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Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs to UNFF10

Regional/ Sub-regional Organization: The Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (The Montréal Process)

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General Information

The multi-year programme of work (2007–2015) of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) sets a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. Since its eighth session in 2009 the Forum has solicited inputs from relevant regional and subregional forest related mechanisms, institutions, organizations and processes as an integral part of session deliberations.¹

At its ninth session, the Forum invited regional and subregional organizations to strengthen their contributions to the work of the Forum and to provide input, in the context of the overall theme for UNFF10, on their efforts towards the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, (herein after referred to as the forest instrument) and its four Global Objectives on Forests, through sharing regional perspectives, approaches and experiences. Regional activities on North-South and South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation on SFM were also encouraged.

This questionnaire has been prepared by the Forum Secretariat to facilitate regional inputs for the tenth session of the Forum (UNFF10), to be held from 8 to 19 April 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. In completing this questionnaire, you may choose to extract the relevant information

¹ Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the parent body of the Forum, through its resolution 2006/49, agreed to “Strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes , with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum.” (paragraph 2)

and include it in your submission, if information is already available in an existing report or document. Otherwise, you may provide the reference or document itself to the UNFF Secretariat, indicating the relevant section.

The size of the report of the Secretary General will be a maximum of 8,500 words (approximately 16 pages). In view of this, the Forum Secretariat suggests no more than five pages of written input. We would be most grateful if you could send your inputs to unff@un.org, fax: 917-367-3186) by **30 September 2012**. In light of time constraints and financial limitations, you are kindly asked to provide your input in English.

Section I: Progress towards the implementation of the forest instrument in the context of the overall theme of UNFF10 on “Forests and Economic Development”

A. Progress towards implementation of the forest instrument

1. Briefly describe actions (e.g. regulatory, financial/economic and informational/educational) taken by your organization to foster political commitment for sustainable forest management (SFM).

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/ or lessons learned.

2. Briefly describe efforts taken at the regional level to foster economically, socially and environmentally sound measures that act as incentives for the sustainable management of forests.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/ or lessons learned.

3. Briefly describe actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to promote international trade in forest products from sustainably managed forests harvested.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/ or lessons learned.

4. Briefly describe actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to address illicit international trafficking in forest products through the promotion of forest law enforcement and good governance.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/ or lessons learned.

5. List and briefly describe activities aimed at mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources for SFM.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

6. Please provide additional information specific to your region/subregion on the implementation of the forest instrument and the impact made by the forest instrument on enhancing forest-based economic development.

B. Progress towards GOFs

1. Please describe actions taken by your organization and/or by other public and private organizations (e.g., government, NGOs, private sector, etc.) in your region/subregion to help achieve the following :

GOF1, "Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation"

GOF2, "Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people"

GOF3, "Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests"

GOF4, "Reverse the decline in ODA for SFM and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM"

2. Please provide additional information specific to your region/subregion on progress towards the achievement of the GOFs.

C. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

1. Please describe studies or initiatives in your region that capture the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs?
2. What indicators have been, or could be, used to assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs?
3. Please provide additional information specific to your regional/subregional on MDG forest- related work.

Section II: Characteristics of regional and sub-regional cooperation and partnerships

1. Please provide examples of how your region or sub-region is engaged in facilitating cooperation in sustainable forest management? These may include North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Through the Montréal Process, member countries continue to make a voluntary commitment to work alongside each other to further the sustainable management of their forests and to create a pathway for collaboration and capacity-building.

The Montréal Process, through its criteria and indicators (C&I) of sustainable forest management (SFM), provides its member countries with:

- a. An internationally-agreed, locally-supported tool to integrate issues as they apply to forests;
- b. A common ground on which stakeholders, public agencies and countries can work out shared objectives and collaborative actions toward SFM;
- c. A common framework to monitor, assess and report on trends in forest conditions with respect to the full range of forest values and, in turn, on progress toward SFM;
- d. A network and forum for exchanging knowledge and experience deliberating policy tools, maintaining awareness of the important role of forests and fostering collaboration among countries with diverse natural, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

One of the most notable and valuable achievements of the Montréal Process has been the establishment of mutual trust and confidence, which has encouraged the 12 member countries to develop a “network of knowledge.” Through discussion, research, cooperation, communication and capacity-building between countries, this network has enabled member countries to make individual and collective progress in tackling new and emerging issues, such as climate change, water, bioenergy and biodiversity.

Recently, the Montréal Process formed a new strategic partnership with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), FOREST EUROPE and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) to find innovative ways to streamline global forest reporting, reduce the burden of reporting on countries and promote sustainable forest management.

In October 2011, Canada, as Chair of the Montréal Process Working Group, hosted a Workshop of International and Regional Criteria and Indicator Processes that brought these four organizations/processes together to review their evolution, examine emerging forest issues, and explore possibilities to collaborate and to streamline SFM reporting.

The four bodies recognize the value of working with other processes and organizations to avoid the proliferation of monitoring requirements and associated reporting burdens. The four bodies have also initiated the development of a joint communications plan to improve communication around SFM and have been meeting regularly to enhance global collaboration in addressing issues of common interest.

2. What advances has your organization made in such areas of cooperation?

As a wholly voluntary initiative, the Montréal Process has existed for 18 years with continuous membership from all 12 original member countries. During this time it has built significant national and international momentum and significantly influenced the national and international understanding of SFM. It continues to enhance and demonstrate the relevance and value of its criteria and indicators, strengthen capacity to make progress towards SFM, and enhance collaboration and cooperation across the spectrum of SFM activity.

