

**GLOBAL WORKSHOP ON REPORTING ON PROGRESS TOWARDS GLOBAL FOREST GOALS AND TARGETS OF
THE UN STRATEGIC PLAN ON FORESTS 2030**

**22 to 24 March 2023
FAO headquarters, Rome - Italy (hybrid)**

Co-Chairs Summary

I. Background

1. Through ECOSOC resolution 2022/17, Members of the Forum requested the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFFS) to amend the format for voluntary national reporting, conduct a pilot phase using the amended format (with participation of interested countries), and to report back on the progress made to the Forum at its eighteenth session in May 2023. The same resolution requested the UNFFS to organize, in consultation with Members of the Forum, and jointly with FAO and other relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), a global workshop on reporting on progress towards Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and targets, with a focus on indicators that still have issues with data availability and estimation methodologies.

2. Since its inception, UNFF continuously invited Member States to submit voluntary national reports on progress made towards sustainable forest management (SFM). In particular, the Forum called for reports on the implementation of the UN Forest Instrument, and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) and its GFGs. The analysis of the submitted reports to the Forum in 2020 revealed several challenges. The absence of, or difficulty in obtaining information related to the socioeconomic benefits of forests, their role in poverty eradication and income generation, employment, and health and food security poses a major challenge to assess the progress towards GFG 2. There is also a lack of reliable data on forest funding (GFG 4) due to the difficulty in accessing financial information.

3. In light of the above, the UNFFS and FAO jointly organized this global workshop focused on: i) identifying possible sources for data collection and methodologies for monitoring and reporting on the GFGs and their targets, which were difficult to monitor and report on, ii) sharing the results of the pilot phase for the use of amended reporting format, and iii) sharing knowledge and national experiences with regard to the access to and availability of forest data and proposals on the next steps.

II. Opening of the workshop

4. The meeting was opened by Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi from the UNFF Secretariat. He invited Mr. Zhimin Wu, Director of FAO Forestry Division, and Ms. Juliette Biao, Director of the UNFF Secretariat to make their opening remarks. In his remarks, Mr Zhimin Wu welcomed participants to the workshop, which provides an important platform to share knowledge and experiences across countries, identify good practices on forest-related reporting, and find solutions on how to further upscale these good practices. He reminded participants that informed decision-making requires up-to-date and accurate data as without good data it is impossible to monitor and measure progress towards our commonly agreed goals and targets. For FAO, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and disseminating information relating to forests, forest resources, and primary forestry products are fundamental to achieving UN's vision for Forests, and are at the very core of FAO's Constitution.

5. In her opening remarks, delivered by Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Ms. Biao welcomed the participants to the workshop. She underlined the importance of data for informed and evidence-based decision-making. She indicated that despite the technological advances in forest monitoring, assessment, and reporting on forests, relatively little progress has been made in assessing the value of forests beyond timber, and the full contribution of forests to society and sustainable development remains drastically underestimated. She highlighted lack of standardized and statistical data for some GFG targets and emphasized the importance of indicators to demonstrate the full contribution of forests and SFM to livelihoods, food security, sustainable development, and poverty reduction. In this respect, she referred to the databases of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) clearing house, which aims to facilitate access of countries to data related to forest financing, learning material and good practices on mobilizing forest financing. Regarding the pilot phase for the use of the amended format for reporting to the Forum, she considered elaborating on the results of this process, and

commended those Members of the Forum which volunteered to take part in this process. Ms Biao also expressed her gratitude to the Government of Japan for its kind support allowing several participants to attend this workshop.

6. Following Ms. Biao's remarks, experts elected Mr. Gerfried Gruber, Director, Forest Policy, Forest Information and Forest Economy, Directorate-General Forestry and Sustainability, Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, and Austria's UNFF focal point, and Mr. Clement Ng'oriareng, Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Kenya Forest Service and Kenya's alternate national focal point to UNFF, as Co-Chairs of the workshop. In their opening remarks, the Co-Chairs provided detailed information about the programme for the workshop, as well as its objectives, and outcome. Following the request by the Co-Chairs, participants adopted the agenda and programme of work for the workshop.

III. Setting the scene

7. Mr. Tomasz Juszcak from the UNFF Secretariat made a presentation on the key features and state of preparation for the next reporting cycle to UNFF. He provided some context and background information on reporting to UNFF. He underlined the importance of national reports for assessing progress in reaching Goals and Targets of the UNSPF. The information submitted to the UNFFS in the national reports is mostly "action oriented" and qualitative – and it's not available in any international databases, among other CPF Members. He briefly shared the lessons learned from the previous reporting cycle to the Forum, in which the UNFFS received 52 national reports covering 75% of world forests. Finally, he recalled the current guidance and mandate on monitoring, assessment, and reporting from UNFF17, which inter alia, requested the UNFFS to amend the format for voluntary national reporting (VNR) and conduct a pilot phase for its use.

