

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General

21 December 2012

English

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc
Expert Group on Forest Financing
Second meeting**

Vienna, 14-18 January 2013

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Tasks of the Expert Group**The outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, and the ongoing
developments on the post 2015 UN Development Agenda****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

At the special session of its ninth session, the United Nations Forum on Forests decided to establish the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing to make proposals on strategies to mobilize resources from all sources to support the implementation of sustainable forest management, the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, including, inter alia, strengthening and improving access to funds and establishing a voluntary global forest fund. The present note is prepared in response to the request made by the Bureau of the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, to inform the Expert Group of the major outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference and the ongoing developments in regard to the post 2015 UN Development Agenda.

* E/CN.18/AEG/2013/1.

I. Introduction

In October 2009, the Special Session of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) adopted the Resolution on Means of Implementation for Sustainable Forest Management. This Resolution provided a specific mandate and designed a strategic road map to address forest finance within UNFF. In this Resolution, the Forum decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group with a view to “making proposals on strategies to mobilize resources from all sources to support the implementation of sustainable forest management, the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, including, inter alia, strengthening and improving access to funds and establishing a voluntary global forest fund, taking into account, inter alia, the results of the Forum’s review of the performance of the facilitative process, views of Member States, and review of sustainable forest management-related financing instruments and processes”. Member States also agreed that the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests should make a decision on forest financing¹.

Based on the outcome of the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group on forest financing which was held in September 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya, the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in its Resolution on Forests for People adopted in February 2011² called for intensive intersessional activities on forest finance. A wide spectrum of inputs on forest financing was requested from governments, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional processes and major groups, in preparation for the second meeting of the Expert Group and the tenth session of the Forum.

The main inputs to the second meeting of the Expert Group include the 2012 study on Forest Financing by the Advisory Group on Finance of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (AGF/CPF), reports of the Facilitative Process meetings on forest financing in low forest cover countries, small island developing States, Africa and least developed countries, report of

¹ E/2009/118-E/CN.18/SS/2009/2.

² E/2011/42-E/CN.18/2011/20.

the organization led initiative by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and compilation of substantive submissions on forest financing by countries, as well as other relevant inputs.

The outcome of AHEG2 is a critical component for a decision on forest financing in the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in April 2013 in Istanbul-Turkey, and also for the decision on the future of the international arrangement on forests in the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2015.

Due to the significance and relevance of the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference and the ongoing intergovernmental deliberations on the post 2015 UN Development Agenda to the issues under consideration of the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing, the Bureau of the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests during its fourth meeting on 19 November 2012 requested the Secretariat to prepare a background note to inform the work of the Expert Group of these two issues during its second meeting. This note is prepared in response to the Bureau's request and highlights key outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, and provides information on the post 2015 UN Development Agenda. The purpose of this note is to provide only background information on these two issues. A thorough analysis on the implications and interconnections of the Rio+20 Outcome, Post 2015 UN Development Agenda and the international arrangements on forests, as well as relevant recommendations will be presented in the Secretary General Report on Emerging Issues to the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forest.

II. Rio+20 Conference

In 1992, more than 100 heads of state met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for the first international Earth Summit convened to address urgent problems of environmental protection and socio-economic development. The assembled leaders signed the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, endorsed the Rio Declaration and the Forest Principles, and adopted Agenda 21, a 300 page plan for achieving sustainable development in the 21st century. It was agreed that a five year review of Earth Summit progress would be made in 1997 by the United Nations General Assembly meeting in special session. This special session of the UN General Assembly took stock of how well countries, international

organizations and sectors of civil society have responded to the challenge of the Earth Summit. Ten years after the Earth Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development or Johannesburg Summit in 2002 agreed to further advance implementation of sustainable development agenda and adopted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Key outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - or Rio+20 - took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012 and adopted a concrete outcome, titled “The Future We Want”. A summary of the key outcomes of this conference are presented below.

i. Green Economy

The Rio+20 Conference adopted guidelines on [green economy policies](#). Member States affirmed that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions. Green Economy should contribute to eradicating poverty as well as sustained economic growth, enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare and creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the Earths ecosystems. There is no direct reference to forests in this section. However, a reference is made to “natural resources” which includes forests among other natural resources³. Member States agreed that green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should:

- (a) be consistent with international law;
- (b) respect each country’s national sovereignty over their natural resources taking into account its national circumstances, objectives, responsibilities, priorities and policy space with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development;
- (c) be supported by an enabling environment and well-functioning institutions at all levels with a leading role for governments and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society;

³ Paragraph 60 of the Outcome Document.