Communication and capacity-building has been a great strength of the Montréal Process since its inception, leading to a number of advances in the areas of cooperation.

- Sharing of experiences and knowledge has enabled the development and application of the Montréal Process C&I framework by all member countries.
- Through the International Model Forest Network (IMFN), Argentina, Canada, Chile, China and Russia are among a number of countries that are collaborating on methods to demonstrate SFM using the Montréal Process C&I. They have found innovative, low-cost and long-term solutions to the challenges facing advocates and practitioners of SFM.
- The participation of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay in the Montréal Process has facilitated communication, consultation and dialogue on global and local forest sustainability among Southern Cone countries. Beginning in June 2009, these member countries played a key role in the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project on "Strengthening the capacities of the Southern Cone countries for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress towards SFM through the development, use and implementation of criteria and indicators".
- During the 23rd IUFRO World Congress held in Seoul, Korea in August 2010, the Montréal Process hosted two technical sessions on reporting on sustainability of temperate and boreal forests using criteria and indicators.
- In March 2011, Japan hosted the International Seminar on Challenges of Sustainable Forest Management – Integrating Environmental Social and Economic Values of Forests in Tokyo. This country-led initiative in support of UNFF was co-hosted by Indonesia and co-organized by the Montréal Process, ITTO and FOREST EUROPE.

The Montréal Process has also built linkages with other C&I processes. As a result of the strengthened relationships and goodwill developed at the Victoria workshop (October 2011), the Montréal Process, ITTO, FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO endorsed a joint statement in January 2012 to streamline global forest reporting through enhanced collaboration. The joint statement is a milestone in the global process of developing SFM indicators. It compliments the directions adopted at the 2010 Committee on Forestry (COFO) meeting that countries would seek ways to converge global reporting approaches to reduce the overall reporting burden.

By working together, the Montréal Process, ITTO, FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO, along with the Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa (OFAC) initiative and the UN ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, have developed a new Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) that better aligns global data collection schedules and requirements.

The CFRQ will greatly increase the consistency of global forest data and the efficiency of its collection and dissemination, which will in turn contribute to reducing the reporting burden on countries. Effectively, countries that report to more than one of these bodies can now provide their data once to meet multiple reporting requirements. The goal is to ensure that the data being requested by the UN FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) is consistent with the data already being reported within the C&I processes. The closer link between the GFRA and the regional and international C&I processes is also expected to increase the relevance and use of the GFRA.

The CFRQ is one of the most tangible, broadly-based outcomes to emerge from recent efforts to streamline forest-based reporting. The first global datasets from the CFRQ will be available by 2015 as part of the next GFRA.

3. In which areas would your organization like to see stronger international cooperation?

The Montréal Process is confident that its experiences and successes have relevance to other organizations and processes interested in tracking environmental changes, and reporting on sustainable development.

We recognize the value of working with other processes and organizations to avoid the proliferation of monitoring requirements and associated reporting burdens.

We recognise that our knowledge and experience in tracking and reporting on forest conditions and trends is of value and relevance to emerging issues such as climate change, bioenergy and water.

We invite other entities interested in forest-related data, evaluation or expertise to work with us to further improve forest related data collection and reporting. We see this as the best way to address emerging issues and to ensure the greatest lasting contributions from sustainably managed forests to sustainable development worldwide.

The development and adoption of the CFRQ, as a tool for the joint collection and dissemination of forest data and information, is a significant step towards better cooperation between forest data collection partners for the benefit of multiple users.

Still, stronger international cooperation is needed to further promote the use of information provided by C&I processes on SFM and the gathering, analyzing and reporting of data to audiences within and beyond the forest community. In this context, efforts to further develop the establishment of a "Forest Indicators Partnership" – a virtual platform for collaboration on forest indicators – may be useful.

4. Please describe any joint activity relevant to the Forum's work undertaken with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)² and/or involving major stakeholders?

The Montréal Process has maintained a relationship with the UN FAO and ITTO for many years, exchanging information. The endorsement by all parties of the joint statement of collaboration (January 2012) has helped to shift that linkage to one of working together collaboratively to solve shared problems, culminating most recently in the new CFRQ.

The Montréal Process, ITTO, FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO are also working with other processes and organizations to streamline global forest reporting. In August 2012, the USA, a member of the Montréal Process, hosted a workshop with the CFRQ partner organizations and the secretariats of UNFF, CBD and UNFCCC. The participants recommended increased interaction with the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest Indicators and the Rio Conventions (e.g., CBD and UNFCCC) to highlight the value of the forest indicator expertise and information possessed by the regional and international C&I processes, as well as gain greater insight into emerging issues such as biodiversity and climate change and their impacts on SFM.

5. Please provide additional information specific to your region/subregion on successful cooperation and partnerships, including those with the private sector and other civil society organizations (also known as major groups).

N/A

6. Please list (or, if available, provide link to the relevant webpage) the member countries and organizations with whom you work on sustainable forest management issues.

The Montréal Process includes 12 countries representing 83% of the world's temperate and boreal forests, 49% of the world's forests, 33% of the world's population, and are the source of 40% of the world's wood production. The member countries of the Montréal Process include: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Russian Federation, USA and Uruguay.

The Montréal Process has worked with ITTO, FOREST EUROPE and UN FAO, along with the OFAC initiative and the UN ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, to develop the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire. Together, these partners represent at least 94 countries with about 87% of the world's forests.

² List the names of CPF member organizations