

## Building Blocks/Options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

### I. Introduction

#### A. Importance of forests to people and the planet

Contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda:

1. As regards the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet, the merits of wood products are not limited to the recyclable nature. It may be worthwhile to refer to their contribution to sustainable consumption and production as resources that can be permanently produced as long as they are utilized within the renewable capacity of forests; functioning as reservoirs of carbon for a long period of time; and less energy being required for processing compared with other materials.

#### B. Trends and challenges

1. Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, it is illustrated that the main drivers of forest loss and degradation are often outside the forest sector. However, it is also true that, regardless of what the drivers are, forest loss and degradation are in most cases triggered by logging activities and that it should be considered as the role of the forest sector to control those logging activities. In this respect, the fact that the drivers are often outside the forest sector should not be referred to as an excuse for the forest sector, but rather it should well explain that further improving the governance of the forest sector is the challenge in this context.

2. Under the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet, the causes of forest degradation should also include lack of proper forest management practices as well as overexploitation of fuelwood.

3. Under the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, it is illustrated that the demand for forest goods and services continues to increase due to rapid population growth and increasing per capita income and consumption in many countries. Given that this paragraph follows the explanation that the main drivers of forest loss and degradation are outside the forest sector, it is more contextually appropriate to refer to the

increasing pressure on forests for development into other land uses, inter alia, agricultural land, rather than the increasing demand for forest goods and services itself.

4. It would be helpful if the rationale could be provided with regards to the citation that the annual demand for wood alone is expected to triple by 2050 in the 6<sup>th</sup> bullet. If that is the case, it is imperative that the Strategic Plan discuss the way forward for increasing the productivity of forest land including the possible intensified utilization of planted forests for wood production.

### **C. Opportunities for enhanced action**

1. The Strategic Plan covers not only developing countries but also all member states including developed countries. While the enhanced access to financial resources such as GEF and GCF as well as the implementation of GFFFN are important elements of the Strategic Plan, universal perspective is required to describe “opportunities for enhanced action”.

2. 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet should be changed as follows.

Actions to improve productivity of existing agricultural land hold significant potential to reduce the conversion of forests to other land uses, while restoration of degraded landscapes can provide enhanced ecosystem services. Taken together, forests contribute to the achievement of SDG 15 and the steady implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The reason for change is that restoration of degraded landscapes does not relate to reducing the potential for the conversion of forests to other land uses.

3. 4<sup>th</sup> bullet should be changed as follows.

The landmark Paris Agreement of 2015 “aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty”. Forests, as the single biggest sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases on terrestrial ecosystems, are expected to feature in many of the Parties’ intended “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs) to the aim of the Agreement while reaffirming the importance of non-carbon benefits associated with such approach. In this regard, broader recognition of the values of forests both in carbon pricing and as carbon sinks and reservoirs as well as a wide range

of non-carbon benefits is important.

The reason for change is that it is questionable whether the Paris Agreement opens the door to looking at forest benefits holistically in the climate context because substantial co-benefits associated with forest-related mitigation options had been recognized since before. The language should be consistent with the Paris Agreement as to “sinks and reservoirs”.

4. Under the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, “and the GFFFN” should be deleted because GEF is not supporting the implementation of GFFFN. This is the other way around because GFFFN is to facilitate access to existing and emerging financing mechanisms including the GEF (ECOSOC resolution para 13 (b)).

5. Under the 6<sup>th</sup> bullet, “The potential to mobilise GCF resources to support the GFFFN activities” should be changed to “The potential of GFFFN to mobilise GCF resources to the implementation of SFM” with the same reason above.

#### **D. Value-added of the IAF**

1. Under the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet, CPF member organizations are described as the key IAF partners, however, CPF and its member organizations is one of the components of IAF (ECOSOC resolution para 1(b)).

### **III. Strategic approach/global goals/objectives/targets – Options**

1. Under the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, “international” should be inserted before “regional”.
2. While we shall reserve our submission on which option should be pursued at this stage, we would like to make some comments in view of appropriateness of languages and contexts.

