional/subregional partners in the developing world, there will be great need for substantive field intervention funding.¹⁵ Several situations may prevail:

¹⁴OECD (2017): **Global Private Philanthropy for Development - Results of the OECD Data Survey as of 3 October 2017**. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/beyond-oda-foundations.htm//> and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (undated): **Philanthropy and The SDGs - Practical Tools for Alignment**. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors Philanthropy Roadmap.

¹⁵ Not much evidence was accessed that showed regional/subregional partners being funded by the commercial private sector, or by philanthropies. For those currently entirely dependent on traditional donors, it will be encouraging to see the emergence on the forests agenda of the **Bezos Earth Fund**¹⁵. This currently has some \$440 million committed to forests-related projects, of which some \$123 million for a range of global pursuits; \$51 million for restoration (\$36 million for the US, \$15 million for Africa; \$106 million for the Congo Basin; \$152 million for the Tropical Andes; and \$31 million for "other Africa".

- a. bodies with professionals as members may rely entirely on donors: this may restrain their freedom to set own priorities; and
- b. where despite being intergovernmental, ability/willingness to fund own operations may be inadequate - hence donor top-up or even deeper dependence: some may need dedicated and fulltime funds mobilisation capacity.

III.1.5 Service both to selves and to the IAF

- 36. There is evidence of frequent Regional/subregional partners' presence at formal Forum meetings but also at expert group meetings etc. The one format of policy dialogue engagement not come across is organisation by them of "*Regional/subregional partner-led Initiatives*". More dominant however are activities to serve their own constituents.
- 37. The programmes of the Economic Commission for Europe's Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry¹⁶ show most clearly that regional/subregional entities delivering on IAF do not plan their existence to serve the IAF but mostly to serve their regional constituencies with IAF service a collateral beneficiary that shares a desire to achieve SFM and facilitates access to global experience and best practice. The institutional location of the regional/subregional partners – between national governments and global players – is a privileged one. There are possibilities of offering bridging services in policy dialogue while also taking up action areas that require cooperation among individual country governments in their neighbourhood rather than at global level.

III.1.6 Mutual attribution of credit with the IAF

- 38. It appears that regional/subregional partners engage with the UNFF (both through policy dialogue and in other ways such as practical action or support to society) for mutual benefit. The following has been observed from responses received to questionnaires:
 - a. The general practice is to report what the entities are doing for their own use, not all or even many of which are specifically attributed to the IAF or are done to satisfy its ambitions;
 - b. There is recognition, even appreciation, of the impulse the UNFF is giving to caring for forests;
 - c. There is also recognition of UNFF added value in that it facilitates links beyond the national or regional/subregional neighbourhood where operations being reported on are taking place; and
 - d. There is frequently mention of partnerships: entities in the developed world highlight cooperation among themselves; those in the developing world also among themselves but also with external development partners e.g. ACTO highlights gains from working with Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), FAO, and global environmental NGOs.
- 39. The sample of questionnaire responses is too small to generalise the above. But a sense gained is that the IAF has through its persistent messaging about forests and their importance generated an

¹⁶ ECOSOC (2022): **Review of 2022 activities and planned activities for 2023**. Submitted by the Secretariat. Economic Commission for Europe, Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry. Eightieth session. Geneva, 2-4 November 2022.

encouraging atmosphere for its partners to act on forests. They may not credit it but they benefit from its background presence as a force for good.

40. The situation of regional/subregional partners contrasts with groups such as the CPF and Major Groups that have a joint workplan. Collective plans of this type would facilitate checking if collectively the regional/subregional partners are collectively making the biggest or smallest difference in addressing the remaining challenges identified in the Global Forest Goals Report. To do the matching individually for each entity would have questionable efficiency for efforts expended. An attempt was made to do this for a coordinated group, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), with the following three messages emerging:
 - a. The ambitions of the UNSPF are being addressed by ongoing interventions in a selective, perhaps patchy manner by all players at levels beyond Member States;
 - b. For regional/subregional partners, their diversity and complexity is considerable; it may be most feasible for each to try their own matching with the flagship GFGs report. From such an exercise, they can choose to complement what major players (such as the CPF) are leaving relatively unattended;
 - c. It already becomes apparent that for the Regional/subregional partners, a very diverse community, the lack of an at least indicative joint workplan (or information-exchange platforms/networks) places them at some disadvantage with regard to internal coordination. No doubt each separately navigates relative to the GFGs and hopefully keeps the UNFF system briefed about progress and challenges.

III.2 Main developments since 2015 regarding the involvement of regional and subregional partners

III.2.1 Engagement in UNFF Dialogue

41. By design, the UNFF global sessions fall under “policy” and “technical” categories: both are of interest to and attract participation/contribution from Regional/Subregional partners. Under both, the perspective of entities whose excellence is on matters below the global level but above the national one have special importance to bridge a possible divide in attention to matters that individual member states cannot tackle but which fall below the global radar. Essentially, both policy/strategic and technical dialogue involve exchange of knowledge, views and best practice for all parties to potentially adapt to their specific needs. Hence the value of diversity that non-state players bring to the gatherings.
42. As this section of the report starts, it is useful to refer to the MTR desire to **“Assess regional and subregional entities’ involvement in and contribution to the UNFF’s sessions since UNFF12”** and to consider what follows in the light of this, with the following among key considerations:

- a. Regional/subregional partners are already ever-present at UNFF formal sessions where they freely exercise their right to make interventions and submit inputs such as their own reports.¹⁷ They are also present at high-level events;
 - b. To build up to substantive UNFF sessions, they attend lower-level or specialised events such as the four Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) organised by UNFFS with the engagement of regional and subregional partners in September 2016 in Tehran; in November 2017 in Nairobi; in January 2019 in Bangkok; and virtually in December 2021. These allow them to prepare joint messaging and coordinate their priorities: the four EGMs for example agreed upon periodicity and content of reporting to the UNFF; desirability of regional focus segments at annual UNFF sessions; coordination of their inputs to the HLPF; and funding challenges of some entities.”.
 - c. Regional/subregional partners also help the UNFF process by communicating between the UNFF sessions and their constituencies on how the IAF goals for forests can be implemented, even in partnership with parties that may themselves be outside the IAF. In this way, they can expand the footprint of the IAF beyond just those who actually attend its meetings. In reverse, they help domesticate some IAF ideas drawn from diverse global experiences shared in UNFF events for adaptation to their own constituency needs;
 - d. Also, some regional/subregional partners help boost the quality of UNFF meetings (and meetings of multilateral environmental process discourses like those under CBD, UNCCD, and UNFCCC etc) by preparing member state delegations from their regions for meetings.
43. The main developments under the IAF have been in its role as a policy forum. The most up-to-date point of reference on IAF priorities is the Programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2022-2024, leading to ECOSOC resolution 2021/6. The reports show a certain “steady state” in that the agendas of successive sessions have retained certain “staple” agenda items. Thus thematic priorities for the 17th till 19th UNFF sessions have been selected global forest goals and associated targets; Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development; International forest-related developments; and Preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in achieving its objectives. It is significant that while in general the expectation is attendance of regional/subregional organisations at UNFF-organised sessions, the UNFF Secretariat also attends events organised by them or by other partners (Box 3).

¹⁷As an example, the UNFF16 report [Doc E/2021/42-E/CN.18/2021/8] mentions that the following Regional/Subregional organisations made statements: European Union; the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization; Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan; Brazilian Tree Industry; International Forestry Students’ Association; and representative, Forestry Research Network of Sub-Saharan Africa; the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

Box 3: Reciprocal Participation in Policy Dialogue

There is also reciprocal attendance of Regional/Subregional partner and Major Group events by the UNFF Secretariat, just as attendance by UNFF Secretariat at events hosted by CPF members. As examples UNFF17 document Doc E/CN.18/2022/2 mentions the since the sixteenth session of the Forum, in September 2021, the secretariat had addressed an expert level meeting of the Forest Europe Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe; it also joined the ministerial dialogue of the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan's Africa Bamboo and Rattan Congress.

Representatives of the secretariat addressed the thirty-second session of the FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (September 2021) and thirty-first session of the FAO North American Forestry Commission (November 2021). Via a Webinar, the secretariat also took part in a regional forest programme for the basin and Amazon region event organised by the Permanent Secretariat of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (December 2021).

44. Another standing commitment, to which regional and subregional partners have been party as participants in UNFF sessions, has been the topic **“Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for Forests 2017–2030”**. In the report of UNFF17 – E/RES/2022/17, ECOSOC *“1. Invites members of the United Nations Forum on Forests to accelerate efforts towards achieving the global forest goals, including through coordinating, mainstreaming and upscaling forest-related actions in relevant programmes, strategies and plans, including national development plans, and in this regard to support existing and emerging national, subregional and regional joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030”*.
45. The Covid pandemic has created a milestone also for the IAF, including all that are engaged with it such as the regional/subregional partners. Based on a global study led by the UNFFS, the UNFF proposed inclusion of the forests sector in the 2021 HLPF session’s thematic focus on *“Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic...”*¹⁸. The HLPF also considered the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) which has received much attention in the UNFF and from its partners, especially the Major Groups.
46. Recently, the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) included in its deliberations *“Implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and Strengthening FAO’s Contribution to the International Arrangements on Forests, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Mid-term Review in 2024”*. An IISD summary report¹⁹ on the session suggests that the most salient is the point (as retained in its statement of outcomes) in which the COFO 26...*“invites FAO to continue supporting the participation of the [FAO Regional Forestry Commissions] in regional dialogues related to UNFF, as appropriate and within FAO’s mandate”*.
47. In ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, Section VIII is dedicated to regional and subregional involvement in the international arrangement on forests (paras 25-28). In the UNFF17 Secretariat Note E/CN.18/2022/5 on preparations for the MTR Para 55 states that *“The provisions called for enhanced collaboration between relevant regional and subregional partners and the Forum.... further calling*

¹⁸ See *“Concept Note - High Level Round Table (UNFF16) Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests”*.

