

Thirteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests: 7-11 May 2018

The thirteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF13) met from 7-11 May 2018 at UN Headquarters in New York. About 450 participants from Member States, international organizations, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and Major Groups attended the session, which featured a ministerial roundtable on forest-based solutions for accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Delegates also addressed implementation of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF), announced voluntary national contributions, and a discussed and adopted a communication and outreach strategy.

UNFF13 adopted an omnibus resolution on Friday, 11 May, which addresses:

- implementation of the UNSPF;
- monitoring, assessment and reporting;
- means of implementation;
- UN system-wide contribution to the implementation of the UNSPF;
- the contribution of the Forum to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) review of the SDGs in 2018;
- preparation for the HLPF review in 2019; and
- information on reform of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to UNFF.

UNFF13 was the second meeting under the new annual format that alternates implementation and technical advice in odd years with policy dialogue, development and decision-making in even years.

A Brief History of UNFF

The UNFF 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 on sustainable forest management (SFM); provide for continued policy development and dialogue among governments, international organizations and Major Groups, as well as address forest issues and emerging areas of concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner; enhance policy and programme coordination on forest-related

issues; foster international cooperation and monitor, assess and report on progress; and strengthen political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Organizational Session: The organizational session held in February 2001 at UN Headquarters in New York agreed that the UNFF Secretariat would be located in New York and made progress towards the establishment of the CPF, a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats.

UNFF1: The first UNFF session was held in June 2001 in New York 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 to provide technical advice to UNFF on: approaches and mechanisms for: monitoring, assessment and

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reporting (MAR); finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

Key Turning Points

UNFF5: UNFF5 (May 2005, New York) agreed, *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 means of implementation (MOI).

UNFF6: UNFF6 (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. UNFF6 also finalized the 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 (April 2007, New York) adopted the non-legally binding instrument 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 (April 2009, New York) adopted a resolution on forests in a changing environment, enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, and regional and sub-regional 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 (January-February 2011, New York) launched the International Year of Forests 2011. The Forum adopted a resolution on forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication, which addressed, *inter alia*: procedures for assessment of progress; increased regional and sub-regional cooperation; enhanced cooperation, including with Major Groups; and MOI for SFM, including an *ad hoc* expert group process on forest financing.

UNFF10: UNFF10 (April 2013, Istanbul, Turkey) decided that the effectiveness of the IAF would be reviewed in 2015 and established an *ad hoc* expert group to review the IAF’s performance and effectiveness.

UNFF11: UNFF11 (May 2015, New York) forwarded a resolution to ECOSOC recommending, *inter alia*:

- renaming the non-legally binding instrument 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 UNSPF; and
- convening an *ad hoc* expert group 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 SDGs and targets, the UNSPF, and the Quadrennial Programme of Work for the period 2017-2020. UNFF11 also agreed on a new format for the Forum: sessions would take 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.

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: UNFF12 (May 2017, New York) was the first session to be held under the new format. UNFF12 adopted an omnibus resolution covering MAR, MOI, enhancing cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues, and contribution to the HLPF. The resolution, *inter alia*:

- requested the Secretariat to revise the format for voluntary national reporting on UNSPF implementation;
- decided to consider the cycle and format for the first voluntary national reporting at UNFF13;
- invited the CPF to present to UNFF13 its proposal on a global set of forest indicators;
- invited the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to make further funds available for SFM and other forest-related initiatives under the GEF-7 replenishment;
- invited the CPF to present its work plan to UNFF13 and consider expanding its membership to intergovernmental partners;
- adopted guidelines for country-led initiatives in support of the Forum;
- requested the Secretariat, with the CPF, to prepare for UNFF13 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; and
- decided that UNFF13 would finalize substantive input to HLPF 2018.

UNFF13 Report

On Monday morning, 7 May, UNFF13 Chair Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob (Malaysia) opened the meeting. He explained that Vice-Chair Macharia Kamau (Kenya) had resigned from the Bureau, and presented the African Group nomination of Koki Muli Grignon (Kenya) to replace him. Members approved the replacement and agreed Vice-Chair Luciana Melchert Saguas Presas (Brazil) will serve as UNFF13 Rapporteur.

Delegates approved the provisional agenda (E/CN.18/2018/1) with an amendment proposed by Switzerland for a new agenda item to obtain information regarding UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reform pertaining to UNFF. Delegates also approved the proposed organization of work.

Opening Statements: Chair Yaakob urged UNFF to create momentum toward the goals set in the UNSPF and underscored the importance of UNFF13’s input to HLPF 2018. ECOSOC President Marie Chatardová said she was pleased to see UNFF

“taking ownership” of the forest-related SDGs and targets and encouraged the Forum to present evidence-based, proactive and visionary input to HLPF 2018.

Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, welcomed the achievements of the GFFFN in supporting SFM. He said UNFF13 is an ideal opportunity to enhance coherence between the UNSPF and the SDGs, and make SFM an essential building block for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNFF Director Manoel Sobral Filho highlighted expectations for UNFF13, including discussions on: promoting awareness of the UNSPF; tracking progress through MAR; and mobilizing financing for SFM at the national level. He emphasized that voluntary national contributions (VNCs) are the backbone to achieving SFM.

Implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

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

Policy Dialogue on the Thematic and Operational Priorities, Priority Actions, and Resource Needs for the Period 2017-2018: On Monday, Egypt, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), underscored the need for: a UNFF communication and outreach strategy that highlights best practices and success stories in implementation of the UNSPF and inspire action in areas requiring further support; strengthening the GFFFN; fostering and enhancing other financing sources and mechanisms for forests; and strengthening the UNFF’s Trust Fund.

The European Union (EU) called for strengthening coordination, cooperation and synergies among forest-related instruments and initiatives. He underscored the need for good governance at all levels, including law enforcement and accountable institutions, as well as for including all stakeholders in implementation.

Noting the deforestation caused by production, the African Group called for placing more emphasis on nutrition and food security, as well as for integrating the UNSPF with other international agreements on desertification, water, oceans, and climate. He underscored the need for closing the gap in technological capabilities, strengthening forest governance structures at all levels, and including women and youth in SFM.

The UN Commission on the Status of Women reported that the 62nd session of the Commission recognized the important role of rural women as agents of SFM, and highlighted the 60th session’s conclusions that paved the way for a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Announcement of Voluntary National Contributions: On Monday numerous countries announced VNCs including:

- a national forest inventory, increased forest cover and protected areas, and improved timber tracking (Ukraine);
- a national forest policy and management plan (Jamaica);
- a strategic forest management plan to meet a zero deforestation target by 2030 (Ecuador);
- planting one billion trees by 2027 (New Zealand);
- protecting 98% of forest area and increasing reforestation to one million trees per year (Morocco);
- over US\$10 million over 10 years for restoration of forests (Malaysia);
- Improving 100,000 hectares of degraded forest (Ghana);
- a “green belt” initiative to transform areas of conflict into landmarks for peace (Colombia);

- valuing and financing non-marketed forest ecosystem services (Slovakia);
- improving timber production while conserving biodiversity and restoring four million hectares of forest by 2030 (Madagascar);
- increasing conservation areas and forest management plan coverage and allocating US\$13 million for enhancing social and economic benefits of forests (Indonesia);
- enhancing watershed management, community forest management and protected areas, and creating jobs in SFM and non-wood forest products (Nepal);
- building a national information network on forests and wildlife, which includes the private sector, civil society, and indigenous communities (Peru);
- designing incentives for the private sector to promote conservation, reforestation and restoration of forests (Costa Rica);
- rehabilitating 120,000 hectares of forest in 2018 and 100,000 hectares in 2019 (Philippines);
- investing in building a national infrastructure to support the achievement of the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) (Paraguay);
- a commitment to rehabilitate 30 million forest hectares (India);
- a national plan to increase forest area to 23 million hectares by 2023 (Turkey); and
- containing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 by supporting small producers to implement sustainable production practices (Mexico).

Ministerial Roundtable on Forest-based Solutions for Accelerating Achievement of the SDGs: On Monday afternoon UNFF13 Chair Yaakob chaired the **first ministerial roundtable panel** sharing visions and experiences regarding how SFM will accelerate the achievement of SDGs.

