

United Nations Forum on Forests
Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the Bureau of the Thirteenth Session
4 December 2017 (2:00 - 4:00 pm), UNHQ, New York

Participation

Bureau Members: Ambassador Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob (Malaysia), Ms. Luciana Melchert Saguas Presas (Brazil), Ms. Maureen Whelan (Canada), Mr. Tomas Krejzar (Czech Republic)

Secretary of the Forum: Mr. Moncef Khane

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Mr. Hossein Moeini Meybodi, Ms. Njeri Kariuki, Mr. Benjamin Singer, Mr. Ryo Nakamura, Mr. Tomasz Juszczak, Mr. Ryosuke Ujihashi, Ms. Yan Lang

Others: Ambassador Koki Muli (Kenya), Mr. Evans Maturu (Kenya), Mr. Ridzwan Shahabudin (Malaysia)

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

- 1- The Bureau agreed with the proposal of Ambassador Kamau on organizing a one day joint event with the ECOSOC on forests on 8 July 2018 in New York. The Bureau also agreed that the UNFF13 Chair to meet with the President of ECOSOC to discuss the above proposal.**
- 2- The Bureau invited the Kenyan Mission to prepare, with the support of the UNFF Secretariat a brief note, containing Ambassador Kamau's suggestions about the format, objective, participants, outcome, etc. of the Joint Event, for consideration and further discussion among the Bureau Members, via electronic means.**
- 3- The Bureau Members agreed that UNFF13 Chair to meet with the relevant UN senior officials and to find more information about DESA reform proposal and any potential impact on the status of the Forum and its Secretariat. The Bureau Members further agreed that, after receiving this information, they would further discuss this issue.**
- 4- The Bureau agreed to hold its third meeting in conjunction with the CPF International Conference in 20-22 February 2018, FAO HQ, Rome.**

Provisional Agenda
Second Meeting of the Bureau of the Thirteenth Session
4 December 2017 (2:00 - 4:00 pm), UNHQ, New York

- 1- Adoption of the provisional agenda**
- 2- Preparations for UNFF13:**
 - a. Updates on the inputs on the HLPF2018**
 - b. Main outcomes of the recent expert group meetings in Nairobi**
 - c. Latest developments in regard to the CPF Conference on Halting Deforestation and Expansion of Forest Cover**
 - d. Proposal on holding one day ECOSOC/DESA joint event on forests**
- 3- Other matters**

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

Ambassador Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Chair of the UNFF13 Bureau, welcomed members of the Bureau, Secretary of the Forum and UNFF Secretariat to the second meeting of the UNFF 13 Bureau held at UNHQ, New York. He invited the Bureau to adopt the provisional agenda. The provisional agenda of the second meeting was adopted.

2. Preparation for UNFF13

a. Updates on the inputs on the HLPF 2018

UNFF13 Chair reminded that following the decisions made at the first meeting of the Bureau, a letter was sent by the Chair on 17 October to encourage countries, among others, to consider highlighting the roles and contributions of forests in progressing towards the achievement of SDG15 and other forest-related SDGs at the HLPF2018. The Chair informed that he had received a letter from the President of ECOSOC on 27 November requesting input from the Forum to the HLPF 2018. This letter was shared with the Bureau Members.

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the content of the letter, informed that necessary actions would be taken to get an extension of the deadline so as to enable the Forum to submit its input to the HLPF2018, after its thirteenth session.

In response to the inquiry from Ms. Maureen Whelan, Bureau Member from Canada, UNFFS Director reminded that the four analytical studies to support the discussions of UNFF13 on the contribution of forests to the SDGs, would be on forests and energy; forests and water; forests and ecosystem services; and forests and sustainable consumption and production patterns. He also mentioned that the Secretariat is planning to have a case study from India on traditional use of biomass for energy at UNFF13.