¹⁹IISD: Summary of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry.

upon them “to build and strengthen synergies between the strategic plan and their policies and programmes”. The report also records in Para 57 nothing specific about field action on the GFGs but mentions that the Forum:

- a. was engaging with additional regional and subregional partners and had organized several expert meetings (and dedicated panels) to enhance cooperation and coordination;
 - b. dedicated a specific agenda item to collaboration with regional and subregional partners under its quadrennial programmes of work for the periods 2017–2020 and 2021–2024;
 - c. Recognised consistent contribution of inputs by regional and subregional partners to its work and by answering pre-session Forum questionnaires.
 - d. In reflection of the above, the secretariat proposed inclusion of regional and subregional partners in the scope of the IAF review for the mid-term review.
48. The presence at actual UNFF sessions is the culmination of a larger process including preparatory events within the Regional/Subregional organisations and in their regions; interaction with their governments and civil society; and at times, consultation to arrive at common positions where UNFF meetings require that choices be made. Indeed, the mandate of some organisations (African Forest Forum being a prime example) in fact includes helping to prepare delegations from their regions for international forestry meetings including but not exclusively under the UNFF. The African Forest Forum response²⁰ to the UNFFS 2020 questionnaire reports that AFF continues to build the capacity of African delegates to participate effectively in multilateral environmental processes. This is considered an important contribution to enable African Member States choose more effective approaches for the sector to achieve the goals of the UN Forest Instrument .
49. At no UNFF formal session are Regional/Subregional partners all absent. It is also noteworthy that no mention is made in reports to non-Member State delegates feeling marginalised; there is much evidence of them exercising their right to make interventions as Regional/Subregional partners. As an example, the UNFF16 report [Doc E/2021/42-E/CN.18/2021/8] mentions that Regional/Subregional organisation statements were made, *inter alia*, by European Union; the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization; Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, International Network for Bamboo and Rattan; - the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and the. It is possible many more attended but did not speak.
50. Regional and subregional entities are also take part in high-level activities during Forum sessions; for example at the UNFF17High-Level Round Table (HLRT) on “UNFF response to, role in, and expectations from forest-related multilateral developments”²¹ the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization was among the speakers and points (m) and (n) of the Chair’s summary are related to regional/subregional cooperation.

²⁰African Forests Forum (AFF) (2020): **Input into UNFF16 regional/subregional partners reporting on progress towards the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and the United Nations Forest Instrument.** December 2020.

²¹E/2022/42 - E/CN.18/2022/8, Annex II

51. The attendance is not just a formality; the Chair’s summary contained in the report of UNFF16²² indicates that regional and subregional partners had a key role in accelerating efforts to achieve the goals by exchanging information and data and supporting capacity-building and training activities in their member countries. It also highlighted regional and subregional collaboration for landscape restoration, including for forests and trees in drylands, and in arid and semi-arid regions – all these being essential for the countries to achieving the Global Forest Goals.
52. In terms of quality of attendance, what might be worth checking more is balance: between developed and developing country entities; between high-level attendants (e.g. Ministerial level for Forests Europe) and professional and common-citizen delegates; between those that can self-finance and those that must be sponsored; and by the frequency to which opportunities to speak for themselves reach those most impacted by forest uses (positively and negatively) rather than them being mostly spoken on behalf of.
53. The range of engagement formats for dialogue is wide: participation in substantive official global meetings of the UNFF; in inter-sessional meetings of expert groups; in regional or subregional gatherings; in events that are country-led (member government-sponsored or co-sponsored) or partner-led (e.g. by the CPF or its member organisations, by MGs, or by other Regional/Subregional entities); by civil society of other formats; by academia etc. Possibilities are nearly endless. *It may be important to recognise that meetings relevant to UNFF and to achievement of IAF ambitions will almost certainly be more often organised by Regional/Subregional organisations for themselves and their constituencies – this does not necessarily make such meetings any less relevant to or important for the UNFF ambitions.*
54. As mentioned briefly earlier (section I.3.1, para 38), four Expert Group Meetings (EGM)²³ have been organised by the UNFFS with the objective of conveying the views of regional/subregional partners on how to enhance and strengthen their collaboration with UNFF. The suggestions of those meetings are given below; they are an example of valuable collective inputs to improve the UNFF policy forum role. The EGMs discussed modalities of cooperation with the UNFF and ways to strengthen their feed into the UNFF sessions and into implementation of the Quadrennial programmes of work as well as into the forest-related 2030 (SDG) agenda. Upon tabulation of the proposals made, some themes of shared interest emerged. Being first, the Tehran EGM gave the most suggestions for the way forward, which subsequent meetings have refined. From the four EGMs, most-frequently selected areas of proposed improved engagement with the IAF include:
- a. Ensuring complementarity and synergy between reports to UNFF made by member states and the regional/subregional partners (+ partners’ contribution to enrich the UNFF Flagship publication);
 - b. Proposal to have at UNFF sessions a dedicated regional dialogue/forum/panel – even if only as 3 hours segment in sessions - to highlight the partners inputs for exchange with other parties (also suggested observer or similar status by regions/subregions at CPF dialogue events);
 - c. Synergised inputs of UNFF and the regional/subregional partners into the High Level Political Forum on matters of achieving forestry contributions to the SDGs;

²²E/2021/42-E/CN.18/2021/8

²³:<https://www.un.org/esa/forests/regions/index.html> and <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EGM-Regional-MGs-Dec2021-Summary-final.pdf>

- d. The interlinkages between UNFF and the regional/subregional partners should consider the outcomes of the Rio conventions as well as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
55. The last of the EGMs - the December 2021 EGM was organized in the context of the implementation of the UNSPF, regarding activities in support of the Forum's biennium 2021-2022 thematic priorities²⁴. Its theme was "Strengthening the engagement of the United Nations Forum on Forests with regional partners, major groups and other stakeholders" and its various recommendations include calling UNFF to consider the outcomes of the Rio conventions (on Biological Diversity, to Combat Desertification and Drought, and on Climate Change), as well as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Regional and subregional entities affirmed willingness to continue to collaborate with the Forum and to help implement the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and to achieve the global forest goals.
56. The Forum has also tended to at all times retain attention to forest elements of the SDGs; other Rio conventions; UNFCCC; and various UN decades including the forests-relevant one on ecosystem restoration.

III.2.2 Mixed Menu of Other IAF-relevant Activities

57. Some of the emerging ways of networking and cooperation within the regions may well fit what the UNFF17 had in mind when proposing for ECOSOC adoption a draft resolution submitted by the Chair of the Commission. In it, the ECOSOC "was encouraged to support existing and emerging national, subregional and regional joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 with a view to accelerate efforts towards achieving the global forest goals...".
58. At UNFF17, there was an "Update on the activities of regional and subregional organizations and processes" as recorded in the IISD report on the event. One key intervention encouraged the Forum to step up action to reverse loss of forest cover including by continuing to work with regional and subregional organizations, the finance sector, and other partners in an integrated manner, including through cross-sectoral and landscape approaches.
59. The activities and focus of regional and subregional organizations and processes as they pursue fulfilment of the GFG agenda is reported in the analysis of responses to questionnaires. Some of the diverse engagements are derived from written voluntary responses to the UNFFS questionnaire in 2020. They provided input, submitted on a voluntary basis [see [Box 4](#), from 11 regional and subregional entities²⁵].
60. [Box 4](#) provides testimony to the reality that regional/subregional partners have diverse themes of interest. From among the following main areas of engagement (all of which have some application

²⁴ E/CN.18/2022/2 paragraphs 49 to 52

²⁵ Namely (according to UNFF15 report Doc E/CN.18/2020/2) the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the African Forest Forum, the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific, the Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries and the joint Forestry and Timber Section of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and FAO.

to achieving the GFGs 2030), each Regional/Subregional partner or process has its own its own preferences at any given time. All the sub-headings of engagement below (other than funds mobilisation and action) can feed into the UNFF policy dialogue: Information analysis for policy & strategy formation; Capacity building of their constituency; Societal awareness-raising and mobilisation; Rights advocacy for weaker elements in society (e.g. on tenure, gender etc); Participating in global dialogue [including briefing constituency delegates for international events] and organising fora for their own constituencies; Exhortation to action by others; Mobilisation of financial resources – for action and for their own operations; and Action – implementation of SFM projects .

61. A quick reading suggests that in developed regions there is considerable focus on analysis, planning and strategy work; in developing countries this also applies to professional bodies, accompanied by capacity building awareness-raising. For intergovernmental entities in developing regions, practical action on the ground is always on the menu.

Box 4: UNFF15 record of IAF activities of selected regional and subregional organizations and processes as of 2020

FROM THE UNFFS:²⁶

From ECOSOC (2020): Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the contributions of the Forum’s regional and subregional partners and major groups, as well as involvement of its secretariat in major meetings. Note by the Secretariat. UNFF15, 4-8 May 2020. ECOSOC Doc E/CN.18/2020/6

III. Cooperation with regional and subregional partners

6. In the multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007–2015 (see E/2007/42, chap. II), relevant regional and subregional entities were invited to address issues and agenda items planned for each session of the Forum and to submit a concise summary of their deliberations to its secretariat prior to the relevant session. The entities were also invited to contribute to discussions at Forum sessions, in accordance with their respective mandates, while the Secretary-General was requested to prepare a report summarizing the entities’ submissions. In order to facilitate the submission of inputs, until the eleventh session, the entities responded to a questionnaire prepared by the Forum secretariat, and the inputs received were summarized and published in relevant reports of the Secretary-General, as well as being posted on the Forum’s website.

