

Survey

CPF members' views on contributions of forests to 2017 HLPF theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and achievement of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17

The 2017 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is scheduled to be convened from 10 to 19 July 2017 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. In accordance with the General Assembly resolution 70/299, the theme will be "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goal 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17 will be reviewed in depth.

The twelfth session of UNFF (UNFF12) is scheduled to be convened from 1-5 May 2017. In accordance with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 2015/33, the Forum will deliberate on its contribution to the follow-up, review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including through contributing to the work of the HLPF. In addition, the ECOSOC President invited the Chair of the UNFF12 Bureau to provide substantive inputs to the 2017 HLPF showcasing its contribution towards the 2030 Agenda in general and particularly for the SDG and respective targets that are most relevant to the mandate of the Forum.

Against this background, the UNFF Secretariat is preparing a Note by the Secretariat to facilitate informed discussion on the subject matter to be held at UNFF12. The Note will highlight key issues in the following areas suggested for the Forum's forest-related inputs: i) assessment of the situation regarding the principle "ensuring that no one is left behind" at the global level; ii) identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges; iii) valuable lessons learned on eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity; iv) emerging issues likely to affect the realization of poverty eradication and achieving prosperity; v) areas where political guidance is required; and vi) policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in poverty eradication.

The accompanying questions seek the views of CPF members on the contributions of forests to the achievement of the SDGs goal 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17 in the context of the 2017 HLPF theme. A summary of responses will be included in the Note to help facilitate informed discussion on the subject matter at UNFF12.

Questions:

1. Please provide your organization's view on the key contributions of forests to "eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

From the perspective of UNDP, forests can make a key contribution to eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity. Forest ecosystems provide critical goods and services for both rural and urban communities. An estimated 1.3 billion people – about one-fifth of the global population – derive direct and indirect benefits from forests and trees in the form of employment, forest products, and contributions to livelihoods and incomes. Some 300–350 million people—about half of whom are indigenous – live within or close to dense forests and depend almost entirely on forests for subsistence. Hundreds of millions more, including people in cities, depend on forest resources for food, construction materials, and energy. In providing for both people and the planet, forests serve multiple and symbiotic roles: they generate income, enable agriculture, store medicinal plants and biodiversity, help regulate watersheds, and are carbon sinks.

2. Please provide your organization's view on key contributions of forests to the achievement of Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17.

In recognition of the intersection of interests, opportunities, rights and responsibilities, SDG 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems commits countries to sustainably manage their forests. SDG 15 is complemented by and contributes to several additional forest-related goals and targets, including water (6.6). Through sustainable forest management, multiple benefits across a range of economic, social and environmental SDG priorities can be achieved.

In the response to question 1 above, an overview of the types of key contributions toward other SDGs are already summarized. For illustration, looking more closely at a particular example - on SDG 3 and health - forests and human health are closely linked. Outdoor and indoor air pollution caused by smoke from slash and burn land clearing for agriculture and related forest fires and the use of fuelwood causes significant health risks such as acute respiratory infections, skin disease and death. Smoke from simple biomass fuels may account for 1 million to 2 million premature deaths annually, mainly women and small children in developing countries. In Indonesia⁷, forest fires are projected to have unprecedented impacts, including more than 100,000 deaths a year, due to long term seasonal exposure to smoke particles. One benefit of forest-based biodiversity in many countries involves access to medical care through traditional medical practices. In India alone, some 2,500 plants are used medicinally, and for 400 million to 500 million Indians, traditional medicine is the only option. 70 to 80 percent of Africans consult traditional medical practitioners who often rely on medicinal plants.

3. Please briefly describe the priorities and challenges to enhance the contributions of forests to the achievement of Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17.

The challenge is that, despite progress, particularly efforts to reduce GHG emissions through REDD+, forests continue to be exploited at a highly unsustainable rate, often undermining the role they can play for local and national economies, and livelihood systems, and therefore the contribution that can be made toward achievement of the SDGs listed here.

The following, from the perspective of UNDP, are the policy priorities which can help to enhance the contributions of forests toward the achievement of the SDGs.

- **Promote integrated and participatory land use planning approaches that enable equitable tradeoffs.**

Such approaches to planning provide information to development investments that enable to foster a holistic view of the landscapes, improve the use of soils, water and forest ecosystems while promoting productive activities to tackle poverty and food security. Wide stakeholder participation in land use planning decisions reduces potential conflicts and enhances the rights of local and indigenous communities. These decisions are informed by studies and ecosystem assessments that improve knowledge and awareness of forest status, characteristics, dynamics and uses of trees outside forests and the broader ecosystem services they provide, including for local economic-social development and the livelihoods of the communities that govern them.

- **Expand the envelope of catalytic finance.**

This includes international public instruments such as REDD+, to better leverage domestic resources (e.g. Brazil in the context of fiscal transfers), and diversify private financing options, including environmental, climate and forest finance. Narrowing the significant gap between available funding,

including ODA and other sources, and the additional resources needed, is key to transforming the systems, policies and practices covering integrated forest management.

- **Ensure land security and forest resource use rights for indigenous peoples and forest-dependent local communities, which may be both of a communal or an individual nature.**

A growing body of evidence links community forest rights with healthier forests and lower emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, which in turn contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Moreover, when women gain secure land and tenure rights, multiplier effects on the environment, nutrition and food security, and household economic wellbeing can be achieved.

- **Strengthen forest governance, including better management and greater accountability,** including through community co-management of forest resources, **greening value chains,** sustainable forestry approaches, and developing **chain of custody systems.** This is key to ensuring that benefits flow to indigenous and community-conserved areas. Legal and regulatory reforms, policy enforcement and monitoring, anti-corruption measures, legal redress, and access to justice are also needed to ensure gender and conflict-sensitive, fair and equitable benefit sharing.

- **Anticipate and manage tradeoffs that undermine development and equity gains for marginalized groups.** Incentive frameworks play a critical role in facilitating compliance by governments, private sector entities, and community groups as forest investments increase. For example, the Bolsa Verde programme in Brazil recognizes the role of targeted conditional cash transfers in dis-incentivizing unsustainable extraction of forest resources, including compensation for loss of income.