

## Questionnaire on the Mid-Term Review of the International Arrangement on Forests

### Introduction

In accordance with its programme of work, the UN Forum on Forests at its seventeenth session (UNFF17) adopted an [omnibus resolution](#). The annex to this resolution contains the actions to be taken in preparation for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The resolution calls for these actions to be implemented in a transparent and independent manner, and in close consultation with Members of the Forum, as well as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) member organizations and other relevant stakeholders. To facilitate the process, the UNFF Secretariat has hired several consultants to assist in the preparation of background papers and assessments. This questionnaire is prepared by the consultants to solicit views from UNFF national focal points and representatives of relevant stakeholders, for use in their assessments. You are kindly invited to send your responses to the UNFF Secretariat at: [unff@un.org](mailto:unff@un.org), with copy to [yan.lang@un.org](mailto:yan.lang@un.org) by **14 October 2022**.

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### A. Questions related to the United Nations Forum on Forests and its members

**Question A-1:** Considering the objectives of the [IAF](#), what progress has been made by the UNFF and its Members towards:

- a. Implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests?

The rate of forest loss has declined, but threats to forests are still on the rise, including climate change, poverty, energy market instability, increasing food shortages in developing countries, and rising food prices etc. UNFF provides a platform for discussion and exchange on the implementation of sustainable forest management for all types of forests. It has developed a global forest strategic plan--the UNSPF-- and Global Core Set of forest-related indicators, which provide guidance for countries to implement and monitor sustainable forest management, and has assessed the progress made by member states on the implementation of UNSPF through the flagship publication of 2020 Global Forest Goals Report.

- b. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels?

Some progress has been made in this regard, however, due to the limitation of UNFF's mandate, the role of coordination and consistency was not fully played and needs to be strengthened.

- c. Promoting North-South, South-South, triangular cooperation, public-private partnerships, and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels?

It has played a certain role in promoting South-South and triangular cooperation. Further efforts are needed to promote North-South cooperation, public-private partnerships and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels, which have not yet generated tangible results so far.

- d. Strengthening forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI)

Global forest governance is an important part of global governance. The strengthening of the forest governance framework was not regarded as a priority area in the UNFF, with little valuable support and limited discussion on the subject. There is also much room for improvement in promoting the means of implementation, particularly in scientific research and financial support.

- e. Strengthening long-term political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives?

The non-legally binding nature of the United Nations Forests Instrument (UNFI) and the United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests determines the limitations of the status and role of IAF in achieving political commitments, which is reflected in the limited number of member countries submitting VNC and the need to strengthen the implementation of UNSPF.

**Question A-2:** Could you list the objectives that have not been achieved, and how can this be improved?

Progress has been made on all objectives, but they have not been fully achieved. See the answers above for specific suggestions for improvement.

**Questions A-3:** Has the IAF beyond 2015 been operating in a transparent, effective, efficient, and accountable manner?

The IAF beyond 2015 was able to operate in a transparent, efficient and accountable manner. However, greater efforts are required to improve the efficiency.

**Question A-4:** Considering the functions of the UNFF in paragraph 3 of resolution [2015/33](#), what has been the progress made by UNFF towards:

- a. Providing a coherent, open, transparent, and participatory global platform for policy development, dialogue, cooperation, and coordination on issues related to all types of forests, including emerging issues, in an integrated and holistic manner through cross-sectoral approaches?

UNFF basically fulfils these functions and provides a good opportunity for all parties to participate. However, it needs to be further explored in promoting cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation, and there is currently no effective mechanism to promote the participation of other sectors.

- b. Promoting, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of SFM, in particular, the UNFI?

Considerable progress has been made. More than 50 countries submitted their voluntary national reports in 2019, laying a good foundation for the publication of the 2022 Global Forest Goals Report. However, more countries need to be encouraged to submit their implementation reports. UNSPF identified six global forest targets and 26 specific objectives, some of which are not operable or lack systematic data, making assessment and monitoring difficult. It is necessary for the CPF to better play its role to further improve the global core set of forest-related indicators, and encourage and support countries to carry out the evaluation and application of the GCS.

- c. Mobilizing, catalyzing, and facilitating access to financial, technical, and scientific resources?

Some progress has been made. The GFFFN has played important role in helping the developing countries to obtain financial resources. However, the capacity of GFFFN need to be improved significantly to meet the request from more developing countries. There is also need to facilitate the cooperation between the developing and developed member states to make greater progress in facilitating the obtainment of technological and scientific resources, especially the transferring of environmentally sound technologies.