7. regional and subregional partners were invited to submit written input, on a voluntary basis, on progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals and targets using the format agreed upon in the expert group meeting held in Bangkok in January 2019¹ and following the time frame agreed by member States in terms of voluntary national reporting.

Input from regional and subregional organizations and processes

8. The Forum secretariat received written input, submitted on a voluntary basis, from 11 regional and subregional entities, namely the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the African Forest Forum, the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and

²⁶Source: Extracted as minimal sketches from ECOSOC Doc No E/CN.18/2020/6 - 7/13 20-02076

the Pacific, the Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries and the joint Forestry and Timber Section of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and FAO. All inputs received are on the Forum's website

SPECIFICS FROM THE 2020 UNFF SURVEY OF REGIONAL/SUBREGIONAL PARTNERS:

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)

- Goal 1, target 1.3: building technical capacity for biodiversity conservation in managed forests in Amazonia, which helped to facilitate the integration of forest and biodiversity conservation into the management of forests.
- Goal 2, target 2.5: project proposal to improve member States' knowledge of the state, trends and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services in the region.

African Forest Forum (AFF)

- Goal 1, all targets: studies to improve understanding, decisions and actions related to many aspects of SFM;
- building capacity in the implementation of the IAF and other multilateral environment agreements;
- briefings to enhance the participation of African delegates in UNFF meetings and other fora for international agreements, and their domestication.

Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APNet)

- officially launched the Sino-Association of Southeast Asian Nations Network for Forestry Research Institutes a channel for the capacity-building of young researchers;
- Goal 6, target 6.5: together with the Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association and the Ministry of Forest and Environment, empowering Nepali women in SFM of community forests, and in handicrafts and ecotourism.

Economic Community of Central African States (ECOWAS)

- Goal 5: elaboration of SFM plans by each member State;
- the adoption of a common regional and national set of principles, criteria and indicators of SFM to base forest management plans on;
- adoption of a regional and national chain-of-custody system for the trade in logs and processed wood products; and
- adoption of regional and national anti-poaching plans.

Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

- Goal 3: creation in 2016 of Bouba Ndjida transboundary park between Cameroon and Chad.

FAO African Forestry and Wildlife Commission

- Support to Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, a flagship initiative to combat climate change and desertification;

FAO Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission

- draft guidelines on agroforestry development for ASEAN;
- Bangladesh - develop investment plan on environment, forestry and climate change;
- Timor-Leste - develop first basic forest law.

FAO European Forestry Commission

- GFG 2- technical assistance for improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people using wood energy (e.g. in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia, for example);
- support food system, land use and restoration in Kyrgyzstan.

FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission

- Goal 5: promoting use of various strategies & forestry actions for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as biodiversity;
- sustainable forest management connectivity project on the Caribbean coast of Colombia that restored 15 million ha and benefited 15,000 families.

FAO Near East Forestry and Range Commission

- Goal 4: increased allocation of trust funds for forestry projects, including in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Tunisia, and enhanced mobilization of finances from the GEF;
- Lebanon - establishing a national forest fund for afforestation and restoration plan with 40 million trees to plant.

FAO North American Forest Commission

- Goals 1 and 2: compilation of scientific manuscripts, including “Assisted migration of forest populations for adapting trees to climate change”;
- “Convergent local adaptation to climate in distantly related conifers”;
- development of provisional climate-based seed zones for Mexico for contemporary and future climates;
- use of scenario models linking landscape-level adaptation strategies and genetics with climate change indicators, and geographic expansion of the Seed Selection Tool for application throughout North America.

FOREST EUROPE

- Goal 1: resume negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe, which was subsequently endorsed by ministers responsible for forests in Europe;
- Goal 2: web portal on valuation and payments for forest ecosystem services, including for sharing best practices in the field.

International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR)

Under the Dutch-Sino-East Africa bamboo development programme:

- the development of bamboo forest mapping for East Africa;
- support for national standards agencies in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda in adopting and developing international standards for bamboo products;
- the training of 1,450 people on bamboo product development and establishment of bamboo micro-enterprises on crafts and furniture;
- establishment of over 700 ha of bamboo plantation and the sustainable management of 850 ha of forests and farms.

Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries

- impact and vulnerability assessments in different sectors, including forests; an adaptation measures programme; and mitigation plans, including the role of forests therein.

Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum

- Shared information about its 2018 *Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report*, in which it stated that habitat loss continued to be an issue in the region;
- Integrating ecosystem-based approaches into national and sectoral plans to help reduce vulnerability to climate and non-climate risks.

Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC)

- Goals 2 and 3: connect teak smallholders with the Government and the private sector so as to secure tenure rights and improve livelihood under SFM in Laos;
- a regional training course to develop the capacities of NGO and government staff to initiate tenure reform in various countries.

The joint Forestry and Timber Section of UNECE and FAO

- Goal 4 - green jobs in the forest sector - publications and a policy brief.
- Service as secretariat for the Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector, in partnership also with ILO;
- dissemination of information on forest landscape restoration.

62. In future, priority setting on what to invest most effort into may gain from updates of *The Global Forest Goals Report*, first launched as a concise “flagship” publication on 26 April 2021, during the

sixteenth session of the Forum.²⁷It charted progress towards achieving the global forest goals, using information contained in the first round of national reports. By revealing different degrees to which the ambitions under the GFGs have been achieved, the flagship document can shift the baseline against which to set more efforts in future whether by theme or by region. Any areas of additional efforts would apply as much to regional/subregional partners as to substantive IAF members.

63. Given that the CPF is a very key player in hosting complementary technical and policy dialogues to those by the Forum as well as in undertaking field SFM action, its choice of intervention areas (below, in brief) can be used as points of convergence or complementarity by other players (including be *Regional/Subregional partners*) seeking to achieve UNSPF ambitions. The following is a brief listing of current CPF project areas:²⁸

Active Projects	Pipeline Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Streamlining Global Forest-related Reporting b. Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World c. Green Finance for Sustainable Landscapes d. Forest Landscape Restoration e. Global Forest Expert Panels f. Communicators' Network g. Forest Finance Facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Pathways for Designing a Mechanism to Incentivize Deforestation Free Landscapes and Value Chains for Green Growth i. Turning the Tide on Deforestation j. Forest Education: capacity development and knowledge sharing for sustainable development

64. An observation at a recent COMIFAC meeting [COMIFAC, GTGF Meeting, Douala, 07 - 10 March 2022] reveals that an expert committee reported many activities rely on external partners but that many other interventions remain unexecuted for lack of financing. That particular meeting had on its agenda preparations for UNFF17 attendance, including coordinating the views of the organisation's member states in international dialogue on forests. It is noteworthy that at another meeting [COMIFAC, GTGF meeting, Bangui 10 - 12 October 2022] the recommendation was made to build into national budgets the costs of participation in international fora but also of experts helping to prepare for them.

III.2.3 Feedback through Questionnaire Responses

65. Both Regional and Subregional partners and Member States responded to the questionnaires (see [Annex 5](#)). The responses collectively convey three messages:
- a. The fact that even if not explicitly linked to IAF/UNFF, the activities being undertaken serve the agenda of SFM and their achievements can be credited to GFG ambitions;
 - b. Regional/subregional entities often work in partnerships with third parties – some global like ITTO and WRI in Peru – which also permit progress; these partnership-linked activities to exist without open declaration of UNFF/IAF lineage;

²⁷As revealed in UNFF17 document Doc E/CN.18/2022/5 (Para 42 – 42).

²⁸Source: Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) (2021): **Work Plan 2021-2024 - Working together to reach the Global Forest Goals**. April 2021

- c. That Regional and subregional organisations - AFF and SADC in Africa and ACTO in Latin America have been mentioned – are assisting countries to engage with international processes such as but not exclusively the UNFF/IAF.

III.3 Other Related Findings - post-2015 activities with high field action content

66. This section will attend mostly to non-dialogue areas of engagement, which are less well documented than material reported above as main post-2015 developments involving regional/subregional partners to the IAF. Given that MTR terms of reference focus on policy processes rather than practical SFM action on the ground, material on this has been limited. Nevertheless the section will cover two main domains: (a) attempted response to the TORs request for “Progress made in implementing paragraph 27 of the resolution”; and (b) merely as an example, interventions in two key forest regions (Amazon, Congo Basin) where field action is significant in intention or reality. Box 5 is a caveat on how to deal with Para 27 of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33. There are, of course, achievements also outside these selected regions, examples including:
- a. In Central America (Panama): Recent launch of the project “The five Great Forests of Middle America” to promote local economic stability, reduce human immigration and protect the rights of local and indigenous peoples while at the same time conserving biodiversity with high ecological integrity [funding from a partnership of 5 organisations];
 - b. In North America: Since UNFF15 the North American Forestry Commission Forest Genetic Resources Working Group – FGRWG conducted research on assisted migration for tree species negatively impacted by climate change. Specifically, FGRWG is examining whether *Abies religiosa*.
67. It should be noted that progress is best assessed against expectations under the Global Forest Goals. But the picture that emerges from looking at the findings of the **The Global Forest Goals Report 2021** reveals that coverage of the GFG sub-goals appears woefully inadequate. Also, that there is poor matching between the requirements of the UNSPF 2017-2030 and the activities various parties have chosen to implement. The activities reported for the Amazon and Congo basin below do not break from this reality. It therefore seems important that in order to improve matters, the next iteration of the publication **The Global Forest Goals Report**, go deeper in identifying for greater attention the sub-goals of the GFG that are not being addressed adequately by any of the key players²⁹: Member State Governments, the CPF, Regional and subregional Partners, and Major Groups.

