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**Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs to UNFF11**

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**Introduction**

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) is an intergovernmental organization composed of the eight countries of the Amazon Basin: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. ACTO's Permanent Secretariat (PS/ACTO) was created at the end of 2002 to provide a platform for political dialogue and regional cooperation, based on the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT) signed in 1978.

At the 10th Meeting of Foreign Ministers held in Lima in November 2010, ACTO's Member Countries agreed on the new Strategic Agenda for Amazon Cooperation (AECA by its initials in Spanish), the contents of which are the culmination of a challenging process of regional talks and agreement, including a commitment to the implementation of the programmes, projects and activities identified by consultation with the Member Countries. This Strategic Agenda is composed of sectoral agendas, along with two thematic strands, namely (i) the conservation and sustainable use of renewable natural resources; and (ii) sustainable development (raising the quality of life of the inhabitants of the Amazon region). The topics covered in the AECA are: Topic A: Conservation, protection and sustainable use of renewable natural resources; Topic B: Indigenous Affairs; Topic C: Knowledge Management and Information Exchange; Topic D: Regional Health Management; Topic E:

Infrastructure and Transport; Topic F: Tourism; Topic G: Institutional, Financial and Legal Strengthening; and Topic H: Emergency Issues.

The agenda of activities for the Forests Sub-topic<sup>1</sup> is included under Topic A of the AECA, and seeks to achieve: “*Integrated, integral and sustainable forest governance for the management and conservation of forests resulting in real benefits for local populations*”. This is the main technical instrument directing regional action in forestry. It was drafted jointly with the forest authorities of the Member Countries before being submitted to and adopted by the Foreign Ministers of ACTO Member Countries, and is being fully implemented since the start of activities in March 2011.

This report presented by the PS/ACTO to the General Secretary of the UNFF as input for its 11<sup>th</sup> Session is largely based on the progress and results of the implementation of said agenda.

## **Section I: Progress towards the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the GOFs as 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).

(a) With regard to regulation, in 2012 ACTO embarked on drafting a regulatory instrument to promote cooperation for the protection of natural resources against forest fires in the Amazon. The instrument, “*Framework Agreement for Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the Integral Management of Forest Fires by ACTO Member Countries*”, is a draft set of rules and regulations to govern assistance and cooperation among Amazon countries to ensure the integral management of forest fires. It focuses primarily on support and mutual assistance among ACTO Member Countries in fighting forest fires in Amazon forests. This initiative is currently being discussed by the countries to find the most suitable legal mechanism to make this regional cooperation process viable.

(b) With regard to finance and economics, in its aim to promote its actions to achieve sustainable forest management, ACTO has consolidated its portfolio of regional projects, which currently contains five projects amounting to approximately US\$ 28 million in non-reimbursable funding from different sources, such as KFW, the Brazilian Amazon Fund, the Cooperation Ministries of Germany (BMZ) and Holland (DGIS), and the ITTO. (Further details on these regional projects can be found under Question 5 of Point A in this section.)

In the same line, from 2009 to 2013, ACTO promoted the development and application of financial instruments for the implementation of pilot and demonstration projects in forest management, the management of protected natural areas and community forest management. These were implemented at national, sub-national and local level through government institutions

<sup>1</sup> Forests Sub-topic Agenda of Activities ([www.otca.info](http://www.otca.info))

and civil society. In total, approximately 1.5 million euros were allocated in the form of non-reimbursable funds from BMZ and DGIS to six pilot and demonstration projects.

- (c) Turning to information, one of ACTO's main roles is to provide a platform for dialogue and the exchange of information among its Member Countries. On this point, the agenda of activities of the Forests Sub-topic includes actions identified by forestry authorities where there is a shared interest in the exchange of information. One of the existing mechanisms is the holding of regional meetings every two years with the top-level forest authorities to assess progress in the implementation of the forest agenda and exchange information on achievements and challenges in the implementation of their respective national forest programmes.

As for education and awareness raising, taking up UNFF's offer, ACTO played an active role in the events of the International Year of Forests in 2011. It drew up and carried out a regional programme of commemorative activities, subsequently compiled in a publication that was presented at a parallel event in the framework of the Rio +20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The publication can be found at the following link: ([www.otca.info](http://www.otca.info))

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

- At the financial and economic level, one specific challenge is developing suitable methodologies for measuring the actual contribution of the forest sector to the economy of the countries and the recording of this information in forest statistics. At the same time, with regard to information, there is a need to produce mechanisms and tools that enable the socio-economic benefits provided by forests to be recorded, particularly the benefits for people and communities that depend on the forests for food, housing, energy and so on.