8. Mr. Anssi Pekkarinen, from FAO made a presentation on the key features and state of preparation for the next reporting cycle to Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2025 process. He informed that from 2024 onwards, FAO will start using a flexible reporting modality that will allow the countries to revise and update their reports when new data become available. The scope and other technical aspects of FRA 2025 were discussed in an online Expert Consultation in September 2022. After the consultation, the FRA scope and process were finalized and the new reporting tables and other functionalities were implemented on the FRA on-line Platform, which will be used also for the data collection, documentation, and review. The main changes in the FRA reporting content include introduction of quality tiers for some of the key attributes, reporting on primary forests by biome, addition of a table on forest restoration and exclusion of the reporting tables on reforestation, employment, and graduation. However, information on employment in the forest sector will be made available in a special study that is being prepared in close collaboration with partners such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Thünen Institute of Forestry. FRA 2025 data collection and training were initiated in early 2023 and will continue throughout the year. The objective of FAO is to complete the data collection and review in 2023, open the FRA platform for voluntary flexible updates in 2024 and publish the FRA 2025 products and open access database in 2025.

9. Following the presentation by Mr. Juszcak and Mr. Pekkarinen, experts engaged in interactive discussions. A summary of key points of these discussions are presented below:

a. An inquiry was made on how national reporting to UNFF could be aligned with FRA cycle. The UNFF Secretariat explained that in the past, the reporting to the Forum was on biannual basis. With the adoption of United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), the decision of the Forum was to align UNFF reporting with the FRA cycles to reduce reporting burden on countries, reduce duplicative reporting, and benefit from latest data provided in FRA. A question was asked about the definition for employment (permanent/part time jobs). FAO indicated that previously collected data was not fully compatible with international standards, and as is another UN agency that is mandated to collect employment data, FAO is closely working with ILO and other partners to get standardized and comparable data across countries. Furthermore, a special study on the "Assessment of emerging employment and decent work opportunities and challenges in the forest sector" is ongoing in collaboration with the LUKE Institute.

b. In response to an inquiry on where data on "ecosystem restoration" would come from, FAO indicated that the forest restoration related information will be collected through the FRA National Correspondent network and that the intention is to collect data on forest restoration definitions, targets, and implementation.

c. In response to an inquiry, if the amended format and next FRA would address land degradation and restoration, FAO informed that they would seek information from countries on how they define forest degradation and restoration.

d. To increase efficiency and consistency, national focal points to UNFF are encouraged to collaborate with focal points from other international agreements, processes, and reporting instruments within their home countries.

e. In response to an inquiry on why only 52 countries reported to UNFF, and the reasons that other members did not submit their voluntary national reports, UNFFS referred to a survey conducted in January 2022 in which countries were asked for the reason of not submitting their national reports. Only a few countries responded to the survey. Nevertheless, those who responded to the survey indicated that due to the lack of resources, and lack of data, they had not been able to submit voluntary national reports.

f. A request was made for further and more frequent engagement with experts, including through convening virtual meetings, to brief them on the issues related to national reporting. It was also indicated that there are some duplications among the six GFGs, and their 26 targets, which make it complicated for countries to report on them. It was indicated that GFG 1, 2, 3, and 4 are well-defined and clear, but there are some duplications between these goals and GFG 6. It was also mentioned that in some cases information on non-state forests was difficult to access and reporting privately owned forest is complicated.

g. It was emphasized that reporting on forests is challenging but important. The CPF work to streamline reporting was welcomed and it was indicated that the amended format is much better. In the preparation for the next FRA, a request was made to FAO to consider convening more hybrid meetings with different regions and try to draw from the expertise of national experts.

