

I. Executive Summary

II. Introduction

1. This is one in a series of ten reports containing independent assessments carried out in preparation for the 2024 midterm review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), in accordance with paragraphs 28-30 and the Annex to ECOSOC resolution

III. Assessment methodology

4. The following sources of information were used in the preparation of this Report:

- Ø Responses to a consolidated Questionnaire, containing questions proposed by the consultants preparing this suite of Reports. This Questionnaire served as the vehicle for consultations with UNFF members, relevant partners and stakeholders, and was circulated on 9 August 2022 by the Chair of the UNFF 18 Bureau to all UNFF member states, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), regional and subregional partners and major groups. Annex 2 contains the Questionnaire responses relating to the COS.
- Ø UN documents and Voluntary National Reports relating to the IAF, UNSPF and COS; relevant websites; and other publications. Annex 3 contains details.
- Ø Discussions with a number of individuals. Annex 4 contains details.

5. Throughout the process of preparing this Report, there was close consultation between all the consultants engaged in preparing the ten reports in this series. The aim of this consultation, which was conducted through online meetings and the circulation of drafts,

awareness of the GFGs and encourage implementation of the UNSPF; and (d) amplify communications from the forest community. It describes the role that Member States, entities within the UN system, other members of the CPF, regional organisations, Major Groups and other partners can play in implementing the COS. It also recognises the potential importance of influencers/opinion-makers/communication networks, and the need to promote public awareness and action. The section on key messages draws from the UNSPF and highlights the need to communicate the idea that forests sustain the daily lives of people everywhere. Communication methods and activities proposed by the COS include the use of websites, social media, events and advocates/messengers. With regard to success criteria, it suggests using voluntary national reporting to the Forum as a means of tracking communication and outreach activities. Finally, it notes that the COS is an evolving document which could be reviewed and updated, as needed.

8. Resources available for implementation of the COS include inputs from Member States, the UNFF Secretariat, CPF members, regional and sub-regional organisations, and Major Groups. In order to help co-ordinate action and make effective use of available resources, the UNFF Secretariat works closely with other members of the CPF Communicators'

142 countries, representing 95 percent of the total forest area report that they have platforms to enable the participation of stakeholders in forest policy development.⁷

Activities related to educational and youth outreach include

: In 2019, UNFF reproduced the text of the GFGs and their associated targets in a well-illustrated brochure that also identified the SDGs associated with each GFG. Subsequently, the UNFF flagship publication, *Global Forest Governance Report 2020*, reviewed progress towards achieving the GFGs and targets and included infographics and success stories; a shorter *Global Forest Governance Report 2021* complemented the full report. Recent publications have also included three DESA policy briefs, relating to forest fires, forest financing and the role of forests in green recovery from the COVID-19, and a quarterly newsletter on forest financing opportunities which is shared with UNFF national focal points and other email subscribers. Other communication products, such as films and visual images relating to the annual IDF themes, are available on the *Communication* section of the UNFF website.

The UNFF Secretariat regularly organises side-events in the margins of other key international conferences and meetings. In addition to liaising with CPF partners regarding side-events at CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC meetings, it organised side-events during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) sessions of July 2018, July 2021 and July 2022. The UNFF Secretariat also facilitates side-events at the UN High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) meetings, including the HLPE on Forests and Land-Use Change in the Tropics (HLPE-FLUC) and the HLPE on Forests and Land-Use Change in the Tropics (HLPE-FLUC) relating to the annual IDF theme at the UN High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) meetings, including the HLPE on Forests and Land-Use Change in the Tropics (HLPE-FLUC) and the HLPE on Forests and Land-Use Change in the Tropics (HLPE-FLUC) and important intersessional meetings, are covered by the *UNFF News* (ENB)⁸,

furthering the aims of the COS include

its work, APFNet has links to 18 videos and the Montreal Process website contains a short public service announcement video, also available on YouTube, promoting sustainable forestry.

