

SUMMARY OF THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: 1-5 MAY 2017

The twelfth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) was held from 1-5 May 2017 at UN Headquarters in New York. Over 300 participants from Member States, international organizations, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and Major Groups gathered to address: implementation of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030, including holding a number of panel discussions on SDGs to be taken up in 2017 by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development; means of implementation for sustainable forest management; monitoring, assessment and reporting; and emerging challenges and issues. Informal discussions on the omnibus resolution took place from Wednesday to Friday, culminating in its adoption on Friday morning.

Constructive engagement characterized many of the discussions over the course of the week, with many highlighting the cross-cutting nature of forests and underscoring the role that the new format of UNFF sessions can play in cementing the importance of forests and ensuring their consideration across the UN system.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNFF

The UN Forum on Forests was established in 2000, following a five-year period of forest policy dialogue within the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). In October 2000, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in resolution 2000/35 established the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), including the UNFF as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC, with the main objective of promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The UNFF's principal functions are to: facilitate the implementation of forest-related agreements and foster a common understanding of sustainable forest management (SFM); provide for continued policy development and dialogue among Member States, international organizations and Major Groups; address forest issues and emerging areas of concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner; enhance cooperation, and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues; foster international cooperation and monitor, assess and report on progress; and strengthen political commitment to the objectives of the IAF.

ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION: The UNFF's organizational session took place from 12-16 February 2001, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates agreed that the

UNFF Secretariat would be located in New York, and made progress towards the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats.

UNFF1: The first session of UNFF (11-23 June 2001, New York) discussed and adopted decisions on the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work, a Plan of Action for the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and the UNFF's work with the CPF. Delegates also recommended establishing three *Ad Hoc* Expert Groups (AHEGs) to provide technical advice to UNFF on: approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR); finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs); and parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

UNFF2: The second session of UNFF (4-15 March 2002, New York) adopted decisions on, *inter alia*, specific criteria for: the review of the effectiveness of the IAF; and continued policy development. UNFF2 agreed that specific criteria related to the implementation of the Proposals for Action are the extent

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to which: countries, the CPF and other actors progressed in implementing the Proposals for Action; countries developed and started to implement national forest programmes or equivalent processes; the IAF facilitated and promoted countries' implementation, focusing on means of implementation (MOI); and countries progressed in assessing the Proposals for Action in order to determine their relevance in their national contexts.

UNFF3: UNFF3 (26 May – 6 June 2003, Geneva) adopted six resolutions on: enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination; forest health and productivity; economic aspects of forests; maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs; the UNFF Trust Fund; and strengthening the Secretariat.

UNFF4: UNFF4 (3-14 May 2004, Geneva) adopted five resolutions on: review of the effectiveness of the IAF; forest-related scientific knowledge; social and cultural aspects of forests; MAR, and criteria and indicators; and finance and transfer of ESTs. On the review of the IAF, delegates agreed to request that Member States submit a voluntary questionnaire based on the specific criteria agreed to at UNFF2. UNFF4 attempted, without success, to reach agreement on resolutions on forest-related traditional knowledge, enhanced cooperation, and policy and programme coordination.

UNFF5: UNFF5 (16-27 May 2005, New York) was unable to reach agreement on strengthening the IAF and did not produce a Ministerial Statement or a negotiated outcome. Delegates did agree, *ad referendum*, to four global goals on: significantly increasing the area of protected forests and sustainably managed forests worldwide; reversing the decline in official development assistance (ODA) for SFM; reversing the loss of forest cover; and enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits. They also agreed in principle to negotiate, at some future date, the terms of reference for a voluntary code or international understanding on forests, as well as MOI.

UNFF6: UNFF6 (13-24 February 2006, New York) generated a negotiating text containing new language on the function of the IAF, a commitment to convene UNFF biennially after 2007, and a request that UNFF7 adopt a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI). UNFF6 also set four global objectives on forests for the IAF to: reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM, including through protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation; enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, and the contribution of forests to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals; increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests; and reverse the decline in ODA for SFM, and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

UNFF7: UNFF7 (16-27 April 2007, New York) adopted the NLBI and a Multi-Year Programme of Work for the period 2007-2015. Delegates agreed that a “voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework for all types of forests” would be developed and considered, with a view to its adoption at UNFF8.

UNFF8: UNFF8 (20 April - 1 May 2009, New York) discussed: forests in a changing environment, including forests and climate change; reversing the loss of forest cover and degradation, and increasing forests and biodiversity conservation; and MOI for SFM. Delegates adopted a resolution on forests in a changing environment, enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, and regional and subregional inputs. Delegates did not agree on a decision on financing for SFM, and decided to forward bracketed negotiating text to the Forum's next session.

UNFF9: UNFF9 (24 January - 4 February 2011, New York) launched the International Year of Forests 2011. The Forum adopted by acclamation a resolution on forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication, which addressed, *inter alia*: procedures for assessment of progress; increased regional and subregional cooperation; enhanced cooperation, including with Major Groups; and MOI for SFM, particularly the AHEG process on forest financing.

UNFF10: UNFF10 (8-19 April 2013, Istanbul, Turkey) adopted, among other items, the “Resolution on Emerging Issues, MOI and the UNFF Trust Fund,” which decided that the effectiveness of the IAF would be reviewed in 2015, and established an open-ended intergovernmental AHEG to review the IAF's performance and effectiveness. The resolution set out the elements to be included in the review: submissions by countries, the CPF, its members and other relevant organizations and stakeholders; an independent assessment of the IAF; and an AHEG on the IAF review.

UNFF11: UNFF11 (4-15 May 2015, New York) forwarded a resolution to ECOSOC recommending, *inter alia*: renaming the NLBI the “UN Forest Instrument”; strengthening and extending the IAF to 2030; deciding that the IAF is composed of the UNFF and its Member States, the Secretariat of the Forum, the CPF, the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) and the UNFF Trust Fund; deciding to set clear priorities for the GFFFN in the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF); and convening an open-ended intergovernmental AHEG to develop proposals on a replacement for the reference to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the UN Forest Instrument with an appropriate reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets, the UNSPF, and the Quadrennial Programme of Work (4POW) for the period 2017-2020.

