

## Summary of the Fourteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests: 6-10 May 2019

The fourteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF14) held technical discussions on implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF), taking into account the review cycle of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and the theme of the 2019 International Day of Forests, “Forests and Education.” As outlined in the current format for the Forum’s two-year thematic cycles, 2019 was to comprise discussions on implementation and technical advice and 2020 will focus on policy dialogue, development, and decision-making.

Meeting from 6-10 May 2019 at UN Headquarters in New York, 300 participants from Member States, international organizations, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and Major Groups participated in three thematic technical panel discussions on links between the Global Forest Goals (GFGs), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review by the HLPF:

- Forests and Climate Change, which focused on forests in the context of SDG 13 (climate action) and 17 (partnerships); and the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change;
- Forests, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth and Employment, which focused on links between forests and SDGs 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 17 (partnerships); and
- Forests, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies, Reduced Inequality, Education and Inclusive Institutions at all Levels, which discussed links between forests with SDGs 4 (quality education), 10 (reduced inequalities), 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships).

Technical panel sessions were also held on other topics including implementation of the UNSPF, Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, Means of Implementation, and Communication and Outreach.

At the conclusion of the week-long meeting, UNFF14 Chair Boris Greguška (Slovakia) presented a Chair’s Summary, which contains four parts:

- a summary of technical discussions, for transmission to UNFF15;
- UNFF14 inputs to the 2019 HLPF, for transmission to the HLPF;
- information on UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reforms pertaining to the Forum, for transmission by UN DESA to appropriate UN bodies that are considering the reforms; and

- an indicative list of intersessional activities suggested during UNFF14 to facilitate policy deliberations at UNFF15.

### 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:

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- 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.

The UNFF 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 Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats. The first UNFF session was held in June 2001 in New York and adopted a 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.

### 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 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 (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 subregional 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 (4POW) 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 (UNGA) 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 monitoring, assessment and reporting, and 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 SDG

15 (life on land) 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:** UNFF13 (7-11 May 2018, New York) forwarded a resolution to ECOSOC which, *inter alia*:

- adopted a communications and outreach strategy and requested the UNFF Secretariat to report on progress at UNFF14;
- decided UNFF will consider the results of the first round of voluntary national reporting at UNFF15; and
- requested the UNFF Secretariat to initiate development of the GFFFN's online clearinghouse mechanism.

### UNFF14 Report

On Monday morning, 6 May, UNFF14 Chair Boris Greguška (Slovakia) opened the meeting. He noted the first meeting of UNFF14 in May 2018 had elected Javad Momeni (Iran) as Vice Chair, and since then Khalid Cherki (Morocco), Rob Busink (Netherlands) and Kitty Sweeb (Suriname) had been nominated as Vice Chairs. Delegates elected them by acclamation, and designated Cherki as UNFF14 rapporteur.

Delegates approved the provisional agenda (E/CN.18/2019/1). On organization of work, Switzerland, supported by Japan, asked to move up the discussion of the impact of UN DESA reform on UNFF from Thursday to Wednesday so that the conclusions of this discussion can be reflected in the UNFF14 Chair's Summary. Australia asked to schedule time for an informal working group to discuss a scoping paper to guide the Secretariat's work toward the 2021 "flagship" study on progress toward achievement of the GFGs. Chair Greguška said the Bureau would discuss these proposals. On Tuesday, 7 May, he announced that the Bureau had agreed to the requested changes.

**Opening Statements:** Chair Greguška emphasized the importance of a solid UNFF14 outcome for any decisions and resolutions to be considered at UNFF15. Noting that forests are critical to achieving the SDGs in areas such as climate, biodiversity, water and land degradation, ECOSOC President Inga Rhonda King urged UNFF14 to send a "strong signal" to HLPF 2019 on the importance of forests for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and empowering people through forest services and benefits.

Delivering a message on behalf of Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN DESA, noted that forests have a crucial role in mitigating climate change by acting as carbon sinks, and preserving biodiversity, and announced that the world is on track to achieving the target of zero net deforestation by 2020. She thanked China, Finland, the Russian Federation, the US, the Republic of Korea, and Switzerland for their "generous contributions" to the UNFF Trust Fund.

### Information on the UN DESA Reform Pertaining to UNFF

On Monday, Spatolisano explained that UN DESA has implemented changes to enhance its capacity to support UN Member States in achieving the SDGs. She also reported that the position of the UNFF Director is currently vacant by standard procedure, and the functions of this position are currently being reviewed. She said the position will be included in UN DESA's proposed budget for 2020, which will be discussed by the UNGA later in 2019.

On Tuesday morning, the European Union (EU) submitted a set of questions to the Secretariat requesting clarification on:

- the options proposed for restructuring the UNFF Secretariat;
- implications these options would have on the budget, human resources, and reporting lines;
- the impacts of reforms on UNFF's representation in other conventions and fora;
- whether the capacity of UNFF to fulfill its functions will be affected; and
- when the position of the UNFF Director would be filled.

Canada also asked if reforms would leave the sub-programme on forests independent within UN DESA or if it would be merged into another division. She asked for clarification on how the division would distribute financial and human resources.

On Wednesday, Juwang Zhu, Officer-in-Charge, UNFF Secretariat, assured delegates that the operation and functions of UNFF would not be affected by the UN DESA reforms, noting that the UNFF's Secretariat's capacity to deliver on the Forum's mandates will be strengthened. He clarified that the Director of the UNFF Secretariat would continue to report to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and the forests sub-programme will continue to be independent and implemented by UN DESA through the UNFF Secretariat. The Director will continue to be accountable to the Under-Secretary-General for the management of the Forum's resources, he explained, and the forests' sub-programme budget will continue to be featured separately in UN DESA's budget.

New Zealand, supported by Australia, the EU, Nigeria, the US, the Russian Federation, Niger, Switzerland, Argentina, the Major Group for Children and Youth, and the Scientific and Technical Community Major Group, reiterated that the Forum's ability to deliver its mandate should not be affected by the UN DESA reforms. He stressed the need for continuous transparency on how the reform is undertaken and for Member States' views to be fully reflected in the Chair's summary.

Australia, the US, and Switzerland asked for the UNFF Director position to be filled "as a matter of urgency." Canada, Australia, Germany, and Argentina cautioned that downgrading the UNFF Director position from a D2 to D1 post "would be a mistake."

The African Group, supported by Australia, China, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, and Major Groups, called for UN DESA to recognize UNFF as an independent global body, and urged for strengthening the capacity of the UNFF Secretariat, calling for the UNFF Secretariat to remain a separate division in UN DESA.

Australia, supported by the US, asked for the UNFF14 Chair's Summary to be presented to the decision-making bodies on UN DESA reform. She highlighted that "there has never been a greater need for a fully functional UNFF Secretariat," since an independent and resourced UNFF Secretariat is crucial for UNSPF implementation.

Japan pointed out that this lack of transparency, especially about the structural options and associated cost-benefit analysis, and the delays in filling the Director's position will affect the Forum's fundraising capacity. Switzerland stressed the need to maintain a separate budget for the Forum.

### Implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant document (E/CN.18/2019/2). Several delegates, including the EU, the African Group, Australia, and Romania, emphasized the need to strengthen the UNFF Secretariat in order to deliver effective implementation of the UNSPF.

The State of Palestine, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), urged increased support for implementation of the UNSPF, highlighting the need for common aspirations to deliver real on-the-ground solutions to SFM financing. He called on the international community to support forest restoration and the substantial increase of forest cover, and to accelerate efforts for conservation of genetic resources.

Senegal, on behalf of the African Group, urged the international community to support Africa's efforts in UNSPF implementation, particularly GFG4 (mobilize financial resources), Target 5 on technology transfer and capacity building.

The EU underlined that SFM practices contribute to successful adaptation of forests to climate change and forest resilience to disasters. He urged the CPF to strengthen collaboration with UNFF in the implementation of the UNSPF.

Citing Pope Francis, the Holy See said a true ecological approach to forests must include social justice, with the full and meaningful participation in forest policy decisions by those most impacted by them.

Nicaragua discussed its national crusade for reforestation and participation in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+), and the Bonn Challenge on restoring deforested and degraded land. Israel highlighted its research and sharing of technical expertise, and called for more financial support for international sharing of technical expertise in forest management.

Canada discussed its formulation of a new national vision of forests towards 2030, together with goals to promote continuous improvement of forest management. Germany described an updated national forest strategy and reported on collaborative work with the UNFF, the German REDD+ Early Movers Programme, and implementation of the New York Declaration on Forests.

