

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, with copy to yan.lang@un.org by 30 September 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?
- b. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels?
- c. Promoting North-South, South-South, triangular cooperation, public-private partnerships, and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels?
- d. Strengthening forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI)
- e. Strengthening long-term political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives?

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

We would like to see more progress on definitions of forest degradation and guidance on how it can be monitored and measured.

We encourage the UNFF and its members to promote understanding of issues around deforestation. For example, FAO's Global Remote Sensing Survey 2021 showed that agricultural expansion drives almost 90 percent of global deforestation. It might be useful for the UNFF to leverage global knowledge

of deforestation drivers to help increase understanding of deforestation and facilitate pathways for action and possible solutions.

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

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?

The UNFF contribution has been useful, in particular as it plays a unique role in the multilateral system as the global platform for policy dialogue, cooperation, and coordination on issues related to all types of forests. This highlights its important role as an advocate for well managed forests, and sustainable wood products, in sustainable development and addressing and meeting the key global challenges.

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

We note that, according to the United Nations UNFI webpage ([United Nations Forum on Forests » UNFI Implementation](#)), the last UNFI Implementation Workshop was held in January 2016, with five other workshops unconfirmed. We believe there should be a more regular schedule for these workshops to maximise attendance and ensure continuity. Or if members do not consider this a priority, it would be useful to understand why not.

We also note the findings, Recommendations and Key Lessons Learned in the UN report “Monitoring Progress towards Sustainable Forest Management (2016-2019)” ([MAREvaluationReport_24Dec2019.pdf \(un.org\)](#)). We recommend considering the learnings from this report when considering the functions of the UNFF related to promoting, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of SFM.

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

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

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

We consider that progress made in this area could be more strategic. For example, the UNFF could have a more embedded presence in the UNFCCC to better promote its objectives, and the contribution of forests. Also, it is important to take every opportunity to promote the role of forests, sustainable forest management, the UNFF, the UNSPF and the Global Forest Goals in high-level political dialogues.

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?

We consider there is potential for more intersession activities. They lend themselves to more detailed “deep dives” and fulsome exchanges on topics of interest. At times, discussion in UNFF plenary on the most topical issues seems cut short due to scheduling constraints.

We support the use of hybrid meeting formats for intersessional activities as it promotes broad participation and enables engagement without requiring travel.

Suggestions:

- Some items to have written responses submitted beforehand and session used for discussion of major sticking points.
- Intersessional activities could be used to prepare submissions to HLPF and other high-level forums, similar to what was done earlier this year.

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?

Highlight the important role that positive stories and can play in demonstrating progress to towards SFM, as forests are forestry have an ongoing challenge regarding broader reputation of the sector.

Survey members to identify interest in:

- capacity building for preparation of national reports
- resource-sharing opportunities within and between regions to support member countries in preparing reports.

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?

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?

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?

Secretariat needs to engage well and transparently with members, while technical capacity and understanding of the subject matters is also important for credibility both with members and other bodies. We also encourage Secretariat to proactively seek out opportunities to advocate for and on behalf of forestry and forestry, and the UNFF's work.

We note the work of the Secretariat on capacity building with members on forest financing strategies appears to be well appreciated by recipients.

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?

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)
1	Contributions to UNFF documents & sessions	Medium We consider it has further potential, subject to sufficient mandate/resources to engage by the respective bodies.	We consider the value add of CPF (bringing other international fora and processes “to the UNFF table”) is very high. We commend CPF on the publication of “Challenges and Opportunities in Turning the Tide on Deforestation”
2	Streamlining forest reporting	High	We appreciate the efforts of CPF to coordinate and reduce the reporting burden for members - this is a valuable role it plays.
3	Global Forest Expert Panel	High	We highly value the GFEP function of consolidating available information and expertise in relevant fields at the science-policy interface. In particular, we would like to highlight the contributions of the Expert Panels on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests and food security • Illegal timber trade • Forests and water
4	Global Forest Information Service	Low (but noting we have not engaged or followed it, so may not be well-placed to comment).	
5	CPF meetings, side events & OLI		
7	CPF Communicators network		
8	Forest Landscape Restoration		
10	Forest Finance Facilitation		

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:

- the key elements in setting criteria for membership of the CPF (take into account CPF rules of procedure as annexed to the CPF policy document¹)
- the frequency for review of the criteria (e.g., below 5 years; 6-10 years; etc.)
- the process for triggering a review of the CPF membership

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

Considering that a body can proactively request consideration by CPF of membership at any time, then a suitable review period would be 6-10 years. The process could include:

- as requested by UNFF membership or as agreed by majority of current CPF membership, and
- considering significant changes in global priorities with regards to forests and forestry, or structural arrangements (establishment a new body with a mandate relevant to forests).

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.

We wonder whether a specific report/briefing to UNFF by CPF which synthesises and summarises key relevant developments of interest across its membership would be of value. It is difficult to stay across the many and broad areas of work of all the CPF members in a timely fashion. This would help members with contextual information for their forestry policy work, and for the policy discussions.

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?

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?

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

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

Not applicable

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?

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

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

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

We note that a key challenge is the global attention and high profile currently on climate finance commitments, and that this appears to be at the expense of other finance flows. We encourage efforts to position funds and initiatives to qualify as eligible for climate finance. This also links to the important advocacy role of UNFF for forests and sustainable wood products noted above.

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?² What are the main challenges and constraints your country or organisation is facing in implementing the UNSPF?

New Zealand’s policy work and measures on forestry is ongoing. Since 2020 we have progressed legal harvest assurance legislation³, feature the role of forestry and sustainable wood products in NZ’s first Emission Reduction Plan⁴ to 2025, and continue policy work on the role of forests in our Emission Trading Scheme. This year the government also announced significant new funding for various forest-related initiatives under the Climate Emergency Reduction fund⁵. This is alongside ongoing afforestation programmes.

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?

Given the significant policy work which has been in progress, it was not a suitable time. As decisions are now made, we will report at the next opportunity.

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?

Yes

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

- Addressing and balancing land use pressures between forestry and other land uses, including agriculture and bioenergy crops, while providing evidence and guidance on balancing these land uses to achieve the SDGs.
- Country initiatives to address global environmental concerns such as deforestation via trade measures on forestry and other products potentially causing fragmentation in the trade system.
- Global definitions – in particular deforestation and degradation – to support informed and coherent dialogue.
- Promoting a diversity of country-led approaches to achieving the Global Forest Goals, rather than a “one-size-fits-all” approach.

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:

_____ HLPF ministerial declarations in 2018 and 2022 (SDG15 theme years)⁶

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

³ <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/forestry/forest-industry-and-workforce/legal-harvest-assurance-system-for-timber/>

⁴ <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/aotearoa-new-zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan/>

⁵ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/portfolio/labour-2020-2023/forestry>

⁶ See para 27 of HLPF 2018 declaration and paras 66, 67, 69 and 71 of HLPF 2020 declaration.

_____ HLPF ministerial declarations in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (non-SDG15 theme years)⁷

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 process⁸ 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:

Increased collaboration with other relevant bodies to promote awareness of the relevance of forests to the broader SDG agenda.

We note that all the suggestions above are supported, and would encourage the UNFF to pursue and secure funding for any initiatives that may emerge.

⁷ 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.

⁸ The annual HLPF preparatory process is launched in March of each year with significant regional and global activities: <http://hlpf.un.org/2022>

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?

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?

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?

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?

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 15th session of the UNFF?

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 15th session of the UNFF?

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