The websites give details of a large number of events. In addition to organisational business meetings these include, for example, events aimed at capacity building, side-events in the margins of international meetings, and IDF celebrations.

Examples of educational and youth outreach include the student debates on IDF themes that have been organised by the Center for People and Forests, with FAO and UNEP; and the Youth Forest Policy Days organised by Forest Europe, IFSA, IUFRO and the Global Landscapes Forum in December 2022.

15. In addition, FAO has six FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, each of which have specifically discussed the implementation of the UNSPF. FAO also has Regional Forest Communicators' Networks that cover Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Mediterranean and Near East, and the Caribbean, together with a Global Coordination Group on Forest Communication. Since 2018, these networks have organised a number of training workshops on effective communication, and their website also includes a communication toolkit.

16. The UNFF Major Groups¹² have the potential to play a valuable role in implementation of the COS by engaging with broader society through their extensive networks. However, while many of the

of Traditional Forest Related Knowledge (S&T MG). There was also a photography exposition on during the XXV IUFRO World Congress in 2019 (Women MG).

Events organised by UNFF Major Groups include a webinar series to build capacity among the youth delegation prior to UNFF 14 (C&Y MG); side events at CBD and UNFCCC COPs (NGO MG); a special session on Forest Landscape Restoration at the XXV IUFRO World Congress in 2019 (S&T MG); capacity building for Indigenous leaders to strengthen skills in advocacy capacity (NGO MG); capacity building to access forest-based decision-making structures in Nepal (Women MG); webinars to discuss new FSC gender indicators in Brazil, and on gender equality in the forest sector (Women MG); a side-event on gender equality in the forest sector during the XXV IUFRO World Congress in 2019 (Women MG); and a

cross-sectoral audiences, including through the development of targeted communication approaches for non-forest industries, such as agriculture and mining, was also recog

UNSPF. Secondly, the COS itself contains no evaluation strategy to help assess its impact, and there are no specific, measurable targets with agreed metrics, survey protocols and baseline data. Furthermore, at least some of the activities described in Section IV B would probably have taken place even if there not had been a COS. One Questionnaire response noted that, while elements of the UNSPF had been implemented through national forest policies, this was not directly related to the COS. Another response said that the “groundswell of support for forests in the context of climate change and biodiversity ... coincides with the IAF but does not result from it” .

23. N

25. The annual celebration of IDF by a large number of countries was widely recognised in Questionnaire responses as having been

differences: for example, there are significant differences in patterns of social media preferences between countries and there are also many people who remain offline, including 1 billion people in south Asia and 840 million in Africa.¹⁹

27. This growth in communication channels brings opportunities and challenges, and there is a

29. The UNFF website, which

audiences. Then, decisions can be taken about appropriate communication channels, taking into account costs and available resources, and recognising that it is counter-productive to engage with a particular platform without adequate resources to maintain a vibrant presence.

32. There is also the need to consider the best approach to monitoring and evaluation, where again resource implications need to be considered.

briefs. The right approach for experts working in non-forestry sectors might be to provide more detail about the linkages between forests and their sector.

35. The UNFF can use its position in the UN system to support the work of its members in strengthening advocacy. It can produce more short, sharp policy-briefs that highlight synergies with, and threats from, other sectors. It can extend its series of flagship publications, not only to highlight progress made in implementing the GFGs, but also to explain the positive impact that this offers for addressing other global priorities, such as food security, water, jobs, climate change, biodiversity and land degradation. It can also deploy its convening power to attract more high-level decision makers, including those working in other sectors and on other forest-related initiatives, such as the Tropical Forest Alliance, to its high-level round tables. Doing this successfully will require considerable thought and effective facilitation so that these high-level round tables move beyond prepared statements to generate real dialogue and also have clear outputs, such as a policy-brief and/or short video clips presenting highlights suitable for dissemination via social media.

