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Item 3 (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the provisional agenda¹

Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023-2024

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In accordance with its programme of work for 2022-2024², the Forum at its nineteenth session, will hold policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and consider the activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023-2024 undertaken since the eighteenth session of the Forum. The present note serves as the basis for discussion during the nineteenth session of the Forum on agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e), and informs on the progress in the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF, as well as the International Day of Forests.

¹ E/CN.18/2024/1

² E/RES/2021/6

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the Programme of Work of the Forum for the period 2022-2024, the Forum, at its nineteenth session, will hold policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

2. The present note serves as the basis for discussion of the Forum under agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a) Updates on the activities of members of the Forum, including new announcements of and updates on voluntary national contributions, (b) Update on the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations and progress in the implementation of its workplan, (c) Updates on the activities of regional and subregional organizations and processes, (d) Updates on the activities of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, and progress in major group workplans, and (e) Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2024 and international forest-related developments. The present note also contains information on the progress in implementing the communication and outreach strategy of the UN strategic plan on forests, as well as the International Day of Forests 2024. This note also provides an overview of the relevant intersessional activities conducted since the eighteenth session of the Forum. It also contains references to relevant proposals contained in the summary by the Chair of the eighteenth session of the Forum for consideration at the nineteenth session.

II. Background

3. The nineteenth session of the Forum will be devoted to policy discussions, including implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017 – 2030, considering the discussions held and proposals made at the eighteenth session. In accordance with annex I to Economic and Social Council resolution 2020/14, the thematic priorities of the Forum for each biennium, to be decided by the Bureau of the Forum, shall be based on the global forest goals and targets, taking into account the post-2020 programme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and relevant international forest-related developments.

4. In that respect, for the biennium 2023-2024, the Bureau decided to focus on global forest goal 2 and global forest goal 3 as the substantive goals, along with global forest goals 4, 5, and 6 as cross-cutting goals. In this respect, the Bureau decided that the thematic priorities for the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Forum would be: (a) enhancing forest-based economic, social, and environmental benefits; (b) increasing significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests, and; (c) mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation, promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation and enhancing cooperation, coordination, and coherence for sustainable forest management³.

5. At the eighteenth session of the Forum, technical discussions were held on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024 and the contribution of members of the Forum and stakeholders to the thematic priorities. The summary by the Chair of the discussions at the eighteenth session includes his proposals regarding the items contained in the present note as follows:

- (a) Thematic priorities in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030
 - (i) Invite members of the Forum to take concrete steps to accelerate efforts towards achieving all global forest goals, including through increasing financial, technical, and technological collaboration, enhancing forest governance and forest law enforcement, and increasing the

³ Thematic priorities of UNFF18 and UNFF19 at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>

- involvement of local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision-making and implementation of policies;
- (ii) Encourage members to promote coherence and integration of forest-related actions in the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as reflect these agreements in their forest-related actions, in accordance with the mandates and principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (b) Voluntary national contributions
- (i) Welcome the announcement of new voluntary national contributions and update the existing ones, and invite members of the Forum that have not yet done so to announce their voluntary national contributions in support of the global forest goals and targets, and further encourage those members that have already announced voluntary national contributions to update the Forum on their progress;
- (c) Communication and outreach strategy
- (i) Invite members and the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests to develop additional digital outreach materials, including infographics, fact sheets, posters, videos, and the compilation of good practices regarding the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda;
- (d) Support by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030
- (i) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations to continue their efforts to support the work of the Forum and the provision of technical support to its members, enhance interactions with Forum members, improve the focus of its workplans on the global forest goals, convene regular and short virtual briefing meetings on its joint initiatives for members of the Forum and facilitate the engagement of relevant stakeholders in its work, and report the progress to the Forum at its nineteenth session;
 - (ii) Continue to support the active involvement of regional and subregional partners and intergovernmental organizations, as well as major groups and relevant stakeholders, in the work of the Forum, including through regional workshops, and also engage in a dialogue with the private sector and philanthropic community to explore their potential to provide support to the ongoing efforts of major groups in capacity-building and resource mobilization.

III. Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

A. Activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024

1. Update on the activities of members of the Forum, including new announcements of and updates on voluntary national contributions

6. Since the eighteenth session of the Forum, no UNFF members have announced voluntary contributions in support of the global forest goals and targets, or informed of any voluntary national contribution to be announced during UNFF 19.

7. During the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held from 30 November to 13 December 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Forum Secretariat) held an event under the theme “Climate & Canopy: Amplifying Action for SDG13 and 15 through Primary Forest Conservation”. The event brought together over 50 delegates from Member States, partners and stakeholders. The event featured keynote addresses by the Director of the Forum Secretariat and the Director General of the Forest Service of Brazil and a panel discussion with the participation of representatives of the Global Environment Facility,

the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the Griffith University. The discussions at this event highlighted the opportunities provided in the implementation of the outcome of the Three Basins Summit and the Belem Declaration and stressed the importance for countries and stakeholders to accelerate forest-based climate actions in support of the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and the Paris Agreement, particularly through increasing forest finance and capacity building for developing countries.