ECOSOC approved the UNFF11 recommendations on 22 July 2015 in resolution 2015/33, and the UN General Assembly gave effect to the changes recommended by the Council on 22 December 2015 in resolution 70/199.

UNFF12 SPECIAL SESSION: At a special session of the UNFF12 (20 January 2017, New York), delegates agreed to the UNSPF and 4POW. The UNSPF was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 27 April 2017.

UNFF12 REPORT

On Monday morning, 1 May, UNFF12 Chair Peter Besseau (Canada) opened the meeting. He explained Vice-Chair Clarissa Souza Della Nina (Brazil) was not able to attend UNFF12, and members agreed that Tomas Krejzar (Czech Republic) will act as Rapporteur.

Delegates adopted the provisional agenda (E/CN.18/2017/1) and Chair Besseau emphasized that implementation of the six Global Forest Goals and 26 associated targets of the UNSPF calls for ambitious, deliberate, UN-wide action. He invited constructive guidance and feedback from participants on the new format and design of the Forum Sessions.

Peter Thomson, UN General Assembly (UNGA) President, emphasized the health of the world's forests is fundamental for securing humanity's place on this planet. He said without recognition of the importance of sustainably managed forests, the efforts of the international community working towards the 2030 Agenda will ultimately fail.

Marie Chatardova, ECOSOC Vice-President, praised the UNFF for remaining at the forefront of the dialogue on forests, including through its mutually supportive relationship with ECOSOC.

Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, in acknowledging the importance of forests in climate change reduction and livelihood opportunities, noted that the UNSPF provides a roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and other international agreements.

UNFF Director Manoel Sobral Filho reiterated that forests are a vital resource for human life whose use and exploitation provide the foundation for economies worldwide. The UNSPF, he noted, will provide the right enabling environment to equitably and sustainably share forests, and provide a pathway out of poverty.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FORESTS 2017-2030

This item was taken up on Monday through Thursday. An omnibus resolution containing elements pertaining to the implementation of the UNSPF was adopted on Friday. (See page 7.)

UNFF Director Sobral introduced this agenda item (E/CN.18/2017/2), highlighting that the thematic and operational priorities of the UNSPF for 2017-2018 have taken into account the SDGs currently being reviewed by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). He added that panel sessions would be held to facilitate technical discussions on forests in relation to these SDGs, and announced that the UNFF Secretariat will be developing a communication and outreach strategy for the UNSPF.

UNFF12 Chair Besseau opened the floor for general discussion. Many Member States welcomed the adoption of the UNSPF and the 4POW by the UNGA, and provided an overview of national actions contributing to the implementation of the UNSPF and the SDGs. Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), urged greater commitment to achieving the goals and targets of the UNSPF. He called for additional funding and stated that MOI should encompass technology transfer.

Thailand urged prioritizing conservation of forest ecosystems, including encouraging local communities' involvement. Peru said there is a need to ensure improved livelihoods of forest dependent communities through practicing SFM. Israel urged cooperation to achieve the Global Forest Goals. Iran said the UNSPF is a global framework for action at all levels and urged for more integrated, synergistic implementation of the SDGs. Indonesia highlighted the importance of: capacity building and technology transfer; reducing reporting burdens; and improving coherence and coordination between forest-related institutions.

Canada noted the need to "get out of our comfort zones," by talking to other land-use sectors and engaging with the private sector. Malaysia underscored the need for the UNFF to assist in national SFM implementation. Romania highlighted the opportunity the UNSPF provides to improve coordination among countries.

Papua New Guinea urged the UNFF to continue enabling financial resources necessary to achieve the goals and targets of the UNSPF and the SDGs. New Zealand said the UNSPF provides an opportunity to galvanize ambitions for achieving SFM. Morocco urged the UNFF to take national plans of action into account in implementation of the UNSPF, to ensure that countries are able to simultaneously meet the SDGs and the Global Forest Goals. Colombia highlighted the need for cooperation and access to funding that takes the realities of each country into account.

Australia encouraged meaningful reporting, and the inclusion of value-added programmes while avoiding duplication. Chile noted that the six Global Forest Goals of the UNSPF provide

each country with the opportunity to address SFM within their national context, calling for political and financial commitment at all levels.

China encouraged mobilizing funds, recognizing the role of forests in achieving the SDGs, and improving MAR. Viet Nam called on the GFFFN to mobilize new funding opportunities and enhance support to developing countries to access forest-related climate financing. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) urged commitment to support developing countries in SFM and reported on their actions to combat illegal logging through technology transfer and strengthening law enforcement.

The European Union (EU) said MAR is crucial to demonstrate progress in the UNSPF's implementation, noting the need to avoid additional reporting burdens and duplication. Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group, noted their appreciation for: the role and function of the GFFFN; and the UNSPF as a useful road map for bringing forests into national accounting, planning and priority-setting. Switzerland observed that the "truly impressive" opening panel is indicative of the UNFF's authoritative voice on forests, while emphasizing the need to increase the visibility of forests UN-wide, saying "one voice is not a choir."

Senegal proposed developing a special programme for fragile forest ecosystems such as mangroves, and expressed hope that, in the future, funds currently used to address the trafficking of forest products will instead be used to promote forest biodiversity conservation. Niger stressed the importance of global financing and capacity building to undertake SFM. South Africa urged the UNFF to consider national contexts and allow countries to determine their own level of involvement. Nepal called upon the UNFF to pool resources and enhance capacities for local populations. Fiji noted the important role of forest ecosystems in sustaining small island developing states, and called for increased financing, in particular to scale up mangrove conservation.

China, on behalf of the Montreal Process on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests, reported on the 26th meeting of the working group held in Yanji, China in August 2016. He noted that the Yanji Declaration reiterated the Montreal Process's commitment to, *inter alia*: enhance the use of its criteria and indicators for SFM; actively engage in global initiatives related to forests; and collaborate with other organizations for SFM.