- d. Promoting governance frameworks, enabling conditions at all levels to achieve SFM?

Some progress has been made in improving the forest-related legal framework and promoting the participation of all levels in forest governance. However, the fragmentation of global forest governance has not been fundamentally reversed, and there is still much room for improvement to achieve the goal of good governance.

- e. Strengthening high-level political engagement, with the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, in support of SFM?

UNFF has taken positive steps to encourage and facilitate the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, and made efforts to strengthen high-level political participation. The participation of more regional processes should be encouraged and supported.

**Question A-5:** Are you satisfied with the current level of engagement of Members and stakeholders in the Forum's intersessional activities, and what are your suggestions to improve the use of the UNFF's annual sessions, including intersessional activities?

Not satisfied. The overall participation is not high. The delegates who participated in the inter-sessional activities were basically members who were active in the annual sessions of the Forum. It is suggested that the following measures be taken to make better use of the annual sessions and inter-sessional activities.

1. Mobilize more countries and regional organizations and processes to participate in UNFF;
2. Carry out targeted thematic discussions in the form of typical case analysis and grouping of different regions;
3. Increase opportunities for experience exchange and sharing among countries in the same region.

**Question A-6:** What do you suggest could be done to encourage more Members of the UNFF to submit voluntary national reports and voluntary national contributions?

1. Acknowledge the members that have submitted national reports and VNCs in an appropriate manner to encourage the submission of reports by more member States;
2. FurtherSimplify the format of the report and VNC;
3. Enhance experience sharing in submitting reports and VNCs by countries in the same region.

## **B. Questions related to the Forum secretariat**

**Question B-1:** What are the achievements of the Secretariat in carrying out its functions and in making progress towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, as defined in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33?

In line with its mandates, the Secretariat has made positive efforts in promoting the realization of IAF objectives and achieved certain results, represented especially by promoting the formulation of UNSPF and organizing the publication of the 2020 Global Forest Goals Report.

**Question B-2:** What are the gaps in and the existing capacity of the secretariat with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations, strengthening its capacities, gaining a better understanding of its decision-making processes and procedures, and amplifying the impact of its activities?

The existing capacity of the UNFF Secretariat can basically meet the requirements of its mandates. It has fulfilled the main tasks decided by the UNFF, and responded to the inquiries of member States in a timely manner. However, the limited post establishment and regular budget have created great obstacles for the Secretariat to play its functions and improve its work efficiency and capacity, which do not match its increasing work load. On the other hand, the main tasks (work plans) of the Secretariat and the specific mandates of its officials are not clear enough which have created some difficulties for member states to contact the right person on specific issues.

**Question B-3:** What are your suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the UNFF Secretariat in carrying out its functions and in making progress towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, and enhance collaboration and synergies, and reduce duplication?

1. Strengthen the communications between the UNFF Secretariat and other international organizations and institutions;
2. Increase the participation of the UNFF Secretariat in relevant international conferences;
3. Improve the structure of the official website of UNFF, enrich the content of the website, and make it easier to query relevant information.

### C. Questions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

**Question C-1:** Since 2015 what is your assessment of the extent of progress on CPF’s contribution to the IAF objectives as defined in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33?

CPF and its member organizations have been active in fulfilling their responsibilities and made good use of its advantages in science and technology. According to the work plan, the CPF members have jointly carried out a number of activities, which have achieved remarkable results. Some influential brands have been formed, such as Wangari Maathai Award, Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators, and Global Forest Expert Panel, etc. Also, they have released professional reports on key issues related to sustainable development, such as climate change, biodiversity and water resources, which have played an important role in raising international and public awareness of the important role of forests in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and have made positive contributions to achieving the IAF targets. However, there is still room for improvement in encouraging in-depth participation of all member organizations in UNFF, expanding the scope of members, and in cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergy.

**Question C-2:** In the table below kindly indicate your assessment of the effectiveness, impact and added value of the activities, in particular, Joint Initiatives of the CPF as outlined in its workplan (2017-2020).