2. Update on the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations and progress on the implementation of its workplan

A. Implementation of the work plan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the period 2021–2024 and the Strategic Vision towards 2030

8. The Partnership's work plan presents the Partnership's planned activities over the period 2021-2024 to facilitate their implementation and provide information on the intended activities to the Member States, governing bodies of the Partnership's member organizations, and stakeholders.

9. The planned activities are to contribute to the implementation of the guiding frameworks of the work plan, most notably core functions of the Partnership, strategic priorities of the Partnership contained in its Strategic Vision towards 2030, Global Forest Goals, and the Forum's thematic priorities, and the SDGs, among other forest-related goals, instruments, processes, and international developments.

10. The current work plan was developed in 2021 based on guidance received from the Forum and other governing bodies of its member organizations in response to paragraph 22 (e) of Council resolution 2015/33 and is aligned with the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and the Programme of Work of the Forum for the period 2021-2024. The work plan is updated annually in preparation for the session of the Forum and published on the CPF website^{and} circulated to Forum Members.

11. The Partnership will report to the Forum at its nineteenth session on progress made in implementing its work plan for 2021–2024. Information on the progress achieved in implementing the current work plan since the eighteenth session of the Forum is provided below.

12. The Partnership will develop a new work plan for 2025-2028 in line with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for 2025–2028, considering the guidance received by the Forum and the discussions at the CPF meetings and retreat.

B. Recurrent activities of the Partnership

13. The Partnership held a briefing to Members of the Forum as a side event during the eighteenth session of the Forum and three meetings of its members, including a strategic retreat, since January 2022 to discuss its activities to support the implementation of the strategic plan for forests and the achievement of its global forest goals and targets. The Partnership's briefing to Members of the Forum was held on 11 May 2023⁴. The meetings of the members of the Partnership were held on 23 February⁵, 9 May⁶, and 22-23 June 2023⁷. The Partnership is planning to hold the next meeting of its members in January 2024.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/UNFF18-CPFside-event-Concept-note-programme.pdf>; <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/meetings/roadmap/en>

⁵ Summary report at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CPF-Meeting-Summary-report-Feb2023.pdf>.

⁶ Summary report at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/CPF-Meeting-Summary-report-9May2023.pdf>.

⁷ Summary report at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CPF-Meeting-Summary-report-22-23June2023.pdf>.

14. During the Partnership's briefing to Members of the Forum held on 11 May 2023, it was informed that the Partnership accepted the membership request by the Green Climate Fund and admitted the Fund as a member of the Partnership during the meeting of the Partnership held on 23 February 2023.

15. During its retreat held from 22 to 23 June 2023, member organizations of the Partnership discussed and identified ways to implement the outcome of the Organization-led Initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests held in February 2023 and further strengthen the work of the Partnership to support the Forum and its Members in their implementation of the UNSPF and progress towards the achievement of the Global Forest goals based on the comparative advantages of the sixteen member organizations of the Partnership. The Partnership also discussed ways to improve the effectiveness of the Partnership's workplans, its impact, and added value towards achieving the Global Forest Goals and other global intergovernmentally-agreed forest goals and targets in line with Council Resolution 2015/33 and in the context of Council Resolution 2022/17, as well as the results of the Organization-led Initiative of the Partnership.

16. During its retreat, member organizations of the Partnership also discussed the means to improve further the Partnership's joint programming, including identifying priority thematic areas and modus operandi for the Partnership's work. Member organizations of the Partnership also exchanged ideas on how to improve communication and outreach among member organizations of the Partnership and to the Member States through the preparation of communication pieces and issue briefs, as well as the organization of events and briefings. The preparation for the high-level event of the Partnership during the 2023 SDG Summit was also discussed during the retreat.

17. On 18 September 2023, the Partnership held the high-level event "Forests for our Future" on the margins of the 2023 SDG Summit⁸. The event featured two interactive roundtables with the participation of ministers, heads of government, and other senior representatives of the Partnership's members, outlining how their countries and organizations contribute to coordinated forest-based actions to accelerate progress towards global goals and targets by 2030. The event was moderated by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan. The Partnership launched a "CPF Joint Call to Action for Forests Towards 2030" during the event. The joint call is intended to serve as a clarion call for heightened commitment, political will, and concerted efforts to fortify forest-based solutions to untap the potential of forests to achieve the SDGs and the GFGs by 2030 with a focus on four focal areas: implementation and action; data, science, and innovation; finance for forests; and communication and awareness-raising.

18. On 9 December 2023, the Partnership held its event "Beyond Carbon- Realizing Untapped Potential of Forests to Combat Climate Change" during the twenty-eighth session of the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The event brought together representatives of six member organizations of the Partnership. It provided an opportunity to share and discuss best practices and case studies on capturing the full values of forests, the productive functions of forests, and the potential of renewable materials and green jobs. The event also highlighted the opportunities and possible next steps for CPF members to realize the full values of forests beyond carbon in the focal areas of the CPF Joint Call to Action for Forests towards 2030: Implementation and Action; Data, Science, and Innovation; Finance for Forests; and Communication and Awareness-raising.

