



## CONCEPT NOTE

### Session on Global Forest Goal 5 of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) and Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs) in Asia-Pacific

Songdo Convensia Convention Center, Incheon, Republic of Korea

Tuesday, June 18 | Room 305 at 15:30 - 17:30

## BACKGROUND

The main theme of the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forestry Week (APFW2019) is ***Forests for peace and wellbeing***. APFW2019 will be held alongside the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC). As with previous APFWs, APFW2019 will be organised along five parallel thematic streams. Stream number five is ***Innovating governance and institutions***. As one of the co-leaders for stream five, the UNFF Secretariat (UNFFS) in coordination with FAO will organise a panel discussion/workshop on “Promoting governance frameworks to implement the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 and enhance the contributions of forests to the 2030 Agenda in the Asia-Pacific Region”. This activity will be undertaken through sharing experiences from reporting on progress made in the implementation of Global Forest Goal 5 of the UN Strategic Plan to ***Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*** and the development of ***Voluntary national contributions (VNCs)*** in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 (UNSPF). In April 2017, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the first ever United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030 (A/RES/71/285). At the heart of the Strategic Plan are six Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and 26 associated targets to be achieved by 2030. The GFGs are voluntary, universal and encompass the four Global Objectives on Forests contained in the UN Forest Instrument (UNFI).

Enshrined in the UNSPF is the concept of Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs), as the framework for countries to communicate their individual commitments to the GFGs and targets. It provides a global framework for action at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests and halt deforestation and forest degradation. Country Reports are a vital source of information for assessing progress towards implementation of the UNSPF, the UNFI, VNCs and forest related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At UNFF15 (2020), the Forum will consider the results of this first round of reporting<sup>1</sup>, as well as the timing of the next round of reporting. UNFF15 will also consider preparations for a concise “flagship” publication (for release by the end of 2021) on progress toward achieving the GFGs and targets based on the first round of reporting. In order to harmonise reporting and avoid additional reporting burdens, UNFF members States will have an opportunity to communicate progress on their VNCs to the Forum in the context of the voluntary national reporting on the implementation of the strategic Plan due in November 2019.

Voluntary national reporting. Following the pilot test of a draft reporting format in 2017-2018, UNFF13 adopted the format for countries to use in their initial voluntary national reporting to UNFF<sup>2</sup> (paragraph 8 of the UNFF13 resolution). The format is aligned with the GFGs and is largely qualitative in nature. To reduce reporting burdens, relevant quantitative data will be retrieved from existing data sources.

<sup>1</sup> Countries are invited to submit their report to the Secretariat by mid-November 2019.

<sup>2</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/162/00/PDF/N1816200.pdf?OpenElement>



Global Forest Goal number 5 is to Promote ***governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***<sup>3</sup>. Its targets include:

5.1 Number of countries which have integrated forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies is significantly increased.

5.2 Forest law enforcement and governance are enhanced, including through significantly strengthening national and subnational forest authorities, and illegal logging and associated trade is significantly reduced worldwide.

5.3 National and subnational forest-related policies and programs are coherent, coordinated and complementary across ministries, departments and authorities, consistent with national laws, and engage relevant stakeholders, local communities and indigenous peoples, fully recognizing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

5.4 Forest-related issues and the forest sector are fully integrated into decision-making processes of land use planning and development.

The UNFFS has provided capacity building support to a few countries to collect and use forest monitoring data for evidence-based policy making, reporting and analysis of the contribution of forest goods and services to the national development priorities including the sustainable development goals and targets. One these countries will share experiences learned in the process.

#### Voluntary National Contributions for the achievement of the Global Forest Goals and Associated Targets

Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan in April 2017, an increasing number<sup>4</sup> of countries have announced their VNCs towards achieving the Global Forest Goals and Targets. However, as of today, there has been only one VNC announced from the Asia Pacific Region. It is important to note that actions and commitments by governments are critical for the achievement of the GFGs and targets.

These “voluntary national contributions” (VNCs), take into account the reporting countries’ national circumstances, policies, priorities, capacities, levels of development and forest conditions. They may also include national actions and targets related to other international forest-related commitments and goals, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and actions to address climate change under the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

Global Forest related indicators. In order to provide the information necessary for monitoring progress towards achieving the GFGs and targets, the VNCs and other internationally agreed forest-related goals and targets, member organisations of the Collaborative Partnership (CPF) have been working to develop a global core set of forest-related indicators aimed at simplifying and harmonizing concepts and terminologies and reduce the reporting burden.

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<sup>3</sup> Goal 5 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement, among others, of Sustainable Development Goal targets 1.4, 2.4, 5.a, 15.c, 15.9, 16.3, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10 and 17.14, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2 and 3; and are supported by UNFI actions 6.a, 6.c, 6.k, 6.l, 6.n, 6.w, 7.c, 7.h, 7.i, 7.j, m,

<sup>4</sup> Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Jamaica, Liberia, Madagascar, Morocco, New Zealand, Slovak Republic and Ukraine



## PANEL OBJECTIVE, MODALITIES AND OUTPUT

The purpose of this panel is to share experiences and lessons learned in collecting and using forest monitoring frameworks for evidence-based policy making, reporting and analysis on Global Forest Goals 5 and the contribution of forest goods and services to the national development priorities including the sustainable development goals and targets. The panel will also share experiences in the development of VNCs in the region. In addition, participants will be updated on the status of the global core set of forest related indicators and how this set can be used to report on progress made on Global Forest Goals and other forest commitments.

The panel will open with a brief introduction by the moderator, followed by presentations by the panelists. These presentations and the subsequent interactive discussions among AFW2019 participants may address one or more of the following questions:

1. What actions has your country taken to integrate implementation of the UNSPF and forest related SDGs into national sustainable plans and/or poverty reduction strategies?
2. What steps has your Government taken to prevent and reduce illegal international trafficking in forest products, wildlife and other biological resources?
3. What mechanisms have been put in place to ensure cross-sectoral coordination among government agencies?
4. What types of mechanism are in place to involve stakeholders in forest/ sustainable forest management policy formulation, planning and implementation?
5. What mechanisms are in place to involve the forest sector in cross-sectoral coordination among government agencies in charge of land use planning and development

The expectation is that these experiences will encourage more countries in the Asia-Pacific region to:

- Increase integration of the implementation of the UNSPF and forest related SDGs into national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies.
- Increase in the number of countries in the region developing VNCs
- Increase in voluntary national reports to UNFF from the region

## Panel composition

Moderator: Ms. Njeri Kariuki, Sustainable Development Officer

Panellists:

1. Mr. Kenichi Shono, FAO – Global Core Set of Forest related indicators
2. Mr. Sixian Zheng, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, P. R. China – Experiences on reporting on GFG5
3. Mr. Jesse Mahoney, Australia – Experiences on the development of VNC/reporting on GFG5
4. Mr. Zhang Zhongtian, AED - Contributions of APFNet to implementation of GFG5 on Governance in the region