36. A number of CPF members, including the secretariats of the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC, are well-placed to strengthen advocacy by continuing their efforts to raise the visibility of forests, and their contribution to other agendas, at non-UNFF international forums and meetings. The CPF can also continue to strengthen advocacy through its leadership of high-profile initiatives, such as the UN Secretary-General's initiative on ²⁵ In addition, CPF can build on its experience in organising the

SFM.²⁷ The UNFF could help strengthen advocacy by engaging more closely with private sector organisations and major NGOs in order to encourage them to look for ways to align communication messages relating to SFM.

39. Recognising the value of the IDF, a number of Questionnaire responses suggested that more use should be made of other International Days (and Weeks, Years and Decades) to strengthen advocacy on forests. Possibilities include the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-30), World Wetlands Day, World Wildlife Day, World Water Day, International Mother Earth Day, International Day of Plant Health, World Bee Day, International Day for Biological Diversity, World Environment Day, World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, International Day of the Tropics, International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, World Habitat Day, International Day of Rural Women, World Soils Day, and International Mountain Day. It is striking that many of these celebrations have images of trees or forests on the home page of their website. These celebrations all offer potential for wider outreach with tailored messages about the contribution of forests and trees.²⁸

40. Questionnaire responses also suggested inviting international celebrities to serve as global forest ambassadors or spokespersons to promote the UNFI. In its 2014 Report on the IAF, the independent team of consultants made a similar proposal, recommending that the Secretary-General should appoint a Special Envoy on Forests to raise political commitment for forests within the broader development agenda, by facilitating top-level connections with politicians and by enhancing the profile of the IAF among the Governing Bodies of other UN organisations that address cross-cutting issues relating to forests.²⁹ Such a proposal would require careful consideration to make sure that the role could be properly resourced and that it was sufficiently well defined to avoid overlap with the responsibilities of the UNFF Bureau Chair and the UNFF Director. However, it would be possible for the Forum, through ECOSOC and the General Assembly, to request the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy to strengthen advocacy on forests, with comparable functions to those of the Special Envoy for the Ocean³⁰. This would also send a strong signal about the importance with which forests are regarded within the UN system.

V Conclusions and Recommendations

its Secretariat to make greater use of its convening power to widen participation in the Forum's high-level round tables in order to strengthen engagement beyond the forest-sector;

its Secretariat to develop short, sharp policy briefs, and to extend its series of flagship publications in order to highlight the benefits that trees and forests bring for other global priorities;

its Secretariat to make progress in upgrading the structure and content of its website, and to develop a communication plan setting out its proposed activities and associated objectives, messages and communication channels for different audiences, together with metrics for monitoring and evaluation;

CPF members to continue efforts to raise the visibility of forest-related issues at international forums and meetings, to continue to seek ways to take initiatives that

LIST OF ANNEXES		<i>page</i>
Annex 1	Brief biography of the consultant	26
Annex 2	Questionnaire responses relevant to this Report	26
Annex 3	List of documents, websites and publications consulted	35
Annex 4	Discussions with individuals	40
Annex 4.	External references to UNSPF, GFGS, UNFF, IDF and SFM	41

ANNEX 1. BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CONSULTANT

David Henderson-Howat is a past President of the UK Institute of Chartered Foresters. Earlier in his career he managed forests in Scotland and Eswatini. For six years he was the Forestry Commission Chief Conservator for Scotland. Then, in the early 2000s, he spent a year working for the UNFF Secretariat in New York, on secondment from the UK Government. He subsequently became head of agricultural and rural development policy within the Scottish Government. In addition, he served as Director of the Forestry Commission in England, where his responsibilities included advising UK Ministers on forest policy, and related communications, at a time when the possible privatisation of state-owned forests was in the spotlight. More recently he has undertaken consultancy work for UNFF and FAO, and made significant contributions to the 2016 and 2018 editions of

He has also chaired Scotland's National Access Forum, a stakeholder roundtable addressing issues relating to rights of recreational access over land, and is a member of his local Community Council in rural Scotland. He has degrees from Edinburgh University's Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, Cambridge University's Department of Land Economy and an MBA from Strathclyde University.