India reiterated its commitment under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through increasing forest and tree cover by 2030. He said the GFFN will be essential to achieving the forest-related goals in the Paris Agreement and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Thailand expressed commitment to UNSPF implementation through national policies and partnerships with the private sector. Ecuador said his government is developing a national plan to promote SFM taking into account the cosmos-visions of Ecuador's indigenous groups, and is increasing access to credit for SFM.

Ethiopia mentioned the Forest Development, Conservation, and Utilization Proclamation, aimed at providing consumers with sustainable forest products. He presented incentives to attract private sector participation in SFM, including tax exemptions.

Morocco called for improving global facilitation processes for forest financing, and highlighted the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation for capacity building.

Uzbekistan mentioned collaboration with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to develop national SFM indicators, and announced the adoption of a national plan to increase forest area at the end of February 2019.

South Africa highlighted the vulnerability of southern Africa to the effects of climate change, drawing attention to the impacts of the recent Cyclones Idai and Kenneth on livelihoods and infrastructure. Côte d'Ivoire presented national strategies to end deforestation and restore forest areas, including a new forest code in January 2019, and the creation of a national forest preservation and rehabilitation fund.

Venezuela discussed an SFM project with FAO to strengthen biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and climate change mitigation in the forestry sector. Zambia drew attention to its 2018-2022 investment plan to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, aimed at attracting and guiding the allocation of national and international funding sources for the implementation of the country's REDD+ strategy.

On Tuesday, Costa Rica reported a dynamic and active involvement of indigenous peoples in reforestation and SFM efforts. The US emphasized that implementing the UNSPF will need good governance, rule of law, and active participation of the private sector. She urged countries to present voluntary national contributions (VNCs) without duplicating their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCCC. She also suggested that the FAO take the lead in drafting with the UNFF Secretariat, inputs to the 2019 HLPF and the Climate Action Summit. Paraguay reported on the Poverty, Reforestation, Energy, and Climate Change Project, which combines objectives of poverty reduction, reforestation, renewable energy, and climate change, in order to support the implementation of the Paraguay 2030 National Development Plan.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo said most forest resources in the Central African Forest Commission area have not been mapped, calling on UNFF to facilitate forest financing for implementation of subregional forest plans. Peru reported on ensuring equality in the forest sector including the role of women in forest conservation. She mentioned efforts to ensure conservation, SFM, reforestation, and the rights of communities.

The Republic of Korea reported successful afforestation that has formed the foundation for economic growth, job creation, and enhancement of the quality of life. She said that forest resources have been valued at USD 108 billion, according each citizen an equivalent of USD 2000 worth of benefits from forests. Brazil discussed SFM activities to ensure sustainable job creation and rural incomes, and reported on environmental laws to conserve native species and create areas of restricted use.

#### **Announcement of Voluntary National Contributions**

**(VNCs):** On Monday, numerous countries announced VNCs including:

- a 25-year forest plantation strategy that includes planting of 21,000 hectares of trees annually (Ghana);
- a plan for one billion new plantation trees within the next three years (Australia);
- reduction of deforestation from 0.92 million hectares per year to 0.45 million by 2020 and 0.325 million by 2030, and an allocation of 12.7 million hectares for social forestry for the livelihoods of local communities (Indonesia);
- development of a master plan for every forest reflecting a holistic approach by 2030 (Israel);
- an update of a national forest strategy and a pledge of USD 5 million for the CPF Work Plan (Germany);
- an investment of USD 251 million over three years to support forest programmes dedicated to forest-based economic development (Canada);
- plans to increase forest cover by 8% until 2030, to reach 60% of the country's territory (Costa Rica);
- plans to increase forest carbon stock by restoring 1.2 million hectares of degraded forest by 2030 (Bangladesh);
- plans to ensure 50% of the country's territory will be forest-covered by 2030 (Malaysia);
- plans to increase forest areas by planting seven billion trees by 2023, which will cover 30% of the country's territory (Turkey); and
- forest cover monitoring systems (Colombia).

**Technical Discussion and Exchange of Experiences on the Thematic and Operational Priorities, Priority Actions, and Resource Needs for the Period 2019-2020:** On Monday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced the relevant document (E/CN.18/2019/2) and noted the recent publication of a booklet on the GFGs and a brochure on VNCs.

The Forum engaged in three thematic technical panel discussions on links between the GFGs, and the SDGs under review by the 2019 HLPF.

**Thematic Panel Discussion on Forests and Climate Change:** On Monday afternoon, Chair Greguška introduced a panel on the linkages between forests, the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and two of the SDGs under review by the HLPF 2019: SDG 13 (climate action) and 17 (partnerships).

Duncan Brack, Chatham House, stressed that the maximum climate mitigation potential of forests is far higher than generally understood, and not reflected well in the NDCs under the Paris Agreement. He said realizing that potential would require:

- reducing pressures on forests, as through REDD+;
- reducing the pressure on forests from agricultural commodity supply chains;
- managing forests more sustainably, through better management of forest carbon uptake;
- increasing forest cover, particularly with natural forests rather than plantations;
- increasing the value of forest and wood products; and
- improving wood-for-energy technology to reduce the emission of short-term climate-forcers.

He said prerequisites for these to work include substantially increased financing and improvements in forest governance and law enforcement.

Elena Paoletti, Europe Forest Institute, urged:

- boosting a forest-based bioeconomy;
- intensifying forest-harvesting in the Northern Hemisphere through sustainable forest operations;
- developing local climate-smart forest strategies;
- encouraging SFM plans;
- considering planted forests only when appropriate; and
- promoting certified forest products.

Igor Viszlai, Forest Europe, presented the role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation. He said forest management needs to adapt to climate change to sustain functions and resources. He announced that the Forest Europe Expert Group on Human Health and Well-Being will prepare a publication on “Integration of adaptation measures into SFM in Europe” comprising:

- a knowledge base and work done in the region including evaluation of GFGs and the 2020 forest targets;
- approaches to adaptation of forests to climate change; and
- identifying best practices and how to integrate adaptation into SFM.

He said the Expert Group will present the identified adaptation measures for different biogeographical regions in Europe, in order to evaluate them and identify knowledge gaps.

In the ensuing discussion:

- the EU urged recognition of forests’ importance in mitigating climate change, noting that 58% of the NDCs include specific forest-related policies;
- India reported plans to plant over 8.3 million hectares with trees to address climate change;
- Brazil called for recognizing the role of REDD+ in supporting developing countries;

- China and New Zealand said forests should be featured in the nature-based solutions segment of the Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit in September 2019;
- Finland said there is need to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation in forest policies; and
- the US cautioned against formalizing or bureaucratizing the link between forests and climate through international instruments.

**Thematic Panel Discussion on Forests, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth and Employment:** On Monday afternoon, Chair Greguška introduced a panel to discuss linkages between forests and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 17 (partnerships).

José Joaquín Campos Arce, Board of Trustees of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) - World Agroforestry (ICRAF), noted estimates of forests’ contribution to global gross domestic product (GDP) and employment. He urged UNFF, governments and the CPF to inform decision makers and civil society about the role forests can play in promoting decent employment and combating poverty. He recommended the exchange of experiences and information on, *inter alia*:

- innovative, inclusive, and collaborative governance arrangements;
- policies that secure tenure rights and equal benefit sharing for the poor and vulnerable;
- devolution of rights to local actors, especially through community-based management and the development of locally-controlled forest enterprises;
- integrated landscape management and restoration;
- development of wood-based products and markets to move away from carbon-intensive materials; and
- addressing decent work deficits in the forest sector.

Pia Katila, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), emphasized that SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and the GFGs cannot be achieved in isolation of other SDGs. She stressed the importance of addressing informal activities in the forest sector in economic growth strategies, noting the informal forest sector in many countries equals or exceeds the formal. She urged, *inter alia*:

- addressing gaps in information on the contribution of forests to economic development;
- developing inclusive and sustainable forest-based value chains;
- decoupling economic growth from forest-degrading activities; and
- integrating forests into economic growth, sustainable development, and poverty reduction strategies.

Gill Shepherd, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK, agreed that because of the informal nature of most forest-based economic activity the true contribution of forests to GDP is hidden. She emphasized challenges including land tenure and how best to build partnerships. She said forest land tenure “is going in the wrong direction,” away from publicly managed forests to privately managed ones, and suggesting “a profound re-think” on forest tenure.

Regarding partnerships, Shepherd noted that REDD experiences suggest that often national decision makers need to learn what works best by observing how matters are organized at the local level. She suggested “work first at the local level, and work up from there.”