Ghana outlined progress at the national level, including: a new forest and wildlife policy that promotes SFM; a forest sustainable development action plan; a REDD+ strategy; and the launch of a national tree plantation strategy. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) highlighted Forest Europe's contribution to enhancing forest leadership. She stated that UNECE and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) are working closely to provide a better understanding of the state of Europe's forests, including through the production of the State of Europe's Forests Report. Farmers and Small Forest Landowners said attention to, and inclusion of, small forest owners is indispensable for successfully implementing the UNSPF. He noted the importance of fair trade in safeguarding the rights of small-forest holders.

TECHNICAL DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES ON THE THEMATIC AND OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES, PRIORITY ACTIONS AND RESOURCE NEEDS FOR THE PERIOD 2017-2018: Panel discussion on the contribution of forests to the achievement of SDG1: On Tuesday morning, Wu Zhimin, UNFF12 Vice-Chair, introduced the panel. Charles Barber, World Resources Institute (WRI), moderated the panel, which looked at the contribution of forests to the achievement of SDG1 (poverty eradication).

Keynote presenter, Uma Lele, independent scholar, discussed the forest sector's role in developing pathways out of poverty, noting that using forestry goods and services to alleviate poverty can be impeded by, *inter alia*: the distance of forests from markets and inadequate rights for forest-dependent communities.

Gerhard Dieterle, Executive Director, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), outlined five pathways out of poverty: productivity, rights, investment, markets, and ecosystems.

Godwin Kowero, Africa Forest Forum (AFF), outlined research demonstrating how forests can contribute to health, clean water, food, shelter, employment and energy. He noted a need to strengthen policies addressing the nexus between land-based activities and poverty eradication.

Frances Seymour, Center for Global Development, argued that turning forests into reliable income streams at scale has proven challenging; the loss of forest services and products presents "very real pathways into poverty"; and deforestation and climate change constitute a vicious cycle and damaging feedback system, exacerbating poverty.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates shared national initiatives and experiences. They also underscored: the role of public-private partnerships; strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises; the need to address inequalities and ensure access to sufficient resources; technology transfer; and the importance of South-South cooperation.

An in-depth summary of the panel discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol13/enb13205e.html>

Panel discussion on the contribution of forests to the achievement of SDG5: On Tuesday afternoon, this panel on the contribution of forests to the achievement of SDG5 (gender equality) was chaired by UNFF Vice-Chair Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Gabon) and moderated by Seemin Qayum, UN Women.

Isilda Nhandumbo, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), presented a keynote speech, via videoconference, on the empowerment of women and girls in the forest sector, noting that in order to reduce inequality in the forest sector, there is a need to develop women's business skills.

Panel moderator Qayum acknowledged that although gains had been made towards gender equality, women are still disadvantaged due to insecure tenure rights and limited access to forest resources, decision making and credit.

Marilyn Headley, Forestry Department, Jamaica, recounted a case study on gender balance at the Forestry Department in Jamaica, which moved from zero professional female staff in the early 1990s to 40% in 2017.

Cecile Ndjebet, President, African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF), highlighted the important role women play in forests, stating their engagement in the sector is critical to combating climate change and achieving SFM.

Latha Swamy, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), outlined their work on advocacy, capacity building and knowledge development and sharing.

In the ensuing discussion, a number of Member States provided details on national initiatives to increase women's participation in the forestry sector. They also highlighted gender equality as crucial for: an effective increase in ODA; ensuring young and graduating women are accurately informed about careers in the forestry sector; and recognizing indigenous women's highly specialized knowledge of trees and forest products for diverse uses.

An in-depth summary of the panel discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol13/enb13205e.html>

Panel discussion on the contribution of forests to the achievement of SDG2: On Wednesday morning, Tomas Krejzar, UNFF12 Vice-Chair, introduced the panel discussion on the contribution of forests to the achievement of SDG2 (food security). Paola Deda, UNECE, moderated the panel.

Keynote speaker Bhaskar Vira, University of Cambridge, outlined the work of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) Global Forest Expert Panel on Forest and Food Security, stating that there is growing evidence that conventional agricultural strategies can result in, *inter alia*, unbalanced diets that lack nutritional diversity and increased exposure to volatile food prices for the most vulnerable groups.

Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO, emphasized that food and agriculture are at the heart of the SDGs. She stressed that integrated land-use planning is key to balancing multiple land uses that promote both sustainable forests and agriculture.

John Parrotta, IUFRO, noted the traditional links between agriculture and forests, and outlined forest management practices that enhance the nutritional and economic value of food.

Bronwen Powell, Pennsylvania State University, US, urged moving away from viewing forest conservation as a trade-off with agriculture, and towards an understanding that forests are important to achieving food security and nutrition.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates underscored the linkages between forests, food security and gender. They also: requested that the FAO further analyze the concept of food sovereignty; highlighted the contribution of sustainable and healthy wood industries for providing jobs and livelihoods; emphasized the need to ensure sustainable forest utilization; and said resource conflicts impede food security in many African countries.

An in-depth summary of the panel discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol13/enb13206e.html>

UN SYSTEM-WIDE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL FOREST GOALS AND TARGETS:

Eva Müller, FAO, on behalf of Maria Helena Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General and CPF Chair, presented the CPF policy document, saying that it contains elements for strengthening the CPF.

The CPF work plan, she noted, is aligned with the UNSPF and the 4POW. She outlined its content including: activities contributing to UNFF sessions; and joint initiatives relevant to achieving the Global Forest Goals and targets, SDGs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

UNFF12 Chair Besseau invited comments on the CPF policy document and work plan. Switzerland congratulated the CPF for being so active, requested access to the policy document and work plan, and suggested updating the CPF website to aid transparency. Müller clarified the documents should both be accessible on the UNFF website. The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) noted its aspiration to become a CPF member.