Item	Key CPF activities as outlined in its 2017-2020 Workplan	In your view what has been the effectiveness of CPF in the following areas (please explain)	In your view what has been the Impact and value-added of the CPF in the following areas (please explain)
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1	Contributions to UNFF documents & sessions	Relatively effective. Drawing on the rich expertise, the CPF assisted the UNFF Secretariat in drafting a number of background documents, which helped delegates to better understand and facilitate discussion of the relevant topics.	The main impact is that CPF members come from a wide range of forest-related fields and are uniquely positioned to exchange and disseminate knowledge across disciplines, helping forum members broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding of forest issues.
2	Streamlining forest reporting	Relatively Effective. The framework for reporting has been simplified to some extent through coordination with FRA and the development of global core set of forest-related indicators. More efforts are needed to further simplify the format and improve the GCS.	The CPF can play an important role in simplifying forest reporting. Many CPF member organizations require member countries to submit reports, especially FAO's FRA. Through the CPF, the structure and requirements of related reports can be coordinated and connected, which will greatly reduce the reporting burden of forum member countries.
3	Global Forest Expert Panel	Effective. Under the leadership of IUFRO, the GFEP has produced seven high-quality reports since its establishment, which have interpreted the relationship between forests and climate change, biodiversity, food security, water, poverty alleviation and other related fields, and deepened the public's understanding of the importance of forests.	With the largest global network of researchers in forestry and related disciplines, CPF members have a huge advantage in accessing and sharing the latest and most comprehensive knowledge and can play a greater role on GFEP program.
4	Global Forest Information Service	Not clear, we have not used the service.	Not clear
5	CPF meetings, side events & OLIs	Very effective. It has promoted the focus and discussion on key forestry issues.	The CPF brings together professionals from different fields to contribute to the debate on forest issues.
7	CPF Communicators network	Effective. It has played an important role in determining the theme of the International Day of Forests each year and promoting IDF publicity.	Members of the CPF have their own International days, which can be linked to IDF to convey a unified and coordinated message about forests and SFM.
8	Forest Landscape Restoration	Relatively effective. Some progress has been made in the forest landscape	The interdisciplinary advantages of CPF expand the concept of forest restoration

		restoration project with a number of pioneering demonstration activities, but the effectiveness is yet to be seen and many activities remain to be implemented.	into forest landscape restoration, and provide an innovative solution to systematic solution of the problems caused by forest degradation through fully considering the multiple benefits and mutual impacts of forests.
10	Forest Finance Facilitation	Fair. It has played a positive role in providing financing information, but it can play a bigger role in increasing financing channels and facilitating the access of developing countries to financial resources.	Some members of the CPF are acting as financial and aid agencies, such as the World Bank, GEF, and UNDP. They have natural advantages in terms of financing information and financing channels.

**Question C-3:** The CPF Policy Document recognises the need for periodic review of its membership given the evolving nature of its mandate. In your view what should be:

- a. the key elements in setting criteria for membership of the CPF (take into account CPF rules of procedure as annexed to the CPF policy document<sup>1</sup>)

Whether the mandates of the organization involve forest management and whether it has significant global or regional influence.

- b. the frequency for review of the criteria (e.g., below 5 years; 6-10 years; etc.)

3-5years.

- c. the process for triggering a review of the CPF membership

The organization initiates an application or request for joining the CPF.

**Question C-4:** In your view, how can the CPF provide greater support for policy development and implementation of UNFF resolutions/decisions and in particular assist countries in the implementation of the UNSPF.

To enhance the participation of member organizations, increase the visibility of UNFF, provide more support to member countries on technical issues, and play a bigger role in the mainstreaming of forest issues. The CPF is a powerful platform, but there is room for improvement in how its activities are closely linked to the UNSPF framework, especially to examine the actual benefits of producing a large number of technical reports.

#### **D. Questions related to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network**

**Question D-1:** Have you requested assistance from the GFFFN for mobilizing forest financing? If yes, how long did it take to receive a response and what was the outcome of your request?

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<sup>1</sup> CPF Policy Document: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-policy-document/index.html>

Never.

**Question D-2:** If you participated in GFFFN capacity building/training workshops, did forest financing improve for your country as a result? If yes, how did it improve?

Never.

**Question D-3:** Was your country able to develop or update its forest financing strategy with the support of the GFFFN?

We have not received GFFFN support.

**Question D-4:** What funding sources have you targeted for forest financing with the support of the GFFFN and how successful were your efforts?

We have not received GFFFN support.

#### **E. Questions related to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests**

**Question E-1:** What are the contributions of your country /organization to the UNFF trust fund?

China has contributed more than US \$2.2 million to the UNFF Trust Fund since 2012.

**Question E-2:** What is the impact of voluntary contributions to the UNFF trust fund on supporting the core activities of the UNFF?