IV. Forest-related SDG indicators

10. Ms. Simona Sorrenti, Ms. Anne Branthomme, and Mr. Xavier de Lamo from FAO made presentations. In their joint presentation, they explained that the SDG indicator process is a country-led process supported by custodian agencies, FAO being one of these. Overall, 21 SDGs indicators are under FAO custody, and FAO is a contributing agency for other five indicators. FAO's Office of Chief Statistician, having a coordination role, and its technical units serve as focal points for data generation and dissemination, carry out methodological and capacity-building work related to SDG Indicators, and support SDG monitoring. FAO's contribution to the monitoring system is carried out through different work streams: Reporting activities, methodological work (methods and guidelines for producing the indicators), capacity building (e-learning courses, technical assistance, trainings), resource mobilization, promotion of partnerships, and communication and statistical dissemination through the FAO SDG Indicators portal and a dedicated domain in the corporate database FAOSTAT. Due to their importance, forests contribute to many of the SDGs, particularly SDG 15 "Life on land". Forests provide critical goods and services to humankind. It is crucial to understand the status of the world's forests and ongoing trends, to protect and manage forests wisely. FAO is the custodian of three forest-related SDG 15 indicators: 15.1.1, 15.2.1 and 15.4.2. SDG indicators 15.1.1 and 15.2.1 have been developed to report progress on SDG Targets 15.1 and 15.2 at global, regional and national level. SDG 15 and Targets 15.1 and 15.2 are intended to stimulate action on forest conservation and sustainable forest management. SDG indicator 15.1.1 (Forest area as a proportion of total land area) corresponds to the GCS 1. SDG indicator 15.1.2. Progress towards sustainable forest management has 5 sub-indicators to measure the different dimensions of SFM, relating to GCS 2, 4, 8, 19 and 20. Reporting on these SDG indicators and sub-indicators is carried out through the FRA process. Data collection for FRA 2025 was launched in 2023. It will allow updating the status and trends of SDG 15.1.1 and 15.2.1 indicators. Also, more frequent voluntary updates of those indicators by country through the FRA process will be possible from 2024 onwards. SDG Indicator 15.4.2: a) Mountain Green Cover Index and b) Proportion of degraded mountain land has been developed to measure progress towards SDG Target 15.4, which aims to *"ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, to enhance their capacity to provide benefits which are essential for sustainable development"*. As a response from comments received from member countries, the methodology of this indicator has recently been refined to monitor progress towards the above-mentioned SDG Target more effectively. Following this refinement, new data was produced centrally by FAO using global data sources following the new methodology. Currently, FAO is working on the development of tools and guidelines to support countries in the computation and reporting of this indicator in accordance with the new methodology. The development of these materials is being informed by a pilot study involving national technicians from Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, Nepal and Japan, in which the new methodology is being implemented using nationally relevant data sources. On the next steps,

the presenters indicated that 15.1.1 and 15.2.1 will increase the frequency of updates because of the implementation of a more flexible voluntary FRA reporting process.

11. Following the presentation by Ms. Sorrenti, Ms. Anne Branthomme, and Mr. Xavier de Lamo, experts engaged in interactive discussions. A summary of key points of these discussions are presented below:

a. In response to an inquiry on whether the lack of progress on 15.1 and 15.2 is a general statement for all countries, or there have been some progress by some countries, FAO indicated that the results are mixed. At the global level, there are some improvements and increase, for instance, on protected forest area, and the biomass in forests. However, forest area is overall decreasing, but with lower rate compared to the past. Still some regions show some improvements in terms of expansion of forest area. Nevertheless, as deforestation is continuing, we need to tackle its direct and indirect drivers to stop this trend.

b. In response to an inquiry on the correlation of increase in ground biomass, and decrease of forest area (15.2.1), FAO responded that the stock is in m³/ha, which is generally increasing.

c. It was stated that certification data were produced with data from certification organizations. FAO clarified that the sub-indicator has been designed to prevent double counting.

d. In response to an inquiry regarding indicator 15.2.1 on the progress towards SFM, and whether this considered socio-economic and environmental contribution of forests, FAO indicated that these indicators may not be enough to cover all aspects of SFM, and these indicators were chosen based on the availability of data.

V. Update on the Global Core Set of Forest related Indicators

12. Mr. David Morales from FAO presented the CPF report on the status of, and trends in the global core set of forest-related indicators¹. Mr. Morales stated that the strong commitment of the international community, and especially the CPF members, to provide the information necessary for monitoring progress towards global goals, targets, and indicators in a comprehensive, efficient, timely, and meaningful way led to the idea of developing a global core set of forest-related indicators (GCS). The aim was to simplify and harmonize concepts and terminology while respecting the needs of all potential users. The concrete work on the GCS was initiated in 2016 through an organization-led initiative on the development of global forest indicators. Following the recommendations of this initiative, CPF members established a GCS task force, which developed the GCS. The GCS was presented to the UNFF and FAO's Committee on Forestry (COFO), which welcomed the progress made in developing the GCS and acknowledged its value for assessing progress and better focusing data-collection efforts to reduce duplication. The two bodies also encouraged the application of those indicators ready to use and requested the CPF to continue developing the remaining indicators, particularly those that may require additional efforts but are manageable through various data sources.

13. Ms. Stefanie Linser from IUFRO presented the CPF report on the assessment of uptake of the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators², which was based on a survey among all the members of the CPF and regional criteria and indicator processes. The uptake analysis confirmed that the GCS is seen as a useful tool which has already reduced reporting burden. Furthermore, FAO has made progress in the further development of some of the GCS indicators that still had issues with the underlying methodology and data coverage. On possible further steps, and based on the results of the survey conducted, she suggested to: i) conduct a campaign by CPF members and C&I processes to promote and explain the GCS; ii) continue efforts to build capacity at the national level to supply information on the GCS indicators; iii) use the structure and concepts of the GCS as a framework for international studies on SFM along the lines of recent work by FAO (*The State of the World's Forests 2022*³) and the UN (*The Global Forest Goals Report*⁴), to demonstrate the usefulness of the GCS and familiarize the expert community with it; iv) continue efforts to improve the tier 3 indicators; v) examine whether there is potential to expand cooperation on data collection and sharing along the lines of the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) and the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ) with new

¹ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/fr/c/cb9963en/>

² https://redd.unfccc.int/uploads/2_250_an_assessment_of_uptake_of_the_global_core_set_of_forest-related_indicators.pdf

³ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb9360en>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Global-Forest-Goals-Report-2021.pdf>

partners and for new GCS indicators as a means for further reducing the reporting burden on countries; and vi) formally endorse the GCS and its objectives, preferably at a higher-level.