In a keynote, Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility, said UNFF13 provides an opportune time to take stock of progress on forests’ contribution to sustainable development. She noted current actions on forest defragmentation, saying there is a need for joint work and financing to connect food, land use, and reforestation programmes.

Nicolau dos Santos, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Livestock, Guinea-Bissau, said his country’s 2015 Forest Policy aims at ensuring long-term SFM and sustainable rural development in order to achieve forest-related SDGs.

Peng Youdong, State Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, reported on actions to achieve the UNSPF, including improvement of forest tenure reforms and formulation of national SFM programmes.

Maria Patek, Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, Austria, highlighted the enhanced role of the forest sector in her ministry. She said inclusion of tourism in the ministry has fostered cross-sectoral cohesion in the sustainable development agenda.

In the ensuing discussion, Bulgaria, speaking for the EU, called for urgency in up-scaling activities to halt forest degradation and for progress in tackling competition between forest protection and agricultural development.

Congo reported its commitment to: legal sourcing of timber; reforestation for supplying fuelwood; Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in developing countries (REDD+) activities; and reforestation and conservation of forest-related ecosystems.

Slovakia called for payments for non-marketed ecosystem services. Lesotho called for a knowledge hub for sharing SFM-related experiences and challenges and a simple template for members to follow.

Romania noted its strategic objectives, including pursuing SFM, halting deforestation and degradation, combatting illegal logging and related trade, contributing to the green economy, and conserving biodiversity.

Pakistan noted commitments to, *inter alia*: address forests in communal lands and urban areas; regenerate forests; reduce fragmentation; involve local communities in forest management; and enhance forests as carbon sinks.

Kenya, noting its current 7.2% forest cover, reported reforms to reduce pressure on forests and increase cover to 10% through capacity building, a temporary moratorium on logging, and national tree planting activities.

Bolivia stated that its comprehensive vision for forests focuses on the rights of local communities, its 30 indigenous groups, Mother Earth, and all people, under a democratic approach to land distribution.

Beth MacNeill, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, moderated the **second ministerial roundtable panel**, on challenges and issues surrounding forests' contributions to the SDGs.

John Peter Amewu, Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Ghana, identified challenges including: overdependence on forest goods; lack of alternative livelihood options; limited private sector participation; climate change; increasing population; and lack of access to technologies, financial resources, and capacity.

Patrick Mlynář, Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic, called for addressing forest dieback through water management, rural development, and nature conservation. He asked that the HLPF recognize forests' multifunctional roles.

Ezechiel Joseph, Minister, Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Co-operatives, Saint Lucia, noted: Saint Lucia's hurricane belt location, with increasing frequency and severity of storms, landslides, floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures; competition for land; and fragility and ecosystem connectivity challenges. He called for risk assessments to measure impacts of disasters on islands and for international awareness-building, expressing gratitude for GFFFN assistance.

In the ensuing discussion, Madagascar called for designing sustainable financing instruments for SFM. Thailand announced national efforts to increase forest area from 32% to 40% by 2038. Venezuela noted the recent inauguration of a park that protects the largest forest in the world.

Germany called for strengthening synergies among forest-related instruments and initiatives, especially within the CPF. The Republic of Korea announced the launch of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization, a new Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) mechanism that will contribute to enhancing cooperation on forests.

Cameroon said timber and wood markets need to be sustainable in order to enable afforestation. The Russian Federation stressed the importance of forests for water resources and thus SDG 6. Finland underscored the need to create mechanisms for multi-stakeholder participation in UNSPF implementation, especially for women and youth.

Tanzania announced SFM plans for 90 national forests. Papua New Guinea announced his government's first-ever forest inventory, which will enable evidence-based forest planning. Nepal called for a mechanism for assessing forests' contributions to the SDGs.

Uzbekistan announced its efforts to reforest thousands of hectares. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) presented its global outreach campaign on forests' contributions to clean energy.

Turkey emphasized the need to mainstream gender in SFM programmes and plans. Poland highlighted the importance of the UNSPF to implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Malaysia called for environmentally sound technologies for developing countries for implementing the UNSPF. Viet Nam called on the GFFFN to mobilize sustainable and predictable financing resources to support developing countries in implementing the UNSPF. Argentina underscored the need for multi-stakeholder participation in UNSPF implementation. The Major Group for Children and Youth noted the inaccessibility of the UNSPF to civil society and indigenous peoples.

Closing the roundtable, Chair Yaakob explained that a summary of the key ideas presented during the ministerial roundtable will be included in the Chair's summary and serve as input to the HLPF.

Panel Discussion on the Contribution of Forests to the Achievement of the SDGs and Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies: On Tuesday morning, UNFF13 Vice-Chair Tomas Krejzar (Czech Republic) introduced a panel on linkages between forests, water, and ecosystem services.

Hiroto Mitsugi, Chair, CPF, presented the key messages from the CPF's February 2018 Conference "Working Across Sectors to Halt Deforestation and Increase Forest Area":

- achieving SDG 15 by 2030 requires urgent action now;
- legal, inclusive, and sustainable value chains in agriculture and forestry that prevent deforestation and degradation should be promoted and upscaled;
- civil society and particularly youth should be empowered as agents for change for realizing the full value of forests and halting and reversing deforestation; and
- the technical and business capacities of small producers should be developed, forestry education at all levels strengthened, and consumers educated.

Meine van Noordwijk, Chair, Global Forest Expert Panel (GFEP) on Forests and Water, explained that the GFEP report to the HLPF will review existing science addressing three questions:

- to what extent, where and for whom is ongoing change in forests increasing or decreasing human vulnerability to climate variability and change in water resources?
- what can national and international governance systems and co-investments in global commitments do in response to changes in water security?
- how can the SDGs be used to increase the coherence and coordination of national responses in relation to forests and water across sectors and from local to national and international scales?

David Ellison, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, discussed the state of scientific debate on the water-forest paradigm, and whether more forests really mean more water. He explained that many studies focusing on the level of water catchment basins conclude that more forests mean less water, whereas a broader view, taking into account terrestrial evapotranspiration, suggests a different conclusion.

Michael Jenkins, CEO, Forest Trends, US, presented on payments for forest ecosystem services. He recommended developing indicators for integrating them into national accounts, development policies and planning, and called for public sector commitments and risk-taking to encourage private sector investments.

David Ganz, Executive Director, Center for People and Forests, Thailand, commented that SFM, aided by forest certification, should benefit local communities. He further advocated private

sector interaction with local communities through free, prior, and informed consent.

A second panel examined the linkages between forests and energy and the sustainable production of forest products. Jitendra Vir Sharma, The Energy and Resource Institute, India, reported that wood fuel is the highest emitter of greenhouse gases and that sustainable energy options would help his country achieve several goals including climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation.

Gary Bull, University of British Columbia, discussed energy in the context of forests. He said the share of renewable energy vs. fossil fuel energy remains low. He recommended, *inter alia*:

- support for more forest financial mechanisms;
- accelerated use of engineering technologies;
- expanded and improved forest information systems technologies;
- promotion of SFM in multiple ways; and
- institutional reforms that increase collaboration.

Duncan Brack, Chatham House, noted that 60% of the world's forests are used for wood production and identified the drivers of wood products consumption. Observing that by 2060 we can expect a fall in global demand for fuelwood but an increase in demand for other wood products, he cautioned that the rate of forest cover loss increased by 51% in 2016 compared to 2011. He recommended, *inter alia*:

- policies to support legally and sustainably produced wood products in both consumer and producer markets;
- support for private sector initiatives to source legal and sustainable products;
- reform of forest and land use legislation, including clarification of land tenure and access rights;
- improvements in forest governance and law enforcement;
- greater protection for critical areas of forest; and
- payments for ecosystem services.

Ganz explained that in order for biofuels to become a feasible option, countries need to have economies of scale to support the large scale infrastructure development needed for them.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates addressed: the Congo Basin Blue Fund; pricing ecosystem services for smallholders; eliminating harmful subsidies; good governance; forest certification for supporting trade of sustainably and legally sourced timber; ongoing work on forests and water under the Water Convention; valuation of non-carbon ecosystem services; illegal logging; support for countries transitioning to biofuels; promotion of natural capital; and creating a compelling, united narrative on the importance of forests and biodiversity up to 2030.

