

**UNFF Expert Group Meeting**  
**Assessment of the Impacts of COVID-19 on Forests and Forest Sector**  
**2-4 February 2022 (Virtual)**

**Concept Note**

**I. Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an enormous disruption to human lives, livelihoods, and economic systems worldwide. It is the worst global crisis humanity has faced since the second world war with its impacts being felt in all aspects of social and economic spheres. The on-going pandemic has precipitated a massive public health crisis and short-term economic contraction, shuttered countless businesses whether big or small, thrown tens of millions out of work, disrupted global supply chains, severely strained fiscal capacity, and safety nets, and continues to test global solidarity and multilateralism at a time when they are needed to address its impacts. The pandemic has created turmoil in global economies, leading to the sudden loss of livelihoods, extreme poverty, income inequality and food insecurity in some of the most vulnerable segments of society. Due to broad range of vital services that forests provide for economic functioning and human wellbeing, as well as their roles in providing income, livelihoods, and well-being of people, especially rural communities, indigenous peoples, small farms holders, and other forest-dependent communities, it was important to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on forests and forest-dependent people.

The technical discussions at the sixteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF16) highlighted the need for assessing the challenges faced by countries, and the strategies, recovery measures and best practices for reducing the impact of COVID-19 on forests and forest sector. <sup>1</sup>. In response, the UNFF Secretariat initiated conducting 16 assessments in different regions and subregions. These assessments aim to identify and elaborate on the:

- Challenges faced by countries in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector,
- Strategies and recovery measures being adopted by countries in combatting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector; and
- Best practices adopted by countries and other stakeholders for reducing the impact of COVID-19 on forests and forest sector.

Considering the above, the UNFFS will organize an expert group meeting to allow the consultants, who carried out the assessments, to share the findings of their assessments with the participants. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for experts to provide their feedbacks on the findings of these assessments, and share their experiences and lessons learned.

**II. Objectives**

The main objective of the expert group meeting is to discuss and share views on: (i) the challenges faced by countries in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector; (ii) the strategies and recovery measures being adopted by countries in combatting the impacts

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Chair's summary of UNFF16 discussions in the report of UNFF16 ay: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/120/62/PDF/N2112062.pdf?OpenElement>

of the COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector; and (iii) best practices adopted by countries and other stakeholders for reducing the impact of COVID-19 on forests and forest sector.

### **III. Modality and expected outcome**

The UNFF expert group meeting will be held virtually from 09:00 am to 11:00 am (NY Time) from 2 to 4 February 2022. The discussions will be led by two co-chairs, to be selected from among the participants. Interpretation will be available in English, French and Spanish. The provisional agenda and program of work of the meeting is contained in annex to this Note.

The outcome of the meeting will be a concise summary of key points of the discussions during the meeting, which also include suggestions and proposals on the way forward. The key points from the discussions during the meeting will be incorporated by the Secretariat in the relevant official document for consideration of UNFF17.

### **IV. Participants**

The meeting will bring together experts from UNFF Members, CPF member organizations, relevant regional entities and processes, the private sector and civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

### **V. Background documents**

All background information, including the assessments carried out by the consultants will be available shortly at UNFF17 webpage at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>

### **VI. Registration**

Members of the Forum, CPF member organizations, UNFF regional and subregional partners, and civil society representatives are invited to communicate the name and contact information of their designated experts to Ms. Edith Niamke at the UNFF Secretariat at: [niamke@un.org](mailto:niamke@un.org), with cc to Ms. Njeri Kariuki at: [kariuki@un.org](mailto:kariuki@un.org) by **27 January 2022**. The Secretariat will then provide the link to the meeting to the registered participants.

### **VII. Contact Person**

For all issues related to this UNFF expert group meeting, including registration, please contact Ms. Njeri Kariuki at: [kariuki@un.org](mailto:kariuki@un.org).

**Provisional Agenda and Programme of Work (UPDATED)**  
**UNFF Expert Group Meeting on the Assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on forests & forest sector**  
**2-4 February 2022 (Virtual)**

Time	Wednesday, 2 February	Thursday, 3 February	Friday, 4 February
9:00am-11.00am	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening remarks by UNFFS Director</li> <li>2. Election of Co-Chairs and setting the Scene and introduction of regional consultants (UNFFS)</li> <li>3. Adoption of provisional agenda and programme of work</li> <li>4. Opening remarks by Co-Chairs</li> <li>5. Impacts of COVID-19 on Forests and Forest Sector: Presentation of the regional assessments:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Eastern Europe</li> <li>b. Africa</li> <li>c. Asia-Pacific</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><i>Interactive discussion on the presentations and reactions/inputs from the participants</i></p> <p>(Highlights from day 1 by the Co-Chair)</p>	<p>Item 5: Impacts of COVID-19 on Forests and Forest Sector: Presentation of the regional assessments (<i>continue</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. LAC</li> <li>b. WEOG</li> <li>c. North America</li> </ol> <p><i>Interactive discussion on the presentations and reactions/inputs from the participants</i></p> <p>(Highlights from day 2 by the Co-Chair)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Key suggestions on the way forward</li> <li>7. Closing of the meeting</li> </ol>