

**United Nations Forum on Forests  
Minutes of the Second Meeting of UNFF18 Bureau  
5 December 2022 (10:00am–1:00pm)**

**UN Secretariat Main Building in New York- Room S1519**

**Participation**

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

**UNFF Secretariat:** Ms. Juliette Biao, Mr. Hossein Moeini Meybodi, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, Ms. Mita Sen, Mr. Ryo Nakamura

**UNFF Secretary:** Mr. Ziad Mahmassani, Ms. Jori Joergensen

**Permanent Mission of Türkiye:** Ms. Damla Dogan Uludag, Liaison Officer at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Türkiye to the United Nations, accompanying Mr. Belen

**Key Actions/Decisions**

- 1. The Bureau approved the provisional organization of work for UNFF18 and agreed to include a panel by the private sector under agenda item 3C(ii) on Tuesday 9 May 2023. It also decided that “forests, energy, and livelihoods” would be discussed under agenda item 5 on emerging issues during UNFF18.**
- 2. Considering the upcoming UN General Assembly SDG Summit in September 2023, the Bureau decided to take the initiative to organize an event on “Forests, Energy and Livelihoods” in advance of UNFF18.**
- 3. The UNFF Secretariat will prepare a concise communication product to showcase the contributions of forests to the SDGs using concrete data and statistics.**

## **Provisional Agenda**

- 1. Adoption of the provisional agenda**
- 2. Update on the composition of the UNFF18 Bureau**
- 3. Update by UNFF Bureau members on their activities**
- 4. Preparations for UNFF18:**
  - a. Update on the modalities and discussions on the organization of work of UNFF18
  - b. Update on UNFF18 expected outcomes
  - c. Update on the preparations of UNFF18 official documents
  - d. Update on the pilot phase for the use of the refined format for national reporting
- 5. Intersessional activities in preparations for the midterm review of the IAF:**
  - a. Update on the Bangkok Expert Group Meeting
  - b. Update on the CPF Organization-Led Initiative
  - c. Update on the Global Workshop on National Reporting
- 6. Preparations for the 2023 session of the HLPF, and the SDG Summit in September 2023:**
  - a. Letter from the ECOSOC President inviting UNFF to provide an input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2023
  - b. Discussions on UNFF18 Bureau-led event on Energy, Forests & livelihoods
- 7. Update on the joint meeting of the ECOSOC President and Chairs of Functional Commissions and recommendations on the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies**
- 8. Briefing on major forest related events:**
  - a. UNFF participation in UNFCCC COP27- lessons learned in terms of increasing UNFF's visibility.
  - b. Briefing on the activities of UNFF during the next COP15 of CBD
  - c. Briefing on the International Day of Forest 2023.

## **1. Adoption of the provisional agenda**

Ambassador Maniratanga, Chair of the UNFF18 Bureau, welcomed members of the Bureau, the UNFF Secretariat, the UNFF Secretary and the deputy Secretary to the second meeting of the UNFF18 Bureau. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting. Mr. Ismail Belen, the Vice-Chair on behalf of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) proposed to add an item to update on the activities of the UNFF Bureau members, and to discuss preparations for the 2023 session of the HLPF. The provisional agenda was adopted, as amended.

## **2. Update on the composition of the UNFF18 Bureau**

Mr. Ziad Mahmassani, The Secretary of the Forum informed that no nominations had yet been received from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) for the position of Vice-Chair. However, there were two countries from the Eastern European Group (EEG), which have submitted their candidacy for the position of Vice-Chair in the Bureau of UNFF18. As there are two candidacies for the one vacancy from among EEG States, a secret-ballot vote would be conducted during the second meeting of UNFF18, on 8 May 2023 to fill the vacancy. The Bureau thanked the Secretary of the Forum for the information provided including on the options for ensuring the participation of the two groups for which vacancies remain and underlined that the presence of Bureau Members for GRULAC and EEG was very essential for a balanced representation. The Bureau kindly requested the Secretary of the Forum to follow up on an appropriate solution. Mr. Belen also touched upon the importance of the UNFF official website and thanked the Secretariat for keeping the website updated and detailed.