An in-depth summary of the panel discussions is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol13/enb13211e.html>

General Statements on Implementation of the UNSPF:

Throughout the course of the week delegations made general interventions about their activities that are relevant to the implementation of the UNSPF. These include the following.

- Israel said it will continue efforts to generate master plans for all its forests.
- Brazil announced that it will restore 10 million hectares of forest by 2030.
- Palestine noted its US\$4 million investment in forests.
- Malaysia said ASEAN will contribute to reducing emissions from forests by harmonizing and adapting strategies on mitigation.
- Indonesia said its government allocated more than four million hectares of forest to local communities to solve land-related conflicts.

- Algeria announced plans to increase its Green Dam to more than 4.2 million hectares.
- China presented its proposal to host an office for the GFFFN.
- Pakistan stressed the importance of urban forestry, which can bring down ambient temperatures by 8-10°C, and of the UNFF working cross-sectorally with related conventions such as the Ramsar Convention and the Water Convention.
- Zambia spoke about its “Plant a Million Trees” initiative to improve food security and reduce climate change impacts. He called for initiatives focusing on low forest cover countries, small island developing states, and landlocked developing countries.
- El Salvador reported on reforestation and forest restoration since 2016 for implementing the Bonn Challenge.
- Thailand highlighted establishment of a UNSPF Committee.
- Lesotho noted that SFM is required for forests to perform their global ecosystem functions.
- Forest Europe said forests in Europe have expanded, covering 33% of Europe's total land.
- Panama cited its timber tracing programme and its initiative to restore 1 million hectares of forest over 20 years.

United Nations System-wide Contributions to the Implementation of the Global Forest Goals and Targets: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant document for this item (E/CN.18/2018/3). Delegates took note of the document.

Panel Discussion on the Activities of the CPF, Regional and Sub-regional Organizations, and Major Groups and Other Stakeholders: On Thursday, UNFF13 Vice-Chair Tomas Krejzar introduced a panel on this topic. Eva Müller, FAO, presented the CPF Work Plan 2017-2020, identifying planned activities and outlining recurrent activities, joint initiatives, and activities to strengthen CPF pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 2015/33. She highlighted initiatives on, *inter alia*:

- sustainable wood for a sustainable world;
- green finance; and
- a pathway for designing a mechanism to incentivize deforestation-free landscapes and value chains for green growth.

Dampha Almami, African Union Commission, reported on the African expert meeting in November 2017, which focused on regional cooperation. He noted that recommendations stressed:

- links between regional, sub-regional, and national reports;
- the contributions of forests to all SDGs;
- use of high-level ambassadors on forests at the HLPF;
- regional and sub-regional partners' participation in UNFF meetings; and
- delineation of UNFF duties in relation to other forest-related bodies.

Cecile Ndjebet, Women Major Group, reported on a Major Group Expert Meeting held in November 2017, which recommended:

- promoting gender awareness;
- engaging local groups in SFM;
- advocacy for establishing secure tenure;
- mutual accountability;
- finalizing a Major Group workplan;
- mobilizing funding for Major Group actions; and
- enhancing Major Group preparation before UNFF meetings.

Stephen Dehn, Major Group for Children and Youth, reported on a meeting of this Group in February 2018, which finalized a work plan to guide youth in “realistic, sustainable activities” to achieve forest goals. Core activities decided at the meeting include, *inter alia*:

- education programmes at all levels;

- a Young Innovators Initiative;
- enhancing forest education;
- social media campaigns; and
- youth participation in regional and international policy dialogues.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates addressed:

- CPF collaboration with Major Groups;
- green accounting;
- gender equality;
- forest education;
- the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)/FAO Forestry and Timber Section;
- International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) work within the CPF context;
- the Major Group Partnership on Forests;
- the new CPF initiative on green finance; and
- the lack of a mandate from the governing bodies of many CPF participating organizations to cooperate with UNFF.

An in-depth summary of the panel discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol13/enb13213e.html>

Development of the Communication and Outreach

Strategy for the Strategic Plan: This agenda item and the draft communication and outreach strategy (E/CN.18/2018/2 annex) were introduced on Tuesday. A revised draft of the strategy taking into account delegates' comments was discussed on Thursday, and a final version reflecting Thursday's comments was adopted as an annex to the omnibus resolution on Friday.

On Tuesday afternoon, UNFF13 Vice-Chair Presas introduced a panel on the power of communication for the successful implementation of the UNSPF. Carolyn Liu, Asia-Pacific Forest Communicators Network, moderated the session, noting that policymakers, governments, and international organizations increasingly recognize an urgent need for the forest sector to improve communication across countries and internationally.

Robert Grace, M&C Saatchi Abel Group, South Africa, called for "brutal simplicity of thought" that transforms complicated information into a personal, emotional story by stripping away the complex layers and leaving simple messages that enter the brain faster and stay there longer.

Ingwald Gschwandtl and Kai Lintunen, Forest Communicators' Network (FCN), noted the challenges of negative "fake forest news" and said successful communication entails: political will; capacity to communicate well; sufficient resources; strategic planning; a specific purpose; solid evidence; understanding of the stakeholders; partnerships for pooling resources and defining common messages; imagination and creativity; and perseverance.

Jennifer Hayes, US Forest Service, narrated the story of a fire researcher who "gives a human face" to fire data that needs to be communicated widely.

Gschwandtl showcased how holding the Expo Milano 2015 in a real forest site served as a crowd puller.

Liu spoke on "participatory development communication" for communicating effectively with local communities. She said sustainability requires involving communities in programme interventions and entails: establishing a relationship with the community; engaging with them to develop a communication strategy; and then co-implementing the strategy.

Jasson Kalugendo, FCN Africa, recommended bringing communications to the beginning of any process in a rural community, rather than just "adding it on" at the end. He described a process by which researchers engaged with individuals to understand their needs and concerns, after which the community members reached agreement on the causes of

problems, their impacts and potential solutions. He said they then communicated to the broader community and sustainably applied the knowledge gained.

Lintunen emphasized the need to be vocal and proud in communication and to tell stories that make forests relevant to the audience.

Peter Csoka, FAO, explained how the FCN has increased outreach through regional communication networks in all continents, citing extensive capacity building through these networks.

UNFF Director Sobral said the key messages of the UNSPF need to leave the negotiation rooms and be communicated to the public. Mita Sen, UNFF Secretariat, presented the draft communication and outreach strategy annexed to the Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (E/CN.18/2018/2).

Regarding communication materials, Switzerland recommended using art, literature, and music, and the US suggested increased focus on social media. Ukraine called for book format products in different languages.

On targeted audiences, China said cities and governments should be included, and the EU called for nexus opportunities to engage political decision makers external to the forest sector.

On messages:

- New Zealand called for simplicity, the EU for achieving greater understanding of SFM, and Japan for better illustration of the multiple functions of forests;
- Ecuador asked for inclusion of best practices of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- Indonesia said the UNFF needs to portray what the world would be like without forests;
- Australia, supported by Iran, said the scope should be the GFGs, not the entire UNSPF;
- the Children and Youth Major Group called for focus on the plight of forests and how to save them; and
- the Farmers and Small Forest Land Owners Major Group called for demonstrating the compatibility of conservation and timber production.

The US said the omnibus resolution should urge the Secretariat to produce a compact hard copy publication on the GFGs. Women said they would assist in mainstreaming gender into the strategy.

On Thursday, UNFF13 Vice-Chair Maureen Whelan (Canada) solicited delegates' comments on the revised version of the draft communication and outreach strategy.

The US, supported by Canada, asked to delete a paragraph on key determinants for successful communication, and suggested that the omnibus resolution call for a report on implementation of the strategy at UNFF14.

The EU suggested adding a new paragraph on Secretariat monitoring of the strategy's implementation, and adding decision-makers as target audiences.

Canada observed that the revised draft did not fully reflect comments made earlier about objectives, target audiences, and focus on the GFGs.

The African Group asked to include national political and scientific bodies among target audiences.