Panel Discussion on the Contributions of CPF Members, UN Partners, and Stakeholders to the Implementation of the UNSPF: This panel, which convened on Monday, was moderated by Hosny El-Lakany, University of British Columbia, Canada. Eva Müller, FAO, said CPF members' work aims to contribute to the goals of UNSPF as well as the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Carole Saint-Laurent, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), outlined IUCN's role in providing technical support, capacity building, and optimizing synergies between the Global Forest Goals and the numerous national efforts globally.

Milena Sosa-Schmidt, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), stated that CITES' contribution to the SDGs has a direct impact on the Global Forest Goals, for example, by reducing biodiversity loss.

Xia Jun, Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), highlighted the role of regional organizations in building synergies, avoiding overlapping actions, and focusing on subregional needs.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates addressed: increasing partnerships with regional organizations, intergovernmental organizations and the CPF; the CPF's role in implementing the UNSPF; and utilizing scientific expertise for effective implementation of the UNSPF.

An in-depth summary of the panel discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol13/enb13204e.html>

PREPARATION OF PROVISION OF INPUT TO THE 2018 HLPF: UNFF12 Chair Peter Besseau introduced this item on Thursday. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), highlighted the HLPF 2018's theme, "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies," noting that the set of SDGs to be reviewed are directly linked to forests. He emphasized that the Forum can also contribute to improving information on the nexus between forests and other goals.

UNFF12 Chair Besseau then opened the floor for comments. Iran and Switzerland asked for clarification regarding the feedback mechanism from the HLPF to the UNFF on inputs made. Bhutan and Switzerland said they are carrying out their voluntary national reviews on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which will feature progress in the forest sector.

The EU said the Global Forest Expert Panel on Forests and Water provides an avenue for the Forum to contribute to the HLPF, as it connects SDG6 (Clean water and sanitation) and SDG15 (Life on land). She also recommended that the CPF-planned conference in 2018 on actions to achieve SDG15.2 (Promote implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally) and UNSPF target 1.1 (Forest area is increased by 3% worldwide), include Global Forest Goal 3 (Increase 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).

Germany said the UNFF's contribution to the HLPF should emphasize that forests are essential to life on earth and signal the need to address pressures from unsustainable practices in other sectors. The African Group called for more action to increase community resilience, including policies and institutional arrangements. Malaysia urged the international community to prioritize imports from countries with sustainable forest products, as a way to support developing countries.

China provided suggestions for inputs to the HLPF, including: identifying gaps in implementing SFM; enhancing cooperation between CPF members; and encouraging Member States' participation. IUFRO urged providing opportunities to share technical knowledge during UNFF13 and the 2018 session of the HLPF. FAO underscored that the HLPF provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of sectors impacting forestry. New Zealand said the HLPF can demonstrate forests' role in sustainable development.

In closing, Gass urged Member States and experts to remain engaged and continue promoting the role of forestry in the 2030 Agenda.

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

This item was addressed on Wednesday afternoon. Delegates adopted the omnibus resolution on Friday morning, which includes a section on MAR.

Tomas Krejzar, UNFF12 Vice-Chair, introduced the agenda item (E/CN.18/2017/3). UNFF Director Sobral noted that in order to reduce the reporting burden, the reporting cycles of the FAO's Forestry Resources Assessment (FRA) and SDGs should be taken into account.

Tomasz Juszczak, UNFF Secretariat, highlighted features of the UNSPF reporting format, including a set of seven questions for each Global Forest Goal and the use of qualitative responses.

Brazil reported on the Expert Group meeting on Reporting to UNFF held in Brasilia in February 2017, echoing the need to reduce the reporting burden. Eva Müller, FAO, reported on the global core set of forest-related indicators, which were proposed by an Organization-led Initiative organized by the CPF in November 2016. She noted they provide a promising way to decrease the reporting burden.

In the ensuing discussion, a number of delegates called for maximizing the use of existing reporting mechanisms, including the FAO's FRA, and building upon existing criteria and indicators. Canada, the EU, Australia and New Zealand said there is need for clarity on the purpose of, and expected outputs from, reporting. Mexico said reporting has to lead to outputs that can have impacts on forest management at national and local levels. Canada urged for consideration of the value addition of UNFF reporting prior to delving into specifics of MAR.

On reporting cycles, the US, with Ukraine, supported a five-year reporting cycle. Japan and Ukraine stated that reporting should be flexible.

Switzerland applauded the global core set of indicators and supported including more socio-economic data in reporting. Indonesia proposed that the format of voluntary national contributions follow that of Nationally Determined Contributions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Colombia said there is a need to ensure data collection involves forest agencies that are already formally collecting national data.

Australia emphasized that the UNSPF provides an opportunity to tell the forest story, which is lesser known within and beyond the UN, noting that data should add value to this story. Norway noted that the reports of voluntary national contributions should be adapted to improve consistency, and supported Switzerland's suggestion to pilot the feasibility and appropriateness of proposed MAR procedures.

Germany stated that indicators could help reach a common understanding of SFM. Farmers and Small Forest Landowners suggested that engaging with rural communities would help motivate them to meet targets. Children and Youth emphasized the need for strategic reporting and to communicate outcomes to the public, including through mainstream media.

In closing, UNFF Director Sobral highlighted that the UNFF Secretariat has received a wealth of reporting data that has not yet been used to its full potential. He also urged delegates to keep in mind that the SDG review cycle is every four years, suggesting the merits of streamlining MAR efforts with this process. Müller encouraged delegates to participate in the upcoming online consultation on the global core set of indicators, and opined that "the core set will only be useful if they are used," both by this Forum and other relevant fora.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

A panel discussion on this agenda item was held on Thursday afternoon. Delegates adopted the omnibus resolution on Friday morning, which includes a section on MOI.

UNFF Director Sobral introduced this agenda item (E/CN.18/2017/4), and Gustavo Fonseca, Global Environment Facility (GEF), moderated the ensuing panel discussion.

Penny Davies, Ford Foundation, outlined the work of the Climate and Land Use Alliance that provides “nimble and flexible” finance from private philanthropic funds. She said the Ford Foundation is looking to fund governments that, *inter alia*: provide clear tenure systems; “name and shame” illegal forest management; and support SFM sub-nationally.