During the subsequent discussion, delegates: noted the need for indices to evaluate the real value of forests besides their contribution to GDP; urged for consideration of countries where small landholders are engaged in forest restoration; and

highlighted that curriculum and training should be geared to ensuring better skills for forest-related jobs.

**Thematic Panel on Forests, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies, Reduced Inequality, Education, and Inclusive Institutions at all Levels:** On Tuesday morning, UNFF14 Vice Chair Javad Momeni (Iran) moderated this panel, which relates GFGs 3 (increase area of protected forests), 5 (promote governance frameworks), and 6 (enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies) with SDGs 4 (quality education), 10 (reduced inequalities), 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships). Discussions were also aligned to the theme of the 2019 International Day of Forests, “Forests and Education.”

Mónica Gabay, National University of San Martín, Argentina, said a synergistic approach is required that applies a nexus approach to the SDGs and the GFGs. She emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships to leverage the required funds, expertise, and capacity. She said reducing inequalities in the forest sector requires recognizing the role of indigenous and local communities and putting in place frameworks to motivate local value addition and SFM. She also noted the importance of secure forest tenure and access rights in fostering forest stewardship by traditional communities.

Mika Rekola, University of Helsinki, Finland, noted the need for forest- and nature-oriented education for youth in order to avoid alienation from nature, increase the understanding of sustainable development, and reduce risks of asthma, allergies, and diabetes. He urged improved quality and quantity of technical and vocational education and training in forestry, as well as improved teaching in universities.

Maureen Whelan, Canadian Forest Service, presented videos depicting Canadian perspectives on reducing inequalities in the forest sector. Beth MacNeil, Canadian Forest Service, via video, reported progress towards more gender equality and representation of minority groups in forest initiatives. Through a second video, Whelan showed how the Prince Albert Model Forest is working to achieve SFM with several stakeholders including indigenous peoples, researchers, and governments. In a final video, she showed how the Indigenous Guardians Program is creating stewardship in collaboration with First Nations to ensure indigenous rights and responsibilities in protecting and conserving forest ecosystems, while developing and maintaining sustainable economies.

In the ensuing discussion, the EU underlined that good forest governance, clear land tenure and property rights are crucial preconditions for guaranteeing “sustainable transformational development.” Costa Rica inquired on ways to provide funding and support for small landholders engaged simultaneously in forestry, agriculture, and landscaping activities. Colombia emphasized the need to combat environmental crimes affecting forests. Germany noted many international activities intended to support small landholders, but little progress observed on the ground, so he suggested that a new global initiative is needed to facilitate exchange on this issue.

On education, the EU supported a UNFF Secretariat proposal for identifying, compiling, and communicating best practices in forest education, and invited the Secretariat to prepare a document on the subject for consideration at UNFF15. The US highlighted programmes to help urban dwellers access nearby national forests. Finland asked about the role of civil society in increasing formal and informal learning about forests. Germany called for a new attempt at the global level to bring together exchange on forestry education.

Regarding youth, Lesotho emphasized the need for forest education to start early, involving youth in hands-on education in forests. Finland urged using youth organizations and digital technology to reach youth on forest issues. The Major Group for Children and Youth said youth can be drivers of change and bring fresh perspectives, adding that talking about youth participation will not make it happen. The Group urged greater youth inclusion in government and CPF activities.

In response, the panel said:

- knowledge and experience sharing is key, and some sort of global clearinghouse mechanism may be needed;
- addressing transaction costs is essential to helping smallholders;
- community rangers can serve both a conservation and educational role;
- it is important to tap informal education and knowledge sharing means, such as online information sources, courses and networks; and
- greater efforts are needed to integrate youth voices, ideas, and approaches in both forest management and policy making.

**Panel on Mobilizing Private Sector Action in Support of Implementation of the UNSPF and the 2030 Agenda:** On Tuesday afternoon, UNFF14 Vice Chair Busink introduced the panel on how to better engage the private sector in UNSPF implementation.

José Carlos da Fonseca Jr., Brazilian Tree Industry (IBA) reported on the activities of his trade association, which consists of 50 companies operating at different levels of the wood and pulp production chain. He reported that the organization has supported the planting of forests, which have contributed to 6.9% of Brazil’s industrial GDP. He mentioned support for restoration of forests in protected areas that are important ecological corridors and carbon sinks.

Ana Noriega, Secretary-General, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), explained that PEFC is the leader in forest certification and the scheme of choice for small family forest owners. She said once a national forest certification scheme has been endorsed by PEFC, it must follow a global standard on traceability of chain of custody. She also explained that being PEFC certified requires members to undertake specific commitments linked to certain SDGs, such as complying with seven core International Labor Organization conventions as part of a commitment under SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth). She further noted PEFC’s participation in Forests for Fashion Initiative and campaigns to get companies to use certified sustainably-sourced packaging and certified cork, and in various alliances on sustainability such as the Consumer Goods Forum, Soft Commodities Compact, and Banking Environment Initiative.

Kwame Asamoah Adam, CEO, Ghana Timber Millers Organization, using examples from Ghana, explained some of the problems the private sector faces in West Africa in branching out from primary timber production, including:

- difficulties caused by tenure and land ownership schemes;
- lack of clear investment policies, business incentives and access to capital;
- investments tied up over long periods, which few can afford; and
- infrastructure restrictions.

He urged UNFF to work on changing negative attitudes about the private sector among governments and NGOs, and recognize the role of the private sector in ensuring SFM.

In the ensuing discussion, Ecuador inquired what recommendations the panel could make for developing countries seeking to develop certification programmes. India asked how the private sector can partner with communities in forest development, and how to engage the sector more in biodiversity management beyond timber species. Australia noted the need for information sharing on best practice for effective engagement with the private sector. Switzerland suggested using GFFN to link with the private sector in innovative financing schemes for forest management and conservation.

Nigeria said there is a need to include sustainable bushmeat exploitation as a component of forest management. NGOs urged for certification tools to promote SFM. The Women's Major Group called for gender mainstreaming in forest-related private sector activities.

Responding to questions and comments from the floor, panelists highlighted the need to be very clear when defining the responsibilities between the private and public sectors and to find solutions for the challenge posed by the multiplicity of certification schemes for the private sector.

**Panel Discussion on Communication and Outreach and International Day of Forests 2019:** On Tuesday afternoon, Rob Busink, UNFF 14 Vice-Chair, introduced this panel session. Mita Sen, UNFF Secretariat, presented activities by the UNFF Secretariat to implement the Strategy, including events at HLPF 2018, the 24th meeting of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP 24), the International Day of Forests, and the GFG booklet. She also highlighted social media's potential, noting that the social media campaign launched for the 2019 International Day of Forests reached 105 million Twitter accounts, with 28,000 tweets from all over the world from 70,000 contributors.

Peter Csoka, FAO, highlighted that each International Day of Forests is an opportunity for education. This idea was utilized by FAO to engage the public in education campaigns through innovative, interactive ways such as quizzes, t-shirt design contests for children, storytelling videos, students' video contests, and teachers' video contests. He said that promoting messaging around forests in innovative ways generated free airtime on important television channels and online coverage worth of million dollars.

Steffen Dehn, International Forestry Students' Association, said the Association organized multiple World Café sessions around the world and capacity-building activities around the International Day of Forests. As success criteria for communication and outreach activities, he identified:

- the continuity of communication throughout the whole year;
- the framing of the communication campaign in a way that generates engagement; and
- results in real life, such as changes in policies and increased investment in forests.

During the ensuing discussions, several countries commended the UNFF Secretariat for the GFG booklet. Delegates reiterated the need to be innovative in engaging youth, particularly through the use of social media. They also suggested a more user-friendly website to allow ease of access to documents.

Others noted that while engagement through electronic media is key for urban areas, many rural communities would be marginalized, and thus posters and brochures in local languages are essential.

**UN System-wide Contributions to the Implementation of the GFGs and Targets:** On Tuesday morning, UNFF14 Vice Chair Momeni introduced this agenda item (E/CN.18/2019/2).

**Panel Discussion on Contributions to CPF Members to Implementation of the UNSPF 2030:** Vice Chair Momeni moderated this panel on Tuesday morning, which addressed progress made by the CPF on implementation of the UNSPF.

Hiroto Mitsugi, CPF Chair, said the CPF provided strong inputs to UNFF 13, HLPF 2018, the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) COP 14, and UNFCCC COP 24. He noted that CPF is about to start a new study on Forest and Poverty, under the leadership of IUFRO, highlighting the link between SDGs 1 (no poverty), 15 (life on land), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 10 (reduced inequalities). He added that the CPF established a working group for designing its strategic vision until 2030.