The final version of the strategy, reflecting this second round of comments, was approved on Friday by UNFF13 as an annex to the omnibus resolution.

UNFF13 Chair's Summary for Transmittal to HLPF 2018: Forest-based Solutions for Accelerating Achievement of the SDGs and Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies: On Friday morning UNFF13 Chair Yaakob introduced

his draft summary for transmittal to HLPF 2018, which highlights key messages emerging from the discussions at UNFF13, including:

- The SDGs can be achieved only if forests are sustainably managed and forest landscapes restored.
- Achieving SDG 15, especially halting deforestation and restoring degraded forests by 2020 (SDG target 15.2), requires urgent action. To accelerate progress, the application of best practices and tools available needs to be upscaled and expedited.
- Enhanced synergies are needed among the CPF members and across the UN system to tackle the current fragmentation in global forest governance.
- Progress in implementing the UNSPF and achieving its Global Forest Goals and targets is an effective means to accelerate achievement of SDGs.

The EU proposed language on replacing fossil fuel sources with environmentally-sound alternatives.

The US proposed adding language on other forms of verification than certification so that the text does not read as if certification is the only way for SFM.

Chair Yaakob assured delegations that he would take into consideration inputs sent in writing in revising the summary before submitting it to HLPF 2018.

Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

UNFF13 Vice-Chair Whelan chaired this session on Wednesday. The Secretariat introduced the document on MAR (E/CN.18/2018/4) and summarized relevant intersessional work and the proposal for a “flagship” study to be prepared on progress towards achievement of the GFGs.

Davia Carty, Jamaica, summarized her country’s experience in pilot testing the format for national reporting. She said the template was useful and the questions clear, concise, and relevant, but some terms and the reporting period could be clarified. She recommended providing countries a minimum of six months to prepare and submit the report, to allow sufficient time for relevant national consultations.

Patrick Kariuki, Kenya, reported on Kenya’s pilot of the reporting format, lamenting scanty information and inadequate time for consultations or for compiling the national report.

Peter Csoka, FAO, presented on CPF’s initiative to streamline reporting through a Global Core Set (GCS) of 21 forest-related indicators based on seven elements of SFM. He said the document explains relationships between global goals and targets, and is harmonized with the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) where possible. He stressed continuing development and evolution of indicators, especially given difficult methodologies or limited data for some. He invited UNFF13 to consider a decision on the platform.

During the ensuing discussion, the Philippines asked for UNFF assistance to Member States on any gaps identified in reports. Brazil noted the need to provide capacity-building support to countries that request it.

India, with Indonesia, the US, and Nepal, called for flexibility and acceptance of qualitative responses on some indicators, such as food security.

The EU, with Romania, said MAR should consider all information sources and queried the added value of the flagship study. She said the GCS indicators should take account of additional costs and reporting burden.

The African Group called for an evolving, flexible and amendable reporting system as well as for more time and for further consideration of the flagship study.

Ghana requested indicators on net changes in forest health or condition.

Malaysia, with Indonesia, proposed a five-year cycle for the flagship study and, opposed by the US, production of a manual on using the format.

Indonesia asked to distinguish actions taken before and after 2015.

Congo requested indicators on products and programmes being implemented, both qualitative and quantitative.

Colombia, with Nepal, requested capacity building on gathering information.

The US, with New Zealand, called for adoption of the reporting format “as is,” using available data, and for high-level, brief reports. She queried the purpose of the proposed GCS.

New Zealand called for ongoing work on the proposed indicators.

Mexico underscored the need for integration of efforts on UNSPF monitoring with the FRA and MAR processes under climate change and other relevant international agreements.

China called for capitalizing on the monitoring done under the FRA, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in order to minimize countries’ reporting burden.

FAO highlighted ways in which the FRA can contribute to the UNSPF MAR.

UNECE said FAO and UNECE look forward to coherent reporting, harmonized with their ongoing processes.

Australia supported the development of a flagship report by the Forum, based on the inputs received from Member States. South Africa supported the three-year proposed reporting cycle and publication of the flagship report. Argentina suggested the flagship report be supplemented by information on the GFFFN. The NGOs Major Group called for the flagship report to take an analytical approach and for involving civil society organizations in the reporting process.

Turkey said experts should focus on how the 21 GCS indicators can provide useful inputs to the SDGs. Senegal said the 21 proposed indicators should be integrated in the voluntary national reporting. Algeria observed that the reporting currently focuses too much on the qualitative aspects of monitoring. Noting the lack of agreed definitions of some of the issues included in the indicators, such as “protected areas” or “degraded forests,” Switzerland emphasized that more work is needed. IUFRO noted that there is a very strong scientific basis for the proposed indicators and expressed willingness to work with FAO and other CPF partners in supporting the monitoring process.

Means of Implementation

This agenda item, including discussion of the draft guidelines for operation of the GFFFN, was opened on Wednesday afternoon. A revised draft of the GFFFN guidelines taking into account delegates’ comments was discussed on Thursday, and a final version reflecting Thursday’s comments was adopted as an annex to the omnibus resolution.

UNFF13 Vice-Chair Grignon opened this agenda item on Wednesday afternoon. The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (E/CN.18/2018/5), noting that since UNFF12 the GEF had provided US\$824 million for 46 national projects and five regional programmes. He added that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) provided US\$216 million for seven forestry and land use projects.

Hu Yuanhui, China, reported on the outcomes of the expert group meeting (EGM) on guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN. He said the EGM proposed measures to increase the effectiveness of the GFFFN around five key elements:

- national forest financing strategies;
- support for resource mobilization at the programme and project level;
- clearinghouse functions and sharing lessons learned and best practices;
- collaboration and partnerships; and
- potential actions by the Forum.

Ukraine expressed appreciation for the work of the GFFFN.

Malaysia called for simplifying the guidelines and criteria for access to finance through the GCF and supported the proposal to facilitate this by appointing GCF officers as liaisons with the UNFF.

The African Group recommended strengthening the mobilization of resources in support of the GFFFN's activities, explaining that the Network contributes to realizing the principle of "leaving no one behind" promoted by the 2030 Agenda.

The EU emphasized the facilitative role of the GFFFN, noting that there should be no expectations for it to function as a development agency.

Congo said UNFF should strengthen its work in supporting countries to implement the UNSPF.

Niger and Senegal called for support for strengthening the Network to discharge its mandates. Saint Lucia said small island developing states should be eligible for support to help them achieve the GFGs and forest-related SDGs. Iran called for language on funding of the GFFFN to ensure it includes not just sufficient, but also predictable, financing.

India urged for simplification of funding procedures.

Mexico emphasized that capacity building to achieve SFM and the GFGs is important and should be provided within UNFF.

Many countries, including Japan, Switzerland and Australia, emphasized transparency and accountability.

Several countries cautioned that the GFFFN mandate should not be changed to make it a funding mechanism (US), implementing agency (Japan), or project management body (Australia).

Switzerland said the GFFFN should play a facilitative, not a capacity-building, role.

The African Forest Forum said the Network has raised the profile of the UNFF from policy dialogue to one that facilitates policy implementation, making UNFF more efficient and effective in catalyzing SFM actions on the ground. They suggested that the Network reach out more to the private sector and civil society.

The Scientific and Technological Community, on behalf of Major Groups, said GFFFN should include funding mechanisms involving Major Groups.

UNFF Director Sobral assured UNFF that the Secretariat is not equipped to be a funding or implementation agency. He emphasized that while there is growing demand for funding from the GFFFN, there is no increase in funding to the Trust Fund. He reported that the Secretariat is following all UN rules in exploring all possibilities for additional fundraising.

On Thursday, Vice-Chair Whelan solicited delegates' comments on the revised guidelines for operation of the GFFFN.

Ukraine, supported by the US, asked for revisions to the provisions on follow-up advice and clearinghouse function.

The US suggested amendments on taking into account equitable geographic distribution under "procedures," and, with the EU and New Zealand, preferred not to specify a need for

"sufficient and predictable" resources or "to enhance resources for effective Network operations."

