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Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs to UNFF11

Regional/Sub-regional Organization/Process:

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Note: The Chair rotates among members at the annual Working Group Meeting.

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General Information

The multi-year programme of work – MYPOW (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 sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, organizations and processes as an integral part of session deliberations.¹

The eleventh session of the UNFF (UNFF11) will be held from 4 to 15 May 2015 in New York. In accordance with the Forum’s MYPOW, the overall theme of UNFF11 is *Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward on the international arrangement on forests (IAF)*, with the following sub themes:

1. Reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options
2. Reviewing the progress towards the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (hereinafter referred to as the “Forest Instrument”)
3. Reviewing the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

In completing this questionnaire, you may choose to extract the relevant information and include it in your submission, if information is already available in existing reports and/or documents. Otherwise, you may provide the reference or document itself to the UNFF Secretariat, indicating the relevant section. Please note that the Year 2007 – the year of the adoption of the Forest Instrument (2007), should be used as a baseline throughout the document.

Moreover, in view of the limitation of sizing of the pertinent Secretary-General’s report, the Forum Secretariat suggests no more than 250 words of written input per answer. We would be most grateful if you could send your inputs to unff@un.org, fax: +1 917-367-3186, by **30**

¹The 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)

September 2014.In light of time constraints and financial limitations, you are kindly asked to provide your input in English.

Section 0. Overview of the the Montréal Process (MP) Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests

The Montréal Process (MP) Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests --“The Montréal Process” -- was launched in 1994 as a response to the Rio Forest Principles. Today, the Working Group has 12 member countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Russian Federation, United States of America and Uruguay. These countries account for 83% of the world’s temperate and boreal forests, 49% of all forests, 45% of the world’s wood products, and 33% of the world’s population.

The Working Group is supported by the MP Liaison Office (LO) established in 1995 and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) established in 1996. The LO is currently hosted by the Government of Japan. From 1995-2006, it was hosted by the Government of Canada. The LO facilitates communication among members, helps organize Working Group and TAC meetings, arranges for translation, printing and dissemination of MP documents, maintains the MP website, and coordinates MP representation at regional and international meetings and events.

The TAC is comprised of forest experts from all member countries and provides technical and scientific advice to the Working Group on issues related to data collection, indicator measurement and reporting. The work of the TAC, including the development of the revised MP indicators presented here, is coordinated and facilitated by the TAC Convenor, currently hosted by the Government of New Zealand. From 1997 to 2003, the TAC Convenor was hosted by United States. From 1996-2014, it was hosted by New Zealand.

The MP criteria and indicators provide a common framework for member countries to describe, monitor, assess and report on national forest trends and progress toward sustainable forest management. They also provide a common understanding within and across countries of what is meant by sustainable forest management, and may be understood to constitute an implicit definition of sustainable forest management at the country level.

As such, the MP criteria and indicators help provide an international reference for policy-makers in the formulation of national policies and a basis for international cooperation aimed at supporting sustainable forest management.

Countries need to track the state and change in their forests with credible, reliable and transparent data and efficiently report consistent information to many different domestic and international readers. This helps them improve their forest management practices and promote their sustainable management credentials. To do this effectively, they need to maintain a common reporting framework, coordinate reporting activities, and share knowledge and expertise.

The approach of the MPWG is to bring together countries with diverse social, economic, and political situations in a voluntary forum to develop and maintain an internationally-accepted framework to track the state and change in forests. Through this

forum, member countries share ideas, address common problems, and foster collaboration toward a shared goal of sustainably managing boreal and temperate forests.

The MPWG is less formal, lower-cost and offers countries more flexibility in how they participate compared with many other international forest-related initiatives. It meets about once per year and relies extensively on virtual communication tools. A small liaison office coordinates group interactions and acts as a focal point for interactions with other individuals and organizations. A technical committee provides scientific advice as needed. Shared expenses are paid by individual member countries. There is no common budget. Members track the state and change in their forests using the framework to the best of their ability.

The MPWG is an efficient and effective mechanism to foster international consensus on reporting requirements for sustainable forest management. The MPWG works with international organizations to align data collection requirements and schedules, which streamlines reporting and improves the consistency of global forest information. The result is that national data on the state and trends in forests are now less onerous to collect, more useful for multiple reporting requirements, more accessible to a larger audience, and more robust for improving management practices and addressing emerging policy issues like climate change adaptation. In collaboration with four other international forest reporting organizations, the MPWG recently created the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire, a tool to reuse data in multiple international reports.

The emergence of a common language and comparable data to describe progress toward sustainable forest management is contributing to international discussions on emerging issues, such as how to report on global biodiversity targets concerning the area of forest sustainably managed.

Recently, the MPWG also contributed to discussions at UNFCCC on the applicability of globally-recognized, stakeholder-supported forest indicators to provide countries with a sufficiently flexible means to monitor the social and environmental performance of their programs to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD+) while providing a consistent manner to ensure all countries meet generic criteria for high social and environmental performance. The common language has also aided the development of forest certification standards and helped align green procurement policies with internationally accepted norms on sustainability, which facilitates trade.

The MPWG also helps member countries understand the perspectives of their trading partners, learn how to better manage their forest resources, refine national forest monitoring programs, and be seen taking a leadership role in advancing sustainable forest management.

The MPWG is a tangible demonstration of the success of a voluntary partnership that for over 20 years has been monitoring, assessing and reporting on trends in forest conditions with advice and information that is well-attuned to stakeholder sensitivities. The member countries are confident that their experiences and successes have relevance to other governments interested in tracking environmental changes and reporting on sustainable management of boreal and temperate forests.

Section I: Progress towards the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the GOFsas well as the contribution of forests and

the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs

A. Progress towards implementation of the Forest Instrument

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

Specific actions since 2007 include:

- Revised the 1995 criteria and indicators in 2007 and 2009² which are now widely available on the Internet and various publications and being widely used.
- Formulated MP's Strategic Action Plan for 2009-2015 in 2007 and reviewed in annual MP Working group meetings.
- Published 2nd overview report³ (covers 12 member countries) with respective countries' reports in 2009/2010 in the context of monitoring, assessment and reporting on forest trends and progress toward SFM using MP's C&I.
- Contributed to World Forestry Congress Declaration in 2009.
- Formulated and coordinated a Joint Statement of MP, ITTO, Forest Europe, FAO to streamline data reporting through FRA2015 in 2012⁴.

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

Main challenges:

- Reviewing and improving the original 7 criteria and 67 indicators in 2007 and 2009 which now stands at 7 criteria and 54 indicators.
- Also reviewed/improved technical notes on implementation of C&I (rationale and measurement approaches).

Lessons learnt:

- The Montréal Process, through its C&I of SFM, provides its member countries with:
 - An internationally-agreed, locally-supported tool to integrate issues as they apply to forests;
 - A common ground on which stakeholders, public agencies and countries can work out shared objectives and collaborative actions toward SFM;
 - 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;
 - 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.

² http://www.montrealprocess.org/documents/publications/techreports/2009p_2.pdf

³ <http://www.montrealprocess.org/Resources/Publications/index.shtml>

⁴ http://frdev.ftcol.wo.fs.fed.us:8082/documents/statements/jointStatement2011/2011j_e.pdf

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.

- To inclusion of MP C&I in the process of forest management at national and regional level in the participating countries
- To inclusion of qualitative indicators in the set of MP C&I
- To recognize forest ecosystem services in a more comprehensive manner, related Montreal Process indicator's rationale and measurement approaches were revised in 2014.

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

- Challenges:
- Difficult to show standardized approaches/measures across 12 member countries.
- Lessons learnt:
- Each individual Montreal Process member country, in preparing their first and second Montreal Process Country Reports, has the option of reporting against these indicators, trends in forests and progress toward sustainable forest management. The Montreal Process Country Reports and the Second Edition of the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forest are available at: <http://montrealprocess.org>
 - Importance to continue sharing experiences/knowledge within and beyond 12 member countries.

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

- NA

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

- NA

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.

- NA

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

- NA

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

- NA

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

- Found little political leadership to introduce new innovative measures/incentives.

B. Progress towards the achievement of the GOFs

1. Please describe actions taken by your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process and/or by other major stakeholders in your region/sub-region to help achieve the following:

Any concrete achievement related to "goal" can be reported by individual countries of the MP in their respective report to the UNFF.

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"

- MP' set of 7 criteria and 54 indicators will provide transparent data and information related. The countries' report based upon 54 indicators will provide analytical information on efforts related.