## **3. Update by UNFF Bureau members on their activities**

Mr. Belen informed that he regularly communicated with his constituency and updated them via various communication means including virtual meetings. He stated that some countries conveyed their views and suggestions verbally during the meetings and some countries in written form. He informed of the desire of his constituency for a more interactive and participatory programme for UNFF18, including through the organization of exhibits and side events, with the involvement of partners from outside the forestry sector. Mr. Javad Momeni, the Vice-Chair from Asia-Pacific Group shared his experience working with his constituency. He stated that members of his constituency regularly shared their concern with him, and he followed up on those issues in close consultation with the Secretariat and members of the Bureau. He also agreed with Mr. Belen's view for having a more interactive UNFF18, if, such activities were within UNFF mandates. The Secretariat provided explanations on the rules and conditions for organizing exhibits at UNHQ and suggested that interested Members of the Forum consider organizing side events during UNFF18, and invite relevant companies and entities as speakers, and presenters.

## **4. Preparations for UNFF18**

### **a. Update on the modalities and discussions on the organization of work of UNFF18**

The Secretary of the Forum provided explanations on the modalities for UNFF18. He informed that as there were no longer any COVID-related distancing or occupancy restrictions in the UN premises in New York, at present, UNFF18 would meet in-person during the regular working hours of meetings in UNHQ in New York in conference room 4. Ms. Juliette Biao, the Director of the UNFF Secretariat also advised that in preparing the proposed provisional organization of work of UNFF18, the Secretariat took into account the responses by Members and stakeholders to the UNFF17 survey in the proposed organization of work. In this respect, general discussion is included in the opening meeting of UNFF18, and no panel is being organized during the first day of UNFF18. It was also suggested to organize a panel by the private sector on Tuesday afternoon, for which a suggested concept note had been provided to the

Bureau in advance. In response to Mr. Momeni's comment on the possibility of organizing a panel during the discussion on the agenda item on means of implementation on the theme of financing for forests, as well as Mr. Belen's comment on the need to involve non-UNFF/non-CPF partners in the work of the Forum, the Secretariat informed that it was considering involving non-traditional finance partners in a panel for Tuesday (9 May) morning meeting. The Bureau was also invited to decide on the topics for discussion under agenda item 5 on emerging issues on Thursday afternoon.

The Bureau thanked the UNFF Secretariat for preparing draft provisional organization of work for UNFF18. The Bureau thoroughly discussed the means to ensure effective engagement of Members of the Forum, as well as other relevant partners and stakeholders in the deliberations of UNFF18. In this regard, the Bureau agreed that during the opening meeting on 8 May in the morning, after the introduction of agenda items 3 and 5, and the official opening remarks, there would be time allocated for general discussions on items 3 and 5 as a whole. To accommodate maximum number of interventions, the Bureau also decided to set the limit of three minutes for individual national statements, and five minutes for group statements for the entire UNFF18. The Bureau also highlighted the importance of time management to avoid spillovers in the discussions. The Bureau also agreed with the proposed inclusion of three panels during UNFF18, including a panel by the private sector to share their contributions on Tuesday 9 May 2023 in the afternoon.

The Bureau considered forests, energy, and livelihoods as issues of high relevance to the thematic priorities of UNFF18, and to the ongoing preparations for the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the ECOSOC in July 2023 and the UN General Assembly Summit on Sustainable Development Goals in September 2023. To promote a science-policy interface, the Bureau agreed to hold technical discussions during UNFF18 on forests, energy, and livelihoods under agenda item 5 on emerging issues on Thursday afternoon, 11 May 2023, and engage participants in interactive discussions following the presentations by the panelists.