The EU called for:

- including UNSPF implementation in the statement of purpose;
- broadening a reference to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to include the principles of national ownership and accountability;
- a provision ensuring that any further guidance and procedures involving the GFFFN will be decided by the UNFF;
- text calling for the Secretariat to develop a clear terms of reference template for external consultants that may be hired by the GFFFN; and
- deletion of a reference to national and subnational organizations under "partnerships."

A final version of the guidelines on operation for the GFFFN reflecting these comments was adopted on Friday as an annex to the omnibus resolution.

Emerging Issues and Challenges

UNFF13 Chair Yaakob introduced this item on Friday, stating that the Forum may decide to include urgent and emerging issues and challenges that may impact forests. Gabon, for the Central African Forest Commission, proposed the inclusion on the agenda of an item on forest criminality. Malaysia proposed that UNFF develop a "green premium" mechanism for the certification of timber products. Bangladesh suggested adding an item on technical and financial support for bioengineering initiatives targeted at forest restoration. Iran proposed including on the Forum's agenda an item on the negative effect of dust storms on forests. The Chair said the UNFF13 session report would take note of the issues raised.

Forum Trust Fund

The Secretariat introduced the document on the Trust Fund (E/CN.18/2018/7), saying that China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the US had contributed funds totaling US\$1,173,830, with some in-kind contributions. She reported 2017 expenditures totaled US\$891,139, including 47% for travel to UNFF meetings. For 2018 she predicted a budget of US\$1,056,000.

Responding to a query from the US, UNFF Director Sobral said the 2017 figure included extra costs from holding two UNFF meetings in 2017, which is not foreseen for 2018. He also acknowledged contributions from Finland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands in 2016, which were used to finalize the UNSPF in 2017.

The African Group, supported by El Salvador, cautioned that while resources decline, challenges remain, including for travel expenses for developing countries, and requested a reversal of the decline.

Progress on the Implementation of Economic and Social Council Resolution 2015/33

On Friday afternoon UNFF13 Chair Yaakob introduced the Report of the Secretary-General on this topic (E/CN.18/2018/6). Delegates took note of the report.

Information on UN DESA Reform Pertaining to UNFF

On Wednesday morning, UNFF13 Chair Yaakob opened this session. Haitian Lu, UN DESA, explained that the UN DESA reforms are part of the reform of the overall UN development system to be proposed by the Secretary-General in response to UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 70/299. He said the Secretary-General is considering various options to strengthen

UNFF while respecting its original mandate and function, and will offer a formal proposal once the UNGA adopts its resolution on the repositioning of the UN development system. After that, he said, the Secretary-General will follow the guidance of Member States, as provided through the UNGA Fifth Committee.

Switzerland asked what would happen to the detailed plans set out in the 2018-2019 programme budget for UNFF. South Africa asked if the reforms would have a negative impact on recent work on translating UNFF policy debates into action. Mexico inquired about the process for approving reform plans and whether ECOSOC would have input before reforms are finalized. Jamaica asked how the GFFFN would be affected. Brazil expressed concern about impacts on the Forum's outputs and Secretariat staff. The African Group asked about possible impacts on voluntary contributions to the UNFF Trust Fund. Canada inquired how reforms might impact the UNFF mandate. Kenya suggested a "concrete outcome" on this agenda item in order to send a clear message from Member States that within the reform framework and arrangements the UNFF should remain as is or strengthened and better resourced.

Lu assured Member States that the Secretary-General is committed to ensuring that UNFF receives strengthened, integrated support from the rest of the UN system, synergized with support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, with no change to mandate or function of the Forum. He also pledged that all comments and concerns raised at UNFF13 would be conveyed to the Secretary-General, and urged UNFF delegations also to convey their concerns to their delegation in the Fifth Committee.

Date, Venue and Provisional Agenda for UNFF14

UNFF13 Chair Yaakob introduced these agenda items (E/CN.18/2018/L.1 and L.2). UNFF Secretary Monclef Khane explained that the UNFF14 agenda would be amended to include a new agenda item on information on UN DESA reform pertaining to UNFF. The documents were adopted as verbally amended.

Final Decision: In its decision, the UNFF adopted the agenda of UNFF14 (E/CN.18/2018/L.1), which includes:

- the implementation of the UNSPF;
- MAR;
- progress on the activities and operation of the GFFFN and availability of resources;
- enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of SFM;
- enhanced cooperation, coordination, and engagement on forest-related issues; and
- UN DESA reforms pertaining to the UNFF.

It also decides that UNFF14 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York from 6-10 May 2019.

Omnibus Resolution

The draft omnibus resolution was circulated for comment on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning and afternoon, undergoing successive revisions to reflect comments from Member States before being finally adopted on Friday afternoon.

At the start of the Thursday morning session, the G-77/China, supported by El Salvador and Thailand, outlined several elements it wished to have reflected in the draft omnibus resolution due to be circulated later that day, including:

- recommending that the UNGA maintain the independent status of UNFF, with a strengthened Secretariat;
- stressing the importance of the communication and outreach strategy;

- emphasizing the need for a strengthened and scaled-up GFFFN;
- welcoming China's offer to host a GFFFN office; and
- calling for increasing contributions to the Trust Fund.

On Thursday afternoon, while reviewing a draft of the resolution, the G-77/China suggested adding a paragraph on the importance of the communication and outreach strategy for forests "and life on earth." On the MOI section, he called for strengthening the references to the GFFFN and the Trust Fund. In light of the UN DESA reform, he repeated calls for adding references to strengthening the UNFF Secretariat and maintaining its independence.

The African Group requested retention of a paragraph on success criteria for the draft communication and outreach strategy.

Mexico proposed adding multiple references to "relevant stakeholders" in the MAR section.

Ukraine called for adding "enhancing capacity building" in a paragraph that requests the Secretariat, in consultation with interested members of the Forum and members of the CPF, to initiate the development of the GFFFN's online clearinghouse mechanism referred to in the guidelines.

China stressed that the GFFFN office to be established in China will work in accordance with UN rules of procedure, adding that its budget will be negotiated with UN DESA.

The US suggested deleting language on the necessity of sufficient financial, technical and human resources for the effective functioning of the GFFFN.

New Zealand, supported by Australia, proposed adding language that encourages CPF members and other relevant bodies to utilize the GCS.

Australia proposed adding a request to the Secretariat to compile all the communicated VNCs in a centralized, public repository.

UNFF Secretary Khane said the comments would be taken into account and a new draft of the resolution circulated by email that evening.

On Friday, the plenary discussed the revised draft omnibus resolution. Comments focused on text on funding for the GFFFN, China's offer to host it, enhancing collaboration with other conventions on forest-related aspects, and the integrity of the UN's work on forests.

On voluntary national reporting, the EU asked for a description of the proposed "flagship" publication and for presentation of the GCS at UNFF14.

Under MOI, on forest project funding through the GCF, Mexico asked for language welcoming the launch of the pilot programme for REDD+.

On developing the GFFFN's effectiveness and efficiency, Switzerland and Japan specified building capacity in financing SFM.

On GFFFN facilitation of national efforts on the GFGs and forest-related SDGs, the US, opposed by the African Group, Jamaica, and Algeria, proposed calling for robust, rather than continued and increased, funding for the Network. The EU preferred deletion of the reference to funding.

On China's offer to host the Network, the US, EU, India, and Japan suggested noting the offer rather than expressing appreciation, with the EU adding explicit linkage of this office to the UNFF. Switzerland stressed consistency with UN rules and regulations. India, supported by Mexico and the African Group, requested more details regarding the arrangement. China circulated a concept note on its proposal. Japan asked about potential budgetary implications.

On the CPF's new workplan, the EU called for encouraging the CPF to develop and start fundraising for its new activities.

On inviting conventions to work with the UNFF Secretariat, the US specified that UNFF National Focal Points should engage with convention focal points in their countries. Mexico, the African Group, the Russian Federation, and Iran suggested adding the UN Convention to Combat Desertification's land degradation neutrality framework and, with Switzerland and Pakistan, the Ramsar Convention. Pakistan also stressed recent developments in urban forestry by the FAO.

Switzerland stressed that implementation of the UNSPF at the regional and sub-regional levels should make use of regional fora on sustainable development.