14. Following a presentation by Mr. Morales, and Ms. Linser, experts engaged in interactive discussions. A summary of key points of these discussions are presented below:

a. Regarding a comment on Tier 3 indicators and the reasons for trying to collect data on the issues and areas that neither has methodology, nor available data, UNFFS and FAO clarified that initially the GCS was developed to cover all seven thematic aspects of SFM, including its socio-economic aspects. These aspects are very important to show the value of forests, but there is no systematic data about these aspects. In addition, there is increased expectations regarding forests, as the global environment is changing, and there is now more attention to other services provided by forests, beyond timber, as well as contribution of forests to bioeconomy, and sustainable development. It was stated that to provide such data, countries also need financial support and capacity development.

b. In reaction to the emphasis on the importance of reporting on forest degradation, despite existence of various national definitions for forest degradation, FAO referred to the recent COFO decision in which FAO has been requested to develop a definition for forest degradation. In this respect, FAO is now collecting information on the existing national definitions, with a view to develop and propose a global definition on forest degradation.

c. In response to an inquiry on which entity is suggested for a possible formal and high-level endorsement of the GCS, panelists clarified that it could be UNFF to endorse it at the global level, followed by possible endorsement at the regional and national levels.

d. It was emphasized that use of wood from sustainably managed forests contributes to carbon neutrality, therefore, information should not be “hidden” (overshadowed) by other indicators.

VI. Key suggestions regarding data availability, data sources and methodology, and the next steps for selected goals, targets and indicators

15. Ms. Ashley Steel from FAO made a presentation on the share of wood-based energy in total final energy consumption - status and next steps. Ms. Steel indicated that wood energy is inexorably linked to forest sustainability, human health, human nutrition, and the production of sustainable energy. Quantifying wood-based energy is a complex and sensitive issue. There are examples of wood-energy as a sustainable and renewable energy source and examples where the production of wood-energy is driving deforestation. Global Core Set Indicator 10, the ratio of final consumption of energy derived from wood over total final energy consumption inclusive of energy from renewable (e.g., wood fuel) and non-renewable (e.g., fossil fuels) sources, faces two common but formidable challenges: the need to collaborate across disciplines (forestry, statistics, energy) and a lack of data and, in particular, a lack of high-quality data. She referred to some progresses in addressing the challenges. These include: i) convening a multi-disciplinary expert working group, bringing together knowledge and experience, assembling the history wood fuel estimation and developing a strong conceptual model of the drivers of wood fuel consumption, ii) conducting a systematic country-by-country search for new data and uncovered 2309 additional data points, published since 1999, on wood fuel or wood charcoal production or consumption, iii) update the models used to estimate wood fuel and wood charcoal production for countries that do not have the capacity to supply official data. She indicated that the modeling approach and new estimates are being written up for external scientific review and publication to ensure credibility and the new estimates are expected to be publicly available in late 2023.

16. Following a presentation by Ms. Ashely Steel, experts engaged in interactive discussions. A summary of key points of these discussions are presented below:

a. In response to a question on how countries were clustered, and if any difficulties were encountered, FAO explained that the grouping of countries was based on variables identified in the conceptual models, e.g., high forest cover, or medium forest cover countries.

b. A national experience was shared regarding development of fuelwood consumption models. However, it was stated that the needs of various communities were quite diverse. FAO was asked which models were used and if the models could be shared. FAO confirmed it could share the models, once available. Variability exists within and among countries in terms of fuelwood consumption. This could be one area for capacity building. FAO could support development of surveys for various situations and share the results. This could help to provide decent estimates of fuelwood consumption.

c. FAO was asked if the impacts of war in Ukraine was also considered in this work. FAO indicated that the start time of this work was before the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine, so, none of these were factored in the estimation of wood-based energy. Both, Covid and the war in Ukraine had different impacts on the consumption of fuelwood, the former likely increased the share of fuelwood consumption, but the latter likely decreased the share due to its impacts on trade.

d. In response to a question about which measurement units were used in providing the estimation for the use of fuelwood, FAO indicated that standardization is an important factor, using the amount in cubic meter for fuelwood, metric tonnes for charcoal.