Mher Margaryan, Chair, UN Commission on the Status of Women, noted that the Commission's guidelines for land tenure for women, including forest land, play a crucial role in supporting rural women, who are the most vulnerable as they are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss. He said UNFF can play an important role in promoting the equal participation of women in SFM.

Garo Batmanian, World Bank, said the Bank's Forest Portfolio increased by 28% from 2016 to 2018, from 76 projects funded at USD 1.8 billion in 2016 to 87 projects funded at USD 2.8 billion in 2018. He highlighted the need for country-owned programmes that support national level reforms and the landscape approach.

Sheam Satkuru, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), said the work of the UNFF and of the CPF members are "fully recognized" in the International Tropical Timber Agreement 2006 and the current ITTO Biennial Work Programme. She noted that ITTO is focusing its support to the GFGs on six intervention areas: policies; incentives; a legal and sustainable supply chains platform; education, information and capacity building; tracking and verification systems; and assistance to private sector initiatives.

Kimberly Todd, UN Development Programme (UNDP), said UNDP's work under its nature-based solutions addresses the GFGs, including in the UN-REDD programme, which is a global knowledge hub for solutions to deforestation and forest degradation. The programme, he said, encompasses 64 countries and has become a flagship partnership for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

Adriana Vidal, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), said IUCN is supporting the GFGs through:

- slowing global deforestation rate by protecting primary forests, land use stabilization, and sustainable commodities from degraded lands;
- improving forest governance to benefit vulnerable populations; and
- restoring forest landscapes to enhance the delivery of multiple benefits from multifunctional landscapes.

In the ensuing discussion, the US highlighted work by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and called for using the IPBES Global Assessment report in preparation for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The CBD Secretariat noted the need for integration between the UNSPF and the CBD's work.

### **Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting**

On Wednesday morning, the Secretariat introduced its note on Monitoring, Assessment, and Reporting on Progress towards Implementing the UNSPF 2017-2030 (E/CN.18/2019/3).

On Friday morning, Australia updated delegates on a proposal by Australia, Canada, and New Zealand based on an informal meeting on the preparation of the flagship publication, held on Wednesday evening. The proposal, he noted, calls for:

- a clearly articulated and effective communication of why forests matter for sustainable development, and for progress in achieving the GFGs and the SDGs;
- a roadmap outlining key steps and timelines of publication;
- launch of the publication at the XV World Forestry Congress to be hosted by the Republic of Korea in 2021; and
- an advisory committee to guide the Secretariat on the publication.

Australia also requested annexing this proposal to the UNFF14 Chair's Summary.

**Panel on Monitoring, Assessment, and Reporting (MAR):** Wednesday's panel, moderated by Roman Michalak, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)-FAO Forestry and Timber Section, discussed the challenges associated with data collection on tier 3 socio-economic and financing indicators for the global core set of indicators (GCS), and related challenges in national and regional reporting on:

- GFG 2.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people);
- GFG 2.3 (significantly increase contribution of forests to social, economic and environmental development);
- GFG 4.1 (mobilize resources to finance SFM); and
- GFG 4.2 (enhance and increase cooperation and public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation).

Peter Csoka, FAO, reported on the development of the GCS. He explained that the GCS uses existing data sources to identify subsets, covering all aspects of SFM that are identical or reasonably close to be utilized by different global processes at the same time. He reported that 12 indicators have been determined to be of good quality ("tier 1"), five where the methodology is sound but some data challenges still exist ("tier 2"), and four where both methodology and data availability challenges exist ("tier 3"). He also noted an additional area identified by the task force for further work: "contribution of forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development." He said FAO's Committee on Forestry has recommended that countries use tiers 1 and 2 while development work continues on tiers 2 and 3. He also reported that an indicator on UNSPF target 2.4 (contribution of forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development) has been identified for further work.

He noted FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment is already collecting data for all 15 indicators, which will be updated annually beginning in 2020.

Davia Carty, Jamaica, discussed her country's experience as one of the six UNFF pilot countries developing local indicators for GFG targets to be used in its national reporting to UNFF and VNCs, namely targets 1.1 (increase forested area), 2.4 (enhance forest-based ecosystem services and benefits, including improving livelihoods of forest-dependent people/communities), and 5.2 (enhanced forest laws and governance), noting progress made since 2017. She identified Jamaica's MAR challenges, including funding, getting national level buy-in to the VNC commitment and lack of strong collaborations, and institutional and data gaps.

Kofi Affum-Baffoe, Ghana, presented his country's actions to achieve GFGs, linked to tier 3 indicators on socio-economic and financing issues. On GFG2 (enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits), he highlighted the modified Taungya systems, which are partnerships with local communities to incorporate crops within village forests. He reported that 300 million tons of food was projected between 2017-2020.

Patrick Kariuki, Kenya Forest Service, reported support for an analytical study to help in implementation of the GFGs through the UN Development Account Project on Monitoring Progress towards SFM. He discussed the identification of tier 3 indicators, noting potential sources of data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and the Kenya Integrated Budget Survey.

During discussions, the EU urged the UNFF Secretariat to make use of all data sources from national forest services to complement national reporting and reduce the reporting burden. MAR processes, he added, should trace progress and enable experience sharing in UNSPF implementation.

Ukraine emphasized the importance of clear definitions and means of analyzing the information received. The Republic of Korea, with the US, urged for means of acquiring more quantitative data. The US also noted the importance of identifying the scope, audience and resources necessary for production of the flagship report, adding that in order to communicate to the wider public, the report needs to contain graphics, key findings, a brief executive summary, and digital stories.

Fiji urged for assistance for MAR, noting the vital role of GFFFN. Argentina called for strengthening of forest institutions to conduct MAR.

### *Means of Implementation*

On Wednesday afternoon, Peter Gondo, UNFF Secretariat, introduced the relevant document (E/CN.18/2019/4). He announced that since UNFF13, USD 825 million have been allocated to forest financing from the GEF-6 replenishment, which is expected to leverage USD 4.8 billion in co-financing. The GEF-7 replenishment set two impact programmes: Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration; and SFM. A liaison officer, he added, was appointed for the Green Climate Fund (GCF), with GCF overseeing 14 forest and land use projects valued at USD 738.7 million.

Thomas Baldauf, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany, said an Expert Group Meeting on the clearinghouse mechanism of the GFFFN took place from 9-11 January 2019 at UN Headquarters in New York, with the participation of more than 60 experts. The meeting, he noted, decided the core elements of a clearinghouse mechanism, and intersessional work is currently undertaken on assessment of:

- information technology needs and budgetary requirements;
- the timeline for various phases; and
- the planning in greater detail of phase one of the clearinghouse.

The UNFF Secretariat provided an update on the GFFFN office in Beijing, China. He announced that a draft host agreement and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) were prepared by UN DESA in coordination with the UN Office of Legal Affairs. He said two rounds of consultations were held in 2019, 14-15 January in New York, and 23-24 April in Beijing, with substantive progress made on the draft MoU. He noted that the draft will be finalized and signed by the end of 2019. The UNFF Secretariat, he reported, will continue to perform the core functions in New York, and the office in Beijing will be complementary and will not have any normative role, responding to the authority of the UNFF Director. He added that the costs for the Beijing office will be covered in entirety by extrabudgetary resources provided by China.

India called for clarification on the inadequacies of the UNFF Secretariat that would necessitate a satellite office in Beijing. Several delegates, including the EU, the US, Japan, and Switzerland, lamented the lack of timely updates on discussions on the Beijing office, calling for more transparency and



information sharing with UNFF Member States. They also asked to review and comment on the MoU.

The US further called for:

- ensuring the office staffing preserves the international and multicultural requirements of the UN;
- functions be cost effective and adhere to professional norms;
- clarity that supplementary support to the office be drawn from voluntary finances *ad infinitum*; and
- leadership of the office be maintained at UN Headquarters in New York.

The EU asked how UN DESA reforms would affect this satellite office. Australia asked how final arrangements could be determined before the impact of UN DESA reforms on the UNFF Secretariat become clear.

Switzerland said a written report on progress of negotiations on the office should have been provided to delegates in advance.

Japan asked if UNFF has done a study of other organizations that have had similar split offices, such as the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Global Mechanism. She called for regular written updates on the matter.

Suriname said that several of the high forest cover, low deforestation countries are struggling to acquire funding to sustain the status of these forests and urged for more consideration under GFFFN.

Ukraine proposed that the clearinghouse mechanism ensure countries with economies in transition remain eligible for funding. The US asked for clarification on the bottom-up approach proposed for data collection.

Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Algeria, Botswana, and Ecuador stressed the importance of GFFFN efforts to help developing countries. Malaysia emphasized GFFFN's role in negotiating with the GCF to simplify terms and conditions. Fiji expressed gratitude for GFFFN's work with countries on capacity challenges.

In response to interventions, the Secretariat explained:

- the Secretariat is considering undertaking an assessment of results achieved by the GFFFN, and will provide more information in the official documentation for UNFF15;
- the clearinghouse mechanism should be operational by the end of 2020; and
- the lack of official information on the Beijing office had to do with the UN deadline for official documentation for UNFF14, with the second consultation on the MoU only occurring three weeks prior to UNFF14.

He stressed that the Beijing office will be a project office, and that all operations will be managed by the UNFF Director and be accountable to the Forum, and will be considered a UN office following all UN standards. None of that, he said, will be changed by UN DESA reform. He noted that the UNFF Secretariat is fully aware of the UNCCD's Global Mechanism example and assured this office would be very different.

Switzerland said the division of work between Beijing and UN Headquarters remained unclear, and until this was clarified, Switzerland would not contribute to the GFFFN. The Secretariat promised to consult with Office for Legal Affairs involved in negotiating the MoU and bring back the sought details by the end of UNFF14.

During the subsequent discussions, Sri Lanka said it was time to consider which specific indicators need to be collected by forest officers on the ground and which can be generated by existing databases. Canada, supported by New Zealand, suggested that the launch of the first UNFF flagship publication be timed with the 2021 World Forestry Congress.

Australia reported its pledge of USD 50,000 to support the flagship report. Japan said the flagship publication should be based on national reporting and remain neutral and objective. He urged that Member States be allowed to review it before publication.

Ecuador called for knowledge transfer on new technologies and innovations to allow developing countries improve data collection.

The Major Group for Children and Youth urged involvement of youth in MAR in order to produce innovative data collection technologies, and increase awareness of the UNSPF. The CBD Secretariat highlighted guidance provided in collaboration with the FAO for reporting on GFG1 (reverse the loss of forest cover) and Aichi Biodiversity Target 5 (the rate of loss of all natural habitats is halved).

On Friday, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Suriname, Uruguay, Nepal and Armenia supported the setting up of the GFFFN office in China, noting that this would strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to facilitate developing countries' implementation of the UNSPF. Algeria said the use of the UNFF regular funds may also further advance the mandates of the China office. The US and Japan objected to the use of these funds, and China confirmed that their offer is for a fully funded GFFFN project office. China further clarified that the ongoing negotiations with the UNFF Secretariat, including contents of the MoU, are open and transparent.

**Panel on Means of Implementation for SFM:** On Wednesday afternoon, this panel moderated by Sibylle Vermont, Switzerland, addressed GFFFN Priority 4 (serve to contribute to the achievement of the GFGs and targets as well as priorities contained in the 4POW).

Marilyn Headley, Jamaica, said her country's 10-year forest sector plan has formed the basis for recent discussions with GFFFN to develop financial mechanisms for its implementation. She also reported on GEF-7 funding to support mangrove conservation.

Avhashoni Renny Madula, South Africa, presented his country's experience with GFFFN assistance in the preparation of proposals for financing from other multilateral agreements. He noted GFFFN also supported South Africa in accessing funding to improve its data collection capacity.

In the ensuing discussion, the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group called for GFFFN to also support non-governmental actors, such as civil society. The Philippines highlighted the need for local financing of SFM.

### ***Enhancing Global Forest Policy Coherence and a Common International Understanding of SFM***

On Thursday morning, Rob Busink, UNFF14 Vice-Chair, chairing this discussion, noted that this is the first time the UNFF is addressing this issue. The UNFF Secretariat introduced the document outlining intersessional activities (E/CN.18/2019/5). He highlighted a CPF mapping exercise to assess its existing capacities and identify possible capacity gaps to effectively support UNSPF implementation. This, he said, contributed to the development of the CPF 2017-2020 work plan.

He also discussed an informal survey carried out in September 2018 targeting CPF members, regional and subregional organizations and processes, and Major Groups, to collect information on progress since UNSPF adoption to advance the achievement of targets 6.1 and 6.2 (forest-related programmes are coherent and complementary, and integrate the GFGs and

targets – in the UN System and CPF members, respectively), and 6.4 (a greater common understanding of SFM is achieved and an associated set of indicators identified).

He reported that several member organizations have integrated the GFGs into their respective programmes of work, and others are incorporating achievement of GFGs into the next cycle of their programmes and strategies. He noted that further work is required for a common understanding of SFM.

The EU said the UNSPF is an opportunity to enhance synergies within the UN system and a large number of stakeholders, and encouraged the CPF to contribute to a common understanding of SFM in its next cycle.

The US said that while it is important to create global visibility of the UNSPF, there is need to be sensitive to diverse approaches towards achieving SFM, and respect national sovereignty.

The CBD said synergies already exist with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the GFGs, and urged for continued collaboration to prepare baselines to measure progress in implementation of common forest-related goals.

Malaysia said a common understanding of SFM can contribute to coherence in global forest-related policies.

The Major Group for Children and Youth called on parties to promote education on the value of forests across all sectors, adding that policy literacy is important to enable youth involvement and participation in implementation of the GFGs.

### ***Enhanced Cooperation, Coordination and Engagement on Forest-related Issues***

On Thursday morning, the Secretariat introduced the relevant document (E/CN.18/2019/6), which included items on:

- CPF Activities in support of the Strategic Plan and the 4POW 2017-2020;
- activities of regional and subregional partners; and
- activities of Major Groups.

She said an expert meeting to enhance the contribution of regional and subregional partners to the implementation of the UNSPF and the 4POW and a meeting on civil society contributions were held in January 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The recommendations from these meetings included:

- advancing coherent implementation of the UNSPF, the Paris Agreement, and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- recognizing the potential of regional and subregional entities in advancing UNSPF implementation; and
- strengthening stakeholders' engagement in promoting policy coherence at all levels and their effective participation in Forum's sessions.

### ***Enhancing Cooperation, Coordination, and Cross-sectoral Engagement in Support of the Implementation of UNSPF 2030 and Other Forest-related International Agreements:***

On Thursday morning, Rob Busink, UNFF 14 Vice-Chair moderated this session. Hiroto Mitsugi, FAO, said CPF currently has 10 joint initiatives linked to the GFGs, Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and SDGs. As measures to enhance the synergies between the CPF and the other related forest-relevant international agreements, he identified: coordination of policies at all levels; applying an integrated landscape approach; creating synergistic new mandates; and aligning actions on the technical level.

Alexander Shestakov, CBD Secretariat, proposed measures to strengthen coherence and synergies including:

- setting mutually supportive common goals and targets;
- cross-engagement in strategy development;
- cross-reference in implementation tools;
- mainstreaming and using focal points; and
- using common baselines and indicators.

He invited UNFF participants to bring their inputs to the post-2020 biodiversity framework currently being negotiated under the CBD.

Peter Iversen, UNFCCC Secretariat, noted that more than 75% of all NDCs submitted under UNFCCC are related to forests, including:

- reforestation, afforestation, forest restoration;
- economy-wide emission reduction targets;
- reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation;
- conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- SFM; and
- enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Sasha Alexander, UNCCD Secretariat, highlighted the need for aligning targets and leveraging commitments related to the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Bonn Challenge, and the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration.

Ulrich Apel, GEF, said the GEF is the financial mechanism for the three Rio Conventions, and synergies between them can often be best achieved through forests by slowing deforestation. He noted the integrated approach and focus on drivers and systemic changes of GEF-7's "impact programs," highlighting two relevant for forests: one on food systems and land use and restoration, the other on SFM. The SFM project, he reported, focuses on three globally important biomes: the Amazon, Congo Basin and dryland forests. He said the two impact programs have roughly USD 700 million allocated, but demand is already exceeding amount available.

Hosny El-Lakany, University of British Columbia, Canada, offered several suggestions for enhancing the CPF's contribution to UNFF, including:

- documenting measurable and verifiable CPF contributions to the GFGs' achievement, and assessments of impacts of CPF initiatives at country levels;
- ensuring joint CPF initiatives more directly address GFGs achievement;
- undertaking collective normative, technical, and scientific work to demonstrate the role of SFM in supporting international agendas;
- emphasizing cross-sectoral issues for holistic support to successful achievement of the GFGs;
- systematically strengthening the involvement of Major Groups in the CPF's work;
- adopting a three-step approach to promote policy coherence among CPF members: inventory of policy objectives, screening matrix, and in-depth analysis of key interactions;
- establishing a dedicated CPF funding mechanism to support harmonized programming and joint implementation strategies; and
- promoting greater collaboration and synergies among UNFF and the Rio Conventions.