- (d) promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, foster innovation and provide opportunities, benefits and empowerment for all and respect of all human rights;
- (e) take into account the needs of developing countries, particularly those in special situations;
- (f) strengthen international cooperation, including the provision of financial resources, capacity building and technology transfer to developing countries;
- (g) effectively avoid unwarranted conditionalities on ODA and finance;
- (h) not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade, avoid unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country, and ensure that environmental measures addressing trans-boundary or global environmental problems, as far as possible, are based on an international consensus;
- (i) contribute to closing technology gaps between developed and developing countries and reduce the technological dependence of developing countries using all appropriate measures;
- (j) enhance the welfare of indigenous peoples and their communities, other local and traditional communities, and ethnic minorities, recognizing and supporting their identity, culture and interests and avoid endangering their cultural heritage, practices and traditional knowledge, preserving and respecting non-market approaches that contribute to the eradication of poverty;
- (k) enhance the welfare of women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, smallholder and subsistence farmers, fishers and those working in small and medium enterprises, and improve the livelihoods and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable groups in particular in developing countries;
- (l) mobilize the full potential and ensure equal contribution of both women and men;
- (m) promote productive activities in developing countries that contribute to the eradication of poverty;
- (n) address the concern about inequalities and promote social inclusion, including social protection floors;

- (o) promote sustainable consumption and production patterns; and
- (p) continue efforts to strive for inclusive, equitable development approaches to overcome poverty and inequality.

ii. Sustainable Development Goals⁴

At the Rio+20 Conference, countries recognized the importance and utility of a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are based on Agenda 21 and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, fully respect all Rio Principles, taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and priorities, are consistent with international law, build upon commitments already made, and contribute to the full implementation of the outcomes of all major Summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, including the Rio+20 outcome document. These goals should be coherent with and integrated in the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.

Countries underscored that SDGs should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

They also recognized that the goals should address and be focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, being guided by this outcome document. Governments also decided to launch a process to develop a set of [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), which will build upon the [Millennium Development Goals](#) and converge with the post 2015 development agenda. Member States also agreed that sustainable development goals must be action-oriented; concise; Easy to communicate; limited in number; aspirational; global in nature; and universally applicable to all countries.

iv. High-level political forum⁵

Governments also decided to establish a universal intergovernmental high level political forum, building on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities

⁴ Paragraphs 245-251 of the Outcome Document.

⁵ Paragraphs 84-86 of the Outcome Document.

of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The high level political forum shall follow up on the implementation of sustainable development, and will replace the Commission on Sustainable Development. The decisions on the high level forum's format and organizational aspects are expected to be taken during the upcoming session of the General Assembly, with the aim of having the first session of the forum at the beginning of the 68th session of the Assembly. Countries also identified several potential key functions for this Forum including its role in providing political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for sustainable development; enhancing integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development at all levels; following up and reviewing progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments contained in Agenda 21, and subsequent conferences and summits on sustainable development; engaging high-level system-wide participation of UN Agencies, funds and programmes in its work; improving cooperation and coordination within the UN system on sustainable development programmes and policies; enhancing the consultative role and participation of Major Groups; strengthening the science-policy interface; and strengthening ongoing efforts of capacity building for data collection and analysis in developing countries.

iv. Sustainable Development Financing Strategy⁶

In the Rio+20 Conference, Member States recognized “the need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing, in order to give strong support to developing countries in their efforts to promote sustainable development, including through actions undertaken in accordance with the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and for achieving sustainable development goals”. They also agreed to establish “an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly, with technical support from the United Nations system and in open and broad consultation with relevant international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders. The process will assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks, and evaluate additional initiatives, with a view to preparing a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving

⁶ Paragraphs 255 and 256 of the Outcome Document.

sustainable development objectives”. An intergovernmental committee will implement this process and conclude its work by 2014.

v. *Sustainable Consumption and Production*⁷

Governments also adopted the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, as contained in document [A/CONF.216/5](#), and invited the General Assembly, at its sixty-seventh session, to designate a Member State body to take any necessary steps to fully operationalize the framework.

vi. *Technology and Capacity Building*

Governments at the Rio+20 Conference requested relevant UN agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies by, *inter alia*, assessing technology needs of developing countries, options to address them and capacity building. They requested the UN Secretary General, on the basis of the options identified and taking into account existing models, to make recommendations regarding the facilitation mechanism to the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly⁸.

vii. *Forests*

The Rio+20 Conference also took forward-looking decisions on a number of **thematic areas**, such as energy, food security, forests, oceans, cities... The Rio+20 Outcome Document has numerous provisions on forests, its interlinkages with other sectoral and cross-sectoral issues of sustainable development, conceptual policy issues and frameworks, and the overall scope of work of the UNFF. Paragraphs 193, 194, 195 and 196 in the Outcome Document are specifically devoted to forests. Member States highlighted the social, economic and environmental benefits of forests to people and the contributions of sustainable forest management to the themes and objective of the Conference. They also supported cross-sectoral and cross-institutional policies promoting sustainable forest management, and reaffirmed that the wide range of products and services that forests provide creates opportunities to address

⁷ Ibid. Paragraphs 224-226.

⁸ Ibid. Paragraph 273.

many of the most pressing sustainable development challenges. They called for enhanced efforts to achieve the sustainable management of forests, reforestation, restoration and afforestation, and supported all efforts that effectively slow, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation, including, inter alia, promoting trade in legally harvested forest products. Member States noted the importance of such ongoing initiatives as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. Countries called for increased efforts to strengthen forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, in order to achieve sustainable forest management. Member States also committed to improving the livelihoods of people and communities by creating the conditions needed for them to sustainably manage forests, including through strengthening cooperation arrangements in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity-building and governance, as well as by promoting secure land tenure, particularly decision-making and benefit-sharing, in accordance with national legislation and priorities.

