

Summary of the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests: 26-29 April 2021

With so much of the world's focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economic crisis, and climate change, the sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF16) convened to remind the international community that forests provide multiple socio-economic and environmental services and have enormous potential to address these global crises.

Over the course of the four-day meeting, which was held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, UNFF16 focused this technical session on the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF); implementation of the communication and outreach strategy; thematic priorities for 2021-2022 in support of the UNSPF; monitoring, assessment, and reporting; and means of implementation.

The meeting also took into account the review cycle of the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the theme of the 2021 International Day of Forests, "Forest Restoration: A Path to Recovery and Well-being." The UNFF used this meeting to stress the importance of the health of the world's forests, noting an estimated 23% of total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (2007-2016) derive from agriculture, forestry, and other land use. Furthermore, 2.4 billion people—one-third of the world's population—still rely on wood fuel to meet their basic energy needs. Forests are home to 80% of global biodiversity in terrestrial ecosystems and forests and mountains provide 75% of freshwater resources.

UNFF16 adopted three decisions and the report of the session through the silence procedure:

- Provisional Agenda for UNFF17 (E/CN.18/2021/L.1);
- Date and Venue for UNFF17 (E/CN.18/2021/L.2);
- UNFF Programme of Work for the period 2022–2024 (E/CN.18/2021/L.3); and
- UNFF16 Report (E/CN.18/2021/L.4).

The silence procedure was outlined in the "Procedure for taking decisions of the Economic and Social Council during the COVID-19 pandemic" decision (ECOSOC 2020/206). According to the decision, this procedure is put in place when a plenary meeting of ECOSOC or an ECOSOC subsidiary body is unable to meet due to the COVID-19 pandemic and allows the Bureau to circulate the draft decisions to Member States under a silence procedure lasting at least 72 hours.

UNFF16 convened virtually from 26-29 April 2001 from 9:00-11:00 am and 11:15 am -1:15 pm EDT (UTC-4).

Following the conclusion of the silence procedure, UNFF16 Chair Kitty Sweeb (Suriname) announced that all four decisions were adopted.

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 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.

In this Issue

A Brief History of UNFF	1
UNFF16 Report.	3
Policy Discussions on the Implementation of the UNSPF	3
Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020	7
Forum Trust Fund	7
Emerging Issues: Impacts of COVID-19 on Forests and the Forest Sector.	7
High-level Roundtable on Major Forest-related Developments	7
UNFF16 Outcomes	8
Closing Session	9
A Brief Analysis of UNFF16	9
Upcoming Meetings	10
Glossary.	11

The UNFF's principal functions are to:

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

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. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions, and convention secretariats was also established.

Key Turning Points

UNFF5: UNFF5 (May 2005, New York) agreed, *ad referendum*, to four global forest 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 on means of implementation.

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.

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 means of implementation for SFM, including an *ad hoc* expert group process on forest financing.

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

- rename the non-legally binding instrument the "UN Forest Instrument";
- strengthen and extend the IAF to 2030;
- decide 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;
- set clear priorities for the GFFFN in the UNSPF; and
- convene 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 Sustainable Development Goals (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 gave effect to the changes recommended by the Council on 22 December 2015 in resolution 70/199.

Recent Meetings

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, means of implementation, 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;
- invited the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to make further funds available for SFM and other forest-related initiatives under the GEF-7 replenishment;
- adopted guidelines for country-led initiatives in support of the Forum; and
- requested the Secretariat, with the CPF, to prepare 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.

UNFF13: UNFF13 (May 2018, New York) forwarded a resolution to ECOSOC which, *inter alia*:

- adopted a communications and outreach strategy;
- 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 clearing house mechanism.

UNFF14: UNFF14 (May 2019, New York) forwarded a Chair's summary containing, *inter alia*:

- UNFF14 inputs to the 2019 meeting of the HLPF;
- information on UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) reforms pertaining to the Forum; and
- an indicative list of intersessional activities suggested during UNFF14 to facilitate policy deliberations at UNFF15.

UNFF15: UNFF15 (4 June 2020) was supposed to convene from 4-8 May 2020 at UN Headquarters in New York. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in accordance with ECOSOC resolution E/2020/L.8, the Forum took place through virtual informal consultations based on the draft UNFF15 resolution. UNFF15 adopted an omnibus resolution on:

- the implementation of the UNSPF;
- monitoring, assessment, and reporting;
- means of implementation;
- emerging issues and challenges;
- the 4POW for the period 2021-2024; and
- information on the UN/DESA reform pertaining to the Forum.

UNFF16 Report

On Monday, 26 April, UNFF16 Chair Kitty Sweeb (Suriname) opened the meeting. She recalled the election of Bureau for UNFF16 and 17 following the silence procedure pursuant to ECOSOC decisions 2020/205, 2020/206 and 2020/219, including the following Vice-Chairs: Jesse Mahoney (Australia), Musah Abu-Juam (Ghana), Tomasz Markiewicz (Poland), and Javad Momeni (Iran).

Delegates approved the provisional agenda (E/CN.18/2021/1).

Policy Discussions on the Implementation of the UNSPF

Thematic priorities for 2021–2022 biennium and contributions of members of the Forum: On Monday, the UNFF Secretariat presented the Secretariat's Note (E/CN.18/2021/2), which provides background information on UNFF16 thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022 and includes information on contributions of members of the Forum.

