



Eskinder Debebe | UN Photo

Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education, and inclusive institutions at all levels

UNFF14 Issue Brief April 2019



Introduction

Forests play a major role in the Earth's life support system and are vital to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as highlighted in the UN Forest Instrument and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030. About 22% of forest-dependent peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America derive income from forests and some US\$125-130 billion of gross value-added may be contributed by small-medium forest enterprises. Roughly 1.5 billion local and indigenous peoples have secured land and access rights over forest resources through community-based tenure. Gender equality constitutional provisions are now present in 93% of the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Forest education covers all institutional levels, from elementary to university, and all forms, from formal to informal. An efficient education system is based on both theory and practice and is instrumental in enhancing equality. It

aligns aims, materials and methods, and is learner-centered. It narrows the gap between growing scientific research and the utilization and adaptation of that research as practical knowledge.

Timber legality and law enforcement show substantial progress through improved regulations and forest certification. At the same time however, global exports of roundwood and sawn wood at high risk of illegality totaled around US\$ 6,330.8 out of a total of US\$ 15,076.6 million by 2014.

Realizing the full potential of forests to advance achievement of SDGs 4, 10, 16 and 17, as well as Global Forest Goals 3, 5 and 6 presents policy challenges that require governments' attention. In this regard, it is important to strengthen support for small-scale and community forestry through capacity building, and to develop simplified legal frameworks which encourage investment, and to

enhance cadastral registration of land tenure. Enhancing forest governance requires robust institutional capacity and timber and trade legality. Forest education is an important element for peaceful, inclusive societies with reduced inequality and should help empower vulnerable groups and meet the needs of lifelong learning. This could be attained through decision-makers' involvement in forest education, as well as by investing greater resources in research and development of education. Deepening democratic participation, gender equality, youth empowerment, transparency and accountability requires sound and innovative institutional arrangements. The complexity of these issues warrants working through partnerships across sectors and stakeholders, as defined in GFG 6 of the UNSPF 2030.



ENHANCING FOREST EDUCATION

Establishment of a Forest Education Initiative under Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

International discussion, exchanging ideas and especially teachers training and networking need to be strengthened. The CPF initiative could cooperate with education actions such as Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Major actions for Initiative would be to publish “Journal of Forest Education” and organisation of an International Congress on Forests in Education.

Increase research on forest education

Evidence based education is a must, similar to evidence-based forest management. Research is needed about the future labour markets, curricula aims and content, educational material, and pedagogical methods. Further research on women and vulnerable groups need to be emphasised.

Global core curriculum

Addressing critical forest-related development challenges, such as climate change, calls for cooperation to discuss and form fundamental global threshold (minimum level of knowledge/skill) competences for a forest education curricula.

Strengthen regional and subregional cooperation to meet education needs, especially teachers’ training and education networks

Teachers’ need both forest related substance knowledge and competencies

in pedagogical skills. On a primary level, more knowledge on forests is called for, whereas at secondary and tertiary level, teachers need additional pedagogical training.

Scholarship programme for masters’, doctoral, and post-doc level students from developing countries

As one of the main targets related to SDG4 there is need for scholarship programmes. A forestry and natural resources targeted scholarship programme could be established under UNESCO or World Bank Scholarships Programmes.

Social learning

Public awareness of sustainable use of forests and forest products needs innovative social learning applications, such as citizen science and open data applications. Social learning can contribute to all age groups of consumers.

Non-formal, Informal, and nano learning

Rapid social, economic, and environmental changes call for a more flexible approach to education. Many people have no access to formal learning and therefore, non-formal, informal and nano education is an option, especially in secondary education. A greater use of mobile learning for forestry sector workers without formal education, could be an efficient mode of education.

Learning entrepreneurship starting already at elementary education

Several social, technological and business innovations are created in small and medium size companies which also provide jobs. Entrepreneurship training in agriculture, agroforestry, and forestry field needs local hubs and online material and models.

Establish special master's degree for those not having background in forestry

This is more direct and sometimes cost-effective way to increase the forest related competencies among

professionals of both forest and non-forest sectors. It could also be an efficient mode of Life-Long Learning (LLL).

Executive education for political decision-makers

Non-degree courses have proven successful in some countries, as a way of disseminating forest related knowledge, to enable networking and to promote societal action for sustainable forest management. (GFG5 & 6).



Mita Sen | UN Forum on Forests Secretariat



ENHANCING FORESTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EQUALITY

Small-scale and community forestry foster equitable and inclusive development

Harnessing the potential of small-scale and community forestry requires policy measures such as simplified regulatory frameworks for local added value and investments in sustainable forest management (e.g. simplified management plans and tax regimes, fiscal stability and tax deductions), and infrastructure for improved market access. Technical support, capacity building (organizational, technical, financial, commercial) and inclusive finance catalyse local small-holders' and community forestry initiatives.