ANNEX 2. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGY OF THE UNSPF

There were four questions (H-1, H-2, H-3 and H-4) specifically relating to the COS in the Questionnaire on the Mid-term Review. While this Annex contains the responses to these questions, the Report also takes into consideration comments made in response to other parts of the Questionnaire that were relevant to communication and outreach activities.

Australia	has developed a suite of communication products to promote the role of forestry and raise awareness of forests as a sustainably managed resource. This includes videos showcasing the forestry industry. The 5-yearly State of the Forest Reports promotes a greater understanding of SFM, informs the public about, the management, use and conservation of Australia's forests and acts as a key source of comprehensive and current information for use industry, governments, and research and educational institutions. The 2023 Report will be released on an online platform so that data can be updated more regularly and reach a greater audience; this will
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	<p>include electronic versions of past reports, maps, data tables and spatial data products.</p> <p>works bilaterally with neighbouring countries to promote SFM and understand barriers to implementing SFM. This has included a recent contribution to, and publication of, the FAO Pacific Outlook Study.</p> <p>a possible avenue to explore to achieve greater visibility of the UNSPF and GFG is to raise the profile of the UNFF within and outside the UN system. At times this has not happened (e.g. the Glasgow Declaration), however we were pleased to see linkages made for the recent FCLP.</p> <p>want to highlight the importance of providing strategic guidance to strengthen linkages and influence with other multilateral bodies and forest-related initiatives.</p> <p>there is room to improve on the COS by including the provision of measurable and specific targets to work towards, as well as actions required in order to meet goals/targets.</p> <p>there is added value in reaching out to other sectors that are both impacted by forests, and impact upon forests, to further shape the COS.</p>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have pithier communication of the GFGs similar to the SDGs (e.g. recognizable icons). • UNSPF still not the guiding document for all forest-related work at the UN.
China	<p>development of pilot sites for UNFI implementation in China has further expanded the visibility and influence of the UNFI and the UNSPF.</p> <p>through IDF celebrations, more people have deepened their understanding of UNFI, the UNSPF and especially the GFGs, and are more aware of the important role of SFM in sustainable economic and social development.</p>
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

	<p>and the Ministry of Environment. All launches of social and environmental development programmes to the 2030 Agenda are published in the national press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID-19 led to increased use of virtual communications. The first Regional Congress on Forests and Sustainable Landscapes was broadcast live on the different platforms and social networks of the Ministry of Environment.• address challenges through the joint formulation of regional strategies by working groups with forestry directors of the region and the UNFF secretariat.
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Republic of

	<p>general public and policy stakeholders. (E.g. the FAO IDF 2022 campaign resulted in over 320 articles published by major national and international news wires and online news sources; the website was viewed over 16K times and 240 multilingual posts were shared on social media by FAO reaching 35.6 million accounts. FAO's IDF video spot was produced in 11 languages and broadcast by Deutsche Welle in English, German, Arabic and Spanish, Euronews, Africanews and France24 in French, English and Arabic, and featured in El País and by the Italian news agency Ansa.</p> <p>shortcomings: limited resources for forest communication. Campaigns such as IDF campaign are successful examples, but more targeted, appealing global campaigns are needed for greater impact. (E.g. a campaign on the benefits of wooden products could aim to change public perceptions regarding the benefits of forest management as opposed to strict conservation and protection.) With extra budgetary resources, such campaigns could be organized within the framework of the CPF Joint Initiative on Communication.</p>
ITTO	<p>IDF has raised awareness to an extent on the importance of forests but the audience needs to be widened to include international media. The main shortcomings are that the IDF remains within the rather closed forest community – all other CPF members and their respective membership should be included further.</p>
IUFRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased awareness of the role of forests in achieving SDGs. • IDF a good entry point to communicate. However, IDF promotion should be harmonized and better aligned among CPF partners (e.g. the use of two logos may be confusing).
Forest Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDF a major opportunity to raise awareness of the public on specific topics around forests. Maybe the joint material for a proper promotion (e.g. policy brief based on latest science) could be improved.
Major Group Children & Youth	<p>successes: consistent content delivery across various channels, especially around events enables easy follow up of activities conducted.</p> <p>shortcomings: the COS has not aggressively pursued the possibility of targeting non-forestry audiences and so is not visible in conventional media and to non-forestry practitioners in general.</p>

Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does the UNFF Secretariat have a detailed comms plan to follow throughout the year? Could UNFF have its own Twitter handle?
	<p>(streaming media)</p> <p>est ambassadors or</p>

Colombia

	<p>include environmental camps, nature walks, talks, exhibitions, quizzes, workshops, seminars, tree-planting, and radio shows especially in conjunction with commemorative events such as IDF, Earth Day, World Environment Day, World Wetlands Day and World Oceans' Day.</p> <p>To complement these activities, key agencies maintain nature education and interpretation centres to educate the public. Several local NGOs have also taken the initiative to create similar nature education centres. For example, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) maintains a network of Environmental Education Centres across Peninsular Malaysia in both urban and natural settings to promote awareness and engage the public in environmental discussions. This includes a Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) - MNS Nature Education Centre, an Ecocare Environmental Education Centre, an Environment Interpretive Centre, an Urban Environment Education Hub, a Nature Study Centre and a Discovery Centre</p>
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicates at ministerial level with the foreign ministries and, if possible, with the offices of the Heads of State. •

	<p>creating social media advisories shared in the lead up to events to harmonise communication and drive traffic to event content.</p> <p>engaging organizations outside the UNFF membership that engage in similar activities as well as other UN Agencies.</p> <p>engage in communication activities on policy priorities of importance to forestry, e.g. water and climate change, to highlight the UNSPF's potential contribution</p> <p>UNFF high-level dialogues should integrate experts from various spheres of science of significance to forestry to discuss linkages.</p> <p>vividly engage stakeholders outside forestry, e.g. environmentalists and agriculturalists whose activities complement one another</p> <p>extensively reaching out to children and youth to utilise their competencies as digital nomads to highlight progress of activities of UNSPF.</p>
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2. Additional references for individual sections of the Report

Section IV B

Voluntary National Reports to UNFF 15, available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/unff15/index.html>, accessed 12 October 2022.

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ACTO website, available at <http://otca.org/en/about-us/>, accessed 14 October 2022.

APFNet website, available at <https://www.apfnet.cn/>, accessed 14 October 2022.

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ANNEX 4 DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS

Following the analysis of the Questionnaire responses, the consultant approached the national focal points in 29 countries, together with relevant contacts in six member organisations of the CPF, three regional organisations and four Major Groups, inviting them to offer supplementary views reflecting their experience with regard to implementation of the COS, either by online discussion or by email correspondence.

As a result of this, very helpful comments were received from the following individuals:

Canada: Christa Mooney (online discussion)

Germany: Matthias Schwoerer (online discussion)

Japan: Hideki Kawai (email correspondence)

Slovak Republic: Boris Greguska (email correspondence)

UNFF Secretariat: Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director; Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Senior Forest Policy Officer; and Ms. Mita Sen, Programme Management Officer, Forest Affairs (online discussion and email correspondence)

IUFRO: Gerda Wolfrum (email correspondence)

Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC): David Ganz, Executive Director (online discussion)

Forest Europe: Thomas Hausmann, Head of Liaison Unit (online discussion)

Major Group Business: Derek Nighbor, President and Chief Executive Officer, Forest Products Association of Canada (online discussion)

Major Group Children and Youth: Joshua Amaitum, International Forest Students Association (online discussion)

All these contributions are gratefully acknowledged and helped to enrich the Report; however, the views expressed in the Report remain those of the consultant.