Werner Kornexl, World Bank, highlighted several realities of, and barriers to, forest finance, underscoring that finance ministries have to be able to demonstrate forests’ impact in monetary terms.

Ivan Tomaselli, STCP Engineering Project Ltd., discussed private sector investment, reporting that SFM requires US\$150 billion annually, which should be supported by expertise and technology to ensure competitive production of forest goods.

Moderator Fonseca said the sixth replenishment cycle of the GEF (GEF-6) has seen 89% of total funding go to SFM-incentive programmes. He noted GEF-7 will involve greater cooperation with CPF organizations and the GFFFN.

In the ensuing discussion, participants: called for the GFFFN to be effective, accountable and transparent; urged for more private sector funding; queried what proportion of future GEF funding will be directed towards the African continent; asked what possibilities exist to increase private financing in forests while preserving customary rights; and urged the GFFFN to more fully recognize the importance of funding for scientific research and innovation.

An in-depth summary of the panel discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol13/enb13207e.html>

ENHANCED COOPERATION, COORDINATION AND ENGAGEMENT ON FOREST-RELATED ISSUES

This item was addressed on Thursday morning. Delegates adopted the omnibus resolution on Friday morning, which includes a section on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues.

UNFF12 Chair Besseau introduced this agenda item (E/CN.18/2017/5). UNFF Director Sobral highlighted progress on the new communication and outreach strategy called for in the UNSPF, a notable part of which is on the International Day of Forests.

Several delegates outlined national activities to celebrate the International Day of Forests 2016 and 2017. Colombia noted their use of social networks to promote the notion that forest protection is a part of citizenship and civic duty. Ecuador described their two-day educational events with more than 700 participants. Nigeria noted events mobilizing rural communities, wood-based industries and local schools. Ukraine outlined annual tree planting, work with schools and engagement with mass media. Sri Lanka highlighted the launch of their national REDD+ action plan and monitoring system. On future events, Chile urged for focus on school children. Children and Youth requested they be involved in earlier stages of organizing this annual event.

Japan encouraged Member States to use websites as platforms to publicize. China urged for national outreach activities on the UNSPF. Malaysia said they would involve political leaders in upcoming celebrations to encourage citizens to conserve forests, and, with Papua New Guinea, urged the UNFF Secretariat to provide promotional material to increase awareness. Ghana

said his country carries out five-month-long celebrations aligned to the rainy, and thus tree planting, season, coinciding with the International Day for Biological Diversity and World Environment Day.

Australia highlighted social media’s potential to curate positive stories about sustainably managed forests. Canada suggested intersessional activities include the use of online tools and platforms. Slovakia lauded Forest Europe as an important regional focal point, welcoming improved collaboration with UNFF.

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) highlighted the expert meeting on Enhancing Regional and Subregional Involvement in the Work of the IAF, held in September 2016, which was jointly organized with the UNFF Secretariat. Switzerland raised concerns that some proposed actions from the expert meeting are not in line with the Forum’s mandate.

The EU said there is need for an effective communication and outreach strategy focused on communicating the importance of forests for achieving the SDGs.

The Scientific and Technical Community, on behalf of Major Groups, urged the UNFF to involve Major Groups more effectively, adding that SDG7 (Affordable and clean energy) may provide incentives for renewed private sector interest in the UNFF.

Kenya highlighted the role played by the UNFF in developing his country’s new national forest priorities and legislation. The Global Forest Coalition suggested the UNFF develop a roster of Major Group experts and facilitate networks on cross-cutting issues. He also urged the UNFF Secretariat to organize a Major Group-led Initiative before UNFF13, in lieu of multi-stakeholder advisory groups.

Morocco highlighted the outcomes of the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week held in March 2017, including a focus on restoration and the bolstering of multifaceted cooperation between regions.

The AFF recognized the need for enhanced participation of Major Groups in SFM, and called on CPF members to better coordinate activities at regional and subregional levels.

EMERGING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

UNFF12 Chair Peter Besseau introduced this item on Friday, stating that the Forum may decide to include urgent and emerging issues and challenges that may impact forests. Since no issues or challenges were raised, this item was closed.

FORUM TRUST FUND

UNFF Director Manoel Sobral Filho introduced this agenda item (E/CN.18/2017/6), which provided an overview of expenditures from 2015-2016 and expected expenditures for 2017. He expressed gratitude to the Member States that have contributed funds and provided in-kind support and encouraged further support for the Forum in the future.

DATE, VENUE AND PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR UNFF13

UNFF12 Chair Besseau introduced these agenda items (E/CN.18/2017/L.1 and L.2), which were adopted without amendment.

Final Decision: In its decision, the UNFF adopted the agenda of UNFF13, which includes the implementation of the UNSPF and MAR, and decides that UNFF13 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York from 7-11 May 2018.

CLOSING SESSION

Tomas Krejzar, UNFF12 Rapporteur, presented the draft report of the session (E/CN.18/2017/L.3) to be submitted to ECOSOC. It was adopted without amendment.

UNFF Director Sobral congratulated the Forum on a successful 2017 session, and thanked the Bureau for its leadership, including UNFF12 Chair Besseau, in particular.

UNFF12 Chair Besseau commended the Forum for achieving a position of visibility and relevance. Russia called for the provision of more time for Member States to give comments on Forum documents.

UNFF12 Chair Besseau closed the session at 1:01 pm.

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION

On Friday morning, UNFF Chair Peter Besseau introduced the Draft Omnibus Resolution, which had been reviewed in informal consultations on Thursday evening, assuring delegates that it contains no programme budget implications.

On MOI, delegates differed on the language inviting the GEF Council to “consider increasing the funds available for SFM and other forest-related initiatives” under GEF-7. The African Group supported text inviting the GEF to consider “increasing the funds available for SFM.” The EU opposed, saying this is too prescriptive, preferring “make further funds available.” The US, supported by Switzerland, suggested adding “in consultation with donors.”

Chair Besseau encouraged delegates to resist text negotiations, emphasizing that resolutions from technical sessions have a different nature than those from policy sessions. He adjourned the meeting for thirty minutes of informal discussions.