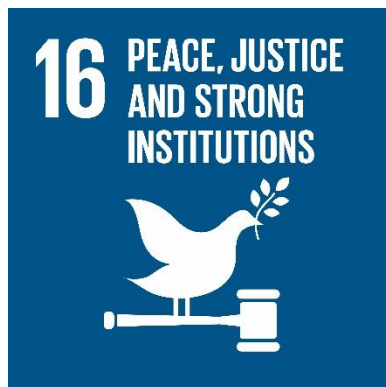
More effort is needed to advance gender equality and youth engagement

Further mainstreaming gender and youth perspective into policies entails, *inter alia*, supporting women-led businesses, peer-to-peer mentoring, business incubation, networks and partnerships at the national and regional level.

Secure forest tenure has a positive impact on local livelihoods and equality and may facilitate the preservation of ecosystem services

Key drivers for secure forest tenure include improved cadastral registration of community land tenure arrangements and customary rights and enforced

women's land tenure and access rights by raising awareness, developing leadership and operationalizing constitutional provisions. Resilient provision of ecosystem goods and services may benefit from flexible and agile payment systems rewarding forest stewards' contributions and ensuring their financial sustainability through predictable sources of revenue (e.g. fiscal instruments, blended finance and support to CSO initiatives through crowdfunding).



FOSTERING EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE FOREST INSTITUTIONS

Strengthen democracy through responsible, inclusive and transparent forest institutions

Policy dialogues that support the participation of vulnerable groups, women and youth in decision-making processes (e.g. using digital technologies) strengthen democratic inclusion. Furthermore, decentralization based on a level playing field and transparent land planning provides an opportunity to actively involve local communities in sustainable forest management. Adopting a results-based approach with key performance indicators enhances institutional quality.

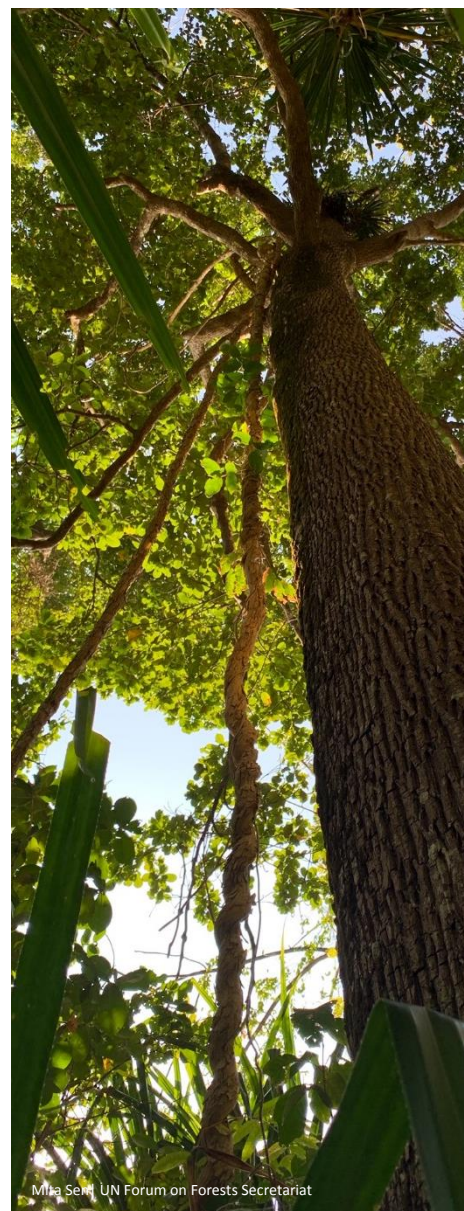
Address challenges in forest governance and foster timber legality

Enacting and enforcing robust legal frameworks is vital to curb illegal logging and trade. The EU FLEGT initiative provides a useful blueprint that could be

advanced by mobilizing partnerships for development in line with SDG 17. Voluntary forest certification systems, labeling and codes of conduct may contribute to enhance legality, provided they are combined with consumer awareness.

Access to public information improves institutional quality and accountability

Open Government Data policies advance transparency and accountability, create awareness and enhance social innovation. Moreover, effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms including policy research and reliable vital statistics supply inputs for evidence-based policy making, impact evaluation and improvement.



Mila Serhi / UN Forum on Forests Secretariat



Eskinder Debebe | UN Photo

About this UNFF14 Issue Brief

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with universal membership. The Forum is composed of all Member States of the United Nations and Member States of specialized agencies.

Since its inception in 2000, the Forum has reached numerous milestones including agreement on the first United Nations Forest Instrument in 2007, establishment of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) in 2015, and agreement on the first United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 in 2017.

The UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides substantive support to the Forum, prepares technical reports and analytical studies, and fosters dialogue to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues.

At its 13th session in 2018, the Forum requested the UNFF Secretariat to prepare background analytical studies on the contribution of forests to other Goals under review by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019, for consideration by the Forum at its fourteenth session

Accordingly, the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat commissioned three background analytical studies, in consultation with the Bureau of the fourteenth session of the Forum, taking into account the thematic priorities of the fourteenth session of the Forum.

The three studies are on: (a) Forests and climate change; (b) Forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment; and (c) Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The issue brief is derived from the background analytical study on Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality and inclusive institutions at all levels by Monica Gabay and Mika Rekola.

The full text of the study is available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/UNFF14-BkgdStudy-SDG4-10-16-March2019.pdf>

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Secretariat. The designations and terminology employed may not conform to United Nations practice and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Organization.