

# **Preparations for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)**

## **Assessment on actions related to the UNFF Secretariat**

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### **Assessment report prepared for the UN Forum on Forests**

Through its resolution 2022/17, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), based on the outcome of the seventeenth session of the UN Forum on Forests, decided that the Forum would undertake extensive intersessional activities in preparation for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The resolution called 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 this process, the Forum Secretariat hired consultants to assist in the preparation of background papers and assessments. These assessments and outcomes of preparatory intersessional work related to the midterm review, will be submitted to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group on the preparations for the IAF-MTR, which will be convened in late 2023.

The views and opinions expressed in the assessment reports are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Secretariat. The designations and terminology employed may not conform to United Nations practice and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Organization.

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## List of Acronyms and abbreviations

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
AHEG	Open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CLI	Country-Led Initiatives
COFO	FAO Committee on Forestry
COP	Conference of Parties
COS	Communication and Outreach Strategy of the UNSPF
CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
CTO	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ENB	Earth Negotiations Bulletin
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FRA	Global Forest Resources Assessment
GA	United Nations General Assembly
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GFG	Global Forest Goal
HLPF	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JPO	Junior Professional Officer Program
MG	Major Group
MGLI	Major Group-Led Initiatives
MTR	Midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the IAF
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO MG	Non-governmental Organizations Major Group
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLI	Organizations Led Initiatives
RLI	Regions Led Initiatives
S&T MG	Scientific and Technological Community Major Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNFFS	United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat
UNFI	United Nations Forest Instrument
UNSPF	United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

## Executive Summary

1. The Assessment B report is one of the 10 assessment reports prepared as part of preparations for the UNFF's midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forest (IAF) in meeting its objectives, as set out in paragraphs 28-31 of ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17<sup>1</sup>. The annex to the resolution elaborates actions to be undertaken in 10 assessment areas, A to J. This report, prepared by Tiegá Anada, assesses Section B on Actions related to the UNFF Secretariat. The Actions contained in Section B of Annex to ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17 are described in Box 1.<sup>2</sup>
2. Assessment B is based on a review of relevant documents and information posted on UNFF and other websites, interviews with a number of Members of the Forum, responses to a consolidated questionnaire developed by the consultants and circulated by the UNFF18 Chair on 9 August 2022 to elicit views on the 10 assessment areas from UNFF members and partners, and information collected from resources provided by the UNFF Secretariat. The questionnaire contained three questions on Assessment B, drawn from section B of annex to ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17.
3. The specific objectives of the assessment are:
  - a. Assess the achievements made by 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.
  - b. Analyse 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.
  - c. Identify additional measures to enhance collaboration and synergies, and to reduce duplication with regard to forest-related issues at the global level, bearing in mind the mandates of different organizations and entities.
- 4.. This assessment report indicates that despite its small size<sup>3</sup> and limited financial resources, the UNFF Secretariat has been able to perform its functions<sup>4</sup>, as provided in section VI of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33. Key achievements of the Secretariat have been organization of UNFF sessions, and intersessional meetings, preparation of technical and substantive documentation, studies, background papers for all those meetings, and intersessional activities. The Secretariat is also supporting the work of the UNFF Bureau, tracking progress in the implementation of the Resolutions of the Forum, important policy issues relevant to forests, as well as other developments related to SFM. Other important achievements include assistance in building consensus to support the Forum's negotiation processes,

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2022/17](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2022/17)

<sup>2</sup> See Box 1: Assessment B- Actions related to the UNFF Secretariat (Annex to ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17)

<sup>3</sup> See Box 3: List of UNFF Secretariat Staff Posts as of February 2023

<sup>4</sup> See Box 2 describing the Functions of the Forum Secretariat

professional inputs to UNFF and other intergovernmental meetings and catalysing action in priority areas that need global, regional, national, and local attention. The Secretariat also contributes to the inter-departmental work within the UN system, including input to the UN system's reports, publications, and expert consultations on a range of issues, with the objective of enhancing and elevating the role of forests in all relevant areas. The Secretariat has also prepared analytical reports and studies on major issues related to forests and global challenges, and it provided technical assistance to build the capacity of countries in different areas related to sustainable forest management, and its financing.<sup>5</sup>