New announcements of Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs): Several countries announced new VNCs, including:

- Bangladesh will address poverty among 800,000 forest dependent people and increase forest cover from 12.8% to over 16% percent by 2030;
- Turkey will plant 7 billion saplings by the end of 2023; and
- Mongolia will increase forest cover to 8.6% by 2025 and by 9% by 2030.

Updates on VNCs and Follow-up Related to the Thematic Priorities: Several countries reported on their progress in meeting VNCs, and work related to the thematic priorities, including:

- China reported review of SFM experiences in 73 pilot sites, eradication of extreme poverty in forest dependent communities, and a 2020 masterplan for restoration of key ecosystems;
- Bangladesh reported planting ten million saplings across the country in 2020, and the launch of the National Tree Plantation Campaign 2020;

- Malaysia launched its forest policy, which facilitates joint efforts of the federal and state governments in forest conservation, and presented the 100 Million Tree-Planting Campaign 2020-2025;
- Ghana cited restoration of 100 hectares of degraded forests through participation of forest-dependent communities;
- Guatemala highlighted mapping of potential areas for forest restoration and incentives for forest protection;
- Indonesia announced successful reduction of the deforestation rate and progress on its timber legality verification system; and
- Japan expressed concern regarding reporting burdens posed by having to complete both VNCs and voluntary national reports (VNRs) under the HLPF.

Contributions of, and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities: This panel on Tuesday was based on the [concept note](#) on implementation of CPF's work plan for 2017-2020, including its Joint Initiatives, and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat Note (E.CN.18/2021/3) on intersessional activities of UNFF stakeholders and partners also provided a basis for discussions.

UNFF16 Vice-Chair Musah Abu-Juam (Ghana) introduced and moderated the panel discussion.

Mette Wilkie, Chair of the CPF, outlined the CPF strategic vision. She said the CPF would contribute to improving the methodology for reporting on primary forests, and enhancing synergies through the Joint Initiative on Forest Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World Initiative. Wilkie underscored the importance of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, which will be led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), and will be launched in connection with World Environment Day on 5 June 2021.

Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab, Head, Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, underscored that the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region covers 56 countries and over 40% of the world's forests. She highlighted work on forest nuts, including links with food security, livelihoods, and forests, underscoring the need to ensure forests are managed to provide an array of ecosystem services.

Lu Wenming, Deputy Executive Director, International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR), explained INBAR is actively promoting bamboo and rattan in land restoration programmes. He said that bamboo and rattan have the potential to replace wood, PVC, and plastic, thus avoiding deforestation and reducing the need for plastic.

José Carlos da Fonseca Junior, Executive Director, Brazilian Tree Industry, stressed that forests are a key part of the solution for green recovery. He noted his organization has been involved in the protection of 5.9 million hectares and the restoration of 32,000 hectares of forests.

Frederik Buchholz, Wageningen University, International Forestry Student Association, stressed the need to focus on integrated landscape management at a global scale. He said integrated landscape management provides a framework for balancing competing demands and is relevant to different stakeholder groups.

Joseph Cobbinah, Forestry Research Network of Sub-Saharan Africa, underscored the importance of involving all entities in the forest sector in the development of forest plans.

Portugal, for the European Union (EU), urged the CPF to address fragmentation of global forest governance and to enhance mutual coherence and cohesiveness at national levels for all forest-related agreements and conventions. She noted that the key to successes in cooperation lies in creating a sense of ownership by partnerships and stakeholders.

Japan emphasized the importance of data, citing the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) statistics on tropical timber trade as an example of a useful resource for management of supply chains.

Kenya highlighted projects on forest reclamation, restoration, capacity development and technology transfer achieved through partnerships with the CPF. He singled out, among others, the GEF and FAO joint project on bio-enterprise and community incentives and work with WWF on forest landscapes.

Peru cited collaborations to strengthen policies for landscape restoration, reporting on a project with the GEF on sustainable development of dry forests in Peru.

Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) highlighted updated guidelines to support forest restoration practices on the ground. He further drew attention to intensive training programmes aimed at transferring knowledge and skills to Asia forestry practitioners.

Finland urged supporting and encouraging youth participation in UNFF. The US commended forest solutions outlined in response to COVID-19, including the One Planet Approach to a greener, more sustainable planet. She highlighted collaborations with stakeholders allowing the US to exceed its Bonn Challenge pledge to bring 15 million hectares into restoration by 2020, reaching 17 million hectares as of June 2019. Guatemala discussed a proposal to establish a regional forest center serving as a georeferential platform for early warning on forest fires.

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) highlighted support provided by forest scientists to address the global pandemic and to build back better through data and knowledge.

UNEP highlighted the Green Finance for Sustainable Landscapes Joint Initiative of the CPF, which seeks to increase finance for deforestation-free commodity supply chains.

Malaysia urged donors and developing countries to support CPF work in developing countries, particularly for capacity building for building resilience of forest ecosystems, forest fire management, managing forest products, and climate change.

Interlinkages between the global forest goals (GFGs) and targets and SDGs under review by the HLPF in 2021, work towards a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and other international forest-related developments: This panel on Tuesday, moderated by UNFF16 Vice-Chair Tomasz Markiewicz (Poland), focused on fundamental actions to be undertaken by countries, organizations, and stakeholders to ensure achievement of the UNFF16 thematic priorities, and discussed ways and means to promote synergy among various forest-related processes.

Ivonne Higuero, Secretary-General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), stressed that the strength of CITES lies within the specificity of its mandate. She underscored that responsible trade of CITES listed species, including forest species, must meet three criteria: sustainability, legality, and traceability. Higuero noted that CITES compliance processes include the ability to suspend trade. Gustavo Fonseca, GEF, underscored the need for systemic transformation of key economic systems, noting the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for understanding and addressing the root causes of environmental degradation. Fonseca noted that political will exists to raise ambition and move the needle towards sustainability.