19. On 10 December 2023, the Partnership held its high-level dialogue on "Forests for Our Common Future: Halting and Reversing Deforestation by 2030" during the twenty-eighth session of the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁹. The dialogue brought together heads and principals of seven member organizations of the Partnership. It provided an opportunity for the leaders of the UN agencies and other member organizations of the Partnership to share their perspectives and outline their individual and joint actions to accelerate efforts to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. The discussions held during the event highlighted the critical importance of taking a coherent approach to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Global Forest Goals by 2030 and other forest-related goals and objectives through joint actions and initiatives of the Partnership and support countries in enhancing and implementing their Nationally-determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement and strengthening the International Arrangement on Forests through its midterm review at UNFF19 in 2024.

C. Joint initiatives of the Partnership

⁸ Summary report at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/18Sep23-CPF-summary-report-fin.pdf>.

⁹ Event recording at <https://unfccc.int/event/turning-the-tide-on-deforestation>.

20. Since the conclusion of the eighteenth session of the Forum, the Partnership has continued to work on advancing the joint initiatives described below.

Forest Communicators' Network

21. Concerning the celebration of the International Day of Forests on the theme “Healthy Forests for Healthy People” in 2023, events were held by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and other members of the Partnership. FAO prepared a video spot aired on major global television channels. The video spot was for the first time translated into 46 languages, celebrating multilingualism and reaching one billion households in 170 countries. FAO also created a dedicated website for the International Day¹⁰ with outreach materials available in several languages. For the 2024 International Day of Forests, the Partnership proposed the theme “Forests and Innovation” and will celebrate the day widely. The Forum subsequently adopted this theme at its eighteenth session.

22. Communication and outreach efforts were amplified, designed, and supported through the five regional Forest Communicators' Networks hosted by FAO (for Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Asia-Pacific, the Mediterranean and the Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean) at the regional and national levels.

23. The communication campaign “Grow the Solution,” as part of the joint initiative on communication and aligned with the Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World joint initiative, has gained momentum through strengthening global advocacy and awareness of the role of sustainable wood value chains and their contribution to SDG12. The Grow the Solution campaign was presented at the World Congress of Architects in July 2023. On the Congress' sidelines, roundtable meetings and workshops were held with architects and Forest Communicators' Network members to discuss opportunities to advance sustainable wood in construction, including establishing a coalition of practitioners.

24. The Forest Communicators' Network of the Partnership directly contributes to global forest goal 6 and indirectly to all other global forest goals.

Forest education

25. The Joint Initiative on “Forest education: Building capacity and knowledge for sustainable forests” is led by FAO, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) with the collaboration of the Secretariats of UNFCCC and the Forum. It links closely with the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and all six Global Forest Goals.

26. As a contribution to this joint initiative, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations undertook various research activities, publications, and events, including the IUFRO Symposium on Forest Education, 2-4 October 2023 in Helsinki, Finland, and online¹¹; Global Competition on Best Practices in Forest Education 2.0 organised by the Joint IUFRO-IFSA Task Force on Forest Education, with the collaboration of Reforestamos and World Resources Institute¹²; and the ongoing work on Restoration Education with the Global Landscapes Forum and Wageningen University and Research¹³, including the regional collaboration workshops around the Bay of Bengal¹⁴.

Forest Finance Facilitation

27. The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network was established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 and is led and coordinated by the Forum secretariat. The Network works in close cooperation with Member States and Partnership members to implement its priorities, as outlined in the strategic plan for forests. Detailed information on this matter is provided in the Note by the Secretariat on means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (E/CN.18/2024/3).

¹⁰ <https://www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/en/>

¹¹ <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/conferences/iufro-symposium-forest-education>

¹² <https://www.iufro.org/science/task-forces/forest-education/competition-best-practices-in-forest-education-2/>

¹³ <https://academy.globallandscapesforum.org/restoration-education/>

¹⁴ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/regional-collaboration-restoration-education-around-bay-bengal/>

Global Forest Expert Panel

28. The International Union of Forest Research Organizations coordinates the Global Forest Expert Panel initiative. Under the Expert Panel initiative, international scientific expert panels on forest-related topics of high global concern are periodically assembled, and assessment reports are produced to support more informed decision-making on forest-related issues. Since its launch in 2007, the initiative has completed eight thematic assessments.

29. The Expert Panel initiative effectively contributes to achieving all Global Forest Goals. It is particularly relevant to target 4.5 of Global Forest Goal 4 (Forest Resources) and Global Forest Goal 6 (Forest Stewards). In the Expert Panel initiative reports, the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Global Forest Goal 5: Forests Sustain Us) is also addressed.