²⁹ Hopefully the successive issues of the document will reduce use of the very confusing assessment finding “**Many actions reported towards this target**” which is probably unclear for all parties.

Box 5: Progress made in implementing paragraph 27 of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 - a Caveat

ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, Article VIII: Regional and subregional involvement (verbatim text):

27. [ECOSOC] *Invites* relevant regional and subregional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes in a position to do so to consider, consistent with their mandates, developing or strengthening programmes on sustainable forest management, including facilitating the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and relevant aspects of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as to provide coordinated inputs and recommendations to sessions of the Forum;

Source: ECOSOC Resolution **2015/33**: ECOSOC 2015 Session, Doc 15-14033 (E)

Caveat: The exhortation in paragraph 27 is so broad that it amounts to a call for all action to implement the IAF agenda. Given that forum roles have been much attended to elsewhere, it has been subsumed under the action-oriented material on post-2015 progress.

68. Given the TOR focus on policy processes rather than practical SFM action on the ground, material on this has been reduced. Nevertheless interventions in two key forest regions (Amazon, Congo Basin) have been summarised in [Box 6](#). In each of these forest areas, policy and planning work is included among interventions but alongside practical action. Questionnaire response has not been received from COMIFAC for the Congo Basin but from a recent report, extracts have been made. The COMIFAC information shows forest governance planning attempts to act on the full value chain of SFM, from controlling resource loss/degradation to ensuring sound and legal harvest, better trade etc. Actual implementation on the ground is relatively light for COMIFAC, for reasons which need not be gone into here but are largely to do with dependence on external funding rather than own revenues to invest and to run the organisation.
69. Ideally one could also have given material from other high-profile forest regions such as the southeast Asian rain forest centred on Indonesia and the massive temperate forests centred on the Russian Federation's Siberia. But such information has not been available from forest-leaning regional/subregional organisations assessed. As implied earlier, the matter can probably be handled easiest by the FAO regional Forestry Commissions covering such major forest areas. In the recent past, these regional commissions have not adequately highlighted IAF-relevant actions on SFM in those major forest regions.
70. In other regions, field action is not prominently reported. For example for UNECE-FAO, which covers a developed region, the "Listing of Workplan elements under Europe's UNECE-FAO Integrated Programme of Work (The Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work)" reveals not field investments but extending support to it by working on information, analysis, strategy development etc. The plans of other regional/subregional partners are likely to fall on the continuum within the range between the examples of ACTO + COMIFAC (include field action) and Europe (focus upstream). As each of the regional/subregional organisations look to the future, it will be important to study the main gaps in progress highlighted in **The Global Forest Goals Report 2021**³⁰ and its successor versions. This document offers a good base for diagnosing areas of GFG achievement that remain most challenging by region and by theme.

³⁰United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (2021)

**Box 6: IAF-relevant action by regional entities – abbreviated examples
from the Amazon and Congo Basin forest regions**

In each of these two forest regions, policy and planning work is included among interventions, but alongside practical action.

A. Action interventions under the Amazon cooperation treaty organisation (ACTO) reported in response to MTR 2022 questionnaires³¹

ACTO's field and field-related action achievements:

- *Formulation and approval by the eight ACTO Member Countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela) of the "Regional Forest Program for the Amazon Basin and Region". This program is aligned with the SDGs and the Global Forest Goals.*
- *Formulation and technical approval by the eight ACTO Member Countries of the "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance for Integrated Fire Management among ACTO Member Countries (MOU MIF)" and development of actions for the formation of the "Amazon Network for Integrated Fire Management".*
- *Progress in the implementation of the Forest Module of the Amazon Regional Observatory (ARO);*
- *Implementation of CITES for tree species conservation in the Amazon Region.*
- *The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Module (MYPIMES) is being implemented.*

ACTO's ambitions:

- *Presentation of the next regional report, incorporating advances in the implementation of the "Regional Forestry Program for the Amazon Basin and Region" that will benefit the IAF.*
- *Develop a financing strategy for the ACTO Forestry Program to the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network GFFFN and manage the participation of the eight ACTO Member Countries.*
- *Institutionalize at the regional level the Dialogue of National Forestry Authorities in the Amazon Region and promote the institutional interaction of national authorities related to forestry in the Amazon Region under the "Regional Forestry Program for the Amazon Basin and Region".*

(a) Partnership with ACTO Member Countries Governments

ACTO is an intergovernmental organization formed by the eight Amazon countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela, which signed the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), becoming the only socio-environmental bloc in Latin America.

Among action linked intervention areas are:

- **Coordinator:** *regionally administers and manages the execution of activities, programs and projects based on the mandates of the Member Countries.*
- **Manager of regional and international cooperation support:** *financial sources are identified to carry out specific activities of a regional nature that have been entrusted to it based on the priorities of the Member Countries, with full respect for national sovereignty and promoting South-South cooperation.*
- **Executor of programs and projects:** *ACTO is in the process of consolidating as an agency for executing regional programs and projects.*
- **Promoter of actions:** *it strengthens the institutional and management capacity of the Member Countries according to their requirements.*

³¹Source: Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) (2022): **Substantive Response To UNFFS and Consultant Questionnaire - Midterm Review of the Effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)**. November 2022.

(b) Partnership with UNFF's Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), its Members and other Organisations: ACTO has interacted with most of the organizations that make up the CPF and has maintained close collaboration with some of them over the years.

Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD)

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

World Bank

ICRAF

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

B. IAF-Relevant Field and Field-Related Action in the Congo Basin - The Case of COMIFAC:

Elaboration of intervention areas for SFM

Thématique 1: Politique et législation forestières [Forest Policy and legislation]

Thématique 2: Légalité et Certification forestières [Legality and forest certification]

Thématique 3: Secteur artisanal et informel du bois et la foresterie décentralisée [The decentralised informal and artisanal wood-based industry]

New Themes:

- Promote forest plantations;
- Promote industrialisation of the timber value-chains in COMIFAC member countries;
- Promote/facilitate access to financing for private sector development of wood-based industries;
- Encourage secondary and tertiary wood transformation;
- Track implementation of the diverse support extended by development partners to the transitory measures to enforce the ban on log exports.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

IV.1 Conclusions

71. In a process that has few “thresholds” against which to measure progress, those that exist being global goals (such as 3% increase in global forest area), “success or otherwise” is hard to declare for the effectiveness of the regional/subregional partners engagement with the IAF and UNFF. Much success is in “soft” areas of policy, awareness-raising, mindset improvements, strategy; only part is in easily measurable action on SFM. Box 7 draws attention to some notable success areas, the reinforcement of which can usefully be at the core of the “future” agenda. Box 8 carries the perceived shortcomings, the correcting of which also be at the core of the “future” agenda.

72. That said, the activities of regional/subregional partners in UNFF are visible in the records, as reported above. The relationship brings to light concerns that individual countries cannot easily handle but which are not on the radar at global level. The review finds that most work by regional/subregional entities is NOT earmarked for the IAF. They do it for their own immediate constituencies – the IAF should be content to record the achievements as being compatible with its ambitions and goals. In return, the regional/subregional entities secure through the UNFF access to global insights, experiences, best practices, trends in policy and strategy: and contacts with potential partners worldwide among member states, the CPF and its members, the Major Groups.
73. For reasons of UN protocols, an area of partnerships with forest-bent entities in the financial, commercial private sector enterprises, philanthropies, and local authorities appears to be closed. Efforts to partner appear likely to all be treated as being potential attempts to breach the divide between them as regional/subregional entities and Major Groups. There seems to be little room to accept the possibility of working together with such organisations or groupings without them being made members, i.e. accept them as belonging to the MG classification but still work with them where there is mutual benefit.
74. There is clearly much diversity in regional/subregional partners – but this need not justify lack of more clear commitment to work together and to jointly define priorities and complementarities driven by the diverse strengths of the parties. At present, they are generally all free agents, with no indications of heading towards a coalition for common purpose. Coordination is a challenge, despite regular joint appearances at UNFF meetings and at EGMs.
75. Quite a few of the regional/subregional entities are in developing areas where policy/strategy outcomes of the UNFF are useful but where field action on SFM would be even more appreciated. These organisations are already at the coalface of action: but at a scale that could be multiplied if resources were available. It is this that tempts towards breaching the divide from working with financial entities, commercial private actors and philanthropies simply because they are Major Groups. Regional entities could be an additional channel for mobilising and channelling resources to member states and their societal institutions for SFM action.
76. The voice of the regional/subregional community could probably be higher and louder if (as they requested) they could have dedicated segments at UNFF sessions to highlight their specificities; if they could organise Regional/subregional Initiatives” for in-depth attention to their specifics; and if the Global Forest Goals Report could carry region-specific in-depth analyses. These are pre-announcements of recommendations that follow below.

