

**UNFF12 Panel on contribution of CPF members, UN partners
And stakeholders
FAO Intervention**

Mr Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to address this session on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization, both as part of the UN System and as member and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. I would like to recognize and thank you, Mr Chair and your Bureau as well as the Secretariat for providing such a dynamic platform for discussing key agenda items.

Allow me to start by recalling paragraph 2 of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests, which states that it intends to serve as a “*reference for the forest-related work of the UN system and for fostering enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies among UN bodies and partners*”; and to provide a framework to enhance the coherence of the International Arrangement on Forests and its components.

This is indeed a crucial element of the Strategic Plan with far reaching and much needed implications, as fragmentation and insufficient coordination have been frequently identified as major impediments to faster progress.

Turning the Strategic Plan into an instrument that transcends the International Arrangement on Forests by encompassing the whole UN system was indeed a wise decision by member states as it represents a major step towards enhanced collaboration across the UN, especially through creating explicit linkages to other major global processes that are relevant to forests.

As we can already see, international organizations – including FAO – are aligning their programmes with the SDGs. It is to be expected that they will also take into consideration the goals and targets of the

strategic plan when developing their strategies and programmes on forests.

Earlier this afternoon I had the opportunity to introduce to you the new work plan of the CPF which outlines the collective contributions of the 14 members on the Partnership to the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan. These contributions, individually and together, aim to facilitate progress on each of the Global Forest Goals.

Because of the integrated nature of these Goals with respect to other global processes, the contributions the CPF will make to the Strategic Plan will also imply contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, the outcomes of the Paris Agreement on climate change negotiated under the UNFCCC, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the CBD, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Land Degradation Neutrality targets of the UNCCD, and others.

CPF's contributions will be delivered on various ways, but most importantly through the Joint Initiatives. The joint initiatives on forest finance, global forest expert panels, streamlining reporting, communication and information services are truly overarching in their nature, while others, like the one on forest landscape restoration, the policy learning platform or the proposed conference in support of the review process of the High Level Political Forum are more strongly focused on a subset the Global Forest Goals.

It is important to note that these joint initiatives are not restricted to CPF members. Several other partners are expected to contribute to and benefit from them, hence they intend also to provide practical examples of how collaboration and synergies could be further expanded and enhanced.

Needless to say that this is not so by chance only. The CPF has agreed on a new format for framing its activities. For each existing or proposed new activity clear reference needs to be made to its contribution to the Global Forest Goals, the SDGs, and the Aichi and

other relevant targets. In addition, it is clearly spelled out who will contribute to and who will benefit from the activities of the Partnership. This is a small but efficient step to ensure that all activities duly consider the need to contribute to the global development goals and targets and that scarce resources are well invested.

Let me now move from CPF to FAO.

FAO has aligned its revised strategic framework directly with the SDGs by using, to the extent possible, the SDG indicators as indicators for the achievement of the planned outcomes under its strategic objectives. The organization has made combatting climate change its highest priority and has dedicated the upcoming conference of members to the theme “climate change and its impact on the work of FAO”. It has created a new Department of Climate Change, Biodiversity, Land and Water, which is an expression of the heightened attention not only to climate change but also to biodiversity.

Recognizing that traditional sectorial approaches will not lead to the transformational change required to achieve the SDGs, in 2016, FAO developed a common framework to support the policy dialogue on identifying possible actions across the different SDGs to implement the 2030 Agenda. The framework is based on five interconnected principles including the conservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources; the enhancement of the efficiency of resource use; improvement and protection of livelihoods and well-being; enhancement of resilience of people, communities and ecosystems; and effective governance. It is almost impossible to not recognize the close linkages to the focus areas of the Global Forest Goals.

This framework was considered by all Technical Committees of FAO, including agriculture, commodities, fisheries and food security and nutrition, each providing guidance on its implementation.

One of the most important elements of the guidance coming from COFO and the other Committees has been the clear recognition of the need for a strengthened policy dialogue across the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors and for enhancing governance capacities to effectively deliver joint contributions to the 2030 Agenda.

FAO is also requested to support countries in integrating sustainable forest management into national development programmes and action plans, and in identifying new opportunities for financing sustainable development, with integrated approaches between forestry, agriculture, and livestock.