30. On the occasion of the International Day of Forests 2023, the Expert Panel initiative published a global assessment on forests and human health¹⁵ and an accompanying policy brief. The assessment synthesizes scientific information on how forests, trees, and green spaces impact human health across all life stages and provides policymakers, investors, donors, and other stakeholders with a stronger scientific basis for decisions of relevance to human well-being and forests. The assessment report and its accompanying policy brief, originally written in English and translated into Spanish and French, were widely disseminated among key stakeholders in international fora considering forest-related issues, including through the arrangement of the UNFF18 Side Event “Forest and Trees for Human Health.” The global assessment directly supports Global Forest Goals 2 (Forests Provide Us) and 4 (Forest Resources) and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by highlighting the interlinkages between SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and 15 (Life on Land), while providing relevant links to other Sustainable Development Goals.

31. Based on the detailed global assessment, IUFRO published an expanded regional policy brief on forests for human health in Asia¹⁶ in October 2023. The expanded policy brief shows that while there continues to be a lack of awareness in Asia and elsewhere of the vital relationship between forests and human health, Asia can be considered a cradle of more integrative and close-to-nature healthcare, which can lay the foundation for adopting approaches such as the One Health framework.

32. In 2023, the Expert Panel initiative began preparing for the next global assessment, including background research and consultations with relevant stakeholders and scientists on potential topics. The new topic will be chosen, among other criteria, on the basis of the need for a synthesis of relevant scientific information and its policy relevance, especially regarding the 2030 development agenda and the SDGs. A concept note on the selected topic will be developed and submitted to all members of the Partnership for approval in early 2024. The publication of the new global assessment is planned for 2025.

Green finance for sustainable landscapes

33. The Land Finance Hub¹⁷ has been launched and operationalized. The Hub contains knowledge products and toolkits. The hub hosted 317 registered users and showcased 31 registered projects seeking financing. The hub’s web analytics also indicated that, as of September 2023, 1,256 web users from Indonesia, Australia, Ghana, the United States, and beyond have accessed the Hub. More details are available in the Hub performance report¹⁸. A promotional video introducing the Hub has been created¹⁹, and a guideline to navigate and register into the Hub has been created

¹⁵ <https://www.iufro.org/science/science-policy/gfep-initiative/panel-on-forests-and-human-health/>

¹⁶ <https://www.iufro.org/index.php?id=7634>

¹⁷ <https://landfinancehub.org>

¹⁸ https://icrafci-for-my.sharepoint.com/:p/g/personal/m_brady_cifor-icraf_org/EWbIHqdxYJtPsCQmzGECE64BgRzXGJWn7Imv9mi88NJy2Q?e=kujR3m

¹⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZ5C90K_0AY

34. A total of 332 MSMEs (354 participants--of which 161 were women participants) have been trained to navigate and register on the Hub. Those who have been registered have been showcased for their profiles²⁰, and their projects seeking finance have also been showcased²⁰. The hub also engaged financiers comprising venture capital and banks²¹.

35. A communication, outreach, and engagement strategy was developed in 2022²². CIFOR-ICRAF actively promoted the Land Finance Hub on social media, blogs, promotional videos, and national and international events such as the Global Landscape Forum, FAO Regional Learning Workshop, SME Finance Marketplace, Sustainable District Festival Sigi, and many others. CIFOR-ICRAF also engaged with MSMEs associations, companies, and financiers to organize training jointly. A set of training materials in navigating and registering on the Hub, gender equity and social inclusion in business, building inclusive business profiles, and financial literacy have been developed and presented during the training²³.

36. Summary of the activities of the hub is as follows: the Land Finance Hub is a web-based platform for financiers and MSMEs seeking to transform sustainable production systems; the Hub calls for financiers with diverse investment interests and a broad geographical focus; agriculture and forestry MSMEs in Land Finance Hub mainly comprise micro businesses lacking access and experience in securing private commercial finance; women hold multiple roles in MSMEs, from owner, manager, worker to investor; and beyond matchmaking, bridging green finance to agriculture and forestry MSMEs requires a lever to improve visibility, access and capacity.

37. The Land Finance Hub has contributed to GFGs 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 by increasing forest-based economic benefits of selected MSMEs in Indonesia through improved access to finance. The project has produced a Land Finance Hub platform that has improved the financial literacy and visibility of MSMEs and their projects seeking finance; it has built MSME capacities through the provision of knowledge products and helped to connect MSMEs with potential financiers. The Hub has much potential to be further developed in Indonesia and other countries. CIFOR-ICRAF will continue to maintain the Hub with planned future linkages to Indonesia's blended finance instrument and peatland restoration project.

Streamlining global forest-related reporting

38. Under this joint initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, efforts have continued to improve forest-related data coverage, quality, and transparency and reduce the reporting burden on countries. This involved further improvement of the online Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) data entry, review, and dissemination platform, publishing of revised terms and definitions, as well as guidelines and specifications for FRA 2025. In addition, it included implementing an extensive capacity development programme (12 regional in-person and three virtual workshops) on country reporting for FRA 2025.

39. It also involved refining the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators (GCS). Work on the GCS has focused on documenting the overall status of and trends in the indicators and further analysis of the way forward for Tier 3 indicators. In 2022, FAO published two reports, prepared under the CPF: "The status of, and trends in, the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators" and "An assessment of uptake of the global core set of forest-related indicators".

