**Preparations for the midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests**

1. **Introduction**

In accordance with the programme of work of the Forum for the period of 2022-2024[[1]](#footnote-1), and its provisional agenda[[2]](#footnote-2), the seventeenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF17) will consider and decide on the preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) in achieving its objectives. The midterm review will be guided by the relevant provisions of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, in particular, its Section I and Section XII, Section IV of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), and ECOSOC resolution 2021/42. *It is important to note that the Forum will undertake the actual midterm review of the IAF in 2024 during its nineteenth session (UNFF19). Therefore, what is expected to be discussed and decided at UNFF17 is the actions, events and outputs which need to be carried out during the period between UNFF17-UNFF19 to facilitate the midterm review of the IAF in 2024 by UNFF19.*

1. **UNFF17 intersessional work related to the preparations for the IAF midterm review**

Considering the above and following consultations with UNFF17 Bureau, the UNFF Secretariat (UNFFS) will organize an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) before the end of 2021, with participation of experts from Members of the Forum, CPF member organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. The EGM will provide an opportunity to discuss possible actions, events, and outputs in the context of preparations for the IAF midterm review. The key suggestions from the EGM will be incorporated in the relevant official document for consideration by UNFF17. The exact date and modality of the EGM (in-person, hybrid or virtual) will be communicated in due course.

To trigger the intersessional work on this matter and to ensure broad involvement of Members and stakeholders of the Forum in this important process, the UNFFS has prepared the attached concise questionnaire. Considering the relevant resolutions, this questionnaire contains questions on the main elements which could be part of the midterm review preparatory process. The responses by UNFF Members and partners to the attached questionnaire will provide valuable inputs to the UNFFS in the preparation of the EGM’s background paper.

1. **Deadline for responses to the Questionnaire**

Members of the Forum, CPF member organizations, regional partners, major groups and other stakeholders are invited to submit their responses to the questions, contained in the attached questionnaire to the UNFF Secretariat at: unff@un.org, with cc to Ms. Yan Lang at yan.lang@un.org by 18 September 2021.

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**Annex: Questionnaire prepared by the UNFFS**

***UNFF and its Members***

1. ***What are the key issues in relation to the UNFF and its Members that should be addressed in preparation for the midterm review? (Choose all that apply)***
	1. [ ]  ***Assessing the progress made by the Forum and its members towards the IAF objectives, as defined in the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33.***
	2. [ ]  ***Exploring additional measures to improve the use of annual sessions of the Forum to foster achievement of the GFGs.***
	3. [ ]  ***Identifying further means to encourage more announcements of VNCs by Member of the Forum.***
	4. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***UNFF Secretariat***

1. ***What are the key issues in relation to the UNFFS that should be addressed in preparation for the midterm review? (Choose all that apply)***
2. [ ]  ***Assessing the progress made by the UNFFS towards the IAF objectives, as defined in the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33.***
3. [ ]  ***Improving the efficiency and strengthening the capacity of the UNFFS, including human and financial resources, and amplifying the impact of the UNFFS activities.***
4. [ ]  ***Enhancing collaboration and synergy on forest related issues at the global level.***
5. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Collaborative Partnership on Forests***

1. ***What are the key issues in relation to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) that should be addressed in preparation for the midterm review? (Choose all that apply)***
2. [ ]  ***Assessing the progress made by the CPF towards the IAF objectives, as defined in the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33.***
3. [ ]  ***Effectiveness, impact, and added value of CPF’s activities as outlined in its Work Plan, including its resources, Joint Initiatives, and recurrent activities to foster the implementation of the UNSPF and the achievement of the GFGs.***
4. [ ]  ***The criteria for CPF membership.***
5. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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1. ***Which process is needed to discuss the above-mentioned issue(s) in relation to the CPF and provide suggestions for consideration of UNFF19 in 2024? (Choose all that apply)***
2. [ ]  ***Independent/external review of the CPF, in consultation with the CPF and Forum members.***
3. [ ]  ***A CPF’s self-assessment of its effectiveness, added value and impact.***
4. [ ]  ***A CPF Organization-Led Initiative (meeting) to discuss the above-mentioned CPF’s self-assessment/ independent external review of the CPF.***
5. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN)***

1. ***What are the key issues in relation to the GFFFN that should be addressed in preparation for the midterm review? (Choose all that apply)***
2. [ ]  ***Assessing the progress made by the GFFFN towards the IAF objectives, as defined in the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33.***
3. [ ]  ***Reviewing the performance of the GFFFN and the impacts of its activities, as well as its guidelines to make necessary adjustments.***
4. [ ]  ***Identifying the key challenges and constraints in the work of the Network and strengthening its capacity to respond to the needs.***
5. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***UNFF Trust Fund***