Indonesia requested new language taking note of the invitation of FAO Committee on Forestry to consider the potential of the FAO's Regional Forestry Commissions and including this on UNFF14's agenda.

On convening a special event on forests at HLPF 2018, the EU supported raising awareness of the multiple roles of forests as one objective, but not inviting UNFF Member States to co-sponsor it.

On the ability of the UNFF to fulfill its mandate and role, the US preferred to note the value, rather than to maintain the integrity, of Sub-programme 8: Sustainable forest management of UN regular budget Programme 7: Economic and social affairs. Egypt, on behalf of the G-77/China, added both the current and future Sub-programme 8. Bolivia stressed preservation of the UNFF and the participation of civil society and young people.

In an annex on the draft communication and outreach strategy, the Russian Federation requested recognition of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, and, with Costa Rica, Algeria and Iran, of that on United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028).

In an annex on guidelines for the GFFFN, the EU favored emphasizing the GFFFN's core mandate to facilitate fundraising and including eligibility criteria for setting priorities.

On a paragraph recognizing the need for sufficient resources for the GFFFN, the US and the EU preferred the paragraph read that "sufficient resources will promote the effective functioning of the GFFFN," rather than being "necessary" for its effective functioning. Bahamas asked whether allocation of GFFFN resources would be needs-based.

The Chair then suspended the session for informal consultations at 11:30 am.

When the session resumed at 3:30 pm, the UNFF Secretary read a note on the budgetary implications of the proposed omnibus resolution.

Switzerland, with the US, Russian Federation, and the African Group, called for deleting a paragraph that "notes the invitation to the Forum by the Committee on Forestry of the FAO at its 23rd session to consider the potential offer by the Regional Forestry Commissions for enhancing regional/sub-regional involvement, and, in this regard, encourages regional and sub-regional organizations and processes to make full use of the commissions in facilitating their contribution to accelerating achievement of the global forest goals and targets." These delegates argued that the issue had not been discussed and the language was new. The US proposed alternative language calling for discussion of the issue at UNFF14, which was supported and included in the resolution.

After the adoption of the revised omnibus resolution as amended, the US expressed "serious concerns" with language that refers to technology transfer on any terms other than mutually agreed, adding her opposition to any language that undermines intellectual property rights.

NGOs called for increased coherence and cohesion between the current international goals, targets, and instruments on forests.

Nigeria underscored the need for the UNFF to develop a guide for training countries to mobilize funding for forest projects.

Final Resolution: The UNFF13 omnibus resolution contains seven sections and two annexes.

On implementation of the UNSPF, UNFF13:

- encourages UNFF Member States to announce VNCs at UNFF14;
- adopts the Communication and Outreach Strategy;
- requests the Secretariat to report on progress in implementing the Communication and Outreach Strategy at UNFF14 and subsequent sessions, and to produce a short, concise print and online publication on the GFGs and targets;
- reaffirms that the effective implementation of SFM depends on the contribution of all relevant stakeholders; and
- recognizes that by 2050 at least two thirds of the world's population will be living in urban areas and stresses the need to integrate forest areas and trees into urban landscapes as an essential aspect of urban planning and development.

On monitoring, assessment and reporting, UNFF13:

- adopts the format for initial voluntary national reporting contained in Annex 1 of document E.CN.18/2018/4, recognizing that the format is an evolving document that can be improved and refined based on experience gained;
- decides that the Forum will consider the results of the first round of voluntary national reporting at UNFF15 and invites Member States to submit their voluntary national reports to the Secretariat by mid-November 2019;
- decides that UNFF15 will consider the timing of the next round of reporting, bearing in mind the Forum's mid-term review of the IAF in 2024;
- requests the Secretariat to prepare, based on the initial round of reporting and in consultation with Forum members, CPF member organizations, and relevant stakeholders, a concise "flagship" publication on progress towards achieving the GFGs and a target for its release by the end of 2021, and requests the Secretariat to report on planning for this report at UNFF15; and
- welcomes the progress made in developing the GCS, and encourages CPF member organizations and other relevant bodies to apply the GCS indicators that are ready for use and requests the CPF to continue developing the remaining indicators and report on progress made in this regard to UNFF14.

On means of implementation, UNFF13:

- welcomes the opportunity for enhanced forest funding under the GEF7 replenishment;
- welcomes the funding made available through the GCF's forests and land use results area, as well as the launching of the pilot programme for REDD+ Results Based Payments, and invites the GCF to designate a staff member to liaise with the UNFF Secretariat to promote cooperation under the GFFFN, consistent with the GCF's mandate;
- adopts the guidelines for operation of the GFFFN;
- requests the UNFF Secretariat, in consultation with Forum members and CPF members, to initiate development of the GFFFN's online clearinghouse mechanism, and to undertake the following additional measures to improve the Network's effectiveness and efficiency and build capacity in financing SFM: (a) develop a generic guide and modular training package to assist countries in developing national forest financing strategies; and (b) share information on lessons learned and best practices on resource mobilization for forests.

- invites Forum members and others in a position to do so to provide voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund to meet the growing demand by members and to scale up the activities of the Network; and
- notes the offer of the Government of China to establish and make operational a UNFF Secretariat office on the GFFFN in Beijing, and requests the UNFF Secretariat to provide further details and regular reporting on possible arrangements for, and operation of, the proposed office.

On the UN system-wide contribution to the implementation of the UNSPF, UNFF13:

- welcomes the CPF Work Plan 2017-2020, invites the governing bodies of CPF member organizations to support implementation of the work plan, and requests the CPF to report progress in implementing it to UNFF14 and UNFF15;
- invites UNFF national focal points to engage their national-level counterparts responsible for the Rio Conventions and the Ramsar Convention to seek to enhance collaboration and synergies in the implementation of their respective commitments;
- agrees to discuss at UNFF14 the FAO Committee on Forestry invitation to consider the potential of the FAO's Regional Forestry Commissions; and
- welcomes the joint workplan developed by Major Groups and the complementary workplan developed by the Major Group for Children and Youth and invites Major Groups to inform UNFF14 of progress made in implementing their workplans.

On contribution of the Forum to the HLPF review in 2018, UNFF13:

- invites HLPF 2018 to recognize the implementation of the UNSPF and achieving its GFGs and targets as an effective means to accelerate progress in achieving the SDGs and associated targets;
- emphasizes the relevance of the UNFF13 policy dialogue to the HLPF and requests the Chair to finalize and transmit his summary of the dialogue to the HLPF as an input to its 2018 review; and
- welcomes the initiative of the UNFF13 Bureau to organize a one-day event on forests prior to the HLPF session in July 2018 to stimulate partnerships and synergies among stakeholders to accelerate achievement of SDG 15 as well as the other SDGs under review.

On preparation for the HLPF review in 2019, UNFF13:

- requests the Secretariat to prepare, in consultation with CPF members, a document containing proposals on the contributions of forests to accelerating progress in achieving SDG 13 (climate change), as well as background analytical studies on the contribution of forests to other SDGs under review by the HLPF in 2019, for consideration at UNFF14;
- invites Forum members, CPF members, UN system partners, and regional, sub-regional and Major Group partners to undertake initiatives that accelerate the contribution of forests to achieving the SDGs under review in 2019 and inform UNFF14 about progress made; and
- decides that UNFF14 will finalize its substantive input to HLPF 2019 taking into account the inputs provided to the Forum.

On information on UN DESA reform pertaining to UNFF, UNFF13 stresses the importance of maintaining the current and future ability of the Forum and the UN Sub-programme 8 on Sustainable Forest Management, to fulfil the Forum's important mandate and role, and reaffirming their intergovernmentally agreed mandates.

Annexed to the resolution are the final versions of the Communication and Outreach Strategy and the operations guidelines for the GFFFN.

Closing Session

On Friday afternoon, UNFF13 Rapporteur Presas presented the draft report of the session (E/CN.18/2018/L.3) to be submitted to ECOSOC. It was adopted without amendment.

UNFF Director Sobral congratulated delegates on a successful UNFF13, saying it had achieved another significant milestone, with major decisions such as the approval of the GFFFN guidelines. Responding to Sobral's announcement of his retirement at the end of May, Switzerland, the Russian Federation, Congo, Iran, the Major Groups, the US, Brazil, the EU, and China congratulated him on his achievements as UNFF Director and thanked him for his years of service.