During the interactive discussion, the Republic of Korea mentioned the Greening Drylands Partnership Project, which provides support to developing countries to promote reversing desertification, land degradation and drought, reforestation and forest rehabilitation in degraded lands.

Indonesia reported goals to reduce emissions by 41% through forestry programmes and urged for alignment of VNCs under UNFF with UNFCCC's NDCs. He also reported on rehabilitation of mangroves and forest water catchments, which links their implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets with the GFGs.

Japan cited the forest environment tax to enable forest management in fulfillment of NDCs that have multiple benefits also for the UNSPF.

Germany said they would accomplish the VNCs through support for: CPF activities, particularly the promotion of coherence; knowledge transfer to developing countries; and promoting resilience of landscapes through the activities of the Global Landscape Forum.

**Thematic Panel on Actions by Regional and Subregional Partners in Support of the UNSPF 2030:** On Thursday afternoon, Paola Deda, UNECE, moderated the panel.

Godwin Kowero, African Forest Forum, said their Forum has more than 2000 members that support UNSPF implementation through actions focused on seven programme areas:

- better management of forests and trees outside forests;
- forests and trees in economic development and poverty eradication;
- contributions of forests and trees to environmental health;
- contributions of forests and trees to food and nutrition security;
- policy and governance;
- capacity building and skills development; and
- information management and impact assessment.

Almani Dampha, African Union Commission, noted that Agenda 2063 considers sustainable management of natural resources as the basis for creating an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens. The major areas of intervention, he said, include: promotion of SFM and sustainable land management; achieving the land degradation neutrality target; and addressing climate change.

David Gritten, Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC), highlighted the contribution of community forestry to achieving the GFGs and the SDGs, where community forestry includes customary and indigenous processes, as well as government-led initiatives. Emphasizing that local communities know the forests best, depend on the forests the most, have proven to be the most effective forest managers, and have rights to their forests, he said RECOFTC has trained more than 60,000 people from 27 countries in Asia-Pacific.

Thang Long Trinh, International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR), said INBAR is working towards the GFGs and the SDGs through ecosystem restoration strategies, commitments to the Bonn Challenge, and promotion of bamboo for poverty alleviation, clean and sustainable energy, sustainable consumption, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and South-South cooperation.

Peter Csoka, FAO, noted that the global network of the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions regularly considers the UNFF outcomes. He emphasized that the Commissions have the potential to enhance regional and subregional involvement and regional-global cooperation, thus they are suitable for deeper collaboration with UNFF through the Forum's regional dimension. He added that this collaboration could be flexible and fit to the different regional circumstances.

In the ensuing discussion, Finland inquired about the challenges faced at the regional level in integrating global goals. Kowero identified as challenges the fact that essential constituencies at the local level, such as the private sector and academia, lack both understanding of the global agreements and goals and representation in the fora that decide on the agreements and goals that they then need to implement.

**Panel on Actions by Major Group Partners in Support of the UNSPF 2030:** Joseph Cobbinah, UNFF Science and Technology Major Group Focal Point, moderated the panel on Thursday afternoon. Cécile Ndjebet, UNFF Focal Point for the Women's Major Group, presenting on the contribution of the Major Groups Collective Work Plan 2018-2020 for UNSPF implementation, outlined 10 specific actions, including:

- development of a knowledge sharing platform;
- advocacy on land tenure;
- gender mainstreaming in all Major Group interventions;
- re-engaging major constituencies in local SFM;
- capacity building at all stages of the value chain; and
- promoting market access for forest/nature-based industries and enterprises.

Steffen Dehn, Major Group for Children and Youth, outlined various advocacy efforts related to forests undertaken by his group since UNFF13. He highlighted a webinar series provided to prepare youth delegates for UNFF14, on the theme, "International Forest Policy in the UN and beyond." He remarked "We did all this in our spare time, with little resources. Imagine what we could do if we had real resources."

Lucy Mulenkei, UNFF Focal Point for the Indigenous Peoples Major Group, said her group's efforts focused on "translating" the UNSPF and UNFF discussions for people on the ground, and working at the local and national level to advocate on secure land tenure, access, legislation based on a human rights approach, and support for the management practices of indigenous community conserved areas.

Martha Nuñez, UNFF Focal Point for the NGOs Major Group, said her group gave priority to communication, awareness raising, legislation monitoring, and networking, with particular attention to security of land tenure, SFM, and linkages with the SDGs. She outlined several activities, including the Global Forest Coalition and inputs to the upcoming Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on land use.

Sim Hoek-Cho, UNFF Science and Technology Major Group, stressed that information is important to realizing the UNSPF, and urged "sustained investment" in the science and technology base for forest policy. He noted the need to fill data gaps, make existing databases more accessible online, and to integrate traditional forest-related knowledge.

Fernanda Rodrigues, Forest Women Network, discussed elements in the Women's Major Group Work Plan in support of implementation of the UNSPF. She noted data gaps on the role of women in SFM, saying the work plan seeks to promote:

- capacity building and educational campaigns around equality in the forest sector;
- opportunities for gender equality in forestry and secure land tenure; and
- increase of women entrepreneurship.

In the ensuing discussion, the NGOs Major Group called for governments to support civil society through funding. Germany announced a new funding agreement to support Major Groups' participation in UNFF15.

Ecuador emphasized that the role played by women in the forest sector is closely linked with ensuring food security, and urged for secure land tenure for women. She also called for strengthening indigenous practices in SFM, citing progress in her country to promote traditional practices.

### ***Emerging Issues and Challenges***

On Friday, Switzerland noted that 2018 was a year of many extreme events affecting European forests, leading to discussion within Forest Europe about creating a Forest Risk Facility. He thought these efforts could provide useful experiences to share with developing countries about dealing with their own extreme events affecting forests, and asked that the UNFF15 agenda include a discussion on addressing extreme events.

**Forum Trust Fund**

On Friday, the Secretariat introduced its Note on the Trust Fund (E/CN.18/2019/7), noting contributions in 2018 from China, Finland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the US totaling USD 685,133, and an in-kind contribution from China for a junior officer post. She observed that carrying out the vision of the UNSPF will require scaling up contributions, and that the production of the flagship publication will require significant and consistent extra-budgetary funding. She noted USD 403,000 received from Switzerland in 2019, a pledge from the Republic of Korea of USD 20,000 to support travel to meetings, USD 54,000 from Australia to support the flagship publication and travel to Asia-Pacific regional meetings, and negotiations with Germany for a USD 909,650 contribution.

Switzerland reiterated that its contributions to GFFFN were contingent on receiving further information on the Beijing office, and supported by Australia, expressed concern that too much Trust Fund money is being spent on consultants.

The Russian Federation noted its consistent annual voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund, which traditionally have not been earmarked, but cautioned that until the uncertainty about the impact of UN DESA reforms on the independence of the Forum and its Secretariat is cleared up, it reserved the right to withhold its contribution.

Australia highlighted that significant funds will be required for the flagship report, and urged applying innovative approaches to its production to keep costs down.

The US said UN DESA reform must not affect the Trust Fund, and endorsed continued use of Trust Fund monies for monitoring and reporting efforts.

The Republic of Korea noted that contributions to the Forum Trust Fund have declined by 28% year-to-year.

Germany clarified that its upcoming contribution reflects:

- the great potential it sees in GFFFN, particularly its work in design of national financing strategies and more effective use of existing financial resources;
- the potential it sees in the CPF; and
- its desire to support Major Groups' engagement in UNSPF implementation.

**Date, Venue and Provisional Agenda for UNFF15**

UNFF14 Chair Greguška introduced these agenda items and the Forum's decision on the dates and venue for UNFF15 (E/CN.18/2019/L.1 and L.2). UNFF Rapporteur Khalid Cherki introduced the UNFF15 agenda. Delegates adopted the documents.

**Final Decision:** In its decision, the UNFF adopted the agenda of UNFF15 (E/CN.18/2018/L.1), which includes:

- implementation of the UNSPF;
- MAR;
- MOI;
- the UNFF Trust Fund;
- a High-level segment, including a forest partnership forum with the CPF and NGOs;
- the 2021-2024 4POW; and
- UN DESA reforms pertaining to the UNFF.

It also decided that UNFF15 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York from 4-8 May 2020.