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.

As mentioned above, the PS/ACTO promoted the implementation of pilot and demonstration projects with the aim of: (i) fostering sustainable development in the region, placing emphasis on improving the quality of life of local communities; (ii) generating input for both national and regional political discussions, particularly on the practice of cooperation processes; (iii) recording and disseminating lessons learnt, results and impacts; (iv) assessing the possibility of replicating initiatives; and (v) forming concrete instruments of regional cooperation on forests.

The following are noteworthy initiatives and projects implemented by the PS/ACTO with the support of the Amazon Regional Programme (BMZ/DGIS/GIZ):

- (a) "*Sustainable forest management in native forests and commercialization chains of legal timber in the centre-south of the Ecuadorian Amazon (2012)*": Based on the concept of community forest management, this produced experiences and elements that subsequently became part of a model for community forest management recognized by the Ecuadorian Government. The project essentially promoted local capacity building for forest management and the commercialization of legal timber, improvements in the application of the forestry system, and the development of financial and legal instruments for forest management.<sup>2</sup>
- (b) "*Strengthening of the value chains of natural products of the Amazon through sustainable management in the Shuar communities of Transkutukú, province of Morona-Santiago, Ecuador, and the PALMASAD Producers Association in Madre de Dios, Peru*"(2012): This project promoted the production of cacao, seeking mainly to increase the income of the Shuar

<sup>2</sup> Publicación de resultados y experiencias de proyecto piloto ([www.otca.info](http://www.otca.info))

communities by producing the cacao more efficiently and ecologically, commercializing other non-timber forest products (NTFP), and strengthening the local organizational structure of the participating indigenous communities.

(c) *“Strengthening of border integration between the regions of Acre (Brazil) and Ucayali (Peru) (2009):* The project reinforced the governmental and non-governmental capacities of both regions with a view to coordinated cooperation actions for the sustainable development of the border area between the state of Acre (Brazil) and the department of Ucayali (Peru). The project contributed to the shared governance of border areas that are hard to access, hold high ecological interest, and are occupied by traditional population groups. Specifically, it built capacities and promoted coordinated action for environmental monitoring and control, facilitated local institutional coordination, carried out actions for the sustainable use of non-timber forest resources by the indigenous communities and other local communities, and thereby produced input for sub-regional talks in the formal agencies involved in the dialogue between Peru and Brazil.

(d) *“Development of the Cosmetic Productive Chain based on the Natural Pigments “Carayarú” (Arrabidaea Chica) and “Veé” (Palicourea Triphylla D.C.) in the municipality of Mitú, department of Vaupés, Colombia” (2012):* The project focused on the incubation of an agricultural processing business, “Sociedad Cosmética del Vaupés, SAT”. This is an indigenous organization created to produce, process and commercialize cosmetics based on traditionally used wild and domestic plants, such as “Carayarú” and “Veé”, two of the most developed production chains.

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

There are still challenges in community-based forest management in the Amazon region regarding the generation of long-term social, environmental and economic benefits able to ensure a genuine contribution to the development of rural areas. As challenge included linking the communities to set national policies focused on forestmanagement.

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

(a) Between 2011 and 2013, ACTO, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the CITES Convention and the Amazon Regional Programme (BMZ/DGIS/GIZ), implemented the regional project: *“Issue of CITES E-permits in ACTO Member Countries”*. This project promoted regional cooperation through the exchange of technology in the framework of South-South Cooperation, for the development of systems to issue e-permits to facilitate the prompt, safe and transparent granting of licences for the export and import of wildlife products from the Amazon forest that are currently threatened with extinction, in the framework of the CITES Convention.

(b) A new regional project was designed on the basis of the above-mentioned project. The new project, titled *“Regional Project for the Management, Monitoring and Control of Species of Wildlife Threatened by Trade”*, seeks to achieve increased efficiency and efficacy in the management, monitoring and control of species of wildlife threatened by trade in ACTO Member Countries. It seeks to do so by developing national and regional information systems, strengthening the processes for issuing CITES e-permits, developing tracking systems and fostering the sustainable management of wildlife. This regional project is supported by non-reimbursable funding of 10 million euros from KFW and is scheduled to start in 2015.

