

Questionnaire on the Mid-Term Review of the International Arrangement on Forests

Introduction

In accordance with its programme of work, the UN Forum on Forests at its seventeenth session (UNFF17) adopted an omnibus resolution. The annex to this resolution contains the actions to be taken in preparation for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The resolution calls for these actions to be implemented in a transparent and independent manner, and in close consultation with Members of the Forum, as well as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) member organizations and other relevant stakeholders. To facilitate the process, the UNFF Secretariat has hired several consultants to assist in the preparation of background papers and assessments. This questionnaire is prepared by the consultants to solicit views from UNFF national focal points and representatives of relevant stakeholders, for use in their assessments. You are kindly invited to send your responses to the UNFF Secretariat at: unff@un.org, with copy to yan.lang@un.org by 30 September 2022.

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A. Questions related to the United Nations Forum on Forests and its members

Question A-1: Considering the objectives of the IAF, what progress has been made by the UNFF and its Members towards:

- a. Implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests?

We commend the UNFF for its efforts to be a visible player in the forest sector and value the intergovernmental and universal nature of the Forum. The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF), including its six Global Forest Goals (GFG) and 26 associated targets, the GFG Report 2021, International Day of Forests, and Phase I of the GFFFN Clearing House are good examples of the Forum's and Member States' progress toward the implementation of sustainable forest management for all types of forests.

- b. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels?

The GFGs strengthen political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives and should influence other UN and forest-related agenda and regional bodies. Although not a substitute for the commitment of Member States, the CPF raises the political commitment of the IAF objectives by enhancing communication across distinct fora. UNFF strengthens commitment by providing a platform to bring all relevant bodies together to form a voice on forest policy issues.

Question A-2: Could you list the objectives that have not been achieved, and how can this be improved?

We note there has not been consistent participation in engaging stakeholders. Greater stakeholder engagement is an important objective of the IAF. Specifically, further progress on private sector cooperation is a widely stated goal of the Forum.

Question A-5: Are you satisfied with the current level of engagement of Members and stakeholders in the Forum's intersessional activities, and what are your suggestions to improve the use of the UNFF's annual

Question B-2: What are the gaps in and the existing capacity of the secretariat with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations, strengthening its capacities, gaining a better understanding of its decision-making processes and procedures, and amplifying the impact of its activities?

Transparency of the Secretariat's work, through reporting at the annual UNFF sessions and throughout the intersession is important to improve the effectiveness of its operations. This includes fundraising activities, potential MOU developments, and internal UN System representations.

At times, Forum discussions overly focus on administrative issues taking time away from policy discussions.

Question B-3: What are your suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the UNFF Secretariat in carrying out its functions and in making progress towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, and enhance collaboration and synergies, and reduce duplication?

An organizational human resources chart and historical timeline documenting staff size would be helpful to include.

We note in the past there were secondments to the Secretariat, which could be a useful way to increase Secretariat capacity with respect to technical and financial resources.

C. Questions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Question C-1: Since 2015 what is your assessment of the extent of progress on CPF's contribution to the IAF objectives as defined in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33?

CPF offers valuable contributions toward progress on IAF objectives through their expertise, programming, and distinct forest-related objectives. CPF is extremely important to Members and the Forum, and we view the CPF as a major achievement of UNFF. In practice, the CPF collaborates when opportunities and funding arise, taking the UNFF priorities into consideration, respective of their own governing bodies and mandates.

We appreciate the work by CPF members to improve internal functioning, planning, and communication with members.

Question C-2: In the table below kindly indicate your assessment of the effectiveness, impact and added value of the activities, in particular, Joint Initiatives of the CPF as outlined in its workplan (2017-2020).

Item	Key CPF activities as outlined in its 2017-2020 Workplan	In your view what has been the effectiveness of CPF in the following areas (please explain)	In your view what has been the Impact and value-added of the CPF in the following areas (please explain)
1	Contributions to UNFF documents & sessions	CPF member input in UNFF documents and formal Forum sessions is crucial. Their input during formal and informal sessions provides technical and organizational insight into the negotiations.	CPF impact and value-added includes joint statements, such as the 2020, "Towards sustainability: forest solutions in response to the COVID-19

10	Forest Finance Facilitation	We view CPF developments on forest finance facilitation as a prominent achievement of CPF joint initiatives. Building upon FAO's SFM toolkit, the CPF provides key data and information for the GFFFN Clearinghouse databases providing valuable information requested by Member States.	CPF members provide extremely valuable information and identifying data sources and financing flows for Phase II of the GFFFN database.
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Question C-3: The CPF Policy Document recognises the need for periodic review of its membership given the evolving nature of its mandate. In your view what should be:

- a. the key elements in setting criteria for membership of the CPF (take into account CPF rules of procedure as annexed to the CPF policy document¹)

The creation of the CPF is a major achievement of UNFF. While CPF members have their own mandates, governance structures, and strategic plans, we value the productive input from all CPF members at UNFF sessions, whether from the UN organizations, such as FAO, UNFCCC, or outside of the UN system, IUFRO, IUCN, CIFOR/ICRAF, amongst others. UN organization membership was never a condition for CPF membership and should continue not to be a qualifying criterion. We value the inclusion of CITES into the CPF and, along with other non-UN organizations, view their inclusion as progress to contributing to IAF objectives.

- b. the frequency for review of the criteria (e.g., below 5 years; 6-10 years; etc.)

