

Summary workshop report
Capacity building workshop
on reporting on progress made towards the achievement of the Global Forests Goals
(GFGs) and targets of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2030 (UNSPF)
UNESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand
28-30 October 2019

Background

The UN Forum on Forests Secretariat/DESA organised a capacity building workshop on national reporting on progress made towards the achievement of the Global Forests Goals (GFGs) and targets of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2030 (UNSPF). The event was organized in response to a request¹ from the Forum (UNFF14) to hold a capacity building workshop on national reporting before the deadline for submission of voluntary national reports to UNFF15.

At its thirteenth session, the Forum adopted a format for voluntary national reporting on progress towards implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests, including the UN Forest Instrument and voluntary national contributions. At the same session, the Forum decided that it would consider the results of the first round of voluntary national reporting at its fifteenth session, in 2020, and invited members of the Forum to submit their voluntary national reports to the Forum secretariat by mid-November 2019.

In July 2019, the UNFF Secretariat circulated the reporting format to Member States, along with the Explanatory Notes for reporting which had been endorsed by UNFF14. The deadline for submission of voluntary national reports to UNFF15 is **15 November 2019**.

The Forum has requested the UNFF Secretariat to prepare, based on the initial round of reporting and in consultation with countries, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests² and relevant stakeholders, a concise “flagship” publication on progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals, for release by the end of 2021. In this regard, the 14th session of the Forum (UNFF14) encouraged countries:

(a) to submit their voluntary national reports to the Forum at its fifteenth session, as these reports will also provide the basis for the “flagship” publication;

(b) to share success stories and best practices as part of their national reports. This would be a vital input, resulting in a “flagship” publication that is interesting and informative, inspiring to experts and non-experts alike and inspirational for the next generation;

This workshop also provided an opportunity to brief the participants on the outcome of the Expert meeting on the Global Core Set of forest indicators, that took place on 22-24 October 2019 at FAO HQ in Rome. The Expert meeting discussed possible ways to enhance national capacities to generate and/or access socioeconomic data relevant to the GFGs and, inter alia, elaborated indicators related to reporting on GFG 2.1 on eradicating extreme poverty for forest dependent populations, GFG 2.3 on the

¹ Prior requests for this kind of workshop had been made by experts during previous intersessional activities

² A full list of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/members/index.html.

contribution of forests and trees to food security, and GFG 4.1 and 4.2 on mobilizing significant resources and increasing forest-related financing from all sources.

Workshop Goals and Objectives

The main goal for the workshop was to build capacity for reporting to UNFF. The specific objectives were to review draft reports to UNFF and address any potential issues/challenges that countries might have experienced in preparing their national reports for UNFF15. Workshop participants were expected to have submitted their draft national reports to the Secretariat prior to the workshop. The Secretariat used the draft reports to identify gaps/challenges, which were discussed and addressed during the workshop. More specifically, the workshop undertook the following activities:

- Analyse each of the GFGs and associated targets in the reporting format and address challenges faced in reporting
- Clarify the types of data/information to focus on in reporting to the Forum on progress towards GFGs and targets
- Further clarify (as needed) terms and definitions used in the reporting format
- Provide a forum for participants to share knowledge and national experiences in data collection and the institutions involved in compiling national reports
- Provide suggestions on how to report on goals/targets using terms that do not have internationally-agreed definitions;
- Further clarify the relationship between information submitted to UNFF and to FAO/FRA;
- Discuss the development and use of the Global Core Set of forest related indicators for reporting on progress towards the GFGs and forest related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The workshop discussed the types of success stories to be included in national reports. Success stories are vital in order to make the “flagship” publication more interesting to readers. In addition, success stories will be available on the webpage containing the country reports.

Regarding Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs), the workshop was informed that the UNFF Secretariat is in the process of developing a template for VNCs as requested by the Forum. The template will be reviewed by the Forum at its fifteenth session.

Finally, the workshop provided an opportunity for countries to share their knowledge, experiences, challenges and lessons learned in preparing their national reports to UNFF, to track progress towards forest related SDGs, the GFGs and the UNFI.

Participation

This workshop was organised for the benefit of Member States representatives who are directly involved in preparing national reports to UNFF15. Most participants shared their draft national reports with the Forum secretariat, prior to the workshop. Participants attended from the following countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), China, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Laos, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Niger, State of Palestine, Philippines, Samoa, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Eswatini, Uganda, Ukraine, Vietnam.

Date and Venue:

The capacity building workshop took place from 28-30 October 2019, at UNESCAP in Bangkok, Thailand.

Workshop Format and background documentation

The format for voluntary national reporting to UNFF and the Explanatory notes for national reports served as background documentation for the meeting, along with a background paper prepared on the basis of the first draft reports shared with the secretariat, which discussed some of the major issues and proposed topics for discussion in the working groups.

Sharing experience

The representatives of Jamaica, Kenya, Philippines and Argentina shared their experience of preparing national reports, and the challenges they encountered. Their presentations will be posted on the website after the workshop. The Workshop expressed its appreciation to these delegations for sharing their experiences which were considered very relevant and useful.