e. Regarding an inquiry about the data sources used, and whether the data were from official government sources, or from publications, and the meaning of “automation model”, FAO responded that data sources included both, data officially submitted to FAO as well as data from semi-official sources, including national websites, published papers, and data provided in reports of international organizations and NGOs. Automation is yet to be availed. The plan is for the model to be automated, meaning that model-fitting could be accomplished annually and efficiently; the models will be the same statistical models being developed now that produces national estimates where countries do not supply official data.

f. Concerning a question about the correlation between fuelwood and forest fires, FAO indicated that the response to this question is complex. There are correlations between fuelwood and forest fires. There are risks in using fuelwood for energy, as well as not using fuelwood, so a firm conclusion on this matter at this stage could not be drawn.

g. With respect to the relation between fuelwood and forest degradation and the importance of accessing reliable data by involving communities who rely significantly on fuelwood, FAO underscored the importance of access to reliable data, and referred to the increasing role of technologies in capturing data, such as mobile and remote sensing.

h. Referring to the recommendation on capacity building for data collection, it was indicated that in some countries, energy and natural resources are dealt with in different ministries. Therefore, engaging all these institutions, and coordination among them are important. FAO concurred that “collaboration and coordination” is an important issue not only within countries, but, also within international organizations, including FAO. Without such collaboration, data gaps would remain. Capacity building should also promote such collaboration.

17. Ms. Yonca Gurbuzer from FAO, Ms. Rattiya Lippe from Thünen Institute of Forestry, and Mr Walteri Katajamäki from ILO did a joint presentation. The presenters indicated that information on the number of employed people is a crucial indicator for the distribution of socio-economic benefits derived from labour activities in the forest sector. The key recommendation of the Expert group in 2019 was to use the employment concept that aligned with the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) resolutions. In the recent joint publication between FAO, ILO and Thünen Institute of Forestry⁵, a new web-based method was developed to estimate the number of employed people in the forest sector globally using ILO microdata and ILO modelled estimates as the primary data input. The main finding revealed that at least 33 million people were globally employed in the forest sector for 2017–2019, accounting for 1% of total employment across all economic activities. The ILO microdata further provides a better understanding of the sector remarkably characterized by informality, particularly in developing economies. The study emphasized the importance of the forest sector for people’s livelihoods and for national economies and highlights the need for sustained and collaborative efforts to ensure reliable and comparable statistical data on forest-related employment. The way forward with this indicator includes i) refinement of the method to deal with incomplete time series while increasing the accuracy of the estimates and allowing for disaggregate estimates by gender, nature of jobs and age groups among others, ii) further research at the country level, which can support data verification and, iii) strengthen cooperation and increase synergies among statistical and sectoral stakeholders. Building on the successful cooperation and the possibility to improve the method coupled with the availability of reliable employment data from ILO, the presenters consider that, from a technical perspective, the Global Core Set Indicator 12 (Employment) would be ready to be upgraded to the Tier 1 category. Before concluding, the presenters posed the following questions for further discussions: i) Are there potential data sources on forest-related employment in the country in addition to ILOSTAT? ii) Do countries have any plans to sustain data collection related to labour indicators in the forest sector? and iii) Do countries need any support for data collection?

18. Following a presentation by Ms. Gurbuzer, Ms. Lippe, and Mr. Katajamäki, experts engaged in interactive discussions. A summary of key points of these discussions are presented below:

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc2438en>

a. Concerning an inquiry about whether both traditional and modern logging were included in the estimates, ILO responded by informing that their statistics included both traditional and modern but informed that ILO did not separate them. Thünen also informed they were not able to separate employment in traditional and modern logging.

b. Regarding the inclusion of employment in protected areas and forest restoration activities in the estimate, Thünen informed that it could not confirm, if employment in forest restoration was included in the calculation, or not.

c. As to whether estimation for employment took into account seasonal work, and the employment in informal and formal sectors, and if the job losses were in the formal or informal employment, FAO responded that it cannot confirm, as the results depend on the time that the survey was conducted. Some countries conducted surveys throughout the year, which might include seasonal estimates. On whether job losses occurred in formal and informal sectors, Thünen said that job losses were likely to be more in informal sector, informally employed workers often have no working contract and are not protected by existing legal frameworks.

d. In relation to the method for counting forestry versus manufacturing employment, FAO explained that data are obtained according to definitions by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) resolutions and international classifications.

e. Whether the estimate include the employment in the recreation sector, Thünen informed that it did not, as the estimate is following the ISIC definitions on forest sector.

f. It was emphasized that in some countries, the employment is seasonal, and when forest fires happen, the employment decreases in informal sectors.

g. On the inclusion of employment for green jobs or jobs in the recreation industry, FAO informed the estimates would not allow to capture this as the estimates are related to quantitative figures on employment, but green jobs have a strong qualitative side in them, as by definition they will need to be decent jobs in order to qualify as green jobs, as informed by ILO. Therefore, it would be very challenging to integrate all these aspects in the calculation. ILO informed that with the current data it was not possible to consider all these aspects. Thünen Institute informed that calculating green jobs for non-traditional forestry jobs is very difficult, but Forest Europe is currently trying to estimate it.