Sheam Satkuru, Assistant Director of Operations, ITTO, stressed that COVID-19 has increased pressure on tropical forests, underscoring the need for replication and upscaling of successful projects at the national and regional level. She said progress on reaching the GFGs is hampered mainly by lack of financial resources and stressed the need for microfinance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and smallholders.

In the ensuing discussion, the EU noted that forests are major reservoirs of biodiversity and stressed that global action must be reinforced. He said the UNSPF represents a joint framework for forest related action and stressed the need for further recognition and promotion of the CPF.

Indonesia outlined its process of preparing its VNR for presentation to the 2021 HLPF, and outlined its national activities to mobilize domestic resources for action on forests.

Brazil explained progress in completing a national forest inventory. He underscored that benefit sharing though a necessary safeguard is a neglected pillar of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and encouraged robust commitments on this pillar.

Peru outlined its work related to gender equality and effective participation of women in all aspects of management and restoration of forests.

Japan highlighted its commitment to achieving climate neutrality by 2050, and the importance of forests in disaster prevention and reduction and improving climate resilience.

Mexico said financial instruments for SFM need strengthening to support forest communities, and highlighted the need to promote partnerships for payments for ecosystem services, forest carbon credits, and incentives for desertification-free supply chains.

Kenya highlighted measures to expand forest cover including reclamation of illegally occupied land, fencing of strategic forest reserves, partnerships with the private sector through the “adopt a forest initiative,” and enacting a forest conservation and management act to conserve community and private forests.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea reported achievements of a 10-year plan for reforestation 2014-2024 aimed at complete tree cover of all deforested mountains, and to transition monocultures to mixed forests to ensure more resilient and diversified ecosystems.

Malaysia discussed commitment to conserve 50% of its land area under forests through, among others, its national policy on biological diversity, and the Greening Malaysia Programme.

Argentina reported reduction of forest loss by 100,000 hectares annually, and efforts to implement sustainable development by improving market access for micro and small businesses.

The US supported a balanced approach for landscape management that includes addressing land tenure and drivers of deforestation, particularly illegal logging and agriculture.

China reported poverty eradication schemes around the country to assist vulnerable communities, including forest dependent communities, and is achieving the GFGs in conjunction with its climate neutrality commitments and the SDGs.

The Russian Federation cited forest plans to prioritize achieving the GFGs, develop forest science, and promote domestic wood production. He reported efforts to decrease greenhouse gas emissions alongside efforts to curb deforestation from illegal logging.

El Salvador highlighted strategies to achieve the SDGs focusing on climate, water, and forests, and national priorities for landscape restoration, diversification of agriculture, and promotion of ecotourism. AFoCO reported on mobilization of financial resources for projects on forest restoration, livelihoods, and forest disaster management.

Implementation of the UNSPF communication and outreach strategy and the International Day of Forests in 2021: The Secretariat introduced the document for this item (E/CN.18/2021/2) on Monday, which includes information on awareness raising including on the role of forests in supporting human well-being during the pandemic, and for a green recovery. The document also reports on social-media friendly products to support celebrations of the International Day of Forests.

Australia called for more ambitious outreach to diverse audiences on the Forum's work. The Philippines highlighted celebrations of the International Day of Forests through webinars and other activities.

The Holy See reported on Pope Francis's initiative to address environmental and human concerns of the Amazon forests contained in the documents, *Querida Amazonia* and "The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology."

The Russian Federation shared experiences of virtual events convened to commemorate the International Day of Forests. Ukraine outlined national activities including large-scale tree planting projects. FAO/CPF announced the themes for the next two upcoming International Day of Forests. In 2022 the theme will be Forests and Sustainable Consumption and Production and in 2023 the theme will be Forests and Health.

Means of implementation: Means of implementation was discussed on Wednesday, moderated by UNFF16 Vice-Chair Jesse Mahoney (Australia). The Secretariat introduced its note on implementation, including operations and resources of the GFFFN (E/CN.18/2021/4), and launched the UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Clearing House (forest-finance.un.org). She explained the Clearing House comprises three databases on financing opportunities, learning materials, and lessons learned on forest financing, respectively. She encouraged UNFF members to share information for inclusion on the Clearing House.

Encouraging members to answer this call to action and add to the Clearing House, Mahoney then opened the floor for interventions. Forum Members welcomed the launch of the Clearing House as a valuable tool.

Malaysia noted that COVID-19 has made financing more challenging than ever, and encouraged work on identifying and removing barriers to forest finance. The EU reflected on plans to establish a UNFF office in China and welcomed any further information on progress made in this regard. Indonesia noted it has accessed finance for forests through the GEF and Green Climate Fund (GCF), and is now expanding cooperation with the FAO Forest and Farm Facility.

Peru underscored the need to deepen strategies for financing, underscoring the need for investment in degraded lands.

Stressing impactful change must be underpinned by finance, the UK reflected on the need to mobilize both public and private resources. She drew attention to the UK Government's GBP 150 million investment in the Mobilising Finance for Forests initiative. She explained that this blended finance programme launched in March 2021 aims to combat deforestation and support sustainable land use practices by creating a new mechanism to mobilize private capital into the forest and land use sector.