**UNFF14 Chair's Summary**

On Friday morning, UNFF14 Chair Greguška, opened discussions on the UNFF14 Chair's Summary, which was

circulated to delegates on Thursday evening. The Summary contains four parts:

- a summary of technical discussions, for transmission to UNFF15;
- UNFF14 inputs to the 2019 HLPF, for transmission to the HLPF;
- information on UN DESA reforms pertaining to the Forum, for transmission by UN DESA to appropriate UN bodies that are considering the reforms; and
- an indicative list of intersessional activities suggested during UNFF14 to facilitate policy deliberations at UNFF15.

The EU proposed adding as a thematic priority for UNFF15 contributing inputs to the 2020 UNGA, the UN Biodiversity Summit, and the post-2020 biodiversity framework. Supported by India, he called for the questions on GFFFN and the answers provided by the Secretariat to be reflected with the same level of detail and accuracy as those on UN DESA reform.

Algeria questioned whether the calls for the GFFFN to support Major Groups should be reflected in the summary.

Canada, also on behalf of Japan, United States, Australia and New Zealand, and supported by Norway, proposed adding text related to "cost-benefit analyses of different options" for the clearinghouse mechanism. She also suggested adding text noting that UNFF will seek guidance from the UN Office for Legal Affairs for the sharing of the draft MoU for the GFFFN Beijing office with UN Member States. She further asked for the Summary to reflect the calls expressed by the Forum's members that the UNFF Secretariat maintains its ability to manage its own budget in the context of the UN DESA reform.

Ukraine called for substantiating the part on the clearinghouse mechanism by reflecting the wide breadth of the comments provided.

India said the active involvement of the private sector mentioned in the summary under MOI should be subject to the legal and policy oversight of governments.

The US called for deleting the suggested intersessional activity on preparing a streamlined synthesis of the VNCs communicated to date aligned with specific GFGs and targets, explaining that it is too early for that.

Australia requested including the text resulting from the scoping consultations on the flagship report.

Norway suggested mentioning that forests can be a source of renewable energy but not going into details as that is the IPCC's mandate.

**Closing Session**

On Friday afternoon, UNFF14 Rapporteur Cherki presented the draft report of the session (E/CN.18/2019/L.3) to be submitted to ECOSOC, which was adopted.

UNFF14 Chair Greguška thanked delegates for a successful technical session of the UNFF, and commended the Secretariat for their level of professionalism in managing the meeting. He urged UNFF Member States to ensure active participation at the 2019 HLPF in order to bring more visibility to the GFGs. He concluded by saying, "Forests are at the head of the solutions for sustainable development in the current generation."

UNFF14 Chair Greguška gavelled the meeting at 12:01 pm.

**UNFF15 Report**

UNFF14 Chair Greguška opened UNFF15 on Friday afternoon, noting a past decision that the first session of every Forum should be opened briefly after concluding the prior one in order to elect the Bureau. He noted, however, that Forum resolution 12/2 of 5 May 2017 called for electing officers for a two-year term starting

at UNFF14, which UNFF14 did. He said the designation of the rapporteur for UNFF15 would be decided when UNFF15 resumes in May 2020.

UNFF15 was suspended at 12:05 pm.

### **A Brief Analysis of UNFF14**

UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) delegates arrived at UN Headquarters looking forward to an interactive “technical” Forum session for the 2019-2020 biennium, under the Forum format that alternates implementation and technical advice in odd years with policy dialogue, development, and decision-making in even years. “This should be a quiet session,” predicted many on the first day before meeting opened, expecting a low-key, straightforward, and contemplative session focused on stocktaking and exchange of knowledge and experience. Indeed, much of it was workmanlike, in many cases demonstrating strong hands-on interest, and engagement of Forum stakeholders during the intersessional period.

However, during the week two issues left over from UNFF13 sparked lively debates, betraying continuing unease among delegates about safeguarding UNFF’s forward momentum: the impact of UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reforms on the UNFF Secretariat, and a proposal to open a project office for UNFF’s Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) in Beijing, China.

This brief analysis looks at these crosscurrents at UNFF14 and what they suggest for the Forum and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) going forward.

### ***Taking Stock on the Road to Realizing the UNSPF***

“This session has a ‘hands-on feel’ to it,” observed an old time UNFF veteran, “as the Secretariat, governments and CPF members, and other stakeholders have taken ownership of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and brought life to Global Forest Goals (GFGs) in their work programmes.”

A CPF member concurred, citing with satisfaction the fact that the Secretariat has delivered a guidebook on the GFGs, the proactive engagement of governments in providing guidance on the scope, preparation and the timing for the 2021 launch of the first ever UNFF “flagship” publication demonstrating how UNFF Member States contribute to the achievement of the GFGs, the increased number of voluntary national contributions (VNCs), among others. This increased level of engagement, however, came with calls for accountability and transparency, with donors openly demanding effective oversight of funding.

Much of the UNFF14 schedule was occupied by 11 panels, three on the themes targeted for this year’s review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), with the rest taking stock of the components of the UNSPF and the contributions of various actors to its implementation. All panels were intended to be interactive, to promote exchange of information and perspectives. Not all achieved this goal: some were well-attended and had an engaged audience, others had a reserved audience or half-empty room. A notable standout was a Tuesday afternoon panel on mobilizing private sector action, which attracted a full house as members sought counsel on how to re-engage business and industry in UNFF work, and to get them to more actively participate in UNSPF implementation and partner in sustainable forest management (SFM).

Many delegates indicated satisfaction with the progress reported on developing a core set of forest indicators to be used in national reporting, capacity-building efforts for national

reporting, efforts to raise awareness about the GFGs, and syncing cooperation and enhancing collaboration among CPF organizations on UNSPF-related issues. Particular praise was showered on the GFFFN for its role to help design national forest financing strategies, mobilize and access existing financing sources, create a clearinghouse and database on financing opportunities, and liaise with the Green Climate Fund. Developing countries were heartened by the news of a large Swiss contribution to support GFFFN and negotiations with Germany for a nearly USD 1 million contribution that includes a portion earmarked to support GFFFN, but they urged more countries to help scale up GFFFN operations.

There was also noticeably greater talk at UNFF14 of promoting and tapping into synergies with other processes to help achieve the GFGs, from capitalizing more on the presence of forests in a majority of nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement on climate change, to assuring forests have a prominent place in the Convention on Biological Diversity’s post-2020 biodiversity framework currently under negotiation, to tapping the Global Environment Facility’s new Impact Programs to address deforestation drivers, and to promoting the role of forests in helping achieve various SDGs. As a panelist in the session on engaging the private sector urged, “Get out there, stop talking among yourselves, form new alliances, explore new partnerships!”

### ***Ensuring Ruts in the Road Don’t Become Significant Construction Delays***

Not all of UNFF14 went smoothly, however. The twin issues of UN DESA reform and the proposed GFFFN Beijing office at times threatened to disturb the week’s smooth journey, both made worse by a lack of transparency that many governments interpreted as stonewalling.

At UNFF13 the lack of information provided to delegates on the UN DESA reforms’ probable impacts on the Forum and its Secretariat created such unease that the matter was added to the agenda of UNFF14 to hold the UN bureaucracy’s feet to the fire.

In the intervening year many developments fed fears among governments that they were not getting concrete answers because the undisclosed plans for UNFF meant reduced autonomy and a lower profile. Retired Executive Director Manoel Sobral Filho was not replaced, “executive” was dropped from the position’s title and rumors circulated that the UN intended to downgrade the post. Rumors also flew at UN Headquarters and among capitals that the Secretariat would be downsized and its autonomy reduced. When the UNFF14 Bureau requested a briefing on the issue in January 2019, they received an uninformative oral report differing little from the oral report given to UNFF13. UNFF14 Chair Boris Greguška sent a letter in March 2019 to the Assistant Secretary-General seeking answers, but received no response. Privately, veterans of UNFF and the UN forest-related negotiations that led to its creation particularly expressed concern, pointing out that UN DESA has tried to downgrade and reduce the autonomy of the UNFF Secretariat at least twice before, and the current wave of UN reform to align with the SDGs may be just the latest pretext for doing so.

At UNFF14, strong supporters of UNFF autonomy came prepared. They insisted on moving the general discussion on reform up on the agenda from Thursday to Wednesday so as to ensure that it was fully reflected in the Chair’s Summary, which serves as the main UNFF14 output. Supporters organized strong interventions from a range of countries from different regions and caucuses who called for filling the Director’s post as soon as possible, not downgrading the post, and maintaining the

Secretariat's autonomy. Several delegations came armed with a list of specific, direct questions and demanded answers. When the UN DESA representative did not provide clear, direct responses, they pointed out which questions must still be answered in writing by the end of the week. Several traditional donors to the Trust Fund, including the Russian Federation and the US, punctuated this concern by announcing in plenary that they may withhold future contributions if the Trust Fund and profile and autonomy of the Secretariat are affected.

