

Concept Note

Expert Meeting on Reporting to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

21-23 November, 2017, United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON), Kenya

I. Introduction

Monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) has been a principal function of UNFF since its establishment. The ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 “International arrangement on forests beyond 2015” extended the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) to 2030, and included MAR on Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) among the core functions of the Forum. In 2017, the Forum, at its special session held on 20 January, adopted the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and a quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020. The reporting at future sessions of the Forum will therefore focus on progress towards the implementation of the UNSPF, including the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI) and voluntary national contributions (VNCs).

In accordance with paragraph 69 of the UNSPF, the Forum shall establish a cycle and format for voluntary national reporting that takes into account the cycle of the global forest resources assessments conducted by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the cycle for reviewing the Sustainable Development Goals at the global level by the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, in order to reduce reporting burdens.

At the last session of the Forum (UNFF12), the UNFFS proposed guidelines and format for reporting on progress towards the implementation of UNSPF, UNFI and VNCs.

UNFF12 requested the Forum Secretariat to further revise the format on the basis of consultations with Members of the Forum, other intersessional activities, the views expressed during the UNFF12 and pilot testing of the current draft format. The Forum, at its thirteen session (UNFF13) will consider the format and cycle, taking into account the work on forest indicators, relevant reporting cycles and the need to reduce reporting burdens, as well as potential communication products from such reporting.

II. Objectives

The main purpose of this meeting is to share experience gained in pilot testing, discuss the preliminary findings in terms of its usefulness in collecting information to assess progress in achieving the Global Forests Goals and targets, implementing UNFI and VNCs - which is the primary purpose of the voluntary national reporting to the Forum, and to revise the format, where needed. In addition to the format, it is expected that meeting will discuss following issues:

- Additional data sources and indicators to supplement information provided in national reports and to be used in the summary report on the progress towards implementation of UNSPF and its goals and targets;
- The Data sharing arrangements with relevant Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and Criteria and Indicators processes and other measures to better synchronize data collection and reduce reporting burdens;
- How the information collected through national reports could be used by the UNFF and the possible “end products”/ reports to be developed on the basis of the submitted information.

III. The expected outputs

- Proposal for a revised format for reporting on progress towards the implementation of the UNSPF, UNFI and VNCs
- Proposal for a list of indicators that will supplement information provided in national reports
- Suggestions on the use of the information collected through the national reports.

IV. Date and venue

The meeting will take place from 21-23 November, 2017 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) in Nairobi, Kenya.

V. Participation

The meeting is expected to gather around 40-50 experts from Member States and the CPF member organizations who i) have participated in the pilot testing process for the current draft format, and/or ii) have knowledge and experience in data gathering, reporting on and monitoring on forests and sustainable forest management.