h. FAO informed the session that the UN Statistical Commission approved ISIC Rev 5 classification. The new classification includes a new code 3121 - Manufacture of wooden furniture - which will allow in future to separate employment statistics in wooden furniture from other furniture industry (plastic, etc.).

i. It was indicated that in some countries, most of illegal production of charcoal is produced by informal sector. In response to a question on whether the estimate for the employment related to charcoal considered both informal sector, and also the illegal activities, Thünen institute indicated that informal is not equal to illegal. Thünen institute also indicated that employment in informal charcoal production is included in the estimate, as employment for charcoal production is part of the employment in forest sector. But these data do not show if it were illegal or legal charcoal production. ILO also informed that its definition of informal economy does not include illicit/illegal activities.

19. Mr. Sven Walter from FAO made an introduction on the number of forest-dependent people in extreme poverty – status and next steps. He presented an update on the Global Core Set Indicator No 13 on “Number of forest-dependent people in extreme poverty”. Mr. Walter reminded participants on the evolution of the indicator that is considered as tier 3 indicator. Based on recommendations of the 2019 workshop on the GCS indicators, FAO published in 2022 a new methodology and global estimate on the number of forest- and tree-proximate people⁶. Mr. Oldekop presented the methodology used by the study, calculating forest-proximate people based on information on forest cover and world population and using open access data. Results indicate that globally, 3.27 billion and 4.17 billion people lived outside of urban areas and within 1 km and 5 km, respectively, of a forest (minimum 1 ha) in 2019. Possible next steps to further improve the methodology related to GCS indicator 13 includes (i) integrating emerging global poverty products in the methodology to estimate forest proximate people living in poverty; and (2) developing online platforms to generate and visualize country and subnational-level estimates.

20. Following the presentation by Mr. Walter and Mr. Oldekop, experts engaged in interactive discussions. A summary of key points of these discussions are presented below:

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc2544en>

a. The importance of inclusion of rural households' incomes in mapping poverty was emphasized. In getting this information, some countries had challenges. An inquiry was made on whether the households' income was included in the estimate, and if yes, how it was done.

b. An inquiry was made in relation to the term "proximate" and whether this term takes into consideration only the distance i.e. people living close to forests or also people living in urban areas but rely on forests for living.

c. It was intimated that proximity to forests included those close to forests producing charcoal, and other people who were not close to forests, but commute to forests and produce products (migrant workers). Also, urban foresters were included.

d. FAO also indicated that the study presented underlines the importance of forests for poverty alleviation in rural areas. Furthermore, the importance of urban-rural linkages was underlined and the relevance of forest goods and services such as recreation, biophilia, medicinal plants and wood in construction for urban populations.

e. Mr. Oldekop responded that dependency on forests is perceived differently by people and therefore is difficult to measure. In consequence, the new concept of "proximate" was developed in order to overcome the definition problem of "dependency".

21. Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, from UNFF Secretariat delivered a presentation: "Financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable - status and next steps". He referred to the significance of the GCS Indicator 15 (Financial resources from all sources for implementation of SFM) for assessing the progress towards GFG4, and SDG target 15.b. He also reminded participants of the main progress made during the meeting in 2019 concerning GCS Indicator 15, during which, there was a general agreement to have three sub-indicators for Indicator 15, namely, public international finance, public domestic finance, and private finance. He provided explanations on the data availability and data sources for each of the sub-indicators, and also explained on the relevance and work of the GFFN Clearing House. To advance the work on Indicator 15, and its three sub-indicators, he provided the following suggestions. On Public International Finance, he suggested to take a stepwise approach regarding Indicator 15, and as the first step, start with a pilot phase for using sub-indicator 1, as the data are easily and broadly available, using OECD DAC CRS data, combined with data to be collected from additional major donor countries through desk research or survey. On Public Domestic Finance, he suggested to: i) Invite relevant subregional/regional organizations, such as ACTO, AFF, SADC, in close collaboration with their respective member countries, to collect and compile data on national budget allocation of their respective members, ii) With the support of FAO and UNFF, consider conducting a pilot phase to support specific subregions, whose member states have already advanced in providing data on national budget allocation to forestry, to compile such information at the subregional level, and iii) Invite UNFFS and FAO to reconsider inclusion of survey/question to solicit national data in future FRA, and UNFF-VNRs, and to organize a global capacity building workshop to identify the needs of countries for provision of quality data. For private finance, he suggested to consider organizing a brainstorming meeting/discussion with major private sector data providers/advisory committees to identify options for improving data collection related to private funding for SFM. On UNFF Clearing House, he suggested to i) Invite the Clearing House to conduct regular survey, including in the areas beneficial to the GCS Indicator 15, and establish systematic interaction with data providers, including data providers on private funding, ii) Invite CPF members to support the work of the Clearing House and consider this as a hub for information related to financing SFM, and iii) Invite all of you to join the Clearing House brainstorming meeting in April for further discussion on data availability and methodologies for collecting data.