With the above-mentioned modifications, the Bureau approved the provisional organization of work of UNFF18 and decided to communicate these decisions to Members and relevant stakeholders as soon as possible, through a letter from the Chair.

#### **b. Update on UNFF18 expected outcomes**

The Secretariat informed that as UNFF18 was a technical session, no resolution or decision was expected as an outcome by the Forum at this session. The main outcome of UNFF18 would be a Chair's summary which would provide a summary of technical discussions, which might include the Chair's proposal for transmission to UNFF19, and a Chair's summary of UNFF's input to 2023 session of the HLPF.

#### **c. Update on the preparations of UNFF18 official documents**

The Secretariat informed that there would be seven official documents for UNFF18, namely, Provisional agenda and annotations, Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024; Contributions of, and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities; Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network; Note by the Secretariat; Monitoring, assessment, and reporting; Update on the preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in achieving its objectives; Note by the Secretariat; and Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests. These documents will be posted on the UNFF website in all UN official languages, well in advance of UNFF18.

#### **d. Update on the pilot phase for the use of the refined format for national reporting**

The Secretariat informed that in implementing the mandate from ECOSOC resolution 2022/17, the Secretariat revised the format for national reporting, and shared it with Members of the Forum in October 2022 to initiate the pilot phase for the use of this revised format. The pilot phase is being conducted until mid-February 2023. So far, 13 countries had indicated their willingness to participate in the pilot phase. The result of the pilot phase will be considered at a global workshop in March 2023, as explained in item 5c below.

## **5. Intersessional activities in preparations for the midterm review of the IAF:**

### **a. Update on the Bangkok Expert Group Meeting**

The Secretariat informed that the Bangkok Expert Group Meeting would be held from 11 to 13 January 2023 in a hybrid format. This meeting would be part of the intersessional activities in preparations for the IAF midterm review, during which, three assessment reports by consultants would be presented. These include the assessment reports on the contribution of UNFF to 2030 Agenda, on the involvement of regional and subregional partners, and on the involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders. Experts would have the opportunity to share their views on the findings and suggestions by the consultants. There would be two Co-Chairs for the meeting, one from Member States, and one from stakeholders. The outcome of the meeting would be a Co-Chairs summary which would be submitted to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group, to be held by the end of 2023.

### **b. Update on the CPF Organization-Led Initiative (OLI)**

The Secretariat informed that the CPF-OLI would be organized jointly by UNFF Secretariat and FAO on 22-23 February 2023 in Rome, Italy. The concept note and relevant information had already been sent to Members and stakeholders. As part of the intersessional activities in preparations for the IAF midterm review, the consultants would make presentations on their assessment report on the CPF during this meeting. Experts would have opportunity to share their views on the findings and suggestions by the consultants. The outcome of the meeting would be a Co-Chairs summary which would be submitted to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group, to be held by the end of 2023.

### **c. Update on the Global Workshop on National Reporting**

The Secretariat informed that it was working with FAO to jointly organize a global workshop on national reporting on 22-24 March 2023 in Rome, Italy. This workshop was being held in response to the request made by Members to the UNFF Secretariat in ECOCOS resolution 2022/17. A draft concept note, and a programme have been prepared by the UNFF Secretariat and shared with FAO for comments. Once finalised, these documents would be shared with Members and stakeholders. The workshop would focus on identifying possible sources for data collection, and methodologies for monitoring and reporting on the GFGs and targets, which were difficult to monitor and report on, due to the lack of statistical information and data. During the workshop, the results of the pilot phase for the use of refined reporting format, including lessons-learned and feedback would be also shared. UNFF18 would be informed of the outcome of this workshop.