Argentina stressed the need for developed countries to renew their contributions for forest activities in order to ensure long-term global forest protection. Mexico highlighted the importance of provision of incentives for SMF, noted its national strategy for financing forests, and offered assistance to countries wishing to develop similar strategies.

Switzerland noted the need to simplify procedures for accessing funds from international financial institutions.

China stressed that forest financing is inseparable from, and necessary for, COVID-19 recovery. He looked forward to the establishment of a UNFF office in China. Ukraine welcomed the Clearing House and provided examples of forest activities completed in her country.

The US noted the GEF is in replenishment discussions and hoped to see the inclusion of strong programmes on forest management. She encouraged transparency and timely updates to members on the office to be established in China. South Africa drew attention to the need for improved implementation mechanisms, specifically resources and technology.

Fiji said forest financing procedures are cumbersome for small island developing states (SIDS). He cited capacity gaps and urged encouraging peer-learning and sharing of lessons in SIDS.

Japan called for clarity on how post-pandemic recovery funding will be facilitated through the GFFFN.

Panama noted the need for increased cooperation on the GFGs and the Paris Agreement and highlighted monitoring and reporting of forest restoration in her country. Brazil highlighted the importance of economic incentives and innovative mechanisms for financing SFM.

Chile said green investments should prioritize job creation in forestry and SFM. Ecuador highlighted forestry incentives to reduce pressure on forests and sustainably provide non-wood and wood-based products.

FAO highlighted its support for SFM, reporting a doubling of the number of projects in its portfolio in 2020 compared to 2019. She highlighted 43 projects supported under 2020 FAO-GCF Readiness Programme. Switzerland noted gaps in funding for dryland forests under the GEF replenishment.

Monitoring, assessment and reporting: This item was discussed on Monday and Wednesday. On Monday, the Forum launched the Forum flagship publication, *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*, and on Wednesday, they held interactive discussions with CPF members on developments on the global core set of forest-related indicators, and on the preparation of the 2020 Global Forest Resources Assessment.

Forum flagship publication: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced its document on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting (MAR): Progress on the implementation of the UNSPF 2017-2030 (E/CN.18/2021/5), which provides a summary of the preparatory process for the Forum's flagship publication and its key findings, and includes an update on progress made towards developing a global core set of forest-related indicators. UNFF16 Vice-Chair Jesse Mahoney (Australia) introduced the 2021 Global Forest Goals Report and moderated the discussion. Mahoney said this is the first time the Forum has produced a publication of this depth.

Reflecting on the report, Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed that many of the most vulnerable members of society rely on forest products.

Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO, highlighted FAO's work in strengthening national capacities for better and more transparent data.

Noting the report covers 75% of the world's forests, Alexander Trepelkov, Officer in Charge, UNFF Secretariat, presented the key findings. On increasing forest cover, the report found that Asia, Oceania and Europe are on track, but that Africa and South America are experiencing overall loss. On forest benefits, the report concluded many actions are being undertaken to reduce poverty of forest-dependent people, but more remains to be done to effectively measure impact. On protecting forests, nearly 18% of forests are legally protected, and most regions are on track to further increase forest protection. On the mobilization of resources, lack of resources remains the major factor hindering progress on achieving overall progress. On forest governance, many measures have been undertaken to strengthen national and sub-national forest authorities, and to curb illegal trade. On enhancing cooperation, an array of communication activities was reported. Trepelkov concluded that despite many challenges, progress is being made towards all six goals and the associated targets.

In the ensuing panel discussion, Liu Xin, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China, described measures undertaken to improve health and livelihoods, including ecological restoration systems.

Julius Kamau, Chief Conservator of Forests, Kenya, outlined support by the UNFF Secretariat in preparation of Kenya's VNR. He said the wide consultation with stakeholders is key to ensuring proper synthesis of information.

Maureen Whelan, Director, Canadian Forest Service – Trade and International Affairs Division, outlined how the area of Canada's protected forest has increased over time.

Davia Carty, Forestry Department, Jamaica, outlined Jamaica's VNR process, which included intensive consultations to facilitate data gathering.

Reporting on GFG5, Boris Greguska, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Slovak Republic, highlighted implementation of its national forest programme through multi-stakeholder

involvement, intersectoral dialogue to agree on data collection on the goal, and awareness raising.

Mette Wilkie, FAO, discussed the 2020 Global Forest Resource Assessment, noting emphasis on responding to recent developments in the international forest policy arena, such as the 2030 Agenda, the UNSPF, and the Paris Agreement. She further highlighted a new on-line reporting platform to increase reporting efficiency and decrease countries' reporting burden.

On Wednesday, the Secretariat discussed lessons learned during the flagship publication process, including challenges in data availability, inadequate definition of indicators, and limited number of VNCs submitted to UNFF15. He noted the need to further strengthen collaboration among UN agencies, streamline the revision of reporting formats, and secure adequate resources for MAR. He cited plans for joint capacity building with the FAO on national reporting and inviting the CPF to actively engage the Forum in testing and finalizing indicators.

Canada noted only 52 countries submitted national reports, and encouraged countries to submit them. Japan suggested attempting to understand why so few countries submitted reports. As one of the submitting countries, Kenya said a key challenge was establishing baseline data.

Australia and the Republic of Korea called for an optimized template to improve reporting. New Zealand supported Canada and the EU on the need to disseminate the report to a wide range of audiences.

South Africa supported capacity building to trigger more submissions. The US highlighted this meeting is a technical session, so there is ample time to consider if another report is required, and welcomed continued discussions on potential timing.