(c) Lastly, an activity currently in the pipeline having been pinpointed by forest authorities as a

priority is the conducting of a regional study on the productivity of forest management in the extraction, transport and commercialization of timber. Said study should primarily carry out market studies and develop scenario models for forest products.

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

One of the challenges of regional cooperation is, through the different mechanisms at its disposal, to help make the forestry sector competitive in terms of the production and commercialization of the goods and services offered by the Amazon forest so as to preclude changes in land use for other productive activities that are in theory more profitable. Efforts should be made to show the true dimension and importance of Amazon forest resources and the Amazon forest itself in terms of: climate stability, the regulation of the water system, soil protection, air quality, and the provision of food, housing, energy and medicine for local population groups, not forgetting the provision of all the products and sub-products currently sold on local, national and international markets. A big challenge is linking markets to promote trade in forest products from manage of legal provenance.

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.

Controlling the contraband of forest products in the Amazon region is a complicated issue. The control mechanisms implemented in the Amazon countries are not effective enough to curb the illegal trade of timber and non-timber forest products, particularly in border zones. ACTO has been addressing this issue through capacity-building for the forest authorities of its Member Countries on fighting the illegal trade in forest products and illegal logging. The PS/ACTO is implementing the following projects and initiatives on this subject:

- (a) *The project “Electronic keys for timber identification and the infrared spectroscopy method”*, implemented in 2014: a pilot phase of this project is being promoted and developed by the Brazilian Forest Service (SFB by its initials in Portuguese) and the Colombian SINCHI Research Institute, to be subsequently scaled up to regional level. The project will allow for the development and validation of an e-tag identifying Amazon timber, thus assisting control agents to correctly identify forest species.
- (b) A regional project should be designed on the results of the above-mentioned project, enabling all Amazon countries to use the *“Electronic key for timber identification”*. The forest authorities have called for the initiative to be backed up by actions to facilitate the identification of the origin of the timber, so the use of the infrared spectroscopy method currently being tested by the SFB should be promoted and bolstered.
- (c) *“Regional workshop on mechanisms for the monitoring of origin and the traceability of timber in Amazon countries”*: This event, held in February 2012, was an opportunity for the Amazon countries to share different experiences and progress in the control of illegal logging, along with the monitoring of origin and tracking throughout the production chain. The workshop furthermore allowed for an exchange of information on other mechanisms for monitoring origin by genetic and isotopic means while encouraging cooperation and the planning of joint activities to fight illegal logging in border regions.

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

One of the biggest challenges is to move from the phase of projects and specific initiatives to establish national forest traceability systems allowing to reduce the illegal trade of forest products and processes.

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

The portfolio of regional projects related to the sustainable management of forest resources (including wildlife) has grown over the last three years and now accounts for approximately US\$ 28 million in actual financial resources. The main projects in progress and/or with funds committed include:

- (i) Project to monitor forest cover in the Amazon region, with approximate overall financing of US\$ 14 million from the ITTO, BMZ, DGIS and the Brazilian Amazon Fund.
- (ii) Project for the institutional strengthening of ACTO Member Countries in ecologically responsible forest management and the conservation of biodiversity in managed Amazon forests, with total financing of approximately US\$ 1.2 million from ITTO.
- (iii) Regional project for the management, monitoring and control of wildlife species threatened by trade, with approximate overall funding of € 10 million from KFW.
- (iv) Binational project “Timber Identification Keys” with approximate financing of US\$ 100,000 from BMZ and DGIS.

The following projects are scheduled to enter the design phase of ACTO’s project cycle in the coming months:

- (i) Regional project for electronic timber identification keys and the identification of origin by the infrared spectroscopy method.
- (ii) Regional project for the prevention and control of forest fires in the Amazon.

Last but not least in this section, there was the “*Regional experts workshop to promote the exchange of national experiences on financing mechanisms for the sustainable forest sector in ACTO Member Countries*”. Held in April 2014, this event allowed for an exchange of national and international information and experiences on the state, progress and outlook of financing for sustainable forest management. It was attended by delegates of ACTO Member Countries, representatives of the UNFF Secretariat, and international experts in forest financing. During the workshop, common challenges and factors in forest financing were identified by the countries, revealing opportunities for the development of national and regional cooperation.

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

ACTO is entering a consolidation phase of its regional cooperation in forests. During this phase, the organization must rise to the challenge of demonstrating to its Member Countries and cooperation agencies its ability to manage the regional initiatives and in particular to obtain the expected results for the sustainable management of Amazon forests and the creation of real benefits for local population groups.

**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:

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”

(a) *Project for monitoring forest cover in the Amazon region.* This is an initiative seeking to develop and implement participatory forest cover monitoring systems in the Amazon and to consolidate the existing regional coordination platforms for forest management. The main problem identified and tackled by the project is an insufficient and unequal capacity for monitoring deforestation and changes in land use in the Amazon region, which significantly hampers decision-making on forest management and ultimately translates into weak forest governance. The results achieved to date, after 40 months of implementation, are: (i) Development of an institutional structure, at regional and national level, responsible for the implementation of the project in each Member Country; (ii) Over 80 specialists trained to use the monitoring systems developed by the Brazilian National Spatial Research Institute (INPE); (iii) Installation, equipping and running of seven national observation rooms in the Member Countries; (iv) Seven national plans drawn up for deforestation monitoring; (v) Technical and political discussion forums set up among the institutions in charge of the project in each of the countries. It is expected that, by the close of 2014, the project will have contributed to the production of updated data on deforestation and measurement, along with national deforestation rates, as well as the compilation of a regional Amazon deforestation map, as an example of regional cooperation efforts.

The new phase of the project (2013 – 2017), financed by the Brazilian Amazon Fund, aims to extend and consolidate capacities for monitoring forest cover, promote the conducting of research on the dynamics of deforestation and changes in land use, incorporate the monitoring of forest fires into training processes, and spawn discussions on policymaking to fight and control deforestation.

This project was officially launched at a parallel event during the 9th Session of the UNFF, while its progress and preliminary results were presented at the Rio +20 Convention and the 10<sup>th</sup> UNFF Session. At the 11th Session of the Forum, we hope to present a concrete regional result based on the work of the national observation rooms of the ACTO Member Countries. The project is currently funded by the ITTO, cooperation by the German (BMZ) and Dutch (DGIS) governments, and the Brazilian Amazon Fund.

(b) Proposal to draft a “*Framework agreement for cooperation and mutual assistance for the integral management of forest fires among ACTO Member Countries*”, with a view to furthering effective, mutual cooperation, helping to curb the loss of forest cover and the degradation of Amazon forests. A more detailed description of this initiative can be found under (Section I, Topic A, Question N°1) of this report.

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

From 2009 to 2013, ACTO’s contribution to the achievement of GOF2 centred on fostering pilot and demonstration initiatives with the main objective of promoting sustainable development in the region and with particular emphasis on improving the quality of life and livelihoods of local communities.

The principal initiatives fostered by the PS/ACTO, with the support of the Amazon Regional Programme (BMZ/DGIS/GIZ), are described in (Section I, Topic A, Question N°2) of this report.

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”

- (a) *Regional project for the “institutional strengthening of ACTO Member Countries in ecologically responsible forest management and the conservation of biodiversity in managed Amazon forests”*. This recently started project strives to develop and boost technical capacities in the Amazon countries for implementing forest management models and ecologically responsible best practices conducive to the conservation of forests and forest biodiversity. The project should consolidate the inclusion and implementation of guidelines on biodiversity conservation in forest management instruments and promote training for the application of such instruments, while heightening the exchange of information and experiences among Amazon countries. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and ITTO are partners in this regional initiative, which has overall financing of approximately US\$ 1.2 million for a 36-month implementation period.
- (b) *Project “Support for the trinational programme for the conservation and sustainable development of the corridor formed by the protected natural areas La Paya, Guëppí and Cuyabeno (Colombia, Peru and Ecuador):* Implemented from 2009 to 2012, the project assisted the consolidation of the La Paya-Guëppí-Cuyabeno Management Corridor as a model of the conservation and regional sustainable development of protected areas, under the joint, coordinated management of Colombia, Peru and Ecuador. Joint planning processes were developed and included specific plans for resource management and the regulating of land use in buffer zones. The project facilitated training and the exchange of experiences with a view to sharing technical strengths, optimizing the use of the available resources and cooperating in the field. It boosted joint operating capacities in the protected areas and developed legal and operational instruments, while documenting and systematizing the experience for subsequent dissemination and the inclusion of its products and results in ACTO’s Agenda for Protected Areas.
- (c) *Pilot project “Strengthening of border integration in the regions of Acre (Brazil) and Ucayali (Peru).* In addition to what is described in (Section I, Topic A, Question N°2) of this report, this initiative developed and consolidated coordination procedures in an area that encompasses the Sierra del Divisor, an area with one of the highest biodiversity rates in the Amazon, including various conservation units and indigenous lands spanning an overall area of over 2.3 million hectares of protected forest.