The secretariat also updated Bureau on the progress of soliciting inputs from Member States and stakeholders on the contribution of forests to the SDGs, as well as to the HLPF2018, as per resolution of the UNFF12. In this regard, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that very limited number of inputs had been received, while some Members of the Forum and CPF member organizations had indicated they would submit their input at a later date.

b. Main outcomes of the recent expert group meetings in Nairobi

The Secretariat reported to the Bureau on the outcomes of the three expert meetings which were recently held in Nairobi on: i) Monitoring, assessment and reporting to the Forum (21-23 November), ii) Regional and sub-regional contribution to the implementation of the UNSPF (20-21 November); and iii) Major groups and other relevant stakeholders' contribution to the implementation of the UNSPF (20-21 November).

Ms. Maureen Whelan and the Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the outcomes of the expert meetings. The Secretariat expressed appreciation to Ms. Maureen Whelan, Bureau member from Canada, for the excellent manner in which she chaired the expert group meeting on MAR.

Major outcomes of the expert group meetings were as follow:

- The expert meeting on Reporting to UNFF agreed on a revised reporting format, cycle and timeline for the future national reporting, which would synchronize reporting on the UNSPF with other forest related reporting cycles. Participants also endorsed the possibility of producing a

“flagship report” to be prepared by UNFFS, focusing on progress towards the achievement of the Global Forest Goals, as a means to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to speak with a single voice on major forest issues.

- The expert meeting on Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders’ contributions to the implementation of the UNSPF identified core principles for the Major Groups work plan, priority areas of work by major groups for implementation of the UNSPF and the 2030 Agenda, and made proposals on the Forum’s contribution to the HLPF 2018.
- The expert meeting on Regional and Sub-regional Input to UNSPF discussed format and periodicity of the regional/sub-regional reports to UNFF and agreed that it should take reference of the UNFF's national reporting and with more general content. It also agreed on recommendations on the inputs for the HLPF 2018. In addition, the participants discussed recent COFO’s invitation to UNFF, and noted that Member States would be the ones to decide upon this matter.

In regard to COFO’s invitation, Ms. Whelan (Canada) stressed that Members of the Forum would be responsible to make decision on this matter. Mr. Tomas Krejzar, Bureau member from Czech Republic requested that the outcomes of these expert meetings be posted on UNFF website. The secretariat confirmed this information would be posted on the UNFF website, as soon as the relevant reports are ready. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that key recommendations of the expert group meetings would be included in the relevant documents for consideration of the thirteenth session of the Forum.

c. Latest developments in regard to the CPF Conference on Halting Deforestation and Expansion of Forest Cover

The Bureau was informed that the Steering Committee of the CPF Conference endorsed that UNFF13 Chair and the CPF Chair to chair jointly the above-mentioned conference. The Bureau was also informed that a letter had been sent by the Co-Chairs of the Conference, inviting the President of ECOSOC to deliver an opening speech at the Conference.

The Secretariat also provided an update on the preparation of the CPF Conference and shared the latest concept note and organization of work of the Conference with the Bureau Members. In response to the query from Ms. Whelan (Canada), the Secretariat clarified that the outcome document of the conference would be submitted by the Chair of UNFF13, Ambassador Yaakob, to the Secretary-General for inclusion as an official document of UNFF13. The Forum would then, discuss the contribution of forests to the SDGs in a broader context, taking into account the outcome of the CPF Conference and other inputs, and would submit its input to the HLPF 2018.

The Bureau member from Czech Republic highlighted the importance of cross-sectoral involvement at this Conference. It was also noted that the current invitees cover wide range of stakeholders from different sectors, including agriculture, fishery, livestock, mining, etc. In order to ensure this broad participation, the Bureau members agreed to convey this issue to their respective constituency members and encourage them to follow-up with relevant ministries to that end.

d. Proposal on holding one day ECOSOC/DESA joint event on forests

The Bureau held a discussion on the proposal of Ambassador Macharia Kamau, the Bureau member from Kenya, on holding a one day ECOSOC/DESA joint event on forests prior to the HLPF2018.