Global core set of forest-related indicators: Ewald Rametsteiner, FAO, provided an update on the global core set of forest related indicators. The global core set of 21 indicators supports measuring progress towards achieving the global forest goals and their associated targets. It is also aimed at reducing the burden associated with reporting on other indicators, including those related to the SDGs and the Rio Conventions. Rametsteiner noted that four of the indicators are still classified as tier 3, adding that for these indicators to become operational further work on concepts and methodology is required.

He outlined the proposed next steps including working with countries to test and finalize work on certain indicators, and further collaboration with agricultural surveys utilizing remote sensing.

Stefanie Linser, IUFRO, outlined success factors for criteria and indicators, including adequate political support for monitoring, which assists in ensuring there is sufficient available data. She also mentioned the need to innovatively present data, depending on the needs of the target groups.

In the ensuing general discussion, Indonesia noted it has launched the State of Indonesia's Forest 2020 report.

Mexico, Malaysia, Ukraine, Australia, and Canada supported requesting the UNFF Secretariat to continue to organize, jointly with the FAO, capacity-building workshops on a global core set of forest-related indicators and on national reporting to the Forum.

Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020

Tiina Vähänen, FAO, presented on the preparation processes for the 2020 FRA and highlighted the involvement of 700 experts and the involvement of national correspondents to compile information based on agreed formats. She reported the use of an online platform that gives access to external data sources, including latest satellite images and other geospatial data. Other outputs from the process, she noted, include an interactive digital report, country reports, and an interactive platform consisting of a 2020 FRA database. Highlighting key findings, she reported that although deforestation has slowed down in recent years, its reduction is not adequate to meet global goals. She reported that the FRA will continue a five-year production cycle and underscored work on improving remote sensing and producing teen- and child-friendly formats.

During the discussion, the EU stressed the need for adequate dissemination of the FRA and then evaluating its effectiveness before agreeing to a new publication. China discussed its achievements in protecting and developing forest resources, and emphasized the need for strengthened multilateral cooperation. Japan noted that the objective of the global core set is to reduce overlap of indicators and suggested FRA indicators be used continually.

Australia and the Russian Federation urged aligning the publication of the Forum flagship report with that of the FRA.

Forum Trust Fund

On Thursday, UNFF16 Chair Sweeb introduced document E/CN.18/2021/6 detailing contributions to and expenditures of the UNFF Trust Fund for 2020. The Republic of Korea highlighted her country's commitment to supporting developing countries through the trust fund and requested the Secretariat to continue scaling up work on generating meaningful outcomes.

China underscored global financial difficulties presented by COVID-19 pandemic, and highlighted the importance of maintaining momentum on achieving the UNSPF and the GFGs, by ensuring financial support to the trust fund.

Emerging Issues: Impacts of COVID-19 on Forests and the Forest Sector

On Monday, the UNFF Secretariat introduced the Secretariat Note (E/CN.18/2021/7), which compiles outcomes of an initial assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SFM, the forest sector, forest-dependent people, indigenous peoples and local communities, forest financing and international cooperation. The session included a high-level round table and general discussions on this topic.

High-level Roundtable on Major Forest-related Developments

UNFF16 Chair Sweeb introduced the session noting that 80% of terrestrial biodiversity is found in forests. Explaining that the high-level roundtable provides an opportunity to showcase solidarity and promote concerted action for forest management, she noted key points from the roundtable will be reflected in the Chair's summary.

ECOSOC President Munir Akram (Pakistan) reflected on the devastating effects of COVID-19, and underscored the essential ecosystem services provided by forests. He stressed halting and

reversing deforestation can also reduce the spread of zoonotic diseases. Akram stressed the need to build back better, as well as making technologies available to all.

President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly Volkan Bozkır (Turkey) emphasized that the current environmental and health crises are indicative of a problem with humans' relationship with nature. Bozkır lamented that currently the world is focused on addressing symptoms of a deeper problem, and pointed to sustainably managed forests as a key to addressing root causes. He said 2021 is a milestone year and urged delegates to focus on creating a more equitable future.

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed highlighted that 75% of Earth's freshwater comes from forested watersheds. She highlighted that for every USD 1 spent on forests, almost USD 7 are generated in further economic benefits. Mohammed stressed we face a "make or break" moment and summits convening in 2021 must send an unmistakable signal of ambition. UN FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said over 10 million hectares are lost annually, and that land degradation impacts an area larger than South America.

Elizabeth Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary, said unsustainable use of forest products push humans further into contact with pathogens, noting that protecting, restoring and sustainably using forests is key to building back better and combatting the pandemic. Mrema said restoring priority lands has the potential to sequester almost half of the CO₂ released since the industrial revolution, but stressed deep transformative change is required.

Tina Birmpili, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), highlighted the opportunity in COVID-19 recovery spending, noting investments in forests yield significant economic benefits.

Donald Cooper, Transparency Division, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), drew attention to the UNFCCC Enhanced Transparency Framework, which seeks to ensure all parties have access to information.

Jane Molony, Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa, stressed that collaboration is key to overcoming global challenges, and underscored the need to support research institutions' work on drought, pests, and disease.

In the interactive discussion, Portugal, for the EU, underscored that COVID-19 recovery should contribute to achieving the SDGs. He also proposed that a second assessment, setting out the impact of the global pandemic, be prepared for presentation to UNFF17.