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

- Reviewed/improved (2007-2009) MP C&I and Technical notes on implementation of C&I (rationale and measurement approaches) provide more attention on social and environmental benefits.

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"

- Country level reporting using the 7 criteria and 54 indicators provides data and information to identify trends in forest area and support initiatives in support of this GOF

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"

- Country level reporting using the 7 criteria and 54 indicators will not directly provide data and information related to ODA for SFM, however, some indicators will provide data and information related to investment in forest sector.

2. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on progress towards the achievement of the GOFs.

- MP countries collect data against a range of C&I and published reports that can be used to assess contributions to sustainable forest management.
- As described above, MP does not make its direct actions related to GOFs in general, however, MP, through its C&I reporting, is enhancing the relevance and use of MP's C&I for policy makers, practitioners and other users and hence will have an impact on the GOFs.

C. Contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs

1. Please describe studies or initiatives in your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process that capture the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

As to the MDGs, three indicators are fully or partially captured by the MP C&I as follows:
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.
Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
Indicator 25: Proportion of land area covered by forest
Indicator 26: Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers
Indicator 32: Proportion of households with access to secure tenure (owned or rented)

2. What indicators have been, or could be, used to assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs?

The MP's 7 criteria and 54 indicators are directly and indirectly relevant to considering sustainable forest management. Data collected and reported could be used to in part assess the contribution of forests to the MDGs., however, the following indicators in MP C&I are quite relevant:
1.1.a: Area and percent of forest by forest ecosystem type, successional stage, age class, and forest ownership or tenure
1.1.b: Area and percent of forest in protected areas by forest ecosystem type, and by age class or successional stage
2.a: Area and percent of forest land and net area of forest land available for wood production
4.1.a: Area and percent of forest whose designation or land management focus is the protection of soil or water resources.

3. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on MDGs forest-related work.

- NA

Section II: Review of the effectiveness of the current IAF and the future options

1. From the perspective of your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process, please provide a general evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement of the current IAF.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role of monitoring, assessment and reporting should be improved.• Lack of mechanism or platform to engage regional process. |
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2. Has the input of your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process been adequately taken into account in the Forum's deliberations?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any regional process' input does not been adequately taken in the past mainly because the nature and composition of the Forum. |
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3. What measures has your organization undertaken to strengthen the current IAF?
Please list the most important measures(maximum five):

- MP's strategic directions relevant to the IAF would be:
 - (1) strengthen member's capacity to MAR on forest trends
 - (2) enhance collaboration with regional and international organizations/instruments/processes and (3) enhance communication on the value of C&I and the accomplishments of MP.
 - (4) MP collaborated in the creation of the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) in FRA2015 with FAO/UNECE, FE, ITTO and OFAC in order to harmonize and streamline reporting questionnaires and to reduce the associated burden.

4. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened regional/sub-regional component in a future IAF?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It depends on the structure of a future IAF.• It could be done, for example, by adding a MAR coordination position in the UNFF secretariat, which is mentioned in the Co-Chairs's summary of AHEG1 in February 2014. |
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5. Has your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process worked jointly with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)⁵ and/or major stakeholders to support the work of UNFF? If yes, please evaluate the overall collaboration.

⁵ CPF member organizations: Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFF), Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), The World Bank, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

- The MP recognizes the importance of joint activities with relevant organizations including those of CPF. The MP regularly invites the representatives from FAO, ITTO, UNECE, WB, FE and OFAC at the MP Working Group meetings and exchanges experience, progresses, and views on C&I implementation.
- The MP has been working closely with FAO and ITTO and the CPF as well as CBD, UNECE, FE and OFAC of the major stakeholders related to harmonising and streamlining reporting formats.
- Voluntary partnership and collaboration among MP, FAO, ITTO, UNECE, FE and OFAC has functioned effectively and constructively through sharing responsibilities and ownership of CFRQ data and FRA2015.

6. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened collaboration with CPF member organizations and/or major stakeholders in a revised IAF?

- 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, ecosystem services, and climate change and their impacts on SFM.
- 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/Platform” – a virtual platform for collaboration on forest indicators – may be useful.
- There is the urgent need to set baselines, indicators and targets, improve monitoring and data collection and reporting to track progress of implementation and achievement