The Bureau highlighted the main intention of the event as raising the profile of the forest and agreed on the importance of having a one-day length meeting for discussion among related stakeholders. The event was expected to involve a broad field of stakeholders and attract participation from forest sector to the HLPF 2018. In that regard, the Bureau stressed on working to ensure wide and high level participation at the special event.

The Bureau also discussed different aspects of the event, including: i) financial implication; ii) level of participation; and iii) format and content. The Secretary briefed the Bureau on the potential logistic arrangement of the meeting, including conference room availability and estimated cost. Due to the nature of the event, the Secretariat informed that the event would be conducted in English. There would be no financial support for travel of participants.

In discussion on the format and content of the event, the Bureau agreed to invite Ambassador Macharia Kamau, the Bureau member from Kenya, to provide a one-page concept note with support of the Secretariat, the Bureau will subsequently continue to exchange proposals on the content and format of the event through electronic means.

Finally, the Bureau agreed to hold this event on 8 July 2018 at UNHQ in New York. The Bureau members also agreed that UNFF13 Chair to meet with the President of ECOSOC and discuss this proposal in order to speed up an early preparation for this event.

3. Other matters

a.

Following the request of Ms. Luciana Melchert Saguas Presas, the Bureau member from Brazil, the Secretariat briefed on current financial status of the UNFF Trust Fund. The Director stated that the programme activities of the Secretariat is supported by the regular budget of the UN and supplemented by extra budgetary resources of the Trust Fund. The Trust Fund resources are made available by voluntary contribution. Recently, the latter is largely from the United States and China. The Secretariat has been successful in securing resources from the UN Regular Programme on Technical Cooperation to fund the GFFFN activities in supporting countries. However, these resources have not been sufficient. The Bureau was also informed that potential substantial fund for GFFFN activities was linked with the possibility of establishing a branch office of the Secretariat on GFFFN in China, which was still under discussion.

The UNFFS Director informed the Bureau that no pledges had been made to the trust fund to provide travel supports for UNFF13.

b.

Ms. Whelan (Canada) requested further information on the status of establishing a GFFFN office in China. Mr. Krejzar (Czech Republic) also requested the Secretariat to update information on the GFFFN activities on the website of UNFF, which will be implemented soon by the response of the Secretariat.

UNFFS Director, informed the Bureau that drafts of host country agreement and memorandum of understanding for the office had been prepared, and the matter was still under discussion within DESA. It was also noted that establishment of the office would have no financial implication on the regular budget of the Secretariat.

He also confirmed that information on the activities of the GFFFN would be posted on the UNFF

website soon.

The Secretariat also added that an expert meeting on the guideline for the operation of the GFFFN is expected to be held in China in March 2018. The concept note and more information would be available for sharing with Member States once finalized.

c.

Ms. Whelan (Canada) and Mr. Krejzar (Czech Republic) asked for information on the ongoing DESA reform. The Director of the Secretariat provided information on the DESA reform proposal. The Bureau was also informed that the DESA reform had been deferred until the consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the reform of the UN Development system, which was to be released mid-December, as well as the result of consideration of the UN programme and Budget proposal for 2020-2021 by the end of the year.

Ms. Whelan (Canada) expressed her concern on the status of the Forum's Secretariat and called for actions to ensure that it would not result in down-grading the Forum and its Secretariat. Such an action would have strong implication on the Forum, especially in light of its recent renewed mandate until 2030, and adoption of the United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030.

Mr. Krejzar also shared the views that further information was needed on the DESA reform and its potential impacts on the Forum's Secretariat. He stated that such information would help his respective constituency in making the decision on the next step.

The Bureau agreed that UNFF13 Chair to meet senior UN official on this matter and seek more information on DESA reform proposal, after which the Bureau would make decision on further action, if any.

d.

The Bureau Members recalled their agreement at the first meeting to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the CPF conference (20-22 February 2018, FAO HQ, Rome).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.