Group work

The participants split into three groups and considered issues raised in the background paper:

- Linkage of actions reported with individual targets: participants reviewed whether the actions and measures reported could be more closely linked to individual targets, not just goals
- Challenges in achieving goals: participants agreed that there were at least three major type of challenge (external, internal to the sector, technical and discussed whether their list of challenges should be broadened to include a wider range of challenges
- Distinction between “legislative and policy action”, “institutional action”, financial action” and “technical and scientific action”: participants shared their experience in trying to distinguish between the types of “action” bearing in mind that in most cases, actions contained elements of all these approaches.
- Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs): participants discussed how to reports on VNCs in their national report, given that there is a “repository” for VNCs on the UNFF website.
- Clarification of terms and definitions: participants discussed any issues arising from terms and definitions.
- Relationship between reporting to UNFF and for FAO/FRA: participants shared experience on combining reporting to FAO/FRA (mostly quantitative) with reporting to UNFF (mostly qualitative)
- Success stories to be included in the 2020 flagship study: participants discussed what are the essential qualities of a “success story” and what criteria should be used in selecting success stories for use in the flagship study, to be issued in 2021, which would draw on the UNFF reporting, as well as FAO/FRA results.

The working groups shared their results and after discussion endorsed advice on completing national reports to UNFF, which participants had found useful, and which might also be useful to national correspondents who had not attended the workshop.

Advice on completing the national reports to UNFF, emerging from the working group discussions

1. Ensure the report reaches the UNFF secretariat *by the deadline 15 November*. Reports received after that time cannot be taken into account in preparing the paper for UNFF in May 2020.
2. Ensure that the report is *transmitted officially*, with a letter from a government department and/or the Mission in New York
3. It is not necessary to answer about all targets – particular targets may not be relevant to your country. *Not every box must or can be filled*

4. Under each Goal try to identify which parts of the broad policy instruments (Forest Law, forest strategy, national forest programme etc.) address each *target*. This is necessary for the analysis of what countries are doing to achieve the targets.
5. The *instrument types* (legal/institutional/financial etc.) overlap as any action will have legal, institutional, financial and technical aspects. If in doubt, report under one heading, then cross reference under the other boxes
6. *Challenges* may be external (e.g. climate change, pressure from agriculture), internal to the forest sector (e.g. lack of forest strategy, insufficient resources), or technical (e.g. lack of skills, mistaken choice of species). Many draft reports focused on only one of these types. Consider whether you have identified all the types of challenge.
7. Keep to the *250 word limit*, which is vital to enable analysis. You can attach background documents if you think more detail is necessary
8. « *Base year* » 2015: if relevant actions were made before 2015, and are still in force, no problem to include them.
9. *Voluntary National Contributions* are high level official commitments, which must be formally submitted to UNFF (see repository on UNFF website). Report on progress towards VNCs **only** if your Government has officially submitted/announced it to UNFF. The references to VNCs in the national report and the VNCs in the repository must be consistent. VNCs are voluntary: if there is no VNC, say so.
10. Success stories should be « stories »: with a theme and a meaning or lesson, and a successful outcome (demonstrable!). In most cases, the « story » will be finished, or at least successfully applied on a stable basis. The scale may be local, national or even regional (e.g. inter-country cooperation and mutual learning to achieve forest related objectives)

Other matters

The Workshop was informed by China of the preparation of that country's Voluntary National Contribution.

The Workshop was also informed of progress in preparing the Global Core Set of forest related indicators, and in particular of the outcome of the workshop in Rome, under the auspices of CPF which had address the Tier 2 and Tier 3 indicators and proposed revised metadata and reporting methods.

Annex
List of participants

First Name	Last Name	Country
Ms. Julieta	BONO	Argentina
Mr. Bikash Chandra Saha	ROY	Bangladesh
Mr. Jamyang	CHODEN	Bhutan
Ms. Keodirile	GAEBUSE	Bostwana
Mr. Eric	KAFFO NZOUWO	Cameroon
Ms. Qi	MAO	China
Mr. Kaoussou	DIOMBERA	Guinee-Bissau
Mr. Abraham Santigui	KEITA	Guinea
Ms. Stephanie Anne	LEE	India
Mr. Dariush	BAYAT	Iran
Ms. Davia Kamar Natoya	CARTY	Jamaica
Mr. Patrick Mungai	KARIUKI	kenya
Mr. Bounsouance	PHONGPHICHITH	LAO
Mr. Elias	SEKALELI	Lesotho
Mr. Konikay Alexei	NIMELY	Liberia
Ms. Lydie Norohanta	RAHARIMANIRAKA	Madagascar
Mr. Custom Nkhamoza	NYRENDA	Malawi
Mr. Sheik Mohamed Reza	RAMJAUN	Mauritius
Dr. Thant	SHIN	Myanmar
Mr. Souleymane	BOKOYE	Niger
Ms. Alaba Modupeola	ADZANDEH	Nigeria
Mr. Thaer M.A.	RABI	Palestine
Ms. Karen Candace	CALANASAN	Philippines

Mr. Moafunua Afuvai Tolusina	POULI	Samoa
Mr. Mamadou	FALL	Senegal
Mr. Joel	MATSHATE	South Africa
Mr. Mohamed Ali	ELHADI ALI	Sudan
Mr. Nkosinathi Britewell	JELE	Swaziland
Mr. Bob	KAZUNGU	Uganda
Ms. Bogdana	DUBROVETS	Ukraine
Mr. Trần Hiếu	MINH	Vietnam
Mr Mahendra	JOSHI	Project Evaluation Consultant
Ms Stephanie	LEE	Consultant
Mr Christopher	PRINS	Consultant
Ms Njeri	KARIUKI	UNFES
Mr Tomasz	JUSZCZAK	UNFES