Contributions from the UNFF Trust Fund have significantly enhanced the capacity of the UNFF Secretariat to carry out its responsibilities, particularly in supporting the participation of developing countries in UNFF activities and in enhancing forestry financing capacity.

**Question E-3:** What are the options to encourage sustained and adequate contributions to the trust fund?

Formulate and publicize, annually, planned activities and funding gaps in accordance with the mandates of the UNFF Secretariat and UNFF resolutions; Report the effects of contributions; and, design targeted activities taking into account donors' priority areas.

**Question E-4:** What are the key challenges and constraints with regard to mobilizing adequate resources for the trust fund?

Forests and forestry are not currently a priority area for most countries, and the weak global economic situation has led to a decline in the willingness of countries concerned to contribute to the Trust Fund.

#### **F. Questions related to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030**

**Question F-1:** What significant actions has your country or organisation undertaken since 2020 to implement the UNSPF?<sup>2</sup> What are the main challenges and constraints your country or organisation is facing in implementing the UNSPF?

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<sup>2</sup> There is no need to repeat information which has already been supplied to UNFF, notably in your country's voluntary national report.

Since 2020, China has mainly taken the following actions to implement UNSPF:

1. Carried out large-scale greening of land in a scientific manner;
2. Accelerate the development of the system of natural protected areas with national parks as the main component;
3. Continuously strengthen the protection and management of forest resources;
4. Strive to achieve a win-win scenario for both ecological improvement and people's well-off.

The main challenges in the implementation of UNSPF in China include: the forest resources are insufficient in terms of both quantity and quality with weak carrying capacity and unstable ecosystem. The integrated management of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grassland and sandy land systems is yet to be in place. The natural conditions of arid and semi-arid areas in the west and north are poor, creating great difficulties for the greening of national land. The risks of forest and grassland fires, pine wood nematode disease and invasive alien species still exist, making it hard to consolidate the achievements in afforestation. Forestry reform needs to be deepened, and the law enforcement system and grassroots teams have been weakened. The policy support system is to be perfected, and the mechanism for materializing the value of ecological products has not yet been established. Technological innovation and equipment are lagged behind.

**Question F-2:** What challenges and constraints did your country face in the preparation of its voluntary national report? If it did not prepare a report, what were the reasons?

Key challenges include:

1. The acquisition of systematic data is faced with certain difficulties;
2. The gap between the national data and the data required by the UNSPF report;
3. Differences in the timing of national planning and UNSPF reporting present certain difficulties.

**Question F-3:** Do you agree with the submission of voluntary national reports to UNFF, 6 to 12 months after the publication of the next Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) in order to reduce reporting burdens and take full advantage of FAO's data?

Agree.

**Question F-4:** What, in your view, are the main "regional and global issues of concern with regard to forests" in the early 2020s?

Climate change, biodiversity, forest health, trade in forest products (including food).

## **G. Questions related to the contributions of the Forum to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Question G-1:** In your view, how well on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being very well) have the Forum's annual inputs to the HLPF on forest benefits and interlinkages with other SDGs been reflected in the HLPF declarations:

  4   HLPF ministerial declarations in 2018 and 2022 (SDG15 theme years)<sup>3</sup>

  4   HLPF ministerial declarations in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (non-SDG15 theme years)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See para 27 of HLPF 2018 declaration and paras 66, 67, 69 and 71 of HLPF 2020 declaration.

<sup>4</sup> No forest-related references in HLPF 2017 declaration. See para 34 of HLPF 2019 declaration; paras 7 and 19 of HLPF 2020 declaration; para 36 of HLPF 2021 declaration.



**Question G-2:** In your view, which of the following should be considered to enhance the visibility of forest contributions at HLPF sessions and better reflect the interlinkages between forests and the SDGs in HLPF declarations (check all that may be useful):

Earlier input into relevant aspects of the HLPF preparatory process<sup>5</sup> by the UNFF, its members, secretariat and partners (CPF, Major Groups, regional/subregional organizations).

Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the Forum and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at HLPF regional and global preparatory meetings.

Enhanced coordination in capitals between UNFF focal points and those responsible for the HLPF and preparation of Voluntary National Reviews.

Enhanced consultations between the UNFF and its secretariat and UN Regional Economic Commissions, particularly their Forums on Sustainable Development.

Enhanced coordination between the UNFF Secretariat and DESA's Office for Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, which supports the HLPF process.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question G-3:** In your view, which of the following should UNFF pursue to increase the political relevance of forests to the broader sustainable development agenda (check all that may be useful)?