Upon resumption of the meeting, the Chair clarified the intention of the paragraph is to signal a request from the UNFF to the GEF rather than prescribing action. He suggested, and delegates agreed, retaining the EU proposal to remove the term “Council.”

UNFF Member States also differed on the paragraph inviting Member States to make full use of international instruments and mechanisms such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement to implement SFM and achieve the Global Forest Goals. The EU preferred, opposed by the African Group, not using the words “full use,” or refer to the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement. The Chair proposed and delegates agreed to remove these references.

On contributions to the HLPF, the UNFF Secretariat provided a text correction stating that the Chair’s summary will be submitted to the 2017 HLPF by the Chair rather than by the UNFF Secretariat. The Russian Federation suggested including text that Member States would review the Chair’s summary to the 2017 HLPF before its submission. The UNFF Secretary suggested the following: “request the Chair to finalize his report in consultation with Bureau Members and support of the Secretariat.” The Russian Federation accepted this.

The US requested reflection in the Chair’s report that her country is undergoing review of international agreements.

The UNFF adopted the draft omnibus resolution as revised.

Final Decision: The UNFF12 omnibus resolution contains four sections and an annex.

On monitoring, assessment and reporting, UNFF12:

- requests the Forum Secretariat to further revise the format for voluntary national reporting on implementation of the UNSPF, based on, *inter alia*, any pilot testing of the current draft format;
- notes the ongoing work led by the CPF to develop a global set of forest indicators for use in assessing progress on, *inter alia*, the Global Forest Goals and forest-related SDGs, and invites the CPF to present its proposal at UNFF13; and
- decides to consider the cycle and format for the first voluntary national reporting at UNFF13.

On means of implementation, UNFF12, *inter alia*:

- reaffirms that UNSPF’s implementation framework, including MOI and voluntary national contributions, offers new opportunities to strengthen SFM;
- welcomes the funding made available for forests by GEF-6, through their cross-cutting strategy for SFM and focal areas related to forests;
- invites the GEF, in consultation with donors, to make further funds available for SFM and other forest-related initiatives under its GEF-7;
- reaffirms the important role of the GFFFN in contributing to the scaling up of SFM by facilitating access for countries to resources; and
- invites members of the Forum and others to provide voluntary contributions to the Forum Trust Fund to support the GFFFN.

On enhancing cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues, UNFF12:

- welcomes initiatives by Member States, the CPF and Major Groups contributing to developing and implementing the UNSPF and 4POW;
- notes the work of the CPF in aligning its work plan and encourages Major Groups to contribute to the implementation of the UNSPF and 4POW, including reporting to UNFF13;
- welcomes the CPF’s new policy document to strengthen its operation and enhance the effectiveness of its work;
- invites the CPF to take into account UNFF’s member inputs on its meeting draft plan for September 2017, present its work plan to UNFF13, and consider expanding its membership to intergovernmental partners;
- encourages UNFF members to announce and communicate their initial voluntary national contributions to the Forum Secretariat;
- adopts the guidelines for country-led initiatives in support of the Forum, contained in the annex of the resolution; and
- stresses the importance of communicating the contribution of forests and the UNSPF to sustainable development, including through the International Day of Forests.

On the contribution to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, UNFF:

- emphasizes the importance of the Forum’s technical discussions on the contribution of forests to poverty eradication, food security, and gender equality and empowerment of women and girls;
- emphasizes the relevance of this week’s discussions to the SDGs under review by HLPF 2017, and requests the Chair transmit related summaries to the HLPF;
- emphasizes the importance of the Forum to provide input to HLPF 2018;
- requests the Forum Secretariat, with the CPF, to prepare a report on actions to accelerate progress in achieving SDG15 and forest-related targets, and a background study on the contribution of forests to other SDGs for UNFF13;
- welcomes the CPF initiative to organize an international conference on halting deforestation and increasing forest area as a contribution to UNFF13 and HLPF 2018;
- invites stakeholders to undertake initiatives to highlight the significance of forests to the 2030 Agenda and present the outcomes to UNFF13;
- invites all stakeholders to provide input to the Forum Secretariat on the contributions of forests to issues considered by HLPF 2018 by 30 November 2017; and
- decides that UNFF13 will finalize substantive input to HLPF 2018.

On the **term of office for the UNFF officers**, UNFF decides that, starting with UNFF14, the Forum shall elect its officers for a two-year term of office with a view to ensuring continuity between policy and technical sessions; and recognizes that this decision shall not be used as a precedent for other functional commissions of ECOSOC.

UNFF13 SUMMARY

UNFF12 Chair Besseau opened UNFF13 on Friday afternoon, to elect its Bureau. Delegates elected Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob (Malaysia) as Chair of UNFF13, and Macharia Kamau (Kenya), Tomas Krejzar (Czech Republic), Luciana Melchert Saguas Presas (Brazil) and Maureen Whelan (Canada) as Vice-Chairs. UNFF13 was suspended at 1:04 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF UNFF12

In the progress of personality, first comes a declaration of independence, then a recognition of interdependence – Henry van Dyke

The twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests convened barely four days after the UN General Assembly adopted the first ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests, Negotiated and adopted during intense intersessional meetings over the past two years—including two *Ad-hoc* Expert Group meetings (AHEGs), and a Working Group and Special Session of the Forum in January 2017—the UNSPF and its corresponding quadrennial programme of work for 2017-2020 provided the basis for UNFF12's discussions. UNFF12 was also the first session to be held under the new format, which was approved at UNFF11: Forum sessions taking place annually, but based on two-year thematic cycles, with the first year comprising discussions on implementation and technical advice, and the second focusing on policy dialogue, development and decision-making.

UNFF12 thus embarked on a week of implementation and technical discussions. Delegates took part in a number of panel discussions—with a wide range of interdisciplinary expertise—and general debates focused largely on forests' contribution to SDGs 1 (poverty eradication), 2 (food security) and 5 (gender equality). This was a move away from previous UNFF sessions, which were politically-charged negotiating sessions, and towards more focused technical input and expert advice on priorities, and resources needed, for implementation. A major aim of this new format is to aid UNFF's vision of being the authoritative coordinating body for forests, in part by providing this technical expertise to other UN fora.