We seek CPF input on the details of their review, but a 6-10-year range is reasonable.

- c. the process for triggering a review of the CPF membership

Either on a 6-10-year routine schedule, or if a majority of CPF members call for a review due to an extraordinary circumstance.

Question C-4: In your view, how can the CPF provide greater support for policy development and implementation of UNFF resolutions/decisions and in particular assist countries in the implementation of the UNSPF.

We believe we have productive steps before we see full potential of GFFFN, GEF programming, and other efforts. The GFFFN continues to offer valuable support to countries to help them access financing, and these require time to show results given funding pipelines. The CPF and UNFF are working on augmenting the funding source database to include additional tools for forest financing planning and mobilization. We believe all of these require additional time to show results.

E. Questions related to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests

Question E-1: What are the contributions of your country /organization to the UNFF trust fund?

The United States has been one of the largest and most consistent supporters of UNFF through our voluntary contributions to the UNFF Trust Fund.

In recent years, decisions regarding the use of specific funds may have inhibited other member states from contributing.

F. Questions related to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030

Question F-1: What significant actions has your country or organisation undertaken since 2020 to implement the UNSPF?² What are the main challenges and constraints your country or organisation is facing in implementing the UNSPF?

The United States is engaged in numerous and multi-faceted forest policy and management efforts undertaken at the national, state, and local levels by government bodies and private sector entities, often in partnership. Many of these activities seek to achieve the UNSPF and its goals. Since 2020, the US government has taken a number of significant actions:

1. The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, a milestone legislation which invests \$5 billion to protect communities from risks of extreme wildfires, conserve forests with significant carbon sequestration benefits, and cool communities vulnerable to threats of extreme heat. These investments will help to prot

Question F-2: What challenges and constraints did your country face in the preparation of its voluntary national report? If it did not prepare a report, what were the reasons?

Our main challenge in preparing the voluntary report was identifying and summarizing from numerous actions, assigning a given cross-cutting action to specific UNSPF goal, and collecting information from various relevant government agencies, state, and other non-governmental actors. Numeric questions were generally easier to answer if such data were part of our national reporting processes. Open-ended qualitative responses can be challenging; however, these qualitative responses were best able to characterize our actions. These examples also provide a niche role for UNFF voluntary reporting.

Question F-3: Do you agree with the submission of voluntary national reports to UNFF, 6 to 12 months after the publication of the next Global Forest Resource Assessment

Question G-1: In your view, how well on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being very well) have the Forum's annual inputs to the HLPF on forest benefits and interlinkages with other SDGs been reflected in the HLPF declarations:

4 HLPF ministerial declarations in 2018 and 2022 (SDG15 theme years)³

(In 2022, the GFGs were referenced in the declaration and forests in general had around 10 references in the document.)

2 HLPF ministerial declarations in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (non-SDG15 theme years)⁴

(In 2021, forests and deforestation were only mentioned once in reference to biodiversity. However, some years may have had more adequate references as stated in the footnote.)

Question G-2: In your view, which of the following should be considered to enhance the visibility of forest contributions at HLPF sessions and better reflect the interlinkages between forests and the SDGs in HLPF declarations (check all that may be useful):

Earlier input into relevant aspects of the HLPF preparatory process⁵ by the UNFF, its members, secretariat and partners (CPF, Major Groups, regional/subregional organizations).
(Due to the schedule of annual UNFF sessions, we already work through the UNFF bureau to provide early input into HLPF before our formal discussions.)

Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the Forum and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at HLPF regional and global preparatory meetings. (Bureau members represent their region, but do not represent all Member States. The UNFF bureau has not always had consistent representation from all UN regions.)

Enhanced coordination in capitals between UNFF focal points and those responsible for the HLPF and preparation of Voluntary National Reviews.

Enhanced consultations between the UNFF and its secretariat and UN Regional Economic Commissions, particularly their Forums on Sustainable Development.

view these communication products and the millions of digital accounts reached last year as a success.

Question H-3: What additional communication opportunities, platforms and channels, including those that have come into prominence in recent years, should be used more effectively to better reach target audiences and achieve greater impact?

We suggest consultants connect with a communications expert and members of the FAO communicator's networks. We would be interested in compiling historical quantitative data

APEC's Expert Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT) covers the Pacific region and over 2 billion hectares of forest cover and significant amount of trade in forest products. EGILAT's steps to combat illegal logging and associated trade, promote trade in legally harvested forest products, and support capacities in member economies is a major contribution to SFM policy development and dialogue.

Question I-2: What are prime examples of regional and subregional partners successfully contributing to the practical achievement of GFGs under the UNSPF 2017-2030? []

NAFC has raised the political profile of the GFGs within in the North American region by broadly discussing and examining the UNSPF with its three forest ministerial leaders.

On the technical level, since UNFF15 the NAFC Forest Genetic Resources Working Group (FGRWG) conducted research on assisted migration for tree species negatively impacted by climate change. Specifically, FGRWG is examining whether the endemic fir species in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve and a wintering habitat for the charismatic monarch butterfly, can survive at higher elevations due to changing climatic conditions. Preliminary results indicate an upwards shift is doable, with additional moderate mortality.

The FGRWG also created a Spanish and English bilingual online Seedlot Selection Tool to inform seed planting decision-making in a changing climate. The web tool accounts for future climate models and provides suggestions for matching planting locations and appropriate seedlots.

Another practical achievement is the NAFC Inv

J. Questions related to the involve

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION