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”

ACTO’s Permanent Secretariat, whose operations are funded by contributions from the Member Countries, was helped in the 2010-2014 period by major support from various cooperation agencies, in particular the Amazon Regional Programme (PRA), which is funded by the governments of Holland (DGIS) and Germany (BMZ), channelled through the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ); the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), the Brazilian National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES); the German Development Bank (KfW), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the CITES Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Relations with international cooperation agencies are conducted within the guidelines approved by the ACTO Member Countries and also take into consideration relevant aspects of the guidelines for Official Development Assistance of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as expressed in the Declarations of Paris and Accra. The areas of cooperation are set out in ACTO’s Strategic Agenda for Amazon Cooperation.

The years 2012 and 2014 in particular saw a rise in financial resources and in the percentage of financial contributions from ACTO Member Countries, bringing these up to the same level as the funds from international cooperation. It should also be mentioned that the decision-making bodies of ACTO have adopted a financing strategy to support the cooperation actions envisaged by the organization, including a gradual increase in the contributions of the Member Countries and the involvement of State oil companies to support national initiatives.

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

ACTO is leading the preparation of a *regional report on the state of the Amazon forest* with the aim of revealing the size and importance of Amazon forest resources, as well as the use, protection and conservation thereof, to ensure the availability of timely and reliable information for the making and consolidation of public policies on sustainable forest management. This report will make it possible to have more accurate and specific information on the situation of forest resources and to be aware of how currently implemented national and regional measures are contributing to the achievement of 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.

- a. ACTO initiatives that could contribute directly to the achievement of Target N° 1 of Goal 7 of the MDG are: (i) *Project “Monitoring of forest cover in the Amazon region”*; (ii) *the initiative to establish a “Framework agreement for cooperation and mutual assistance for the integral management of forest fires among ACTO Member Countries”*, both described in (Section I, Topic B, GOF1) of this report.
- b. ACTO initiatives contributing directly to the achievement of Target N° 2 of Goal 7 of the MDG are: (i) *Project regional “Issue of CITES E-permits in ACTO Member Countries”*; (ii) *“Regional Project for the Management, Monitoring and Control of Wildlife Species Threatened by Trade”*; (iii) *Pilot Project “Support for the trinational programme for the conservation and sustainable development of the corridor formed by the protected natural areas La Paya, Guëppi and Cuyabeno (Colombia, Peru and Ecuador); and (iv) Regional Project “Institutional strengthening of the ACTO Member Countries in ecologically responsible forest management and the conservation of biodiversity in managed Amazon forests”*. The first two initiatives are described in (Section I, Topic A, Question N° 3), while the third and fourth are detailed in (Section I, Topic B, GOF3) of this report.

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

In the *“Tarapoto Process on Sustainability Criteria and Indicators for the Amazon Forest”*, a set of priority indicators were drawn up by ACTO Member Countries. These indicators, resulting from an

extensive process of consultation and validation, can help assess the contribution of forests to the MDG.

The 15 Tarapoto Priority Indicators are:

1. Policies and legal framework for environmental management through ecological and economic zoning.
2. Size of areas per forest type in the categories of conservation areas, related to the forest total area.
3. Rate of conversion of forest cover for other purposes.
4. Quantity and quality of suitable technologies for sustainable management and production.
5. Investment in research, education and technology transfer.
6. Quantity and quality of research and sustainable development projects in progress.
7. Forest management plan approved by the competent authority.
8. Frequency of the assessment of completion of the management plan and average percentage of completion.
9. Level of use of environmentally friendly technologies.
10. Ratio of environmentally protected areas to permanent production areas.
11. Measures for the protection of waterways from forest activities.
12. Number of direct and indirect jobs, and level of income.
13. Contribution to the conservation of biological diversity.
14. Contribution to the safeguarding of values and cultural diversity, along with the knowledge of indigenous and local population groups.
15. Contribution to the economy, health, culture, science and recreation.