²⁰ <https://landfinancehub.org/en/projects/>

²¹ <https://landfinancehub.org/en/financiers/>

²² https://icrafcifor-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/m_brady_cifor-icraf_org/EU7FKAch6WfxgIauxO1NUMBRwzKWs7uSg8TZiiftRJIaA?e=osD0PH&wdLOR=cF0493F82-7F3B-4F54-92B2-94F73A3688C1

²³ https://icrafcifor-my.sharepoint.com/personal/m_brady_cifor-icraf_org/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fm%5Fbrady%5Ficifor%2Dicraf%5Forg%2FDocuments%2FCIFOR%2FVFI%20Work%2FBi%2DLat%20Projects%2FOngoing%20projects%2FGlobal%2FGF4SL%2FImplementation%2FC%203%2E3%20Training%2FTraining%20material%2FTraining%20material%20final&wdLOR=c8BB39CBC%2D65DC%2D468C%2DACAC%2D134AEC6FBBD4&ga=1; https://icrafcifor-my.sharepoint.com/personal/m_brady_cifor-icraf_org/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fm%5Fbrady%5Ficifor%2Dicraf%5Forg%2FDocuments%2FCIFOR%2FVFI%20Work%2FBi%2DLat%20Projects%2FOngoing%20projects%2FGlobal%2FGF4SL%2FImplementation%2FC%203%2E3%20Training%2FTraining%20material%2FGuideline&wdLOR=c697FEE0C%2DACBA%2D4A57%2DA085%2D696356E41735&ga=1

40. This joint initiative contributes to GFGs 6 by enhancing coordination and improving the coherence of forest reporting systems, increasing transparency, and reducing countries' reporting burden.

Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World

41. The Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World (SW4SW) initiative is co-led by FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the World Bank are members of the initiative. The global non-governmental organization Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) International has aligned with the initiative at its inception.

42. The initiative was launched at the thirteenth session of the Forum in 2018 and focuses on delivering more sustainable, efficient, and inclusive wood supply chains to generate higher value-added jobs and renewable low-carbon products. The SW4SW works with governments, the private sector, and national, regional, and international stakeholders to promote the adoption of innovative policy approaches, technical knowledge, and finance to increase sustainable and legal wood production and consumption. The initiative has a strong advocacy and communication component delivered together with the Forest Communicators' Network.

43. The wood-based industry supports the generation of income and employment in remote rural areas, contributing to poverty eradication. Through its focus on sustainable, efficient, and inclusive value chains, the SW4SW has contributed to increasing country capacities of micro, small, and medium producers while addressing aspects of sustainable supply and use of raw materials (GFG 2). The focus on value chains, as well as on supply chains, provides for improved forest governance, as it works on all segments from production to consumption, identifying and seeking to eliminate drivers of illegality, minimizing transaction costs, and increasing data availability, transparency, and efficiency in the wood-based sector (GFG 5).

44. Access to markets and finance is an essential part of the initiative (GFG 4), including through investment fora and capacity development for forest business management. The initiative has a significant role in forest conservation and restoration by contributing to increasing socioeconomic benefits from sustainably managed forests and creating market opportunities to expand forest cover for production, with strong linkages to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (GFG 3). The work on awareness-raising and policy support to advance the uptake of sustainable wood products as renewable low-carbon materials expands the forest contribution to climate change (GFG 6).

45. Some recent SW4SW activities are: FAO and IUFRO are implementing the project Wood4Globe, funded by the Austria Forest Fund, contributing to the development of regional sustainable wood policy platforms; ITTO has led the Global Legal and Sustainable Timber Forum (GLSTF), and is developing the Global Timber Index (GTI); in collaboration with Argentina and Brazil and other regional stakeholders, CIFOR, FAO, and IUFRO delivered two regional Dialogues in Latin America, exploring opportunities of bioeconomy and ecosystem restoration to advance sustainable wood value chains. In the Asia-Pacific, FAO, and ITTO contributed to regional Dialogues organized by the Asian Forest Cooperation (AFOCO) and by Australia and Japan; Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia were supported to promote sustainable wood use in domestic markets; in Central Africa, a regional assessment identified priority actions to support countries' transition to the log export ban established by CEMAC (Communauté Economique et Monétaire des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale), and COMIFAC (Central African Forest Commission), the development of sustainable wood value chains and bioeconomy; in Cameroon, a roadmap for supporting sustainability and legality of production oriented to domestic and regional markets was endorsed by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife for resource mobilization.

Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award

46. Established by the Partnership in 2012 in memory of Kenyan environmentalist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai, the CPF Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award recognises inspiring individuals who have a track record of outstanding achievements in conserving, restoring, and sustainably using forests.

47. The Partnership will launch the next edition of the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award in 2024. Forest Champions need recognition and visibility more than ever to advocate for change and inspire others to follow their

exemplary path. The award seeks to attract the brightest minds, who deliver convincing arguments and innovative and impactful actions to manage all types of forests and forest landscapes more sustainably, recognize forests' multiple values, and unlock the potential of their goods and services.