This analysis, in light of the discussions at UNFF12, assesses how the UNFF is embarking on implementing the UNSPF and the 4POW, and examines the transition towards, and challenges of, reasserting the importance of forests in the international arena and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

During the discussion on preparing UNFF's input to the 2018 session of the HLPF, Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), stated that “the UNSPF and the 4POW are declarations of interdependence.” This he noted, would be “the first, very real steps” to the UNSPF, and thus forests, becoming a pillar of the 2030 Agenda.

For a long time, Member States have been calling for UNFF to: “be an anchor” for forests; provide a forum designed to exchange information; contribute added value; and share expert forest science-policy input throughout the UN system. Although

UNFF delegates recognize forests' interlinkages with a number of different sectors, past efforts to achieve such an anchoring role have brought many challenges.

The 2030 Agenda, however, has brought a promising opportunity that the UNFF has embraced by successfully developing and adopting the “new and bold” UNSPF and 4POW. Delegates now recognize these as the pillars of the forest agenda within and beyond the UN system. Indeed, one seasoned forester was heard stating that by including language from the SDGs in the six Global Forest Goals, the UNSPF and the 4POW are enjoying increased visibility. As such, and with the 4POW outlining detailed action for the next few years, many are optimistic about the Forum's stronger emerging role. To be sure, this week's tone was notably different from the “existential crisis” present at UNFF11; several commented that delegates can now move on from their uncertainty and “identity questions,” and step into the newly affirmed role of being the “forest experts within the UN.”

Despite the optimism for progress, the week saw some hitches that are inevitable when transitioning to a new format. There was general exasperation at the volume of prepared statements, rather than delegates taking the opportunity to seek advice and exchange ideas during panel discussions. Some observers suggested that by taking the opportunity to engage fully with each other and with panel members, UNFF would be able to fulfil its role as a platform for dialogue, policy coherence and knowledge exchange. In particular, one seasoned observer suggested that this would provide further impetus for recognizing UNFF as the “forest experts.”

All agreed, though, that such adjustment difficulties will soon pass, and that these sessions will be able to breathe new life and confidence into the UNFF.

ASSERTING INTERDEPENDENCE

The UNSPF represents the first ever strategic UN-system-wide plan for forests, a significant part of which includes utilizing the SDG-lens to reach a sustainable future by 2030.

Considering the HLPF's thematic sessions, and the multifunctional nature of forests, it is imperative that the Forum succeeds in its goal of clearly communicating the vital role of forests in achieving many of the SDGs. Certainly, UNFF meeting on an annual basis rather than every two years has been lauded as an opportunity for more continuous, persistent and clear messaging into other processes. The emergence of clearer messaging and the ability to curate positive examples about the role of forests and sustainable forest management serve to reengage the broader international community.

Despite the loss of the multi-stakeholder dialogues—at UNFF11 many had voiced concern that the multi-stakeholder dialogues were inadequate to engage Major Groups and new ways needed to be sought—delegates were encouraged to see that the panel discussions succeeded in engaging Major Groups, some of whose absence in recent years has been lamented. To wit, the panel on MOI included representation from the private sector and a major philanthropic organization, the Ford Foundation. While this was seen as a step in the right direction, some believed that future technical sessions will need to be enhanced by engaging with other pertinent sectors such as commercial agriculture, energy, and disaster risk-reduction.

The panel on MOI also helped provide clear evidence that the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network (GFFFN) is already assisting developing countries to access funding, in addition to a notable increase in SFM-related funding under the latest GEF cycle. Panelists during the MOI discussions explained that SFM

requires US\$150 billion annually. UNFF Director Sobral, when introducing this agenda item, stated that the GFFFN has helped eight countries to date, with many Member States asking for clarification on when they too could be assisted by the GFFFN. Gustavo Fonseca, GEF, underscored that 89% of funding from GEF-6 has been allocated to SFM-incentive programmes.

This was seen as a positive sign as some Member States suggested that continued increases in funding, which some said may still be insufficient, could help shift the longstanding and familiar tensions over means of implementation. In fact, tensions over MOI always have the potential to be a subtle barrier to coherence and coordination, since they absorb much of delegates' time and energy and take away from precious time to reach consensus on other crucial agenda items.

Discussions also acknowledged the huge volume of work done intersessionally, led in large part by the CPF, which had held an organization-led initiative to pull together forest-related indicators from across other international processes into a core set of global forest indicators. Delegates also received, with clear enthusiasm, a policy document and work plan from the CPF that indicates a promising move towards greater coordination, better synchronizing of reporting cycles, and avoidance of duplication. Some suggested that this could only benefit UNFF in reinforcing its mission and messaging long-term.

ENSURING INTERDEPENDENCE

Delegates who have followed the intersessional period since UNFF11 will remember the calls for delegates to have "courage to think outside the box." The negotiation and agreement of the UNSPF has demonstrated this courage—in large part because of its "declaration of interdependence—and the "truly impressive" high-level speakers at the opening panel showed that this is paying off. It is not yet, however, a "fait accompli." By realizing its role within, and the strengths of, the greater UN system, the UNFF is moving towards an era of interdependence.