#### **A. Options for strategic approach/global goals/objectives/targets : Option 1**

(1) Under the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, “Promote sustainable governance frameworks” is ambiguous, so it should be changed to “Strengthen forest governance frameworks”.

#### **B. Options for global targets/deliverables : Option 1**

##### Examples/options of how SDG targets could be translated into forest-related targets

(2) It is not necessary to enumerate all the examples on forest-related aspects of SDGs, however, it should be considered to include at least one target under each goal of which forest sector contributes to the achievement in some way in view of its multi-functionality covering a wide variety of SDGs. In this regard, examples below should be added.

SDG 7.2: By 2030, increase the share of wood biomass as a source of renewable energy produced from sustainably managed forest in the global energy mix.

SDG 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work in the forest sector for all women and men.

SDG 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage designated on forest ecosystem.

SDG 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters affecting forests (mountain collapse, landslides, avalanche, eruption, forest fires, etc.) with a focus on protecting the poor and the people in vulnerable situations.

(3) The targets below should be changed.

(a) SDG 13.1: strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity of forests and forest-dependent people to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.

In terms of adaptation strategy on climate change, it is important to strengthen resilience of not only forests but also forest-dependent people including through better evacuation schemes in case of emergency.

(b) SDG 15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of forests, halt loss of forest biodiversity and by 2020 protect and prevent the extinction of forest-dependent threatened species.

The original text of SDG 15.5 is “take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats” and the natural habitats include not only natural forests but also established planted forests.

(4) In relation to the means of implementation, SDG 15.b is more important than SDG 15.c.

## **B. Options for global targets/deliverables : Option 2**

(5) 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet should be clarified as this seems to be inconsistent with the Bonn Challenge which is a global effort to restore 150 million hectares of the world’s deforested and degraded land by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030.

(6) Under the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet, in what carbon pools are targeted should be specified, i.e. forests, trees outside forests, harvested wood products, among others.

(7) Under the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, careful consideration should be given with regards to the targets relating to forest biomass for cooking and heating for below reasons.

- The utilization of forest biomass for energy is not only limited to household consumption for cooking and heating but covers industrial consumption including electricity in some countries.
- The definition for “population that rely on unsustainably produced forest biomass” is not clear and it is difficult to obtain reliable data on it.
- Given that the world’s population will continue to increase and the economy is expected to grow, reducing the share of those relying on wood biomass for their

daily energy needs does not necessarily mean that it is conducive to sustainable production and consumption.

- In developed countries, utilization of wood biomass could be considered as a positive trend in view of their renewable nature. It might be worthwhile to consider setting a rather forward-looking target such as “increase the world’s population that rely on sustainably produced forest biomass for energy”.

(8) Under the 7<sup>th</sup> bullet, it is difficult to define and demarcate the timber-producing forests and hence it is impossible to report on its area.

(9) With regards to the illegal logging issues under the 10<sup>th</sup> bullet, the world should set the target to eradicate illegal logging. It seems too passive to set the target to only reduce the volume of illegal logging by X%, so a goal to eliminate illegal logging should be established.

(10) NDC should be added to the 12<sup>th</sup> bullet.

(11) In order to better respond to the increasing demand for wood which is expected to triple by 2050, as illustrated in “B. Trends and challenges”, it might be worthwhile to consider what level of forest resources including planted forests should be secured in the near future while securing its contribution to global carbon cycles.

## **IV. Implementation framework**

### **B. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **B.2 UNFF**

1. Under the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, “and sufficiency” in para ii) should be deleted because it is not defined as the role of the UNFF secretariat to report the sufficiency of the Trust Fund and furthermore it is completely inappropriate and unproductive to discuss the “sufficiency” of funds before reviewing on its achievements as well as effectiveness and efficiency of its operation should come first.

2. Under the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet, iii) and iv) are not stated in paragraph 17a and 17b of the ECOSOC resolution which defines the role of the secretariat of the Forum. Rather it is more important to refer to the (iii) of the 17b as the most crucial function of the secretariat.

#### **B.3 Member States**

3. While the 1<sup>st</sup> bullet explains that each Member State is responsible for the sustainable management of its forests and for the enforcement of its forest-related laws, the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet focuses on the voluntary contributions of the Member States toward implementing the Strategic Plan. It seems difficult to understand this storyline because the Member States are in a position to be responsible for the forest law enforcement, not in a position to voluntarily contribute to the implementation of SFM.