## **6. Preparations for the 2023 session of the HLPF, and the SDG Summit in September 2023:**

### **a. Letter from the ECOSOC President, inviting UNFF to provide an input to the HLPF in July 2023**

In response to the letter of the ECOSOC President, and following explanations by the Secretariat, the Bureau decided, in consultation with Members of their constituencies, to prepare its own input for

submission to the ECOSOC President by 1 March 2023. The Bureau also reminded that additional opportunity would be provided for all Members of the Forum and stakeholders to share their views on the contribution of forests to the SDGs under review of the 2023 session of the HLPF, at UNFF18. The Bureau emphasized that a Chair's summary of that discussion would be presented to the ECOSOC President following the conclusion of UNFF18.

#### **b. Discussions on UNFF18 Bureau-led event on Energy, Forests & livelihoods**

The Bureau recognized that forests and their role in addressing challenges have gained more attention in recent years at the global level. This required that UNFF and its Bureaus to play more active role in further highlighting the contribution of forests in the ongoing preparations for the SDG Summit in September 2030. The Bureau considered important to raise awareness on the interlinkages of forests, energy, and livelihoods, especially among Permanent Missions in New York, who were involved in the preparations for this Summit. In this respect, and pursuant to informal exchange among its Members, the Bureau of UNFF18 agreed to take the initiative to organize a one-day event in New York on Forests, Energy and Livelihoods. This would be an awareness-raising event by bringing some data and analyses, with no intention to negotiate any outcome. The details about this event were under preparation and would be shared with Members and stakeholders, once they were ready.

In response to the suggestion of Mr. Belen, the Director of the UNFFS expressed the willingness of the Secretariat to prepare, in consultation with Members of the Forum, a concise communication product, containing concrete data and statistics on the contribution of forests to the SDGs for disseminating during UNFF18, HLPF 2023, and the SDG Summit.

#### **7. Update on the joint meeting of the ECOSOC President and Chairs of Functional Commissions and recommendations on the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies**

The Chair provided a brief explanation on his participation in the joint meeting of the Chairs of Functional Commissions with the ECOSOC President, in which, he provided the explanations on the work of the UNFF, and the ways that the Forum had implemented the recommendation of the Council on enhancing contribution to the 2030 Agenda. A copy of the Chair's remarks had been shared with the Bureau.

#### **8. Briefing on major forest related events**

##### **a. UNFF participation in UNFCCC COP27- lessons learned in terms of increasing UNFF's visibility**

The Director of the UNFF Secretariat informed the Bureau of the activities of the Secretariat during COP27, including organization of two events, one on "Towards strengthening forest-based climate actions beyond 2024", and the other one for the CPF on "Turning the Tide on Deforestation". Participation of Chair of UNFF18, as a keynote speaker in one of these events raised the visibility of the Forum and its work during COP27. It was important to continue to improve the visibility of the work of the Forum and improve collaboration with the Rio Conventions.

Mr. Belen stated that it would be beneficial to use social media accounts such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram in order to increase the visibility of UNFF activities.

##### **b. Briefing on the activities of UNFF during the next COP15 of CBD**

The Secretariat informed that information about the programme for COP15 of CBD was provided rather late. This made it difficult for the Secretariat to organize any UNFF events during this meeting.

Nevertheless, the Secretariat planned to attend this meeting, and join relevant events, especially during the second week of COP15, including CPF partner events at the Rio Conventions Pavilion.

**c. Briefing on the International Day of Forest 2023**

The Secretariat informed that the theme for IDF 2023 is forests and health. The Secretariat planned to organize a half day hybrid event on 21 March 2023 in New York. This event would normally include three parts, the first an opening segment by senior officials from Member States and the UN. The second segment would include discussions by CPF members, stakeholders and non-state players, and the third part, a general discussion with statements from the floor by participants. In addition to the UNHQ event, the Secretariat would also prepare a social media package with an advisory, and Trello Board, as well as communication materials in all UN languages.

Before conclusion of the meeting, the Chair thanked all participants for their active involvement in the discussions and expressed satisfaction with the results of the discussions and adjourned the meeting.

*The meeting finished at 1:00 pm*