Noting it had reached out to 20,000 youth in preparation for UNFF13 through social media, the Major Group for Children and Youth reiterated the need to involve youth and the people outside the negotiations rooms in UNSPF implementation.

Ecuador announced that the next Presidential Summit of the Amazon Treaty Cooperation Organization will take place on 6 July 2018 in Quito, Ecuador. At the summit, Colombia and Ecuador will propose the initiative "The Sustainable Amazon to 2030 - Regional Ecosystem Connectivity," which will link conservation efforts across borders in the Amazon.

UNFF13 Chair Yaakob closed the session at 4:53 pm.

UNFF14 Report

UNFF13 Chair Yaakob opened UNFF14 on Friday afternoon, to elect its Bureau. Yaakob reminded delegates that in resolution 12/2 of 5 May 2017, the Forum agreed to elect its officers for a two-year term of office starting at UNFF14 in order to ensure continuity between the policy and technical sessions of the Forum. Delegates elected Boris Greguška (Slovakia), nominated by the Eastern European States, as Chair of UNFF14 and UNFF15, and Javad Momeni (Iran), nominated by the Asia-Pacific States, as Vice-Chair. UNFF13 Chair Yaakob urged the other regional groups to put forward their candidates as soon as possible, with the understanding that the nominated candidates would be allowed to provisionally participate in Bureau meetings until they are formally elected at the resumption of UNFF14.

UNFF14 was suspended at 4:59 pm.

A Brief Analysis of UNFF13

The thirteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF13) convened after what had been a three-year high-speed gallop to prepare and adopt the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020 in line with the mandates given it by ECOSOC in 2015. UNFF13 was the second meeting under the new annual meeting format that alternates implementation and technical advice in odd years with policy dialogue, development, and decision-making in even years.

The universal membership of UNFF means that the Forum's vital role in addressing challenges relating to forests is affirmed by all states, and UNFF13 was particularly key in supporting this role as delegates rallied towards strengthening the Forum's functions and transitioning from policy to practice.

This analysis assesses the UNFF's progress in promoting the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and examines the steps the Forum is taking

to ensure successful implementation to save all types of forests across the globe to achieve sustainable forest management (SFM).

Canopy for All

Forests and trees outside forests play a critical role in sustainable development, unifying almost all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through their multiple ecosystem benefits providing food, water, climate regulation, and soil protection, among others. These roles have been enshrined in the three Rio Conventions, on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, and acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change. The crosscutting importance of forests was constantly repeated during UNFF13, in the hope that it would enhance UN-wide recognition of the Forum as the leading intergovernmental agency on forests.

As the 2018 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) approaches, which includes a review of implementation of SDG 15 (life on land), UNFF13 focused on forest-related solutions for sustainable development. UNFF13 performed this task by providing a highly inclusive process for state and non-state actors, which enabled all stakeholders to report on their actions to achieve the forest-related SDGs. Numerous statements by Major Groups punctuated the week's deliberations, with many delegates emphasizing the overarching role of the Forum and affirming that forests bring us all together.

The onus is now on the UNFF Member States and non-state actors to ensure that this all-inclusive and participatory process reaches all potential agents of SFM at all levels of governance and practice. Major Groups and stakeholders at UNFF13 came out strong, positioning themselves alongside the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and regional and sub-regional bodies, as vehicles of SFM, leaning on their unique networks with communities living in forests. In previous sessions Major Groups have expressed concern that they did not receive adequate time and recognition by the Forum. However, UNFF13 was lauded for including a specific panel for non-state actors to present their UNSPF implementation activities and work plans. Several delegations acknowledged the proposals and work plans of these non-state actors, noting areas of potential synergies and joint actions to pursue SFM and support the implementation of the GFGs, the UNSPF, and forest-related SDGs.

While non-state actors made their mark at UNFF, many Member States also reiterated their commitment by announcing their voluntary national contributions (VNCs). States also showed their commitment by adopting the guidelines for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) and taking note of China's offer to host its office.

Branching Out for Success

UNFF members are pushing the Forum to move from policy to practice and prove its worth by, as one participant put it, "finally walking, not just talking, forests, and putting our money where our mouth is." UNFF13 delegates acknowledged the wealth of knowledge and experience within the Forum and the need to put words into action to bring to life the UNSPF and the Global Goals for Forests.

The recognition that the UNSPF has remained almost invisible around the world was a point of disappointment as the Forum had hoped that the UNSPF would have become as popular as the SDGs, and even more in light of the overarching role of forests. One delegate said, "It seems as if we have been speaking to a wall these past months."

Determined to change this, UNFF13 took up the challenge to step out of its policy and technical discussions comfort zone to explore the need for robust communication. The panel on communication and outreach did just that. Some Major Group representatives made powerful observations, pointing out, for instance, that communities do not comprehend Global Forest Goals such as "Forest area is increased by 3% worldwide." The language needs to be translated into the question, "How many trees should a person should plant and take care of in order to restore tree cover?" As communications experts demonstrated effective ways to get the message across to the public, delegates admitted that the carefully-crafted wording of the UNSPF was not really understandable to people outside of the room, even to most forest practitioners.

In adopting the Communications and Outreach Strategy, Member States affirmed the need to unpack the UNSPF's dense text and ensure they communicate messages that can trigger lifestyle changes to support and protect forests. Ensuing discussions in plenary on what these messages would be and what media should be used showed Member States' willingness to branch out into new territory and use every means possible to increase the relevance of the UNSPF.

While communication is key to reaching the world beyond the UN, many statements also highlighted the need to work in a broader context to tackle drivers of deforestation. Crosscutting sectors such as food, water, energy, and infrastructure received much attention as the Forum considered how to handle impacts from consumption and production of forest products and land use change for food and fuel production. UNFF13 participants also called for innovative thinking to develop nexus-based solutions with these sectors.

Rooting Together for Forests

UNFF delegates also joined forces in view of emerging challenges faced within the repositioning of the UN development system. This issue was the subject of speculation right from the start of UNFF13. Given concerns expressed regarding consultation and transparency on the matter, it was no surprise that delegates pushed for an agenda item to address this. The reform shadow did not however dampen UNFF13's resolve to accomplish its tasks as the meeting made good strides through the week. Delegates rallied behind the UNFF Secretariat, rooting for continued progress towards achieving SFM.

By the end of the meeting, the general sense prevailing at UNFF13 was that if the forest agenda is solid, and supported by a robust work plan and adequate financing, then the UNFF will remain strong. For this UNFF13 participants resolved to ensure that the UNFF is equipped to accomplish its mandates by adopting guidelines for the GFFFN, the Communication and Outreach Strategy, and the final omnibus resolution, and agreeing on their contributions to the 2018 HLPF review.

Peering from the Crow's Nest in the Forest

Delegates left UNFF13 with a renewed sense of responsibility, in light of the vantage point they occupy in the forest agenda and a mandate to work to distinguish the UNFF as the premier intergovernmental forum on sustainable forest management. The flagship report was expected by most to be the vehicle for this distinction and as a means of further strengthening the ability of the UN to speak with a single voice on major forest issues. Some delegates expressed hope that the flagship report will become the hallmark for the Forum.

The report, to be compiled from national reporting by the UNFF Secretariat, would focus on progress towards the achievement of the Global Forest Goals. Unlike earlier arduous discussions on monitoring, assessment and reporting, discussions on this “brand” have been welcome, albeit with words of caution that it must be distinctive and not merely a “copycat” of the FAO’s Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA). Instead, some argued, it can become the policy-oriented complement, or bookend, to the more technical FRA.

The immediate effort to find a simple and powerful brand for the Forum through its new Communication and Outreach Strategy is also expected to help get the UNFF’s message out to forest stakeholders and accelerate the achievement of SFM.

The message of UNFF13 for the future is for an effective and innovative Forum that provides guidance but also informs on progress in forest management, restoration, and protection. The Forum’s reaction to emerging challenges, by strengthening its functions, may well secure its future in the forest agenda.