Preparation of a report and associated targeted communication products on the multiple contributions of forests/SFM to the SDGs, including in the context of COVID-19 recovery.

Building on the momentum of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, foster enhanced coordination among forestry, agricultural and other sectors at all levels (GFG 6.3).

Enhanced coordination in capitals between focal points for UNFF and the Rio conventions.

Increased role for the UNFF Bureau in representing the UNFF and promoting forest/SDG interlinkages at key meetings of the Rio conventions.

Enhanced coordination in capitals on the preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions (UNFCCC), Voluntary National Contributions (UNFF) and Voluntary National Reviews (HLPF).

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **H. Questions related to the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030**

**Question H-1:** What progress has your Government/organisation made since 2015 in implementing the UNSPF communication and outreach strategy, as contained in Annex 1 of UNFF Resolution 13/1 (see [E/2018/42](#))? How could any challenges, including achieving greater visibility of the UNSPF and the global forest goals, be addressed?

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<sup>5</sup> The annual HLPF preparatory process is launched in March of each year with significant regional and global activities: <http://hlpf.un.org/2022>

1. The development of pilot sites for UNFI implementation in China has further expanded the visibility and influence of the United Nations Forests Instrument and the United Nations Strategic Planning on Forests at national and local levels;

2. Through various forms of activities in celebrating the International Day of Forests, more and more people have deepened their understanding of UNFI and UNSPF, especially the content and significance of the Global Forest Goals, and further aware the important role of sustainable forest management in sustainable economic and social development.

**Question H-2:** When considering the overall impact of communication and outreach activities, including the International Day of Forests, undertaken since 2015 by members of the Forum, the secretariat, the CPF, regional organizations and relevant stakeholders, to promote the UNSPF and global forest goals, what do you regard as (i) the main successes and (ii) the main shortcomings?

1. The main successes include: Deepened understanding of UNFI and UNSPF; Awareness of forest resources protection and sustainable forest management has been strengthened; The Global Forest Goals Report highlighted the role of UNFF.

2. The main shortcomings include: Forests have less public influence than wildlife, even though the two are closely related. The form of communication and outreach activities should be more diversified and close to local people. More short animation films or short videos could be produced to further improve the public's understanding of forest and SFM.

**Question H-3:** What additional communication opportunities, platforms and channels, including those that have come into prominence in recent years, should be used more effectively to better reach target audiences and achieve greater impact?

Make better use of the popular electronic media (streaming media) platform; invite international celebrities to serve as global forest ambassadors or spokespersons to promote the impact of UNFI.

**Question H-4:** What opportunities are there to make better use of the capacities of members of the Forum and other players and partners at the global, regional, and national levels to strengthen advocacy on the implementation of the UNSPF?

Integrate the contents of UNSPF, in particular the Global Forest Goals, into national/institutional publicity programmes, and use various international days (e.g. World Wildlife Day, Wetlands Day, Desertification Combating Day, etc.) to publicize the contribution of the implementation of UNSPF to relevant areas.

#### **I. Questions related to the involvement of regional and subregional partners**

**Question I-1:** In your view, what are the top three areas in which regional and subregional partners have made the most important contributions to SFM policy development and dialogue since the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the UNFF?

1. Forest landscape restoration; 2. The important role of Bamboo and Rattan in promoting SFM; 3. Reverse the tide on forest loss.

**Question I-2:** What are prime examples of regional and subregional partners successfully contributing to the practical achievement of GFGs under the UNSPF 2017-2030? [*alone or in partnership with governments or business community*]

**Question I-3:** Given the power for good of the business and philanthropic communities, what are the key efforts of regional and subregional partners to partner with them? [*both within and outside the Business Council for Sustainable Development (UN-BCSD)*]

**J. Questions related to the involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders**

**Question J-1:** In your view, what are the top three areas in which major groups and other relevant stakeholders have made the most important contributions to SFM policy development and dialogue since the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the UNFF?

1. Community forestry; 2. Public education; 3. Women's participation.

**Question J-2:** What are prime examples of major groups and other relevant stakeholders successfully contributing to the practical achievement of GFGs under the UNSPF 2017-2030? [*alone or in partnership with governments or business community*]

**Question J-3:** Given the power for good of the business and philanthropic communities, what are the key efforts of major groups and other relevant stakeholders to partner with them [*both within and outside the Business Council for Sustainable Development (UN-BCSD)*]?]

**Question J-4:** What degree of funding independence have you achieved for participation in (a) policy development and dialogue or (b) practical SFM contribution? What improvements would you prioritise?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

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