Member States called for urgent implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (the forest instrument) and the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on the occasion of the launch of the International Year of Forests.

Member States recognized that the United Nations Forum on Forests, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, plays a vital role in addressing forest-related issues in a holistic and integrated manner and promoting international policy coordination and cooperation to achieve sustainable forest management. They also invited the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue its support to the Forum and encourage stakeholders to remain actively engaged in the work of the Forum. Member States stressed the importance of integrating sustainable forest management objectives and practices into the mainstream of economic policy and decision-making, and to that end they committed to working through the governing bodies of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to integrate, as appropriate, the sustainable management of all types of forests into their strategies and programmes.

III. Post 2015 UN Development Agenda

In 2000, the world leaders set forth a shared vision for development based on the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility, in the form of the Millennium Declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly.⁹ The Millennium Development Goals that followed have since provided milestones for global and national development efforts, with the overall target date of 2015.¹⁰ These goals are focused on a limited set of concrete, common human development goals and targets namely: eradication of poverty and hunger, universal access to primary education, reducing child and maternal mortality and improving maternal health, promoting gender equality and empowering women, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.¹¹

The MDG framework helped to galvanize development efforts, set global and national priorities, and focus action at all levels. These goals provided a common worldwide cause to address poverty and putting human progress at the forefront of the global development agenda. Important progress has been made in most countries, particularly towards the goals of eradicating poverty and improving access to primary education. Yet, trends have been uneven within and across countries and regions, and much more work remains to be done.

Approaching the year 2015 which is the target date for many of the MDGs, it was imperative for the international community to devise an inclusive process to define the post-2015 UN development agenda, taking into account emerging global challenges and issues and the experiences in implementing the MDG framework, its strengths and weaknesses.

The purpose of a global development agenda is not to prescribe specific development strategies or policies, but to provide guidance for priority setting at all levels (global, regional, national and sub-national). To call it a “UN development agenda” is to denote the readiness of

⁹ United Nations (2000). United Nations Millennium Declaration. General Assembly resolution, A/RES/55/2, para.6.

¹⁰ United Nations (2001). Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Report of the Secretary-General, A/56/326, 6 September, p. 56.

¹¹ For the complete list of the MDGs and their timelines, please see:

the United Nations to serve as the multi-stakeholder platform for its formulation, with the capacity to undertake the broad-based consultations required and with the ambition to produce a global development agenda that all countries and all stakeholders will recognize as their own.

In this connection, the world leaders during the High-level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in September 2010 in New York, requests the Secretary-General to report annually on efforts to accelerate progress towards the MDGs and to include recommendations to advance the UN development agenda beyond 2015 in these reports.¹² Initial recommendations in this regard were presented in the Report of the Secretary-General on accelerating progress towards the MDGs of August 2011, with special reference to the need for an open and inclusive process of consultations on the agenda¹³.

The outcome document of the 2010 MDG Summit further requests the President of the General Assembly to convene a special event to follow up on efforts made towards achieving the MDGs during its 68th session, which begins in September 2013. This could provide an opportunity to lay the foundations for consensus on the post-2015 UN development agenda. Of course, consultations still continue on the nature of the special event and the timelines for the post-2015 process as a whole.

The 2011 Report of the Secretary-General recommended an open and inclusive consultation process, in order for the post-2015 agenda to have the best development impact.¹⁴ With this in mind, in September 2011, the Secretary-General established the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda to coordinate system-wide preparations for the agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders. The Task Team, launched in January 2012, brings together senior experts designated by the Principals of over 50 UN system entities and other international organizations. The terms of reference of the Task Team include: assessing ongoing efforts within the UN system; consulting external stakeholders, such as civil society,

¹² United Nations General Assembly, Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, A/RES/65/1, para. 81.

¹³ A/67/257.

¹⁴ Report of the Secretary-General, Accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals: options for sustainable and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, A/66/126.

academic and the private sector; and defining system-wide vision and road map on the post-2015 UN development agenda.

Member States have also stressed the importance of other intergovernmental processes feeding into discussions on the post-2015 agenda, especially Rio+20. They also share the view of the Secretary-General on the need to work towards greater convergence of the Rio+20 and post-2015 processes, to arrive at one post-2015 UN development agenda, with sustainable development at its centre. Also, broad and inclusive consultation processes about the vision for the post-2015 agenda are still ongoing and will be essential in shaping a shared vision.

The progress made within those processes and by the multiple consultations that will take place at national, regional and global levels will feed into the consultations on the post-2015 UN development agenda, and eventually to the high level event in September 2013. Based on the outcome of the special event in 2013, more focused discussions could then be launched on the specific format and content of a new agenda, including possible goals and targets to be proposed for intergovernmental agreement.