France highlighted the Alliance for Preservation of Forests, which is aimed at harnessing collective action against deforestation and encouraging sustainable supply chains. Indonesia reported successes in reducing deforestation and forest fires, citing ambitions to rehabilitate 5,629 hectares of mangroves by 2024. Germany reported doubling forest recreation visits during the pandemic period, and reported forest-related climate action, including encouraging deforestation-free supply chains. The US said that since rejoining the Paris Agreement, the government is working on reducing CO₂ emissions by 50-52% below 2005 levels by 2030, adding that the pandemic has shown the need for working with Indigenous Peoples to sustain and maintain forest ecosystems. China reported forest restoration efforts to promote recovery from pandemic. The Republic of Korea highlighted the relevance of the theme of the 15th

World Forestry Congress, “Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests,” to be held in Seoul on 2-6 May 2022.

Several countries reported on impacts from the pandemic and measures for recovery, including: Peru on loss of 52,000 jobs and 53% income from timber sector; Colombia’s campaign against deforestation; Brazil’s expansion of forest concessions and economic valuation of forests; Argentina’s promotion of sustainable value chains and investments in forest conservation; Kenya’s involvement of youth in tree planting and measures to support livelihoods of vulnerable groups; Philippines’ shifting to bamboo as a priority commodity to enhance soil conservation

AFoCO emphasized that SFM is the key to green recovery, urging for more publicity for forest conservation successes. The IUFRO emphasized the need for evidence-based data to support building back better.

Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, lauded UNFF for being the first UN body to take action on impacts of the pandemic in the forest sector, and called for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the UNSPF. He summarized key messages of the roundtable, including:

- poverty and hunger eradication should be given priority as forests are safety nets for vulnerable groups;
- SFM is crucial for ambitious climate action, biodiversity loss, and post-pandemic recovery;
- intersectoral collaboration is important to ensure optimal and efficient land-use planning;
- the forest sector, including agroforestry, can address unemployment and food security;
- strengthening intersectoral collaboration is an important step to ensuring optimal and efficient land use planning; and
- science and technology, financial mechanisms, and data availability are critical to address impacts and mitigate future pandemics.

UNFF16 Outcomes

On Thursday, UNFF16 Chair Sweeb explained that the following agenda items were subject to the silence procedure, pursuant to ECOSOC decision 2020/206, until 4:00 pm EDT (GMT-4) on Thursday, 29 April 2021:

- Provisional Agenda for UNFF17 (E/CN.18/2021/L.1);
- Date and Venue for UNFF17 (E/CN.18/2021/L.2); and
- Adoption of the UNFF Programme of Work for the period 2022–2024 (E/CN.18/2021/L.3).

She further explained that the Adoption of the UNFF16 Report (E/CN.18/2021/L.4) is subject to the silence procedure until 4:00 pm EDT (GMT-4) on Friday, 30 April 2021. On Monday, 3 May, Chair Sweeb sent out a letter announcing that the decisions were adopted.

Programme of Work for 2022–2024: UNFF16 adopted the Programme of Work (POW) for the period 2022–2024 (E/CN.18/2021/L.3). The POW is contained in an annex to the decision and sets out the work of the Forum’s next three sessions.

The POW for the UNFF17 policy session includes:

- Thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022: selected GFGs and associated targets in accordance with UNFF16 and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the UNFF16 Chair’s summary;

- Other policy session items and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the UNFF16 Chair’s summary, including new VNC announcements; updates by stakeholders and partners on the CPF and regional and subregional organizations and processes; major groups and other relevant stakeholders;
- Interlinkages between the GFGs and targets and the SDGs under review by the HLPF in 2022 and international forest-related developments;
- Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF, including International Day of Forests 2022 activities;
- Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the GFFFN;
- MAR: consideration of the proposed refinements to the format for the next round of voluntary national reporting on progress in implementing the UNSPF, the UN Forest Instrument and VNCs;
- Preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests in achieving its objectives;
- Forum trust fund; and
- Emerging issues.

The POW for the UNFF18 technical session includes:

- Thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022: selected GFGs and associated targets;
- Other technical session items and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the UNFF17 Chair’s summary, including new VNC announcements; updates by stakeholders and partners on the CPF and regional and subregional organizations and processes; Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders;
- Interlinkages between the GFGs and targets and the SDGs under review by the HLPF in 2023 and international forest-related developments;
- Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF, including International Day of Forests 2023 activities;
- Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the GFFFN
- MAR: voluntary national reporting; global core set of forest-related indicators; preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025
- Preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests in achieving its objectives;
- Forum trust fund; and
- Emerging issues.

The POW for the UNFF19 policy session includes:

- Thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022: selected GFGs and associated targets;
- Other policy session items and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the UNFF18 Chair’s summary including new VNC announcements; interlinkages between the GFGs and targets and the SDGs under review by the HLPF in 2024 and international forest-related developments; and midterm review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests;
- High-level segment; and
- Adoption of the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2025–2028.

Date, Venue and Provisional Agenda for UNFF17: UNFF16 adopted the decisions on the provisional agenda, and on the dates and venue for UNFF17, contained in documents E/CN.18/2021/L.1 and L.2, respectively.

The provisional UNFF17 agenda includes:

- Policy discussions on the implementation of the UNSPF 2017-2030 and activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022;
- Implementation of the UNSPF communication and outreach strategy;
- Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network;
- Monitoring, assessment and reporting, including proposed refinements to VNRs; and
- Preparations for the 2024 midterm review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests.

The Forum agreed that UNFF17 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York from 9-13 May 2022.

Draft report: UNFF16 adopted the report of the meeting, contained in document E/CN.18/2021/L.4.