- 5.. This report also highlights the fact that there are various gaps and limitations that are expected to be addressed in the work of the Secretariat. In this regard, some UNFF Member States and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests suggest exploring possibilities for the Secretariat to take additional steps to promote transparency about its activities, using not only information generated by the Secretariat, but also through collecting additional suggestions on promoting transparency through reliable independent evaluations. Some Members States are also requesting the Secretariat to undertake additional resource mobilization activities; maintain a balanced approach to the wide range of challenges related to forests in its activities and provide an organizational human resources chart and historical timeline documenting staff size. Concerning the staff size, it is useful to note that the staffing table of the UNFFS is available in the current UN Programme and Budget, as well as the previous UN Programme and Budget. The staffing table indicates the regular budget posts of the Secretariat<sup>6</sup>. Despite the availability of this table, some Members States wish to get information on the historical evolution of the staff of the Secretariat. This could be used to explore and record staff data for distinct time periods (per year) to show cyclical changes over time. From an M&E perspective, this could help, for example, to assess if bottlenecks that occurred regularly are being resolved or not. Given its extensive mandate, it appears quite likely that the Secretariat will continue to rely on external additional support, either through hiring consultants or through assistance from the CPF members in various forms, such as continued secondments or voluntary contribution to the UNFF Trust Fund. It is suggested to make the best use of existing resources, careful mapping of capacity gaps over time, as well as early consultation with CPF members on their ways and means to help bridge these gaps.<sup>7</sup>
6. The analysis of the gaps reveals significant issues that need to be addressed by the Forum Secretariat to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of its operations. These important issues include the need for: a) more transparency: b) a better dissemination of information: c) enhancement of synergies with other international organizations working on forest-related issues, and d) further actions on fundraising to better support the implementation of SFM. There is also a gap in terms of coordination and communication, including coordination with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the need to improve the UNFF website.<sup>8</sup>
7. The analysis of the human resource capacity of the UNFF Secretariat reveals key gaps, including the small size of the Secretariat,<sup>9</sup> as well as limitations in terms of budgetary resources. There has been significant increase of functions and mandates of the Secretariat. To reinforce the capacity of the

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<sup>5</sup> See Report on the Independent Assessment of the IAF (September 2014): <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IAF-Assessment-Report-Final-12-Sep-2014.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See Box 3- List of UNFF Secretariat Staff Posts as of February 2023

<sup>7</sup> See Annex 2 Responses to Questionnaire

<sup>8</sup> See Annex 2. Responses to Questionnaire

<sup>9</sup> See Box 3- List of UNFF Secretariat Staff Posts as of February 2023

Secretariat it is highly desirable to consider and explore possibilities to address key constraints, including inadequate overall funding and human resources, unpredictable Trust Fund allocation, and need for greater number of qualified policy, research, and technical experts. There is also insufficiency of human and budgetary resources for CPF related activities that is entrusted to the UNFFS, as its Secretariat. Insufficient financial and human resources means that the Director of the UNFFS, , has the added responsibility of dedicating a significant amount of time to fund-raising to cover the costs of badly needed extra-budgetary staff.

8. To address substantive areas for improvements, it is suggested to take measures to enhance collaboration and synergies , and to reduce duplication with regard to forest-related issues. In this regard, the Secretariat should further enhance the effectiveness of its performance in carrying out its functions,<sup>10 11</sup>including by strengthening the communications and partnerships with other international organizations and institutions, improving the structure and content of the official website of the UNFF, and undertaking closer monitoring of global policy issues on forests in other global fora. It is also necessary to achieve greater synergies with other international cooperation mechanisms, to enhance contribution of forests to address climate change , or biodiversity loss . These kinds of synergies could be both in the environmental sector and in other sectors, such as financial organizations like the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund, and regional banks ( African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank). Increasing synergies with financial organizations could serve as additional opportunities to support countries in using the existing international financial resources in direct support to their local communities and indigenous peoples with the least possible intermediation, beyond technical assistance. The Secretariat is already working on the GFFFN Clearinghouse to provide countries with information on existing international financial resources, for which they can apply. Nevertheless, Members States expect the Secretariat to continue this type of work so as to ensure the sustainability of the impact of the GFFFN.
9. In addition, the Secretariat should continue to facilitate exchange of scientific and technical data and knowledge during the Forum’s sessions, as well as preparation of technical papers on new and emerging issues of concerns to forests and countries.
10. There is a need for the Secretariat to accelerate its efforts towards more strategic planning of its work and activities in support of countries, its communication activities, and in its collaboration with relevant partners and stakeholders. Supplementary Strategic Planning is needed to look at all possible actions because there are always various options for bridging the gaps between the current situation and the desired objectives. Strategic Planning can also be used to draw distinctions between realities and objectives. This involves planning around actions, timescales, priorities, and indicators. Prioritization is critical because it is important that the actions selected by the Secretariat address not only the high-level initiatives and over-arching goals, such as the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, but that they get articulated into short term actions that will be required to gradually achieve the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030.

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<sup>10</sup> See paragraph 17 in Section VI of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33