To fully embrace this era, however, the UNFF needs to live up to its expectations and deliver on implementation of the UNSPF and its six Global Forest Goals. As many noted, this will require hard work to ensure: strong and persistent linkages with the 2030 Agenda and the many relevant SDGs; effective and coordinated MAR processes; increases in SMF-related funding; and effective use of the technical-session years to share best practices. It will also require fostering expertise, communication and confidence to step into the Forum's newly affirmed role. With careful consideration and continued foresight, many hope "the new UNFF" will move to fulfill its role to both further the cause of forests within and beyond the UN system, and ensure forests are at the forefront of implementing and achieving the SDGs and 2030 Agenda.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

International Day for Biological Diversity 2017: The 2017 International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) will be celebrated under the theme, "Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism." The theme coincides with the designation of 2017 by the UNGA as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. Celebration of the IDB under this theme is a means to raise awareness and action towards the important contribution of sustainable tourism both to economic growth and to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. **date:** 22 May 2017 **location:** worldwide **contact:** Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/idb/2017/>

Global Soil Week 2017: Global Soil Week (GSW) 2017 will convene under the theme "Catalysing SDG Implementation through a Soil and Land Review" with the aim of contributing to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017. It will conduct a pilot thematic review of the subset of Sustainable Development Goals under focus by the HLPF this year from a soils and land perspective. **dates:** 22-24 May 2017 **location:** Berlin, Germany **contact:** Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) Potsdam **phone:** +49-331-288223-00 **fax:** +49-331-288223-10 **email:** info@iass-potsdam.de **www:** <http://globalsoilweek.org>

52nd Meeting of the GEF Council: In its first meeting in 2017, the GEF Council will approve new projects to realize global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas and provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and implementing agencies. **dates:** 23-25 May 2017 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** Secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/events/52nd-gef-council-meeting>

World Day to Combat Desertification: The 2017 World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) will focus on the linkages between land degradation, migration and security. Under the slogan, "Our land. Our home. Our Future," WDCD 2017 will explore how to strengthen the resilience of local communities in areas affected by land degradation, desertification and drought through investing in land productivity, food security and generating local employment. **date:** 17 June 2017 **location:** worldwide **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898/99 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www2.unccd.int/our-land-our-home-our-future-wdcd-17-june-2017>

HLPF 5: The fifth session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convening under the auspices of ECOSOC, will be held under the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world." HLPF 5 will conduct in-depth reviews of the implementation of five SDGs: Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; and Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. **dates:** 10-19 July 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

CITES Animals and Plants Committees: The 29th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee will take place from 18-21 July, followed by a Joint Session with the CITES Plants Committee on 22 July. The 23rd Meeting of the CITES Plants Committee will take place from 24-27 July. **dates:** 18-27 July 2017 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <https://cites.org/eng/news/calendar.php>

FCPF 16th Carbon Fund Meeting: The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) will convene the 16th Carbon Fund Meeting in order to consider Emission Reduction Program Idea Notes (ER-PINs), agree upon funding decisions and portfolio management, and discuss links with other funding programmes. **dates:** 19-22 June 2017 **location:** Paris, France **www:** <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/>

IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress: The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) will hold its 125th Anniversary Congress to celebrate its accomplishments and establish a dialogue on the future of forestry and forest research. The Anniversary Congress will provide a platform for the exchange of scientific knowledge and a dialogue across the full range of forest-related topics and scientific disciplines. Discussions will focus on globally-pressing topics such as how to enhance the contribution forest research will need to make towards mitigating climate change, conserving biodiversity, providing water, creating income and employment, and improving the quality of life. Issues such as how changes and disruptions in society and technologies are likely to impact on forests and people in the future will also be addressed. **dates:** 18-22 September 2017 **location:** Freiburg, Germany **contact:** Konstantin von Teuffel **phone:** +49-761-69699-29 **email:** iufro2017@forst.bwl.de **www:** <http://iufro2017.com/>

29th Session of the North American Forest Commission: The North American Forest Commission is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. **dates:** 18-22 September 2017 **location:** Edmonton, Canada **contact:** Peter Csoka, FAO **email:** peter.csoka@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/31920/en/>

30th Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC 30): LACFC is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. **dates:** 25-29 September 2017 **location:** Tegucigalpa, Honduras **contact:** Jorge Meza Robayo, FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean **email:** Jorge.Meza@fao.org **phone:** +56-2-22923-2181 **fax:** +56-2-22923 2101 **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/31106/en/>

Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission - 74th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry: This joint meeting between FAO and UN Economic Commission for Europe will provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. **dates:** 9-13 October 2017 **location:** Warsaw, Poland **contact:** Ekrem Yazici, FAO **email:** ekrem.yazici@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/efc/72568/en/>

27th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission: The Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission is one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. **dates:** 23-27 October 2017 **location:** Sri Lanka **contact:** Patrick Durst, FAO **email:** patrick.durst@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/82939/en/>

21st Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission - 21st Session: The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission is one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. **dates:** November 2017 (TBC) **location:** (TBC) **contact:** Magnus Grylle, FAO **email:** magnus.grylle@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/afwc/31908/en/>

ITTC-53: The next session of the ITTC and associated sessions of the four committees will take place in Peru. **dates:** 27 November – 2 December 2017 **location:** Lima, Peru **contact:** ITTO Secretariat **email:** itto@itto.int **phone:** +81-45-223-1110 **fax:** +81-45-223-1111 **www:** <http://www.itto.int>

53rd Meeting of the GEF Council: In its second meeting in 2017, the GEF Council will approve new projects to realize global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas and provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and implementing agencies. **dates:** 4-7 December 2017 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings>

UNEA 3: The third Meeting of the UN Environment Assembly will be held from 4-6 December 2017, with the high-level segment taking place on 5-6 December, and the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives from 29 November to 1 December. **dates:** 29 November - 6 December 2017 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies **email:** unep.sgb@unep.org **www:** <http://web.unep.org/3rd-meeting-un-environment-assembly-unea-3>

23rd Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission: The Near East Forestry and Range Commission is one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. **dates:** 11-15 December 2017 **location:** Beirut, Lebanon **contact:** Abdel Hamied Hamid, FAO **email:** abdulhamied@hotmail.com **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/65542/en/>

UNFF13: The thirteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests will address implementation of the Strategic Plan and the 4POW, and MOI for SFM. **dates:** 7-11 May 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNFF Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-3401 **fax:** +1-917-367-3186 **email:** unff@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

For additional meetings, see <http://sdg.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

4POW	Quadrennial Programme of Work
AHEG	Ad Hoc Expert Group
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
MAR	Monitoring, assessment and reporting
MOI	Means of implementation
ODA	Official development assistance
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation of existing forest carbon stocks, sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNFF	UN Forum on Forests
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNSPF	UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030