VII. Pilot phase for the use of the amended format for reporting to UNFF

22. Mr. Tomasz Juszcak from UNFF Secretariat delivered a presentation on the lessons learned and results from the pilot phase for the use of the amended reporting format to the Forum. He also presented the main changes in the format, emphasizing that these were made on the basis of suggestions and recommendations received from member states. The pilot phase was conducted between November 2022 and February 2023. In total, 13 countries (Algeria, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, South Africa and Turkiye) took part in the pilot phase and sent their reports to the UNFFS. Additionally, feedback on the format was received from USA. He noted that most of the responses from countries were comprehensive, clear and well documented and could serve as free standing, official reports. Several countries provided, mostly positive feedback, stating that the format was more concise and relatively easy to fill in. At the

same time, it was noted that some specific areas of the format e.g, under GFG4, needed additional guidance and countries asked for further capacity building activities. Respondents also provided some suggestions on possible ways how to further reduce potential duplications.

23. Ms. Davia Carty from Forestry Department of Jamaica shared lessons learned in preparation of the national report in her country. It was stated that the forestry department received good support with key partner agencies/ stakeholder: both Governmental & Non-Governmental. She mentioned data gaps in socio-economics aspects of forestry and difficulties in obtaining information from private sector. This creates a serious problem, as 74% of forests in the country are privately owned and the Forest Agency has limited control and access to these forests. The speaker also provided some suggestions on how to further improve the format.

24. Mr. Hideki Kawai, from Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, provided a list of national agencies involved in the preparation of the national report. It was noted that while some parts of the format, namely GFGs 1 to 3, were easy to fill in, others, in particular GFG4, was complicated and needed some more explanation. The speaker also shared some concerns in relation to the newly introduced Table: “self-assessment of progress towards targets” table, as it was difficult to objectively evaluate progress by the country. However, overall, through the pilot phase the country was able to take stock of overall actions related to GFGs inside and outside of the Ministry.

25. Mr. Shiva Wagle from Ministry of Forests and Environment of Nepal, shared information on the preparation of the national report in his country. The national report was primarily based on stock taking of current situation, through extensive review of relevant plans, policies, strategies. Numerous agencies were involved in the process and consultations took place with stakeholders at national and sub-national levels. The speaker provided some suggestions for the reporting format, mentioning the need for quantitative and qualitative indicators to be developed on the basis of national context. Other suggestions included creating stakeholder’s categorization in an institutional set up and measuring results and achievements with color coding.

26. Mr. Rasak Kolawole Adekola, from Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria, informed that the preparatory process for the national report in his country was relatively simple, since the Ministry of Environment – which is responsible for forests - is the depository of data and information on forests and it collaborates, regularly with all the institutions concerned e.g., sub-national forestry departments. The speaker mentioned that the preparatory process allowed the country to report on the actual actions undertaken and results achieved under each Goal and Target. He stated that the “Self-Assessment of progress towards targets” was good innovation, as it provides the dashboard of countries progress towards each target of the UNSPF.

27. Mr. Ugur Karakoc, from General Directorate of Forestry of Turkiye informed about stakeholders engaged and institutions involved in the preparation of the national report and in his country. He stated that some information and data needed for national report was easily available, as it was regularly gathered by the forestry statistical office and therefore it was easy to access. However, there were other areas for which data collection was complex as it was aquired only, via specfic projects and/or gathered from different digital portals and obtaining the whole national data sets was challenging. The speaker mentioned the lack of qualified personnel to carry on monitoring and reporting activities and the need for institutional capacity building. As for the reporting format, it was considered clear and comprehensive. He commended, the newly introduced table “Self-Assessment of Progress of Towards Targets” as it helped to gauge the status of achievement for targets of the UNSPF at the national level.

28. Following these presentations, experts engaged in interactive discussions. A summary of key points of these discussions are presented below:

a. There was an overall agreement that the format should be as simple and concise as possible. It was also suggested that the UNFFS convenes meetings even if they are virtual to brief countries, including relevant stakeholders at the local level on issues related to reporting and data collection. UNFFS echoed statements conveyed by some of the pilot countries, stating that the format was relatively simple, however, the GFGs and their targets cover multiple aspects of forests and SFM and some of the issues under consideration and difficult to report on.

b. It was suggested to avoid, in some places, simple: yes/no questions in the amended format and leave space for countries to provide additional explanations as appropriate.

c. Additionally, suggestions were made to: i) increase the word limit for the responses to questions in the amended format to 500 words, ii) use the targets, as they were agreed in the UNSPF, without modifying or shortening them, iii) adding a new column on the “negative change” to the newly added section on “self-assessment”, iv) to organize fully virtual meetings to avoid costs implications, and v) placing next cycle for national reporting to UNFF, six months after the next FRA.

d. It was observed that the amended format has improved and is now considered more concise and simpler. Several participants mentioned difficulties related national coordination, cooperation among various ministries, and forest agencies on data collection. Some data is difficult to obtain and scattered across various institutions. More work should be done, at country level, to overcome this challenge.

e. Referring to the Rio Conventions, which were providing assistance and resources for the preparation of national reports, a suggestion was made for similar assistance to be provided by UNFF to countries for preparation of their national reports to UNFF.