48. This joint initiative contributes to GFG 6 by creating awareness for forest champions, enhancing cooperation and creating visibility for grass-root initiatives that contribute to improving forests and the people who depend on them.

Turning the tide on deforestation

49. In response to the call of the Secretary-General and complementing the efforts of countries to halt deforestation, the Partnership has continued its global advocacy efforts on halting deforestation as a contribution to the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its global forest goals. The UNFCCC COP28 high-level dialogue on “Forests for Our Common Future: Halting and Reversing Deforestation by 2030” was held in this regard on 10 December 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

50. The joint initiative contributes to GFG 1, 2, 3, and 4 through enhancing cooperation and advocacy to halt deforestation, promote restoration, and enhance the use of sustainably grown forest products. It also provides space to discuss innovative finance models for forestry and thus contributes to GFG 6.

Primary forests

51. This joint initiative aims to foster enhanced conservation of primary forests. There is insufficient recognition, understanding, and conservation of primary forests globally. This oversight poses a significant threat to the climate, biodiversity, and SDGs. In addition, this lack of understanding and integration of the values and benefits of primary forests in forest financing strategies, national budgets, and global policy agendas has led to their inadequate prioritization, contributing to ongoing deforestation and loss of these vital ecosystems.

52. This joint initiative will support the UNFF in elevating the importance of primary forests in global discourse and helping its member countries to provide conditions for strategically channelling investments to good projects and monitoring progress. The joint initiative also aims to facilitate and stimulate financing for primary forest conservation by establishing robust donor-recipient dialogue and coordination mechanisms and providing information on financing opportunities. Through capacity development and information sharing on the value of primary forests, the joint initiative will raise the visibility of primary forests among stakeholders, policymakers, and the public, transforming their perception and ensuring their inclusion in forest financing strategies, conservation initiatives, and the global policy agenda. The joint initiative is intended to be formally launched at the nineteenth session of the Forum.

53. On 8 December 2023, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, in partnership with the Global Environment Facility, FAO, and Griffith University, held the event “Climate & Canopy: Amplifying Action for SDG 13 & 15 through Primary Forest Conservation” during the twenty-eighth session of the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The event provided an opportunity to share ongoing collaboration among the joint initiative partners. It highlighted the importance for countries and stakeholders to accelerate forest-based climate actions in support of the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and the Paris Agreement, particularly through increasing forest finance and capacity building for developing countries.

54. The joint initiative contributes directly to the GFGs 1 and 3 for reversing the loss of forest cover worldwide and increasing the protected forest area. In particular, it targets to promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally. Further, it contributes to GFG 4, which deals with financial resources mobilization, and GFG 6 for enhanced cooperation, coordination, and synergies across the Partnership.

3. Updates on the activities of regional and subregional organizations and processes

55. Since the eighteenth session of the Forum, the Forum Secretariat has continued to strengthen engagement with relevant regional and subregional partners and substantively contributed to meetings held by these entities. The Forum

Secretariat represented the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and addressed the thirty-third session of FAO's Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission, held from 26 to 30 June 2023; the thirty-second session of the North American Forest Commission, held from 25 to 27 September 2023; the thirtieth session of the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission, held from 2 to 6 October 2023; the twenty-fourth session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, held from 30 October to 3 November 2023 and; the forty-second session of the European Forestry Commission, held jointly with the eighty-first session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)'s Committee on Forests and Forest Industry, held from 20 to 24 November 2023. The interventions from the Secretariat reinforced the importance of implementing the UNSPF and achieving the GFGs therein contained at the regional and subregional level.

56. The Forum Secretariat also attended the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (FOREST EUROPE) Expert Level Meeting, held on 21-22 June 2023; Forest Green Jobs meetings held on 29 March and 30 November 2023; the High-Level Policy Dialogue, held on 9 November 2023; the Think Tank on Sustainable Forest Management meeting on 29 November 2023, and; the Expert Level Meeting held on 9-10 January 2024, which served as a preparatory step for the next Ministerial Conference, to take place in October 2024 in Bonn.

57. In the context of the midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests, the Forum Secretariat organized an Expert Group Meeting on the Forum's contribution to the 2030 Agenda, Involvement of Regional/Subregional Entities, and Involvement of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders. The meeting was held in Bangkok from 11 to 13 January 2023, and the Co-Chairs Summary can be found at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Co-Chairs-Summary-Bangkok-EGM.pdf>. Moreover, the Forum Secretariat was able to facilitate the participation of regional/subregional partners in the UNFF Expert Group Meeting on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and Implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests held in Nairobi, Kenya, in June 2023, as well as the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad hoc Expert Group (AHEG) on the preparations for the IAF midterm that was held in October 2023 in Vienna, Austria.

58. The Forum Secretariat's participation in the meetings of regional/subregional forest-related entities, together with enabling the attendance of partners in events it organizes, positively contributes to the implementation of the UNSPF, the achievement of the GFGs and to an inclusive IAF midterm review process.