Box7: Perceived successes of the regional/subregional partners engagement with the IAF

The following (all qualitatively) are among collective pro-IAF successes for the regional/subregional partners' community:

- a. Contribution and continuing engagement in publicising the IAF/UNFF and using it to encourage attention to forests;
- b. Drawing upon the messages of the IAF/UNFF to have a reference framework for planning areas of forests intervention in their member countries along the entire SFM "value-chain" from analysis/planning to strategy, policy and field action;
- c. Using the IAF/UNFF as a goldmine of global interaction with like-minded organisations outside each entity's own constituency for purposes of exchanging best practice but also partnerships that can give access to SFM investments or to funding for own corporate technical and policy/capacity building non-investment operations;
- d. In the case of entities in developing regions, attraction of external funding for IAF-compatible SFM investments or technical assistance in member countries;
- e. Exposure to the full range of forest-relevant multilateral environmental or environment and development agreements so allowing the regional/subregional partners to capture a larger range of forests opportunities than would be encountered under only the IAF/UNFF.

Box 8: Perceived shortcomings of the regional/subregional partners engagement with the IAF

At the same time, the following could be considered shortcomings at present in the engagement of the regional/subregional partners with the IAF:

- a. A tendency for each regional/subregional organisation to work in relative isolation – not lack of partnerships for its own work³² – but generalised failure to plan their work as a collective all associated with the IAF;
- b. The relative failure to attract to their "regional/subregional" family organisations with financial muscle as core and active members – such as regional/subregional development banks or philanthropies. The possibility of raising funds from domestic forest industries, forest tourism etc, or from modest taxes on trade has not been seen in the desk literature review;
- c. The tendency to attend UNFF meetings of various focus but with agendas that they do not help to shape in a significant way: in this regard, the absence of regional/subregional-led UNFF initiatives is telling;
- d. The predominant share of regional/subregional partners are intergovernmental thus probably financially assured. But in the developing world, this ignores two situations that are not rare (a) where despite member-state membership, willingness to fund own operations is inadequate - hence donor-dependence; (b) bodies of a professionals membership whose funding must be from donors. In both cases, the risk of agenda capture by the providers of funds cannot be dismissed.

³² Indeed, the rich spread of global partnerships for ACTO's own work is quite impressive – see [Annex 6\(a\)](#).

IV.2 Recommendations

77. The information from desk study, supplemented by the few questionnaire responses that came, has allowed some conclusions and perceptions to be made which are communicated in this report and are summarised just above. The attempt at recommendations leads to the following:
78. **Recommendation 1: Regional and subregional partners and UNFF sessions since UNFF12.**
- a. To further improve the engagement of the regional and subregional partners in its work, the regional/subregional partners should :
 - i. Continue regular attendance at Forum sessions and associated inter-sessional events;
 - ii. Consider launching “Regional/subregional-led UNFF initiatives” that focus on regions in rotation and feed in-depth findings into the Forum;
 - iii. Sustain support to countries in respective regions to prepare them for UNFF and related sessions under other conventions and frameworks where forests feature strongly and to domesticate the global IAF objectives and related UNFF decisions to their reality.³³
79. **Recommendation 2: Establishment or strengthening of regional and subregional processes/platforms for SFM forest policy.**
- a. **General:** Building on the successful interaction with FAO regional commissions, the regional/subregional partners should consider pursuing engagement (not necessarily as members since they are Major Groups) of the following types of institution, working with which could strengthen the IAF footprint and capacities (including financial) for achieving SFM:
 - i. Corporate regional or subregional financial institutions, such as regional development/investment banks;
 - ii. Pursue more formalised organisational umbrellas for themselves in their association with the IAF to collaborate under for mutual planning and prioritisation of their work;
 - iii. Pursue organisation of regional/subregional partner-led initiatives in support of the UNFF, to allow in-depth reflection on some of the recommendations raised above and feed into the global UNFF sessions.
 - iv. In partnership with their member countries, collectively develop or strengthen practical activities and programmes on SFM in their respective regions, and encourage them to further provide coordinated progress reporting to sessions of the Forum.

³³ Apart from using regional entities such as the African Forest Forum, UNFF could also benefit from using existing platforms in the regions such as the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment that always deal with the 3 Rio Conventions and form their common position on them for the COPs. Forests can be similarly highlighted in their work.

80. **Recommendation 3: Options for further involvement of regional and subregional partners in the work of the UNFF.**

In seeking “options” the MTR essentially makes this part of the assessment a search for recommendations. First order suggestions are presented in Box 9. The Forum in cooperation with regional/subregional partners is invited to:

- a. Take action on all assessment elements in Box 9 which amount to recommendations for consideration;
- b. Increase the potential of regional/subregional partners to help mobilise financial resources by recruiting membership of financial institutions/development banks operating also at their level. Also attract associations of local governments that can boost the delivery end performance;
- c. Find ways for regional and subregional partners to support the preparations of the successive issues of **The Global Forest Goals Report**, particularly regarding preparation of region-specific chapters to allow in-depth analysis of their specific progress and challenges inadequately covered in the global summary published at the first round;
- d. Promote deep introspection within the regional/subregional partner community to discover how best to attract the private sector to give its financial and operational muscle to the work grouping (not necessarily to be members³⁴). The approach should be sensitive to the reality that private forests companies may prefer to work under their own associations); thus special mechanisms for cooperation would have to be developed;
- e. As proposed by one member state in a questionnaire response: under the UNECE/FAO joint programme pursue inclusion of urban forestry in SFM;
- f. For the non-governmental regional/subregional partner institutions, consider creating full-time fundraising capacities but where funding comes from the banking community, private sector, or philanthropic donors (which may have own forests frameworks) perhaps avoid insisting that they operate under the UNFF umbrella;
- g. The Forum is invited to improve further the involvement of regional and subregional partners in its work, through:
 - i. Increased reciprocal attendance of Regional/Subregional partner events by the UNFF Secretariat³⁵- see Box 3;

³⁴ UN system protocol would almost certainly require their membership to be of the Major Groups category rather than regional, even if they operate as regional/subregional associations of private entities.

³⁵As examples UNFF17 document Doc E/CN.18/2022/2 mentions the since the sixteenth session of the Forum, in September 2021, the secretariat had addressed an expert level meeting of the Forest Europe Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe; it also joined the ministerial dialogue of the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan’s Africa Bamboo and Rattan Congress. Representatives of the secretariat addressed the thirty-second session of the FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (September 2021) and thirty-first session of the FAO North American Forestry Commission (November 2021). Via a Webinar, the secretariat also took part in a regional

- ii. Indirect interactions with the Forum through regional/subregional partners attending meetings of and cooperating with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests or its member organisations [such as the FAO Committee on Forestry]; and
- iii. Implement the recommendations (section 1.4.2) under item I.1 regarding initiation of IAF “Regional partner-led initiatives” and item I.2 and I.3 regarding periodic inclusion of regional/subregional focus themes in future re-issues of the **The Global Forest Goals Report 2021**.

Box 9: Further involvement of regional and subregional partners in the work of the UNFF - Options to include for Consideration among recommendations.

The following items are therefore best considered alongside “recommendations”:

- a. Forests are of core interest to an expanded set of constituencies above and beyond the IAF umbrella. In frequently paying attention to the Rio conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change plus initiatives such as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The UNFF exposes regional/subregional partners to the full spectrum of forest opportunities and challenges for their constituencies.
- b. The “selling” of forests as an important area of concern requiring action from all mankind, which has led to implantation of forests agendas, programmes and institutionalised sections within pan-sectoral institutions may be among the most important results of UNFF work. Doubling down on encouraging this trend, so that “the forests agenda” has complementary homes beyond its narrow sectoral origins can continue to offer many further opportunities for cooperation between the UNFF and regional/subregional partners.
- c. Other potentially huge areas of opportunity for future involvement of regional and subregional partners may take four forms:
 - i. increased reciprocal attendance of Regional/Subregional partner events by the UNFF Secretariat.³⁶ A pertinent platform for mutual attendance by the UNFFS and the regional/subregional partners in the lead-up to the SDG summit and beyond could be the Regional fora for Sustainable Development (hosted by UN Regional Economic Commissions). The UN economic commissions in all regions could be helped by the regional/subregional partners to highlight more forest-related issues in their work (only the UNECE has a technical committee on forestry);
 - ii. Indirect interactions with the Forum through regional/subregional partners attending meetings of and cooperating with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests or its member organisations;
 - iii. Initiation by the UNFF regional/subregional partners of “Regional partner-led initiatives” to allow the UNFF process to study the specificities of SFM promotion at their multi-country level in their respective regions; and

forest programme for the basin and Amazon region event organised by the Permanent Secretariat of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (December 2021).

³⁶As examples UNFF17 document Doc E/CN.18/2022/2 mentions the since the sixteenth session of the Forum, in September 2021, the secretariat had addressed an expert level meeting of the Forest Europe Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe; it also joined the ministerial dialogue of the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan’s Africa Bamboo and Rattan Congress. Representatives of the secretariat addressed the thirty-second session of the FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (September 2021) and thirty-first session of the FAO North American Forestry Commission (November 2021). Via a Webinar, the secretariat also took part in a regional forest programme for the basin and Amazon region event organised by the Permanent Secretariat of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (December 2021).

- iv. Periodic inclusion of regional/subregional partner focus themes in the UNDESA flagship publication “Global Forest Goals Report” on implementation of the UNSPF.
- d. Other ambitions for “further involvement of regional/subregional partners” could also be considered in terms of quality rather than quantity. If ways to comply with apparently hard UN protocols can be found, they could take the form of concerted efforts to partner³⁷ with regional level groupings/associations for financial institutions (i.e. development banks), the commercial private sector, philanthropies (with less likelihood of success), and local authorities. Breakthroughs in these areas could change the financial muscle of the game but also the effectiveness of outreach to society.