### **C. Means and Resources for Implementation of the Strategic Plan**

#### **C.1 GFFFN**

4. As referred to in the second bottom bullet on page 11, immediate priority on GFFFN would be to fully operationalize it by 2020. Given this, it is premature to review the priorities of GFFFN in 2020 and make adjustments as illustrated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet. In addition, the four priorities of GFFFN identified in the first bullet are almost the same as the function of GFFFN defined in paragraph 13 of the ECOSOC resolution and therefore it is not acceptable to make adjustments on these priorities before the mid-term review on IAF scheduled in 2024. In this

regard, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet should be deleted.

5. The 6<sup>th</sup> bullet should be changed as follows to be consistent with the ECOSOC resolution 6f (iii)(iv) and 14a.

The Forum will, during its odd year sessions, monitor and assess the work and performance of the GFFFN, review and advise on the availability of resources for SFM funding including GFFFN, and make decisions to further increase the effectiveness, efficiency and resources of GFFFN.

6. 7<sup>th</sup> bullet is not necessary since the performance of GFFFN should be evaluated through to what extent the access of developing countries to funds such as GEF and GCF is improved and hence it does not have to take too much time and energy for the discussion on indicators.

## **C.2. GEF, GCF and other Forest Funding Institutions**

7. Under the 1<sup>st</sup> bullet, the subject “Member States” should be changed to “Eligible countries for GEF funding”. Regarding “invite the GEF to consider establishing a new focal area on forests”, our understanding is that it has already been done according to the report by the UNFF secretariat during AHEG 1. The part “providing financial support to the GFFFN; and to Members of the Forum on preparation of their national reports to the Forum during its next replenishment” needs more clarification.

8. Under the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, the subject “Member States” should be changed to “Eligible countries for GCF funding”.

9. Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, clarification is needed regarding “UNFCCC carbon pricing mechanisms”.

## **C.4 Global Forest Fund**

10. This part should be deleted since it contains content to reopen the ECOSOC resolution.



## **V. Review Framework**

### **A. Evaluating progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan**

1. Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, “sufficiency” in the 3<sup>rd</sup> white bullet should be changed to “availability”.

### **B. Progress in implementation of the UNFI**

2. Under the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet, according to the ECOSOC resolution paragraph 6f(i), assessing the progress in the implementation of the UN Forest Instrument and the strategic plan should be conducted in odd-year sessions.

3. With regards to MAR, there is only one reference to voluntary national reporting under the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet “The Forum will establish a cycle and format for voluntary national reporting at UNFF12 in 2017, taking into account the review cycle of the global FRAs coordinated by FAO, and the SDG review cycle at the global level.” This seems to be a complete failure for using voluntary national reporting in an effective manner while the summary report of AHEG 1 in its paragraph 33 says that ‘experts highlighted a need to make better use of national reports for wider purposes...’ We would like to see ‘better use of national report(ing)’ appear in the Strategic Plan as well as 4POW as appropriate as a key element.

(End)

## The 4POW 2017-2020

1. According to the paragraph 6 (f) of the ECOSOC resolution, the summaries of the discussions of the odd-year sessions on implementation and technical advice for the purpose of focusing the attention of Member States on the specific tasks will be reported to the Forum at its subsequent sessions in the even years for further consideration and recommendations. In this regard, it should be clearly articulated how the outcomes of the odd-year sessions should be strategically linked to the subsequent even-year sessions in the 4POW 2017-2020 as it will provide the basis for the following 4POWs.
2. The illustrative format for the 4POW 2017-2020 should illustrate how national reporting should be utilized in the deliberations of UNFF sessions in a more explicit way given that national reporting should provide basis for policy dialogue for the Forum. Otherwise Member States will lose the incentive to submit their national report on the status of their forest management in accordance with UN Forest Instrument.
3. While the priority actions and resource needs in the 4POW should be geared toward meeting SDG 15 targets with a 2020 target date, it should become clear how the discussion on the subsequent targets would be organized.

(End)