4. Update on the activities of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, and progress on major group workplans

59. The Forum secretariat continued to strengthen engagement with major groups and other relevant stakeholders (MGoS), including the private sector. The Forum secretariat kept major group representatives actively engaged in several intersessional activities, including activities related to the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests. MGoS contributed to the preparation of and discussions on an assessment report regarding the involvement of MGoS in preparation for the midterm review of international arrangement on forests. Their valuable contributions significantly strengthened preparations for the midterm review process; further they contributed to highlighting sustainable forest management with planned activities in observance of the International Day of Forests on 21 March 2023. MGoS also attended and substantively contributed to the following meetings: Expert Group Meeting on the Forum's contribution to the 2030 Agenda, Involvement of Regional/Subregional Entities, and Involvement of Major Group and Other Stakeholders held in Bangkok, Thailand in January 2023; the UNFF Expert Group Meeting on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, and Implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests held in Nairobi, Kenya in June 2023; the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad hoc Expert Group (AHEG) on the preparations for the IAF midterm that was held in October 2023 in Vienna, Austria; the Country-Led Initiative (CLI) hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India held in October 2023, and the UNFF-related events at UNFCCC COP28 held in December 2023 in Dubai, UAE. MGoS substantive participation in these key meetings ensured diverse perspectives, enriched discussions and informed decision-making.

60. MGoS is also organizing a Major Groups-Led Initiative (MGI) to support the nineteenth forum session in March 2024 with funding from the German government. The initiative's main objective is to solidify MGoS governance structures and forge effective coordination arrangements among them, paving the way for their enhanced contributions

to the UNFF and implementation of the UNSPF. The MGI report, once ready, will be posted on the UNFF19 webpage²⁴.

61. The Forum Secretariat continued to engage with the business and industry major group through the group's focal point, the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations, attending meetings organized by FAO's Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries and encouraging private sector initiatives which aim at supporting the sustainable management of forests, such as the International Sustainable Forest Coalition, officially launched in New York in September 2023, composed of companies that, according to the Coalition's website²⁵, collectively manage almost 10 million hectares of forests in 28 countries.

5. Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2024 and international forest-related developments

62. The 2024 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council will be held from 8 to 17 July 2024 at United Nations Headquarters under the theme "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions"²⁶²⁷. During the 2024 session, the high-level political forum will also review in-depth Sustainable Development Goal 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

63. The interlinkages between the thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2023–2024, the global forest goals, the SDGs, and international forest-related developments are shown in the table below²⁸.

²⁴ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>

²⁵ <https://www.isfc.world/>

²⁶ A/DEC/77/553

²⁷ Further information on the 2024 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development is contained in E/CN.18/2024/6.

²⁸ The concept note on the thematic priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19, as well as the background analytical studies and policy briefs are available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>.

Interlinkages between the thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2023–2024, the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, and international forest-related developments

<i>Thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2023–2024</i>	<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in-depth by the 2023 and 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to other Sustainable Development Goals</i>	<i>International forest-related developments</i>
Enhancing forest-based economic, social, and environmental benefits	2	1, 2, 6, 9, 17	4, 5, 8, 12, 15	2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit
Increasing significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests	3	7, 17	12, 14, 15	Resumed second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity Twenty-eighth sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination, and coherence for sustainable forest management	4, 5, 6	1, 2, 17	5, 10, 12, 15, 16	Themes of the International Day of Forests in 2024 Twenty-seventh session of the Committee on Forestry of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development Summit of the Future United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) Decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

64. All types of forests and their sustainable management have significant roles in providing livelihoods and employment, contributing to food, water, and energy security through non-timber forest products and ecosystem services, supporting the bioeconomy, harbouring biodiversity, mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration, adapting to adverse impacts of and increased resilience to climate change, as well as reducing the risk of natural disasters, floods, droughts, sand and dust storms, landslides and other extreme events.

65. In particular, there are close interlinkages between forests, biodiversity, and climate change. The sustainable management of all types of forests and the increased forest cover and protected areas, including at the rural level, effectively help address the global challenges of land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change. In this respect, these interlinkages illustrate that accelerating the achievement of the global forest goals would also contribute

to achieving the global climate and biodiversity-related goals and targets under the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

66. These interlinkages between forests and global challenges demonstrate the importance of ensuring that no one is left behind, enhancing regional and subregional collaboration and exchange of experiences, promoting forest governance and forest law enforcement, increasing involvement of local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision-making and implementation of policies, and improving communication on forest values.

67. Accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests and achievement of the global forest goals by 2030 would require meeting financial, technical, and technological resource needs, including through the effective use of existing resources and strengthening international cooperation, enhancing coordination, mobilizing and facilitating the access to new and additional resources from all sources at all levels and enhancing technical and technological assistance to countries.

68. Since the eighteenth session of the Forum, there have also been major developments regarding forests in various international meetings and conferences, including the GEF Assembly in August 2023, the SDG Summit during the UNGA in September 2023, and COP28 of UNFCCC in December 2023. An overview and analysis of the major international forest-related developments are contained in the note by the Secretariat on the High-level Segment of UNFF19, contained in document E/CN.18/2024/6.