³⁷**Not necessarily get them as members** but working partners or funders (which is a complex issue in the UN), since they are Major Groups.

Annex 1: CONTACTS FOR THE CONSULTANT COMPLEMENTARY QUESTIONNAIRE

[03 October 2022]

MESSAGE: For practical reasons, I send this message to you as a group rather than individually; my apologies.

Greetings from Malawi; my name is Mafa Chipeta, contacting you as a consultant for the UNFF Secretariat-managed independent **Assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests in Preparation for the Midterm Review of its Effectiveness by the UN Forum on Forests**. I have been retained by the UNFF Secretariat to contribute material under **topic I** (Involvement of regional and subregional partners) and **topic J** (Involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders). My draft report should be practically in final by mid-November 2022.

Under cover of a 9 August 2022 letter, **UNFF18 Chair Zephyrin Maniratanga** (copy attached separately) already sent you a consolidated questionnaire that covers all aspects of the ongoing assessment. I assume you have already received that consolidated questionnaire so my contacting you is to build on it (so far only government replies have started to come in).

I now appeal to you to give any IAF assessment-relevant supplementary material for the period since UNFF12. *I believe that your replies will simply sharpen what you may already have included in responding to the UNFF18 Chair's questionnaire.*

Am available for further interaction by email, WhatsApp, Phone (**contact details on attached WORD note**).

Sincerely, Mafa E. Chipeta

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FOREST EUROPE (Ministerial Conference on the protection of Forests in Europe)

DISTRIBUTION: Regional/Subregional partners (continued)	
<p>International Model Forest Network imfn@imfn.net;</p> <p>International Network for Bamboo and Rattan – INBAR bescardo@inbar.int; jdurai@inbar.int; wmlu@inbar.int</p> <p>Six regional forestry commissions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FAO African Forestry and Wildlife Commission</i> • <i>FAO Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission</i> • <i>FAO European Forestry Commission</i> • <i>FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission</i> • <i>FAO North American Forest Commission</i> • <i>FAO Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC)</i> <p>Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific [also known as the Centre for People and Forests]</p> <p>Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)</p>	<p>Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum</p> <p>Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries</p> <p>The Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (The Montréal Process)</p> <p>The joint Forestry and Timber Section of UNECE and FAO</p> <p>UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section</p>

**Annex 2: FOLLOW-UP ON QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES
FROM A SAMPLING OF REGIONAL/SUBREGIONAL PARTNERS**

Organisation	Contact	Call at	Outcome
AFRICAN UNION	+251 115517700 (ask for Harsen NYAMBE - HQ Phone)	08:30	FAILED: Called 20 Oct (twice); 21 Oct (twice); 03 Nov (once: no reply or call back.
COMIFAC	+237 2221 3510, +237 2221 3511, +222 205651/52 (ask for????) Cameroon	10:30	PENDING: On 21 Oct tried 3 numbers from website: proved wrong. Got Secretaire Executif Adjoint email from a meeting report. Reached him who promised feedback after return from holiday 28 Oct. As of 3 Nov, no input.
PACIFIC COMMUNITY	Secretariat, Noumea New Caledonia +687 26 20 00 (ask for Emil, Jalesi, or Sairusi)	00:00	FAILED: On 21/22 Oct (23:25hrs Malawi time) called once and reached switchboard: people on UNFF focal point list proved unreachable; Gmailed documents for attention of switchboard to pass on to best person. No feedback.
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM	Secretary General Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Suva, Fiji. Telephone: (+679) 331 2600 (ask for Jordie, Simon, or Cristelle)	23:00	FAILED: On 21 Oct called twice (23:05, 23:17hrs Malawi time) and reached switchboard: 2 of 3 people on UNFF focal point list (Simon, Cristelle) no longer in secretariat; Gmailed documents for attention of switchboard to pass on to best person. No feedback.
SADC	Gaborone, Botswana. Tel: +267 395 1863 (ask for Moses Chakanga)	09:30	EVENTUALLY INPUT RECEIVED: Three calls to general switchboard on 20 Oct (08:14, 09:14, 10:51; two calls 21 Oct (08:11, 09:54hrs). Contacted another SADC department which advised focal point retired. Traced and talked to him in Zambia who gave new person: succeeded at last.
MONTREAL PROCESS	+1 202-797-3000(ask for Counsellor Jesse Mahoney at Australian Embassy in Washington DC)	15:30	FAILED: Tried fone twice on 21 Oct (17:11, 17:15) not reachable – absent from duty station. Sent Gmail and replied later to give alternative people in China and Australia: both no reply to gmails.

Annex 3: LIST OF CONSULTANTS AND THEIR ASSIGNMENTS A-J

(as circulated by UNFF18 Chair, 9 August 2022)

The following consultants have been hired to assist in the preparation of the relevant background materials in preparation for the IAF midterm review. To reduce duplication and ensure efficiency, the assessments on the identified areas in the UNFF17 resolution are grouped into six assessments. The names and contact information of the consultants who are carrying out these assignments are provided below.

Assessment	Components of the IAF mid-term review as identified in the Annex of the UNFF17 resolution	Name of consultants	E-mail addresses
<u>Assessment1:</u>	A.UNFF and its Members	Mr. Ivan Tomaselli	itomaselli@stcp.com.br
	G. Contributions of the UNFF to the 2030 Agenda	Ms. Stephanie Caswell	caswellsj@aol.com
<u>Assessment2:</u>	B. UNFF Secretariat E. UNFF trust fund	Mr. Tiega Anada	tiegaea@outlook.com
	H. Communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF (COS)	Mr. David Henderson-Howat	hendersonhowat@gmail.com
<u>Assessment3:</u>	C. Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)	Mr. Alhassan Atta	anattah@yahoo.com
		Mr. Thom Sprenger	thom.sprenger@tpiglobal.org
<u>Assessment4:</u>	D. Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN),with exception of the element for Study on Financial Flow to Forests under D.	Mr. Jorge Illueca	j_illueca@yahoo.com
	Study on Financial Flow to Forests under D	Ms. Astrid Zabel	astrid.zabel@unibe.ch
<u>Assessment5:</u>	F. Implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 (UNSPF)	Mr. Kit Prins	kit.prins@gmail.com-
<u>Assessment6:</u>	I. Involvement of regional and subregional partners	Mr. Mafa Chipeta	emchipeta@gmail.com
	J. Involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders		

Annex 4: CONSULTANT BIO: MAFA E. CHIPETA

MAFA E. CHIPETA: Malawian, born 07 February 1950; holds first class B. Sc Hons forestry and M. Sc degrees in forest products and industry planning from the University of Wales, UK.

National Career started 1982 initially in forestry including Malawi government and private sector forestry research, management of forests and later industrial wood processing enterprises.

International Career initially in forestry but eventually dominated by agricultural and food security policy and strategy, with residential postings under the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Italy and Uganda. Highlights:

- Served as UN system forestry focal point for follow-up to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED – the Rio Earth Summit) for its review by third Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development;
- Deputy Director-General of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia 1998-2001 (on secondment from FAO);
- FAO Chief of (global) Policy Assistance Service;
- Director of Policy Assistance 2002-2007;
- First FAO Focal Point for NEPAD - synthesised the *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme* (CAADP) and orchestrated its adoption by the African Union and FAO support to it;
- 2007-2010 – Founding FAO Subregional Coordinator for Eastern Africa (Addis Ababa); also served as FAO Representative to the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and Ethiopia; **retired in 2010** at end of service in Addis Ababa.

Since retirement, undertaken diverse consultancy assignments including for the UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs (UN-DESA) [including for review of the International Arrangement on Forests]. Others have been:

- USAID/Tufts University – Ethiopia agricultural programme and policy review;
- JICA - South Sudan Forestry;
- FAO (sundry tasks);
- World Bank – Ethiopia agricultural development prioritisation;
- Dutch Embassy in Ethiopia – country strategy for Dutch agricultural assistance;
- IUCN – proposal as representative;
- Instituto Lula (Brazil) – areas of focus Brazil/Africa cooperation;
- UN Major Groups Partnership on Forests – role of civil society in international forestry policy dialogue;
- Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry – land grabs in Africa;
- African Union - Agenda to 2025, leading to Malabo Declaration;
- IGAD/FAO - Horn of Africa agriculture/food security;
- UN-ECA – Africa development ambition;
- SADC – synthesis of Common Agricultural Policy;
- African Forestry Forum (AFF) - chair of Programme Steering and Advisory Committee;
- Purpose Group International (Canada) – Mozambique forestry opportunities;
- FAO Malawi – keynote to IFPRI Malawi seminar on agricultural input subsidies: achieving focus in Malawi's future agricultural growth;
- Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) – Studies on: Investment; forestry initiative; Proposed launch of Discussion Documents series; Agricultural Subsidies review; Agricultural trade; Subregional agricultural performance; 5-year SACAU strategy;
- UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs (UN-DESA): Team Member 2014 Review of the IAF; support to Major Groups in Forestry; Development of South African GCF proposal for forestry sector carbon sequestration and trading regime to counter excessive power sector carbon release;
- IFAD – Team Member for Corporate Level Evaluation of decentralisation.