Driven by very similar considerations FAO has been asked to support countries in developing and implementing policies and measures for addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including through the promotion and implementation of sustainable forest management. Furthermore, FAO should support countries in integrating forestry into national development frameworks relevant for climate change, as reflected in the Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Programmes.

These activities, together with the associated capacity building, monitoring, assessment and reporting as well as knowledge transfer and technical advice – the traditional core areas of FAO's work – directly support the implementation of the SDGs that are relevant for FAO's mandate and to all the Global Forest Goals.

But thinking and acting across sectors should not stop at this stage. It is very likely that the next session of COFO will consider at least two cross-cutting issues:

a) a stronger and more effective contribution of agriculture, forestry and fisheries to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, in line with the recommendations of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and

b) mainstreaming biodiversity into agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

FAO has engaged in a major endeavor to facilitate these discussions. We are currently working on the next edition of the State of the World's Forests, which will be launched at the 24th session of COFO in 2018 and which aims to present a comprehensive view on the relationships between forests and the SDGs. SOFO2018 will try to quantify the contribution of forests to the SDGs, describe the efficiency of forest pathways towards the goals, present success stories from countries on applying the integrated approaches called for by COFO and other bodies, and make recommendations for the way forward.

Although we are well aware that forests can play a role in the achievement of all SDGs, the analysis will focus on a subset of those 10 SDGs which were evaluated as benefitting from the most significant and measurable contributions of forests and of those who use and manage them. These goals are: 1 (no poverty); 2 (zero hunger); 5 (gender equality); 6 (clean water and sanitation); 7 (affordable and clean energy); 8 (decent work and economic growth); 11 (sustainable cities and communities); 12 (responsible consumption and production); 13 (climate action); and 15 (life on land).

Through this analysis SOFO is expected to “make the case for forests in the SDGs” and highlight their role in the 2030 Agenda. By doing so it will also help clarify and strengthen the linkages between the SDGs and the Global Forest Goals.

Let me mention two further examples of enhancing collaboration on forest issues beyond sector boundaries. The first one is the report by the High-level Panel of Experts of the Committee on World Food Security on *Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition*, which will be launched in June this year. The Committee on World Food Security will discuss the forest-food security nexus on the basis of this report from its own angle, providing a unique opportunity to

strengthen the linkages to several SDGs including 1, 2, 6 and 15, as well as the Global Forest Goals, in particular 2, 3, 5 and 6.

The other example is the proposed international conference that was briefly referred to already as an evolving new joint initiative under the CPF work plan. The conference is proposed to review current key drivers of deforestation and how they are being addressed; identify key policy challenges to achieving the related targets of the SDGs and the Global forest Goals; recommend key actions by countries and the international community to achieve the targets of halting deforestation and increasing forest cover; and, most importantly, provide recommendations to UNFF13 and the HLPF, when it will discuss SDG15 in 2018.

The event is purposefully not intended to be a forestry conference, but rather a global conference which focuses on sectors with implications on forests. With this broad sectoral coverage, the conference is expected to demonstrate that transformational change can only be achieved by overcoming sector boundaries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude my address by moving to the global-regional interaction. As you are well aware, FAO has a global network of regional statutory bodies, the Regional Forestry Commissions. The interaction between these Commissions and COFO has been seen by member states as a major asset and an efficient vehicle for facilitating a two-way communication between regional and global levels.

The Commissions and COFO have been collaborating on several matters from policy dialogues to designing operational programmes. The outcome of the UNFF sessions has been a standing agenda item for the Commissions for several years now, while the COFO agenda benefits from the outcome of prior considerations by the Commissions.

To give you an example I would like to note that the next sessions of the Commissions will consider the outcome of UNFF12, as well as the forest and food security nexus on the basis of the CFS report and the preparations for the next Forest Resources Assessment, including the recommendation for the global core set of forest-related indicators. This is a very direct way of promoting the Global Forest Goals and the SDGs at the regional level.

In concluding let me deliver to you the invitation of the 23rd session of COFO to consider the potential offered by the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions for enhancing regional/sub-regional involvement, including through using the Commissions for regional dialogues related to the UNFF, noting that the respective roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined in collaboration with other relevant regional forest-related bodies and processes.

Mr Chair, distinguished Delegates, I thank for your attention.