The firm and relentless messaging seemed to have the intended impact: by the end of the week UN DESA issued several assurances, and member governments promised to hold them accountable. Needless to say, this issue will be reviewed again at UNFF15.

A similar lack of transparency regarding the proposed GFFFN satellite office in Beijing also created suspicion. "Two years in a row with little to no written details about this proposal, a memorandum of understanding with the host country nearly concluded but its content undisclosed, contradictory statements and no clarity provided on specific aspects such as mandate, staffing, reporting lines, budgetary implications, etc. Something's not right here," one potential GFFFN donor confided at the beginning of UNFF14.

When the Secretariat blamed the lack of written details on the early UN deadline for finalizing and circulating Forum meeting documents and tried to rely on an oral briefing, many governments privately dismissed the explanation. "We participate in countless UN fora where supplemental documents (Add.1, Add.2, etc.) are issued later, or a conference room paper is circulated. If they wanted to, they certainly could have done that here," pointed out one delegate.

Although the Secretariat answered many questions in an oral briefing on Friday, Switzerland warned it might withhold contributions to the GFFFN until it received clear written disclosures about the Beijing office. Some developing country delegates privately fretted that other donors might soon follow suit.

### *Viewing the Road Ahead*

Despite the ruts and dust-ups along the way, most UNFF14 participants were optimistic that the messages sent, including warnings of possible contribution cuts, may be getting through to the UN bureaucracy and these two issues can be resolved by UNFF15 if governments "keep the heat on."

Delegates appeared generally satisfied with progress made so far in preparing measurement, assessment and reporting on the UNSPF and GFGs, the GFFFN's work, and the early preparations for the 2021 flagship publication. However, concerns were expressed about the timing of certain efforts, whether funding and other support will come in time and in sufficient amounts to help move things along, and how best to communicate achievements.

The UNFF14 Chair's summary lays out ambitious plans for intersessional activities on the road to UNFF15, including: a presentation on forests as part of the "nature-based solutions" component of the 2019 Climate Action Summit; an expert meeting on adding more indicators to the core set; initial work on the flagship publication; a full stock-taking of GFFFN accomplishments; a study on enhancing coherence and synergy in forest-related programmes across the UN system and CPF member organizations; and preparation of an initial draft of the UNFF Quadrennial Programme of Work for the 2021-2024 cycle. If the UN DESA reform and GFFFN Beijing office matters can be resolved satisfactorily, UNFF15 should have a rich agenda for policy discussions and decisions.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**56th Meeting of the GEF Council:** The Council, which meets twice annually, develops, adopts and evaluates the operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities. It also reviews and approves the work program (projects submitted for approval), making decisions by consensus. **date:** 10-13 June 2019 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240 **email:** Secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/events/56th-gef-council-meeting>

**Second Expert Group Meeting on Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics:** IUCN and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration are implementing the CPF Joint Initiative on Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) 2018-2019. The CPF has mandated ITTO to help take stock of the ongoing FLR programmes of CPF members and to play an instrumental role in developing a comprehensive set of voluntary FLR guidelines. **dates:** 11-13 June 2019 **location:** Lüderenalp, Switzerland **contact:** Mr. Youngtae Choi **email:** [choi@itto.int](mailto:choi@itto.int) **www:** [https://www.itto.int/events/second\\_expert\\_group\\_meeting\\_on\\_forest\\_landscape\\_restoration\\_in\\_the\\_tropics](https://www.itto.int/events/second_expert_group_meeting_on_forest_landscape_restoration_in_the_tropics)

**Ninth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity:** The meeting will be an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the latest and best available knowledge relevant to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, and to consider the implications of this knowledge for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. **dates:** 2-5 July 2019 **location:** Trondheim, Norway **contact:** Norwegian Environment Agency **phone:** +47-984-75-911 **email:** [trondheimconference@miljodir.no](mailto:trondheimconference@miljodir.no) **www:** <https://trondheimconference.org/>

**HLPF 2019:** The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will address the theme, "empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality." It will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), in addition to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals), which is reviewed each year. Among other items, the Forum will consider the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), which is issued every four years. **dates:** 9-18 July 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for SDGs **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

**First meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:** The Convention on Biological Diversity's 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CBD COP14) adopted the preparatory process for the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework (decision 14/34) and established an open-ended intersessional working group to support the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. **dates:** 27-30 August 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020/wg2020-01/>

**UNCCD COP 14:** The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is expected to review the progress made to control and reverse further loss of productive land from desertification, land degradation, and drought. **dates:** 2-13 September 2019 **location:** New Delhi, India **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898/99 **email:** [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int) **www:** <https://www.unccd.int/>

**Forest Europe Workshop on Proactive Management of Forests to Combat Climate Change Driven Risks: Policies and Measures for Increasing Forest Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation:** The workshop will bring together policymakers, researchers and practitioners from across the pan-European region to discuss increasing forest resilience and climate change adaptation, and look for effective policy measures at international, national or subnational levels. **dates:** 3-4 September 2019 **location:** Istanbul, Turkey **contact:** Forest Europe **phone:** +421-45-5314-368 **email:** liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org **www:** <https://foresteurope.org/event/14917/>

**UN Climate Action Summit 2019:** UN Secretary-General António Guterres is calling on all leaders to come to New York with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45% over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050. **date:** 23 September 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/un-climate-summit-2019.shtml>

**HLPF under UNGA Auspices:** The UN General Assembly (UNGA) will hold a meeting of the HLPF at the level of Heads of State and Government to consider, among other items, the Global Sustainable Development Report. **dates:** 24-25 September 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for SDGs **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sgdsummit>

**IUFRO World Congress 2019:** The 25th International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congress will convene on the theme "Forest Research and Cooperation for Sustainable Development." The Congress will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences on forest research and is expected to allow for greater participation among researchers from Latin America. **dates:** 29 September - 5 October 2019 **location:** Curitiba, Brazil **contact:** IUFRO **phone:** +55-41-3675-3540 **email:** [info@iufro2019.com](mailto:info@iufro2019.com) **www:** <http://www.iufro2019.com/>

**Forest Summit: Global Action and Armenia:** The Summit seeks to facilitate open and transparent discussion of policy decisions on Armenia's forests, with the aim to catalyze improvements in forest conservation and restoration internationally. **dates:** 20-23 October 2019 **location:** Yerevan, Armenia **contact:** Armenia Tree Project and the Acopian Center for the Environment at American University of Armenia **phone:** +374-10-44-74-01 **fax:** +374-10-44-77-26 **email:** [info@armeniatree.org](mailto:info@armeniatree.org) **www:** <https://www.armeniatree.org/en/forestsummit>

**WG8J 11:** The eleventh meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity will examine the role of traditional knowledge, customary sustainable use, and the contribution of the collective actions of indigenous peoples and local communities to the post-2020 biodiversity framework. **dates:** 20-22 November 2019 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

**SBSTTA 23:** The twenty-third meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) will review possible elements for the post-2020 biodiversity framework, the draft of the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, as well as other relevant information and sources of knowledge. **dates:** 25-29 November 2019 **location:**

Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings>

**2019 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 25):** The 25th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 25), the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) will convene to review implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Convention. **dates:** 2-13 December 2019 **location:** Santiago, Chile **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** [Secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:Secretariat@unfccc.int) **www:** <https://unfccc.int>

**ITTC-55:** The 55th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-55) and sessions of the associated committees will take place in Togo. **dates:** 2-7 December 2019 **location:** Lome, Togo **contact:** ITTO Secretariat **phone:** +81-45-223-1110 **fax:** +81-45-223-1111 **email:** [itto@itto.int](mailto:itto@itto.int) **www:** <http://www.itto.int>

**UNFF15:** The 15th session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF15) will address implementation of the UNSPF, Quadrennial Programme of Work, MAR, and MOI, and will adopt the 4POW for 2021-2024. **dates:** 4-8 May 2020 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNFF Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-3401 **fax:** +1-917-367-3186 **email:** [unff@un.org](mailto:unff@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

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

## Glossary

4POW	Quadrennial Programme of Work
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GCS	Global core set of indicators
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GFGs	Global Forest Goals
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
MAR	Monitoring, assessment and reporting
MOI	Means of implementation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDC	National determined contribution
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in developing countries
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UN DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	UN Forum on Forests
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNSPF	UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030
VNCs	Voluntary national contributions