At the same time, working towards the implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, in the 2010-2013 period ACTO and ITTO jointly harmonized the Tarapoto C&I with those of the ITTO, thus producing a new set containing 9 criteria and 34 indicators, of which the following have been prioritized:

<b>CRITERION</b>	<b>INDICATOR</b>
1.3 Land use planning	1.3.2 Area of deforestation and degradation
2.1. Political, legal and institutional framework	2.1.1 Forest law; legal, political and administrative framework for sustainable forest management
2.3 Forest management plans	2.3.2 Existence of national rules and regulations for sustainable forest management
	2.3.4 Surface and percentage (in terms of country, biome and forests in permanent production) of forests covered by sustainable forest management plans
3.1. Conservation of biological diversity	3.1.1 Surface and percentage (in terms of country and biome) of protected natural areas

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

See Declaration of ACTO Foreign Ministers on the Rio +20 Conference: ([www.otca.info](http://www.otca.info))

## **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.

ACTO-driven regional cooperation for the sustainable use and conservation of forests has been, and continues to be, largely guided by the International Arrangement on Forests and its instruments of implementation.

The IAF's main achievement in the regional process has been the provision of guiding elements for the design and implementation of regional cooperation for forests, as reflected in ACTO's Strategic Agenda for Amazon Cooperation and the agenda of activities for the Forests Sub-topic, currently being implemented in the Amazon region by ACTO Member Countries.

Among the weaknesses and areas for improvement is the need for closer bonds and greater coordination of the actions conducted by the UNFF and PS/ACTO, as well as enhanced synergy between the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all types of forests (NLBI), the GOFs and the agenda of the Forests Sub-topic, which is part of ACTO's Strategic Agenda for Amazon Cooperation.

2. Has the input of your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process been adequately taken into account in the Forum's deliberations?

The PS/ACTO facilitated the construction of a shared vision for its Member Countries in the frame of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) during the talks leading to the adoption of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all types of forests (NLBI). As a result, ACTO's contribution to the regional political dialogue, specifically on the subject of forests, has been recognized.

3. What measures has your organization undertaken to strengthen the current IAF?  
Please list the most important measures (maximum five):

The following measures stand out among those currently being implemented by ACTO related to strengthening the IAF:

- Capacity levelling and facilitating opportunities for analysis with regard to the global dialogue (UNFF, UNFCCC).
- The holding of regional meetings in preparation for the UNFF sessions, with the participation of forest authorities of the ACTO Member Countries, at which information on progress in the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all types of forests (NLBI) and the scope of the Global Objectives for Forests (GOFs) is shared.
- Promotion of the participation of specialists from the UNFF Secretariat in talks and information exchange at regional level.
- Promotion of the participation of members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) in the dialogue and the development of regional cooperation initiatives on forests.
- The active participation of ACTO and the promotion of the participation of its Member Countries in the sessions of the UNFF and in parallel events showing the progress of regional cooperation on Amazon forests.

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

Taking as a reference the results described in the report of the first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group for the International Arrangement on Forests (AHEG1), held in Nairobi from 24 to 28 February 2014, this PS/ACTO endorses the following recommendations

of the AHEG1:

- Clarify the functions of regional processes, particularly with regard to the modes of contribution to the Forum.
- Look into the possibility of transcending traditional regional processes to cooperate with other organizations on regional and sub-regional planes (such as ....., including the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization).
- Suggest that regions incorporate the Forum's resolutions and decisions on priorities into their work programmes.
- Improve communication between the Forum and regional and sub-regional processes.
- Include the results and recommendations of initiatives led by countries, regions and organizations in the Secretary General's report.
- Organize "Regional Days" in the Forum to highlight regional viewpoints and showcase regional success stories.
- Devise web-based regional communication instruments (information bulletins, portals, etc.).
- Hold regional meetings in years when the Forum does not meet, in coordination with regional organizations.

To complement the above points, we suggest that the necessary means be provided at the UNFF Sessions for regional intergovernmental organizations to facilitate dialogue among their Member Countries, with a view to building shared visions based on the deliberations and decisions of the UNFF.

5. Has your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process worked jointly with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)<sup>3</sup> and/or major stakeholders to support the work of UNFF? If yes, please evaluate the overall collaboration.

ACTO has been implementing initiatives in conjunction with ITTO, FAO, CBD, UNEP and GEF, but in none of these are specific measures carried out to support the work of UNFF.

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?

Following the rationale of Question N° 5 of this section, interaction and cooperation among CPF members and the secretariats of regional organizations should be promoted and boosted with the aim of supporting the actions conducted by UNFF and by the actual regional organizations whose work programmes or forest agendas are directly set within the framework of the IFA.

<sup>3</sup> 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)

Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of having regional organizations as members of the CPF should be assessed.

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