Closing Session

In her closing remarks on Thursday, Sweeb thanked participants for their contributions and active participation. She recognized the significant preparatory work on generating information and data. Sweeb reiterated the importance of forest communities and Indigenous Peoples, and the ongoing need to protect and preserve our planet.

Reflecting on her country's national situation, Sweeb explained Suriname is already carbon negative. She said Suriname is committed to maintaining 93% forest cover, but this goal is only sustainable with financial support. Sweeb stressed the need for ongoing collaboration and drew attention to the importance of the data and information contained in both the 2021 GFGs report and the Clearing House.

She looked forward to the upcoming meetings in 2021 and underscored the need for the work of UNFF to feed into these meetings, and for the global political will to act. Sweeb closed the meeting at 9:17 am EDT (GMT-4).

A Brief Analysis of UNFF16

“Mother Nature is very generous but very unforgiving, if you destroy Nature, Nature will destroy you.” — Wangari Maathai

The consequences of our ongoing destructive use of forests clearly illustrates what we already know about our current standing with nature. These consequences include the most devastating pandemic in recent history – COVID-19; the highest global average temperature in history; and the pervasive, systemic phenomenon of land degradation. Left with no choice, the global community has now turned its attention to forests for their multifunctionality in ecosystem recovery for carbon sequestration, biodiversity protection, and the conservation of soils and land.

With this backdrop, for the second time in history the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) met in a virtual format, due to the restrictions of physical meetings imposed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike last year's session, the sixteenth session of the Forum

(UNFF16) covered its full agenda, bringing together members to intervene on diverse technical issues. The Forum also adopted the Programme of Work for 2022-2024, which provides a clear roadmap for UNFF work over the next three years.

UNFF16 experienced renewed commitments from high-level representatives to make every recovery effort count for forests and nature. The mantra to “build back better” resonates strongly for forest protection, conservation, and restoration. The role of the UNFF as a unifying actor is enshrined in its mandate to, among others, enhance policy and program coordination, and strengthen political commitment in sustainable forest management (SFM).

This analysis focuses on post-pandemic recovery efforts and explores the opportunities seized globally to put forests at the heart of the “building back better” campaign.

Making Peace with Nature

COVID-19 laid bare the broken relationship between humans and nature. For years, research has been presented on how deforestation and wildlife loss is bringing humans in contact with diseases for which we have no resistance. Globally, the pandemic has been evidenced as a direct consequence of our failure to care for the planet. Global consumption patterns and production systems are a danger to nature and consequently to our future survival and wellbeing on Earth. Many delegates at UNFF16 echoed these sentiments that the stakes are high and the need to make peace with nature is more urgent than ever before.

Members renewed their commitments to SFM and the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forest (UNSPF). The Forum provided the opportunity for exploring the interlinkages among the separate entry points for protecting nature, including forests, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and laid out a basis for concerted actions. Forests, many said, provide the necessary leverage and thus pooling efforts to achieve the UNSPF is a win-win for all sectors, while achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The long-anticipated flagship publication of the Forum, *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*, was highly acclaimed as a reflection of achievements and actions by members in fulfilling forest commitments under selected Global Forest Goals (GFGs) of the UNSPF, and their contributions to the SDGs. Those who contributed proudly praised the process, while many others showed motivation to showcase their commitment and actions during the next reporting cycle.

However, the report clearly showed that even though progress has been achieved in increasing forest cover through afforestation and restoration, the worsening state of our natural environment is threatening these and other gains.

Global Eyes on Forests

The year 2020, as some have said, failed to live up to its expectations as a super year for nature and people, as the world worked from home, and governments' attention was focused on the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, inevitably, nations have turned their eyes to nature for durable solutions for restoring ecosystem and human health. This year the Forum provided a platform for solutions as attention on nature-based solutions world-

wide continues to peak. The interlinkages provided by the thematic priorities have come at an opportune time.

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework is expected to be adopted at fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2021 in Kunming, China. Even though the latest draft framework contains no specific reference to forests, it is clear that the UNSPF and GFGs can contribute to ensure forests are not left behind. In addition, the Forum's message regarding the need to upgrade forest-based climate actions in the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are also relevant to the upcoming 26th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow, Scotland.

The Fifteenth World Forestry Congress, scheduled for 2022 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, will identify key measures that must be put in place as the forest sector adjusts to the new reality and aims to help "build back better."

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 provides the opportunity to turn potential into reality with regard to the role of forests in supporting human well-being and post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery. In celebrating the International Day for Forests on 21 March, UN Secretary-General António Guterres praised the theme, "Forest Restoration: A Path to Recovery and Well-being," for alignment with the UN Decade. Many at UNFF16 agreed with his sentiments that recovery is on the horizon and that it is not too late to act.

Financing Forests

The COVID-19 pandemic has, so to speak, "changed the game," for global negotiations. Countries that have relied on public financing for forests, such as official development assistance (ODA), have faced a conundrum as they battle the ongoing health crisis while planning for green pandemic recovery. However, as many noted during UNFF16, the economies of scale presented by investing in nature can no longer be ignored, particularly based on the socio-economic benefits that arise from healthy ecosystems. The choice is no longer one or the other, but both concurrently.

Forum members presented their activities in this area, citing integration of forest financing in COVID-recovery stimulus packages and funding activities such as reforestation, fire management, tree planting and landscape restoration.