Annex 5: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES ON REGIONAL/SUBREGIONAL UNFF PARTNERS

Question I-1: In your view, what are the top three areas in which regional and subregional partners have made the most important contributions to SFM policy development and dialogue since the 15th session of the UNFF? / *En su opinión, ¿cuáles son las tres principales esferas en las que los asociados regionales y subregionales han hecho las contribuciones más importantes a la formulación de políticas y el diálogo sobre ordenación sostenible de los bosques desde el 15^o período de sesiones del FNUB?*

CHILDREN & YOUTH MG:

- *Delivered policy proposals through statements at UNFF sessions.*
- *Delivered interventions on issue-specific expert group meetings together with other intersessional events.*
- *Members have participated in national voluntary reporting and made national voluntary contributions to support policy development initiatives.*

FAO:

FAO's Regional Forestry Commissions have been providing a platform for discussing UNFF-related topics in a regional setup. It has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the Forum together with the recommendation to consider these bodies as a means to strengthen the regional dimension of UNFF. In spite of the progress made, this opportunity has yet to be tapped into and more effective collaboration and deeper involvement of the commissions could be envisaged for stronger regional involvement.

For all regions:

- *Goal 1 (reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM)*
- *Goal 4 (significantly increase financial resources for SFM and strengthen S&T cooperation);*
- *Goal 6 (enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues).*

Specifically for the European Forestry Commission and the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry:

- *the circularity concept in forestry and forest products;*
- *urban forestry;*
- *forest landscape restoration*

FOREST EUROPE (FE):

Regional and subregional partners are essential to give a complete picture of the situation of forests worldwide.

[Regarding top three areas of greatest contribution]³⁸ In our understanding the most relevant areas were:

- *Further improvement of data quality and data completeness to report on SFM.*
- *Further work on key indicators.*
- *Report on regional forest situation.*

JAMAICA (JCA)

- *Policy Dialogue.*
- *Technical Cooperation/Capacity.*

³⁸Text in square brackets is added by the author for clarity.

KENYA (K)

- *Development of the EAC forest Policy and climate change strategy.*
- *Convening of the EAC sectoral council on Environment and Natural resources meetings.*

MALAWI (MW)

- *Holding preparatory meetings to UNFF sessions e.g. AFF.*
- *Participating in high level policy meetings e.g. SADC.*
- *Research in forestry and related issues.*

MEXICO (MX)³⁹

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Los intercambios de experiencias y lecciones aprendidas que se han llevado a cabo con la participación de los asociados regionales y subregionales; • la promoción de una mayor participación de los asociados regionales y subregionales en los procesos de reporte y evaluación del UNFF; • la promoción del desarrollo de mejores políticas enfocadas para beneficiar a los pequeños propietarios, especialmente a las comunidades locales y pueblos indígenas. |
|--|
- *The exchange of experience and lessons to learn have been raised to the front by the participation of regional and subregional partners.*
 - *The push to have greater participation of regional and subregional partners in the UNFF reporting and evaluation.*
 - *The pursuit of better policies focused on benefiting small entrepreneurs, especially in local communities and among indigenous people.*

ACTO [See⁴⁰]:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gobernanza forestal • Reducción de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero mediante la disminución de las tasas de degradación forestal y aumento de la restauración forestal. • Manejo Forestal Sostenible que promueva el desarrollo regional, nacional y local y que contribuya a los medios de vida de las poblaciones locales. |
|--|

Annex 6(a) gives details of ACTO achievements, including in matters of policy development and dialogue. ACTO has been active in policy dialogue globally but also among its 8 member countries:

- *Forest governance.*
- *Reduction of greenhouse gases through reduction of forest degradation and increased forest restoration.*
- *Sustainable management of forests which promotes development at regional, national and local levels and also supports local livelihoods.*

In terms of international dialogue, ACTO has achieved:

- *Submission of Regional Reports to UNFF10, UNFF11, and UNFF15.*
- *Participation in the different sessions of the UNFF, with greater participation throughout the Forum's sessions.*
- *Adoption of the IAF for the formulation of the Regional Programs or Projects of each regional organization.*

³⁹ For inputs from Spanish-speaking countries, the original response is kept in its language, in case this paper's author did not get the informal translation quite right.

⁴⁰ Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) (a) 2020: **ACTO'S Contributions To Achieving The Biennium 2021-2022 Thematic Priorities Related To Global Forest Goals (GFGS) 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6 And Their Associated Targets; and 2022: Substantive Response To UNFFS and Consultant Questionnaire - Midterm Review of the Effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF).** November 2022

PANAMA:

- Las tres esferas en la que se han consolidado los países de la región en materia de política ambiental ha sido, El Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA), desde su fundación el 13 de diciembre de 1993, mediante Protocolo a la Carta de la Organización de Estados Centroamericanos (ODECA), inició el puente de unión y consenso de 8 países que compartes no solo sus fronteras, sino sus lazos de amistad.
- La Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo por sus siglas (CCAD), fue constituida con el fin de desarrollar un régimen de cooperación e integración ambiental a nivel de los países de la región.
- El Consejo Centroamericana de Bosques y Áreas Protegidas (CCAB), integrado por los directores forestales y de áreas protegidas, encaminados en el consenso de estrategias regionales.

The three areas under which the countries of the región have converged in matters of environmental policy are:

- *The system of Central American Integration (SICA) from its launch on 13 December 1993 (through the Charter of the Organisation of Central American States protocol (ODECA) – they have consensus of 8 countries not only that share boundaries but bonds of friendship.*
- *The Central American Council of Forests and Protected Areas (CCAB) the membership of which consists of directors of forests and of protected areas that jointly operate under the guidance of regional strategies.*

PERU - Preguntal-I.1:

- El Perú suscribe los compromisos e iniciativas mundiales para la restauración y gestión sostenible de los bosques formando parte de la Iniciativa 20x20.
- Igualmente, trabaja proyectos con la Organización Internacional de las Maderas Tropicales (OIMT).
- A nivel regional, destacan los compromisos y experiencias en espacios de concertación y sinergias como el Programa de Bosques de la Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica (OTCA) y
- los Acuerdos Binacionales y Gabinetes Ministeriales entre países de América Latina.

- *Peru is a party to global agreements and initiatives for restoration and sustainable management of forests; it is part of the World Resources Institute (WRI)'s **Initiative 20x20**⁴¹;*
- *Equally, Peru works on projects with the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO);*
- *Bilateral agreements and among Ministerial cabinets between Latin American countries.*

SADC - Question I-1:

- *The revision of the SADC forestry strategy 2020-2030*
- *Development of the forestry guidelines on participatory forest management, forest fire management and regional information forestry systems under the project forest conservation and sustainable management of forest resources in southern Africa.*
- *Capacity building for Member states on sustainable forest management*

SWITZERLAND

- *EFI Integrate Network: development of policy briefs on the integration of SFM and biodiversity*
- *UNECE/FAO joint programme: support of recommendations for inclusion of urban forestry in SFM*
- *Forest Europe: starting a process of adapting criteria and indicators for SFM due to impact of climate change*

USA - Question I-1:

⁴¹**Initiative 20x20** is an effort led by **17 countries** seeking to change the dynamics of land degradation in Latin America and the Caribbean by beginning to protect and restore 50 million hectares of forests farms, pasture and other landscapes by 2030. In total, that's an area of land roughly the size of France. The initiative — launched formally at COP 20 in Lima — supports the Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration on Forests, two global initiatives that are encouraging countries to restore 350 million hectares by 2030. Initiative 20x20 is supported by more than 120 technical organizations and institutions, as well as a coalition of impact investors and private funds deploying \$2.5 billion in private investment.

[Source:<https://www.wri.org/initiatives/initiative-20x20#:~:text=Initiative%2020x20%20is%20an%20effort,roughly%20the%20size%20of%20France>]

- *In the North American region, important areas of collaboration and contribution to SFM are wildfire, genetics, trade, and inventory and monitoring.*
- *A top area of exchange of regional resources between Canada, Mexico, and the United States is through the FAO North American Forest Commission (NAFC) Fire Management Working Group. Cooperation on firefighting along the U.S.-Mexico border allows both countries to work together on the suppression of fire. Agreements between all three countries have led to coordinated wildfire policy and training requirements and the exchange of fire-fighters during peak fire incidents.*
- *APEC's Expert Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT) covers the Pacific region and over 2 billion hectares of forest cover and significant amount of trade in forest products. EGILAT's steps to combat illegal logging and associated trade, promote trade in legally harvested forest products, and support capacities in member economies is a major contribution to SFM policy development and dialogue.*

Question I-2: What are prime examples of regional and subregional partners successfully contributing to the practical achievement of GFGs under the UNSPF 2017-2030?*[alone or in partnership with governments or business community]* / **Pregunta I-2: ¿Cuáles son los principales ejemplos de asociados regionales y subregionales que contribuyen con éxito al logro práctico de los GFG en el marco del UNSPF 2017-2030?***[solo o en asociación con gobiernos o comunidad empresarial]*

CHILDREN & YOUTH MG:

- *Members have made legislations aimed at reducing and halting deforestation and forest degradation.*
- *Employed measures to increase the area of protected forests and improve traceability of products to limit utilisation of those from sources under unsustainable forest management.*
- *Developed improved financing mechanisms that support achievement of global forest goals together with increased allocations for forest management and efforts to attract external funding for various activities.*
- *Regional and subregional processes have regularly convened to discuss how to coherently approach contemporary issues affecting forest management in their localities.*

FAO:

- *The FAO Regional Forestry Commissions*
- *UNECE*
- *EFI*
- *Forest Europe*
- *ASEAN*

MALAWI:

- *African Forest Forum*
- *SADC*

MEXICO:

Uno de los ejemplos ha sido su vinculación con los grupos regionales forestales de la FAO mediante el cual se promueven sinergias entre las acciones de colaboración regional con el logro de los objetivos forestales mundiales del FNUB.