1. ***What issues in relation to the UNFF Trust Fund are important to be addressed? (Choose all that apply)***
	* + - 1. [ ]  ***Assessing the impact of voluntary contributions to the UNFF Trust Fund in supporting the core activities of the Forum.***
				2. [ ]  ***Exploring options to encourage sustained and adequate contributions to the Trust Fund.***
				3. [ ]  ***Identifying the key challenges and constraints in mobilizing adequate resources for the UNFF Trust Fund.***
				4. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Implementation of the UNSPF***

***In accordance with paragraphs 67 to 69 of the UNSPF, the Forum should assess the progress in implementing the UNSPF as one element of the IAF midterm review in 2024. This assessment shall take into account, inter alia, information submitted by Member States in their voluntary national reports. Subsequently, through paragraph 8 of its resolution 2020/14, the ECOSOC also invited the Forum to synchronize future voluntary national reporting with the five-year global forest resources assessment (FRA). Accordingly, the submission of the next national reporting to the Forum will be harmonized with next FRA cycle in 2025. In this respect:***

1. ***Which of the following options would you consider most appropriate in assessing the progress in implementing the UNSPF for the midterm review, without compromising paragraph 8 of the ECOSOC resolution 2020/14******? (Choose all that apply)***

[ ]  ***Gather new information to be provided by Member States on their actions in implementing the UNSPF since UNFF15 (2020), in response to a concise UNFFS questionnaire and use this information, along with VNCs and the most recent global publications/reports on forests.***

* 1. [ ]  ***Use the existing information gathered in 2019-2020 and submitted by Member States to UNFF15, along with VNCs and the most recent global publications/ reports.***
	2. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***

1. ***What are the key issues in relation to “Contributing to the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” that should be addressed in the preparation for the midterm review? (Choose all that apply)***
	* + - 1. [ ]  ***Assessing the contribution of UNFF to the HLPF and the interlinkages of forests and SDGs since the adoption of ECOSOC resolution 2015/33.***
				2. [ ]  ***Identifying additional opportunities for enhanced contribution by UNFF to the HLPF sessions.***
				3. [ ]  ***Exploring means to attract greater visibility for forests at the HLPF sessions.***
				4. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF***

1. ***What issues in relation to “Communication and outreach strategy (COS) of the UNSPF” are important to be addressed? (Choose all that apply)***
2. [ ]  ***Assessing progress in implementation of the COS by Members, UNFFS, CPF, regional organizations and relevant stakeholders.***
3. [ ]  ***Identifying additional communication platforms and channels that are relevant to implementing the COS.***
4. [ ]  ***Identifying the key challenges and constraints in implementing the COS and strengthening capacity, including human and financial.***
5. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Regional and subregional involvement***

1. ***What issues in relation to “Regional and subregional involvement” should be addressed in preparation for the IAF midterm review? (Choose all that apply)***
	* + - 1. [ ]  ***An assessment of the involvement of regional and subregional partners in the UNFF sessions, and their contribution to the work of the Forum since UNFF11.***
				2. [ ]  ***Identification of options for further involvement of these entities in the future quadrennial programmes of work of the Forum.***
				3. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders***

1. ***What issues in relation to “Involvement of major groups, private sector, philanthropic organizations and other relevant stakeholders” should be addressed in preparation for the IAF midterm review? (Choose all that apply)***
	* + - 1. [ ]  ***An assessment of the involvement of these stakeholders in the UNFF sessions and their contribution to the work of the Forum since UNFF11.***
				2. [ ]  ***Identification of options for further involvement of these stakeholders in the future quadrennial programmes of work of the Forum.***
				3. [ ]  ***Other (please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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***Paragraph 42 of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 and paragraph 66 of the UNSPF***

***In accordance with paragraph 42 of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 and paragraph 66 of the UNSPF, in the context of the midterm review of the IAF in 2024, the Forum could consider:***

 ***(a) A full range of options, including a legally binding instrument on all types of forests, the strengthening of the current arrangement and the continuation of the current arrangement; and***

***(b) A full range of financing options, inter alia, the establishment of a voluntary global forest fund, in order to mobilize resources from all sources in support of the sustainable management of all types of forests.***

***Paragraph 43 of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 provides that should there be a consensus to do so, the establishment of a global forest fund could be further considered at a Forum’s session prior to 2024. It should be noted that the programmes of work of the Forum for 2017-2020 and for 2021-2024 did not include consideration of this matter by the Forum. In this respect:***

1. ***What do you consider the most appropriate course of action(s) regarding paragraph 42 (a) and 42(b) in preparation for the IAF midterm review? (Please provide your suggestion-Maximum 100 words)***

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1. Annex I of the ECOSOC Resolution 2021/6 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ECOSOC Decision 2021/225 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)