Assessments of impacts of the pandemic, including on millions of forest-dependent people, gained a voice at UNFF16. Even though many recognized that medium- and long-term impacts are yet to be acknowledged, there is agreement on the need to pool resources and financing for forests. The Forum's latest policy brief, "Mobilizing Investments and Financing," was well received as a basis to build up ways of financing SFM as a key component of sustainable COVID-19 recovery (UN/DESA Policy Brief #88).

The UNFF16 launch of the Clearing House Mechanism under the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network is another milestone that proves the Forum's readiness to support members' implementation of GFGs, and thereby unlock the full potential of forests to achieving the SDGs. The lack of public finance, as some noted, is no longer acceptable for many as a reason for no action, as innovative private sector sources and partnerships are now available to support the political will expressed for forest action.

Innovative Futures for Nature

UNFF's increasingly prominent role in improving social responsibility and in fully engaging Indigenous communities was also recognized at UNFF16. Nature-based solutions require, as some noted, innovative ideas that impact behavior change among producers and consumers, and to turn the tide on deforestation.

The EU's "One Health" initiative, which prevents trade in goods linked to deforestation, is one such initiative to trigger social responsibility. Many countries also highlighted deforestation-free products, a sign that the Forum has caught up with the winds of transformative change.

UNFF is being prompted to evolve, as there are increasing demands from members to address the drivers of deforestation. While there is no silver bullet for transformative change—largely due to national and regional diversity of environmental, economic, and cultural contexts of sustainable use—common policies in agriculture, mining, timber and other sectors are essential. Many countries drew attention to benefits from agroforestry. Some also mentioned efforts to diversify forest structure by planting diverse tree species in order to increase the value of ecosystem services. Members drew lessons on the value of healthy ecosystems, noting how ecotourism has doubled in many countries due to citizens seeking to spend more time outdoors in natural places during the pandemic.

Although marred by distance from lockdowns and restrictions preventing a physical meeting, UNFF16 maintained a thread of hope for the future relationship between nature and people. UNFF and its partners and collaborators showed their willingness to embrace not just the transformative power of forests, but also to tap into societies' demand for a cleaner and more resilient future.

Upcoming Meetings

Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) Summit:

This Summit, hosted by the Republic of Korea and P4G, will bring together high-level government officials, CEOs, and civil society leaders to deliberate on how scalable and replicable market-based solutions can advance increased ambition on climate action and sustainable development. **dates:** 30-31 May 2021 **location:** Seoul, Republic of Korea and virtual **www:** <https://p4gpartnerships.org/content/p4g-seoul-summit>

World Environment Day: This year's observance of World Environment Day will be on the theme of ecosystem restoration and focus on resetting our relationship with nature. It will also mark the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030. **date:** 5 June 2021 **location:** global **www:** <https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/>

60th Meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council:

The Council is the GEF's main governing body, and meets twice annually to develop, adopt, and evaluate the operational policies and programmes for GEF-financed activities. **dates:** 15-17 June 2021 **location:** TBC **www:** <https://thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-60th-council-meeting>

International Conference on Forest Education: Organized jointly by FAO, IUFRO, ITTO, CIFOR/ICRAF and the Secretariats of UNFF and UNFCCC, this meeting aims to chart a path forward

for forest education globally. **dates:** 22-24 June 2021 **location:** virtual **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/forest-education/conference/en/>

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021: The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene the 2021 session of the HLPF under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.” Following the first five days, the HLPF’s three-day ministerial segment takes place jointly with ECOSOC’s high-level segment. **dates:** 6-15 July 2021 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021>

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020: The IUCN Congress will be a key milestone for nature conservation and the development of a new global framework for biodiversity. **dates:** 3-11 September 2021 **location:** Marseille, France and virtual **www:** <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/>

2021 UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15): The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD, the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to take place to review the achievement and delivery of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 11- 24 October 2021 (TBC) **location:** Kunming, China **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 26): The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26), the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) are expected to convene one year after the originally scheduled dates. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, UK **www:** <https://unfccc.int>

57th session of the International Tropical Timber Council: ITTC-57 will consider extending the ITTA, 2006 for another five years, adopting a new Strategic Action Plan, structuring the assessment of the pilot phase of the New Financing Architecture, and electing a new Executive Director. **dates:** 2-7 November 2021 **location:** Yokohama, Japan **www:** <https://www.itto.int>

UNEA-5 Resumed Session: Convening under the theme, “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs,” UNEA-5 will provide a platform for discussing and implementing nature-based solutions that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, by holistically addressing its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Building on the online session in February 2021, the meeting will discuss ways to ensure that policies for economic recovery following COVID-19 lead to a resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world. A special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP

will be held for two days (5-6 March 2022) after the resumed session of UNEA-5. **dates:** 28 February – 4 March 2022 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** <https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

International Day of Forests: The 2022 International Day of Forests will be celebrated under the theme of Forests and Sustainable Consumption and Production. **date:** 21 March 2022 **location:** global **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/observances/forests-and-trees-day>

15th World Forestry Congress: This meeting will convene under the theme “Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests.” **dates:** 2-6 May 2022 **location:** Seoul, Republic of Korea **www:** <https://wfc2021korea.org/index.html>

UNFF17: This meeting is expected to discuss among other items preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests in achieving its objectives, including the communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF 2017-2030. **dates:** 9-13 May 2022 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/index.html>

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

Glossary

AFoCO	Asian Forest Cooperation Organization
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FRA	Global Forest Resources Assessment
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GFGs	Global Forest Goals
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
MAR	Monitoring, assessment and reporting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNSPF	UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030
VNCs	Voluntary national contributions
VNRs	Voluntary national reports