As UNFF13 bid farewell to Director Sobral, who has expertly guided UNFF through the momentous three-year high-speed gallop to the Strategic Plan and strengthening of the IAF, Member States hoped for continued success as the UNFF shifted from policy into practice to support the achievement of the Global Forest Goals, the UNSPF, and the SDGs.

Upcoming Meetings

Expert Group Meeting on SDG 15: Progress and Prospects:

UN DESA and partners are organizing an Expert Group Meeting on SDG 15 (life on land) and its role in advancing sustainable development through implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ahead of the 2018 session of the HLPF. The objectives of the meeting are to: take stock of progress towards SDG 15; share knowledge on success stories, good practices and challenges; identify particular areas of concern; and suggest ways forward in terms of policies, partnerships and coordinated actions at all levels. These messages will help inform the HLPF, assist in planning its sessions, and serve to influence collaborations and programmes of work going forward from 2018. **dates:** 14-15 May 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN DESA **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

FOREST EUROPE Workshop on Enhancing the Long-Term Competitiveness of the Forest Sector in a Green Economy:

This workshop will exchange views on future policy making and governance to support development of the forest-based bioeconomy in European sub-regions, and identify possible topics for intergovernmental cooperation at the pan-European level. **date:** 29 May 2018 **location:** Brussels, Belgium **contact:** FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit **phone:** +421-45-5314-209 **email:** liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org **www:** <http://foresteurope.org/event/13498>

21st Session of the FAO African Forestry and Wildlife Commission:

The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission is one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions established by the FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. **dates:** 19-23 June 2018 **location:** Dakar, Senegal **contact:** Nora Berrahmouni, FAO **email:** nora.berrahmouni@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/afwc/31908/en>

GEF Sixth Assembly and Associated Meetings: The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly is the governing body of the GEF and is composed of all 183 member countries. It meets every four years at the ministerial level to: review general

policies; review and evaluate the GEF’s operation based on reports submitted to Council; review the membership of the Facility; and consider, for approval by consensus, amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF on the basis of recommendations by the Council. **dates:** 23-29 June 2018 **location:** Da Nang, Viet Nam **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <http://assembly.thegef.org/>

Global Bamboo and Rattan Congress 2018: Convened by the International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR) together with the State Forestry Administration of China, the Congress will bring together ministers, government officials, scientists, conservationists, educators, and business leaders to consider bamboo and rattan’s role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. INBAR is a multilateral development organization that supports its 43 Member States in including bamboo and rattan in their sustainable development action plans and green economy strategies. **dates:** 25-27 June 2018 **location:** Beijing, China **contact:** Saurabh Upadhyay, INBAR **email:** supadhyay@inbar.int **www:** <http://www.inbar2018.org/>

CBD SBSTTA-22: The 22nd meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will address, *inter alia*: protected areas, marine and coastal biodiversity, biodiversity and climate change, and digital sequence information on genetic resources. **dates:** 2-7 July 2018 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-22>

CBD SBI-2: The CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation will address, *inter alia*: review of progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan; biodiversity mainstreaming; resource mobilization; cooperation with other conventions; mechanisms for review of implementation; enhancing integration of Article 8(j) under the Convention and its Protocols; review of effectiveness of the processes under the CBD and its Protocols; and preparation for follow up to the Strategic Plan. **dates:** 9-13 July 2018 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBI-02>

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2018: The theme of HLPF 2018 will be “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.” The set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be reviewed in depth are SDG 6 (water and sanitation), 7 (energy), 11 (sustainable cities), 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships). **dates:** 9-18 July 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

High Level Dialogue on Urban and Peri-urban Forestry - Working together to maximize the benefits of urban forests and trees: Sponsored by the FAO, the dialogue is aimed at: a) raising awareness of the wide range of benefits derived from an effective management of urban forests; b) providing strong arguments for cities to invest in urban forestry; and c) fostering cross-sectoral collaboration towards an effective integration of urban forestry in urban planning, design, and management. **date:** 16 July 2018 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Simone Borelli, FAO **email:** simone.borelli@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/urbanforestry/en/>

24th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO 24) and World Forest Week: The Committee on Forestry (COFO) is the highest FAO forestry statutory body. The biennial sessions of COFO bring together heads of forest services and other senior government officials to identify emerging policy and technical issues, to seek solutions and to advise FAO and others on appropriate action. **dates:** 16-20 July 2018 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** FAO **email:** COFO-2018@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofo/en/>

Roundtable Meeting on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe: Following the Madrid Ministerial Decision adopted in October 2015, this meeting will address options for procedural follow-up in order to explore possible ways to find common ground on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. **dates:** 19-20 September 2018 **location:** Bratislava, Slovakia **contact:** Forest Europe Liaison Unit Bratislava **phone:** +421-45-5314-209 **email:** liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org **www:** <http://foresteurope.org/event/13675/>

IUFRO 2018 Posadas: The IUFRO 2018 Posadas Conference on “Adaptive Management for Forested Landscapes in Transformation” will highlight the accelerated environmental changes in this era of the Anthropocene. The conference will address issues arising from the transformation of forests in response to the pressures of globalization, population growth, resource scarcity and ecological degradation. It will also discuss how biodiversity is essential to human well-being, the loss of species and degradation of ecosystems, as well as the status of the achievement of global goals on biodiversity. The conference will also consider the ecological, economic, and functional values of landscapes, with a view to improving planning and decision-making, and operational solutions that can reconcile biodiversity conservation in the light of increasing demands on natural resources and land. **dates:** 1-5 October 2018 **location:** Posadas, Argentina **contact:** Analía Pugener, IUFRO **email:** iufro2018@gmail.com **www:** <http://iufro2018posadas.com/>

76th session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI): The Committee will review and guide activities in data collection and analysis, policy support, capacity building and communication. Under the title “Building the Future with Forests,” the meeting will focus on the transition towards a more sustainable society and a circular economy, based on the provision of forest products from sustainably managed forests. **dates:** 5-9 November 2018 **location:** Vancouver, Canada **contact:** Paola Deda, UNECE **phone:** +41-22-917-2553 **email:** paola.deda@unece.org **www:** <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47708>

54th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-54) and Sessions of the Associated Committees: ITTC-54 will consider, among other things: proposals for improving ITTO’s financing infrastructure and fundraising strategies; progress in implementing the ITTO Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women; and the application of the principle of rotation in selection of the ITTO Executive Director. **dates:** 5-10 November 2018 **location:** Yokohama, Japan **contact:** ITTO Secretariat **phone:** +81-45-223-1110 **fax:** +81-45-223-1111 **email:** itto@itto.int **www:** http://www.itto.int/workshop_detail/id=5427

World Forum on Urban Forests: FAO, the City of Mantova, the Italian Society of Silviculture and Forest Ecology (SISEF), and the Politecnico di Milano have announced the 1st World Forum on Urban Forests. The Forum will bring a variety of stakeholders together to exchange experiences and lessons learned, and discuss possible long-term collaboration on the development of urban forestry strategies and the identification

of nature-based solutions towards a greener, healthier, and happier future. The aim of this first Forum is to highlight positive examples of planning, design and management approaches of cities with diverse cultures, forms, structures, and histories that have used urban forestry and green infrastructure to develop economic and environmental services and to strengthen social cohesion and public involvement. **dates:** 28 November - 1 December 2018 **location:** Mantova, Italy **contact:** World Forum on Urban Forests **email:** <https://www.wfuf2018.com/en-ww/contacts.aspx> **www:** <https://www.wfuf2018.com/>

UNFF14: The 14th session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF14) will address implementation of the UNSPF, Quadrennial Programme of Work, MAR, and MOI for SFM. UNFF14 will also review the implementation of the Communication and Outreach Strategy, the impact of UN DESA reform on UNFF, and the invitation of FAO’s Committee on Forestry to consider using FAO Regional Forestry Commissions for enhancing regional and sub-regional involvement in UNFF. **dates:** 6-10 May 2019 **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

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FCN	Forest Communicators Network
FRA	Global Forest Resources Assessment
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GCS	Global Core Set
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GFGs	Global Forest Goals
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
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in developing countries
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UN DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNFF	UN Forum on Forests
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNSPF	UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030
VNCs	Voluntary national contributions