IV. Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests in 2024

69. Raising awareness of the importance of forests to all aspects of global sustainable development is a key component of the work carried out by the secretariat of the Forum in implementing the communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF. Delivering targeted communications that reach beyond the forest community is critical in this regard. There remains a need for greater recognition of the full value of forests, in particular, how sustainable forest management offers a cost-effective nature-based solution to many of the most pressing sustainable development challenges.

70. The key communications and outreach methods utilized by the secretariat of the Forum include statements, presentations and video messages targeting policy makers at key international events, and compelling content for social media content targeting public audiences. Best practices and success stories remain an integral part of the secretariat's ongoing work on capacity development, including in particular as it relates to forest financing. The "Forest Financing Quarterly Highlight" newsletter of the clearing house of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, provide updates on recent developments, new learning resources and upcoming opportunities related to forest financing. A new UNFF quarterly newsletter was also launched in February 2024 to inform members of the Forum of relevant developments and upcoming events related to the work of the Forum. All of these activities contributed to raising awareness of the multi-faceted contributions of forests to sustainable development and the work carried out by the Forum in this regard, as evidenced by the high level of engagement by participants at events.

71. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs works with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to jointly mobilize resources for communication and outreach, while at the same time exploring new opportunities for partnership with other Forum-related entities. The Department leverages its broad-based communication services to feature work on forests and the UNFF, including the monthly newsletter UN DESA Voice. The Department of Global Communications provides guidance on how to feature forests within the UN system's broader narrative on sustainable development. The communication focal points at the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the FAO regional communications networks provide support in amplifying messaging and outreach, including through the annual celebration of the International Day of Forests, on 21 March.

72. The theme of the International Day of Forests for 2023 was "Forests and health", which provided an opportunity to highlight how forests sustain all aspects of health, from clean air and water to providing essential food, fuel, medicines and income.

73. As part of the global celebration, the Forum Secretariat held a special event to celebrate the International Day at UNHQ which featured the head of Department Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Li Junhua the ECOSOC President, the Chair of the UN Forum on Forests and experts from UN system partners, regional entities, local communities, private sector, academia, Indigenous Peoples and youth. A common thread in all of the presentations and statements was that we must restore balance between human health and well-being and the health of our natural environment. The vital roles of all stakeholders, from governments, local authorities and cities to Indigenous communities, youth and academia, in safeguarding the health of forests and people was emphasized.

74. Social media messaging was a key component of the public communication and outreach campaign for the International Day. Multimedia products included digital posters, social media cards, suggested messages and animated gifs, all of which were made available on the Trello board for the International Day of Forests²⁹.

75. The Facebook and Twitter social media accounts of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were the primary channels for disseminating the social media content produced by the Forum Secretariat. The social media advisory and Trello board were also shared with United Nations system social media focal points, the Forum's national focal points, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional entities and major groups organizations. The campaign hashtag "#IntlForestDay" was widely used and was included in over 17,000 tweets by over 11,000 contributors during the International Day itself, with over 284 million timeline deliveries and over 153 million accounts reached on Twitter, according to estimates.

V. Conclusion

76. In 2024, the theme for the International Day of Forests is "Forests and innovation". The communication and outreach activities planned for the 2024 International Day will follow a similar approach as for previous International Days, with a focus on social media-friendly products and the organization of a special event at the United Nations Headquarters in celebration of the International Day of Forests on 21 March 2024.

77. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations, regional and subregional entities, major groups, and other relevant stakeholders continue to contribute to and play a fundamental role in the work of the Forum. In the last year, UNFF partners actively participated in the process related to the midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests and in the Forum intersessional activities culminating in the inclusion of their views and proposal in the zero drafts of the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2025 to 2028, the zero drafts of the ministerial declaration and the UNFF19 omnibus resolutions.

78. Members of the Forum are invited to consider announcing additional Voluntary National Contributions, an important tool to ensure the implementation of the UNSPF and the achievement of the GFGs therein contained.

79. Recent joint activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests were undertaken to support the accelerated implementation of the UNSPF and progress towards its Global Forest Goals by 2030, particularly with a view to enhancing coherence and synergy on forest-related issues and values among its member organizations.

80. As the global community increasingly recognizes and strives to mobilize and promote forest-based actions and solutions to address major global challenges, additional efforts should be made to further enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies among member organizations of the Partnership, particularly through the work of the Forum, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to enhance their synergies further and sustain the global shift from deforestation to restoration, and sustainable forest management.

81. The Forum Secretariat continued to implement the communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF and promote the celebration of the International Day of Forests.

²⁹ <https://trello.com/b/CVulcXZ8/international-day-of-forests-2023>

VI. Proposals

82. The Forum may wish to:

- (a) Accelerate efforts towards achieving global forest goals 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, including through the mainstreaming and upscaling of forest-related actions in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and developing joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030;
- (b) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, through the development of its new workplan for 2025–2028, to strengthen its support for the work of the Forum and for the accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its global forest goals, and present progress reports at the annual sessions of the Forum;
- (c) Consider further supporting the participation of regional/subregional partners and major groups in UNFF.

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