



## TENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: 8-19 APRIL 2013

The tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF10) opens today in Istanbul, Turkey. The meeting will address a range of topics including: an assessment of progress made on the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (the Forest Instrument) and towards achievement of the four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs); regional and subregional inputs; forests and economic development, including forest products and services, national forest programmes and other sectoral policies and strategies, reducing the risks and impacts of disasters, and benefits of forests and trees to urban communities; emerging issues; enhanced cooperation, and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF); and means of implementation (MoI) for sustainable forest management (SFM).

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFF

The UNFF was established in 2000, following a five-year period of forest policy dialogue facilitated by 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 E/2000/35, established the UNFF as a subsidiary body, with the main objective of promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

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

The IPF/IFF processes produced more than 270 proposals for action towards SFM, which form the basis for the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) and Plan of Action, which were discussed at annual sessions. Country- and Organization-Led Initiatives have also contributed to the UNFF's work.

**ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION:** The UNFF organizational session took place from 12-16 February 2001, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates agreed that the UNFF Secretariat would be located in New York, and made progress towards the establishment of the CPF, a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats.

**UNFF1:** The first session of UNFF took place from 11-23 June 2001 in New York. Delegates discussed and adopted decisions on the UNFF MYPOW, a Plan of Action for the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and UNFF's work with the CPF. Delegates also recommended establishing three *ad hoc* expert groups to provide technical advice to UNFF on: approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR); finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs); and parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

**UNFF2:** The second session of UNFF took place from 4-15 March 2002 in New York. Delegates adopted a Ministerial Declaration and Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and decisions on: combating deforestation and forest degradation; forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems; rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover; the promotion of natural and planted forests; specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (IAF); and proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005.

**UNFF3:** UNFF3 met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26 May - 6 June 2003, and adopted six resolutions on: enhanced cooperation, and policy and programme coordination; forest health and productivity; economic aspects of forests; maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs; the UNFF Trust Fund; and strengthening the Secretariat. Terms of reference were adopted for the voluntary reporting format and three *ad hoc* expert groups established to consider: MAR; finance and transfer of ESTs; and parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

**UNFF4:** UNFF4 convened in Geneva from 3-14 May 2004, and adopted five resolutions on: forest-related scientific knowledge; social and cultural aspects of forests; MAR and criteria and indicators; review of the effectiveness of the IAF; and finance and transfer of ESTs. UNFF4 attempted, without success, to reach agreement on resolutions on forest-related traditional knowledge, enhanced cooperation, and policy and programme coordination.



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

**UNFF6:** UNFF6 took place from 13-24 February 2006 in New York. Delegates 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 set four global objectives 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 was held from 16-27 April 2007 in New York. After two weeks of negotiations culminating in an all-night session, delegates adopted the Forest Instrument and a MYPOW for the period 2007-2015. Delegates also participated in two Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues, a panel discussion with member organizations of the CPF, and the launch of preparations for the International Year of Forests 2011. 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 was held from 20 April - 1 May 2009 in New York. Delegates discussed: forests in a changing environment, including forests and climate change, reversing the loss of forest cover and degradation, and forests and biodiversity conservation; and MoI for SFM. After an all-night session on the last night, delegates adopted a resolution on forests in a changing environment, enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, and regional and subregional inputs. Delegates did not agree on a decision on financing for SFM, and decided to forward bracketed negotiating text to the Forum’s next session.

**SPECIAL SESSION OF UNFF9:** The special session of UNFF9 was held on 30 October 2009 in New York. The Forum decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental *ad hoc* expert group (AHEG) to formulate proposals on strategies to mobilize resources to support the implementation of SFM, the achievement of the four GOFs and the implementation of the Forest Instrument. The Forum also established a facilitative process to, *inter alia*: assist in mobilizing and supporting new and additional financial resources from all sources for SFM; identify, facilitate and simplify access to all sources of finance; identify obstacles to, gaps in and opportunities for financing SFM; and facilitate the transfer of ESTs and capacity building to developing countries.

**UNFF9:** UNFF9 took place from 24 January - 4 February 2011 in New York and launched the International Year of Forests 2011. The Forum adopted by acclamation a resolution on forests

for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication, which addressed *inter alia*: procedures for assessment of progress; increased regional and subregional cooperation; enhanced cooperation, including with Major Groups; and MoI, particularly the AHEG process.

### INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**AHEG2:** The second meeting of the AHEG took place from 14-18 January 2013, in Vienna, Austria, to finalize recommendations on forest financing for consideration at UNFF10. The meeting discussed a variety of inputs on forest financing, including: key findings of the 2012 Advisory Group on Finance study on forest financing; outcomes of the CPF Organization-Led Initiative; outcomes of the facilitative process meetings on forest financing; actions on forests and economic development; findings of the study of the impacts of the price of carbon on forest financing; the private sector’s actions in forest financing; identification of national actions/strategies to mobilize financing for forests; and identification of international actions/strategies to mobilize financing for forests.

On the basis of these discussions, the Co-Chairs provided options for consideration by UNFF10 on: good governance; engaging all stakeholders and building partnerships; cross-sectoral collaboration; capacity building; engaging the formal/informal markets/private sector; developing national forest financing options; addressing SFM data, geographic and thematic gaps; financing the implementation of the Forest Instrument; ODA; regional cooperation; strengthening existing multilateral forest-related financing mechanisms and improving access to their resources; new and emerging funds; mainstreaming forests in development decision-making processes; and forests/post-2015 UN development agenda/sustainable development goals. The report was adopted by acclamation.

**INC-FORESTS:** The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally-Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe (INC-Forests) process was launched by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe to negotiate a legally-binding agreement on forests in Europe, to be completed by 30 June 2013. INC-Forests1, held from 27 February - 2 March 2012, in Vienna, Austria, focused on providing guidance to the INC Bureau to elaborate the initial negotiating text of the mandated agreement. INC-Forests2, which was held from 3-7 September 2012, in Bonn, Germany, undertook a first reading of the initial text drafted by the Bureau, and revised the roadmap for the negotiation process and intersessional work.

The first session of INC-Forests3, which convened from 28 January - 1 February 2013 in Antalya, Turkey, completed the second reading of the draft negotiating text and began the third reading. The meeting was suspended and delegates agreed to reconvene from 3-5 April 2013, in St. Petersburg, the Russian Federation, to have additional time to complete key tasks before the convening of the last INC-Forests session from 10-14 June 2013 in Warsaw, Poland. These key tasks included: reaching a decision on whether to bring the agreement under the UN umbrella; initiating legal scrutiny of the final clauses of the agreement; negotiating financial and compliance provisions; and deciding on the roadmap for negotiations from St. Petersburg to the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference slated for late 2013 in Madrid, Spain, where the results of the negotiations will be presented to ministers for possible adoption and signature. INC-Forests3 decided *ad referendum* to bring the agreement under the UN umbrella and on preambular paragraphs. Other issues will be decided at INC-Forests4 in Warsaw, Poland.