VIII. Main points and key proposals

29. The following are the key proposals and suggestions emanated from the discussions during the workshop, and the next steps:

A. Global Core Set of Forest related Indicators

30. There is a need to:

a. Enhance close coordination and interaction between national forestry officials with relevant ministries and national institutions, such as national statistical offices, to increase collection of data and information related to forests,

b. Increase efficiency: National officials, including national statistical offices, national focal points for different indicators and partners outside forest sector should closely collaborate in the collection of and reporting on relevant data related to SFM,

c. Consider inviting CPF members and C&I processes to promote and explain the GCS; continue efforts to build capacity at the national level to supply information on the GCS indicators; continue efforts, subject to availability of resources, to improve the indicators as appropriate, in particular tier 3 indicators; and examine expanding cooperation on data collection with new partners, including outside the forest sector,

d. Invite the members of CPF and its Joint Initiative on Streamlining forest-related reporting to review the classification of indicators per tier, as well as, lead entities per indicator,

e. Invite the CPF members and other interested organizations to explore needs and options to include emerging topics such as bioeconomy in the GCS framework and the reporting towards the Global Forest Goals and targets,

f. Continue efforts to update the model used to estimate wood fuel and wood charcoal production for countries that do not have the capacity to supply official data,

g. Further develop the methodology to estimate the number of people employed in the forest sector,

h. Integrate new information on poverty in the methodology to estimate forest proximate people living in poverty and explore options to develop online platforms to generate and visualize country and subnational-level estimates,

i. Consider inviting relevant national, subregional/regional organizations, such as ACTO, AFF, SADC, in close collaboration with their respective member countries, to collect and compile data on national budget allocation of their respective members, and with the support of FAO and UNFF, consider conducting a pilot phase to support specific subregions, to compile information on national budget allocation to forests at the subregional level,

j. Invite UNFFS and FAO to reconsider inclusion of survey/question to solicit national data in future FRA, and UNFF-VNRs regarding public domestic funding, and organizing a virtual global capacity building workshop to identify the needs of countries for provision of quality data,

k. Consider organizing a brainstorming meeting/discussion with major private sector data providers/advisory committees to identify options to improve data collection related to private funding for SFM,

l. Use the GFFN clearing house as an information hub for collecting data, including data providers on private funding.

B. Amended format for voluntary national reporting

31. The feedback received from workshop participants, and participating countries in the pilot phase for using the amended reporting format indicate that:

a. The amended format is more concise and simpler, in most parts. As data are scattered and should be collected from different agencies and institutions, completing this reporting format requires early and close coordination at the national level with the engagement of various relevant institutions and stakeholders,

b. There is a need for capacity building, at country level, to: i) improve the accuracy and consistency of forest-related data, ii) create and/or improve existing mechanisms for monitoring and reporting forest related data iii) provide assistance to countries in preparation of their voluntary national reports to the Forum.

c. For some specific GFGs and targets e.g. GFG4, more explanatory notes are needed, as the issues are complex and difficult to report on.

32. The pilot countries provided concrete suggestions and recommendations on the amended format:

a. Add a column for additional targets, to which the action contributes and/or the action is also associated with - actions and measures taken by countries often contribute to many targets simultaneously,

b. Add option "same as above" - to avoid duplication,

c. Avoid shortening - insert the full text of the target, before each question box,

d. Provide some room for additional information/explanation, as in some cases the closed YES/NO questions are not suitable,

e. Increase, in some places, the word limit up to 500,

f. Add column with SDGs/targets corresponding to GFGs/targets,

g. Add room for "references/weblinks" for success stories,

h. Divide table on Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs) into three columns: VNC/Brief description/Progress to date,

i. Add a "negative change" column to the "self-assessment of progress towards targets" table.

IX. Closure of the workshop

33. In their closing remarks the Co-chairs of the workshop thanked the participants for their constructive participation and valuable contributions. They appreciated that the discussions held during the two and half days made an important contribution and will help to further improve the process of monitoring of and reporting on the progress towards the GFGs and targets. The participants were informed that the draft Co-chair summary, shared with them was not a consensus negotiated outcome but a summary of workshop discussions. The participants were asked to provide their comments on the Co-Chair summary draft to UNFFS, by March 31, 2023.

34. Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi thanked the participants on behalf of the UNFF Secretariat and Mr. Ewald Rametsteiner on behalf of FAO.