- *One of the examples has been linking up with FAO regional forestry groups (commission) with which to secure synergies between collaborative regional actions and global objectives under the UNFF.*

ACTO:

- La Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica ha contribuido exitosamente al logro de los Objetivos Forestales Mundiales. Sus acciones se encuentran descritas en la respuesta a la pregunta **Pregunta F-1** de este mismo documento.
- Otros ejemplos, son la FAO (Secretarías de la Sede y de las Comisiones Forestales Regionales), la Red de Asia y el Pacífico para la Gestión y Rehabilitación Forestal Sostenible (APFNet) y la Red Internacional para el Bambú y el Ratán (INBAR).

Annex 6(a) gives details of ACTO achievements, including in matters of achieving practical implementation of the GFGs. The Annex will show that ACTO has been active in practical implementation (supported by policy, planning, institutional and capacity development) in its 8 member countries:

- *The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization has been consistently and permanently supporting the achievement of the Global Forest Goals.*
- *The Amazon Cooperation Treaty has successfully contributed to the global forest objectives. Its actions have been described in response to question F-1 of the UNFF questionnaire.*
- *Other examples include the FAO (both headquarters and its Regional Forestry Commissions), the APNet, and INBAR.*

Sample achievements in summary on the ground (details in **Annex 6a**) are:

- *development of the 1st Virtual Forum on the potential of NTFPs for a Bioeconomy in Latin America and the Caribbean "BioForetALC"*
- *ACTO inputs on the use of natural products in the Amazon Region to work under the Cooperation Agreement in force between ACTO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), which produces the "Biennial Report on the State and Prospects of the Bioeconomy in Latin America and the Caribbean";*
- *Joint work with the CITES Authorities and Forestry Authorities of the ACTO countries on "Support for the implementation of CITES for Amazon tree species".*

PANAMA:

- Sin duda alguna, el lanzamiento más reciente del proyecto, Los Cinco Grandes Bosques de Mesoamérica, que tiene como objetivo promover la estabilidad económica local, disminuir la migración humana y proteger los derechos de los pueblos locales e indígenas, conservando al mismo tiempo la biodiversidad y los bosques con alta integridad ecológica.
- Este proyecto cuenta con el financiamiento de la Unión Europea a través del programa DeSira (Desarrollo de Innovación Inteligente a través de la Investigación en Agricultura). Con este apoyo de la UE, la WCS y la CCAD, Wild, AMPB, gobiernos, sociedad civil, socios de investigación y pueblos indígenas ayudaran a crear un modelo con miras replicables que transformaran la agricultura y los sistemas alimentarios en estos cinco grandes bosques.

- *Without doubt, the very recent launch of the project "The five Great Forests of Middle America", whose object is to promote local economic stability, reduce human immigration and protect the rights of local and indigenous peoples while at the same time conserving biodiversity with high ecological integrity.*
- *This project is being funded by the European Union under its DeSira programme (Development of Intelligent Innovation through Investment in Agriculture). With this support of the EU, the [Wildlife Conservation Society \(WCS\)](#) and the CCAD,⁴² Wild, AMPB⁴³, governments, civil society, research institutions and indigenous people help to create a model with a legacy of replicable results that are transforming agriculture and food systems in these five forests.*

⁴²Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo (Spanish: **Central American Commission for Environment and Development**).

⁴³[Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests](#)

SADC:

- *The development of the Great Green Wall initiative plays a role for the region especially on the protection, restoration, and prevention of deforestation and degradation in the region among others.*

SWITZERLAND:

- *UNECE: urban forestry initiative with the organisation “Trees in cities”*

USA:

- *[the FAO North American Forestry Commission] (NAFC) has raised the political profile of the GFGs within in the North American region by broadly discussing and examining the UNSPF with its three forest ministerial leaders.*
- *On the technical level, since UNFF15 the NAFC Forest Genetic Resources Working Group (FGRWG) conducted research on assisted migration for tree species negatively impacted by climate change. Specifically, FGRWG is examining whether *Abies religiosa*, the endemic fir species in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve and a wintering habitat for the charismatic monarch butterfly, can survive at higher elevations due to changing climatic conditions. Preliminary results indicate an upwards shift is doable, with additional moderate mortality.*
- *The FGRWG also created a Spanish and English bilingual online Seedlot Selection Tool to inform seed planting decision-making in a changing climate. The web tool accounts for future climate models and provides suggestions for matching planting locations and appropriate seedlots.*
- *Another practical achievement is the NAFC Inventory and Monitoring Working Group, which developed a North American Forest Database in 2019, which establishes a platform for enhanced forest inventory and monitoring data integration and complements the national forest assessment tools of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, as well as the FAO Forest Resources Assessment (FRA).*

Question I-3: Given the power for good of the business and philanthropic communities, what are the key efforts of regional and subregional partners to partner with them? [*both within and outside the Business Council for Sustainable Development (UN-BCSD)*] / **Pregunta I-3:** Dado el poder para el bien de las comunidades empresariales y filantrópicas, ¿cuáles son los esfuerzos clave de los socios regionales y subregionales para asociarse con ellos? [*tanto dentro como fuera del Consejo Empresarial para el Desarrollo Sostenible (UN-BCSD)*]

FAO:

- ***EFC:** Strong cooperation with private sector on forest products market and circular economy (in forest products market).*
- ***LACF:** Supports the identification of new markets for wood and non-wood forestry products and that the countries promote incentives for restoration and collaborates with the private sector to channel investment into restoration. Supports countries in accessing funding for restoration actions and developing public/private partnerships to facilitate investments in restoration processes.*

FOREST EUROPE:

- *We have no experience here*

MALAWI:

- *Mobilization of resources for SFM*
- *Enhancing value addition and marketing of wood and wood products as well as non-timber forest products*

- *The key effort for the regional and subregional partners to partner with philanthropic communities will be to engage with them and agree upon on the agreement of partnership especially on Resource mobilisation and capacity buildings for uplifting the communities on the sustainable development of forestry in the region.*

MEXICO:

Generar iniciativas y acercamientos directos para facilitar las contribuciones del sector privado y de las organizaciones filantrópicas y alentarlos a contribuir con cumplimiento de los objetivos forestales mundiales.

- *Start direct initiatives and approaches to facilitate the contributions of the private sector and of philanthropic organisations and encourage them to contribute to compliance with global forest objectives.*

ACTO:

Si bien las comunidades empresariales y filantrópicas proveen aportes económicos y técnicos para acciones sobre los bosques, en algunos casos la aceptación de dichos aportes por parte de organizaciones regionales puede estar limitada por las normativas, legislación, voluntad política y soberanía de los países miembros de las organizaciones.

Annex 6(a) gives details of OCTA achievements in its 8 member countries, including in matters of partnering or otherwise engaging entrepreneurial businesses and philanthropies, on which more information is available in the Annex:

- *While the business and philanthropic communities provide financial and technical inputs for actions on forests, in some cases the acceptance of such inputs by regional organizations may be limited by the regulations, legislation, political will and sovereignty of the organizations' member countries.*
- *The Amazon Regional Observatory (ACTO 11.2021);*
- *The ARO's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Module (MYPIMES) is currently being implemented;*
- *Establishment and operation of the Regional Platform for Exchange and Knowledge (PRIC 2019) that among others offers training and virtual courses on SFM;*
- *Implementation of CITES for tree species conservation in the Amazon Region.*
- *On matters of mobilising financing for SFM and related initiatives, OCTA: Promotion of the importance and impacts of the participation of the Regional and Subregional Groups in the IAF dialogue;*
- *Development of financial proposals with projections of amounts to be funded by UN Member States for the development of IAF/MFS related dialogue forums;*
- *Develop a funding strategy for the ACTO Forestry Program to the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network GFFFN, and management for the participation of the eight ACTO Member Countries;*
- *Formulation of projects to address the implementation of specific strategic actions.*
- *Have funded projects evaluated with indicators to identify their contribution to the IAF.*

PANAMA:

Contamos con el caso de Sumarse-Pacto Global por Panamá, la mesa de trabajo "Diseño de Estrategia de RSE" –en adelante denominada DERSE- dió inicio en el año 2015. A cinco años de su realización y con más de ochenta empresas participando en la misma, se ha generado una masa crítica de experiencia que se ha podido plasmar en una metodología paso a paso que siguiendo los estándares internacionales en materia de sostenibilidad ha resultado ser efectiva y de impacto en las empresas en su aporte al desarrollo sostenible.

- *We observe the case of Sumarse-Pacto Global por Panamá,⁴⁴ which Sumarse-Pacto Global por Panamá, which designed a strategy for Corporate Social Responsibility – called DERSE – at the beginning of 2015. Five years later, over 80 businesses are participating in it and they have accumulated much experience that has been retained in a methodology that*

⁴⁴Sumarse es la organización que impulsa la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial (RSE) en Panamá/ Sumarse is the organisation that is driving Corporate Social Responsibility in Panama.

follows international standards in matters of sustainability. It has proved very effective and its impact in the businesses and in its contribution to sustainable development.

USA:

- *The Amazon region and the Africa Forest Forum have provided key updates at past UNFF sessions and produce important policy briefs, reports, and factsheets.*
- *Africa Forest Forum's factsheet, "Leveraging Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Enhancement of the Ghanaian Forest Products Sector" is one recent example. We encourage the continued exploration of PPPs and efforts with the business and philanthropic communities.*

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