<sup>11</sup> See Box 2 describing the Functions of the Forum Secretariat



11. Improvement of the advocacy role and strengthened collaboration on global forest issues and fulfilment of all Secretariat functions<sup>12</sup> are also subject to strengthening of technical capacity of the Secretariat, and its restructuring to a Division on Forests in DESA, which carries out more than routine secretariat services to the UNFF, and it would rather engage in broader issues of forests and interlinkages with other global issues such as sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity. It is suggested to expand information sharing with the Permanent Representations of Member States in New York to raise awareness, further highlight the benefits of forests, and increase the visibility of the Secretariat's work.
12. There is a need for strengthening the effectiveness of the UNFF Secretariat in terms of sharing other countries' experience and sharing findings for successful cases from across the world. It would also be useful if research/ analysis at the UNFF Secretariat could work with volunteer countries to share their respective experience, based on their similarities in different parameters (climate, population, geographic features, innovations, and priorities).
- 13.. Since the Secretariat has no regional offices, an alternative could be to explore possibilities to increase UNFF presence across the globe through inviting the respective entities to appoint liaison officers based at United Nations Economic Commission regional offices like Addis Ababa, Bangkok, and Santiago, to improve collaboration with relevant regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions, and processes.
14. As requested in Section I of resolution 2015/33 on International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015, the UNFF Secretariat, as part of the IAF should operate in a transparent, effective, efficient, and accountable manner and should provide added value and contribute to enhanced coherence, cooperation, and synergies with respect to other forest-related agreements, processes, and initiatives.<sup>13</sup>
15. The consultant suggests that it is important to focus transparency efforts on where the Secretariat is today, what the stakeholders are expecting, what the Secretariat is looking to accomplish, and what needs to happen to get there. To increase transparency, the Secretariat can also request countries and partners to share their success stories, as well as lessons learned. It is also essential to share not only positive changes, accomplishments, and progressive steps forward, but also share remaining challenges that require additional efforts to reduce obstacles. With increasing interaction between the Secretariat and the UNFF members, the way to generate and present information can make a big difference in the outcome. To that end, it is important to keep the UNFF members in the loop frequently and consistently about all matters regarding the work of the Secretariat and the UNFF members, including achievements, challenges, obstacles, or goals that were missed. If done correctly, sharing the strengths and the weaknesses can inspire the UNFF stakeholders to enhance their commitment and better support the Secretariat and the CPF for the greater good of the SFM.
16. To better understand the decision-making processes and procedures of the UNFF Secretariat, it is useful to examine the administrative, financial, and technical aspects of the decision-making processes and

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<sup>12</sup> See Box 2- Functions of the Forum Secretariat

<sup>13</sup> See <https://documents-dds-y.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/259/77/PDF/N1525977.pdf?OpenElement>  
Resolution 2015/33

procedures. In this regard, it is important to note that the UNFFS is not an administrative and financial UN body. It is rather an expert body on substantive issues on forests. The UNFFS works in accordance with the provisions of the Subprogram 8 on Sustainable Forest Management of Programme 7 on Economic and Social Affairs of the UN Programme and Budget. Like other bodies within DESA, the UNFFS has no power to decide about regular budget allocation. A review of relevant matters related to the UNFFS is made by the relevant UN intergovernmental bodies, namely, ECOSOC Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC), Advisory Committee on Budgetary and Administrative Questions (ACBAQ), and the 5th Committee of the General Assembly. In this respect, Members of UNFF, through their respective representatives, have full authority and ability to review and revise matters related to the work of the UNFFS to ensure consistency with the decisions and recommendations of UNFF. It should also be noted that the Secretariat is required to constantly report to the above-mentioned bodies on the implementation of the provisions of its work plan, its results, impacts and achievements. Within this context, the consultant considers that the Secretariat has the ability to better plan its work, monitor the results, and decide about necessary adjustments to meet the expectations of the UNFF members, including new requests and emerging issues. The Secretariat has also the ability to decide about the best options to contribute to the functions of the UNFF.

## I. Introduction

1. This report refers to Section B on : Actions related to the UNFF Secretariat and is one of 10 assessment reports prepared by consultant (see [Annex 1](#)) as part of preparations for UNFF's midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the IAF as set out in paragraphs 28-31 of ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17<sup>14</sup>. The annex to the Resolution elaborates actions to be undertaken in 10 assessment areas, A through J. areas identified in the annex of ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17 to be assessed in preparation for a mid-term review in 2024 of the "effectiveness of the IAF in achieving its objectives".
2. This report focuses on the Assessment B and addresses the three actions contained in Box 1 :

### Box 1: Assessment B- Actions related to the UNFF Secretariat (Annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17)

Section B of annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17 is on actions related to the UNFF Secretariat and aims to:

- a. Assess the achievements made by 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.
- b. Analyse 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.
- c. Identify additional measures to enhance collaboration and synergies, and to reduce duplication with regard to forest-related issues at the global level, bearing in mind the mandates of different organizations and entities.

3. The report was prepared by Tiega Anada (see [Annex 1](#)) and includes the following sections:
  - Section II briefly describes the Assessment Methodology.
  - Section III reviews the Background and Context.
  - Section IV is dealing with the Assessment of the achievements made by the Forum Secretariat in carrying out its functions.
  - Section V analyses the gaps in and the existing capacity of the Forum Secretariat,
  - Section VI is dealing with the understanding UNFFS decision-making processes and procedures.

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<sup>14</sup> As provided in paragraph 41 of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 on the IAF beyond 2015, the UNFF will conduct a mid-term review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the IAF in achieving its objectives, with a final review in 2030: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/259/77/PDF/N1525977.pdf?OpenElement>

- Section VII is analysing issues regarding transparency.
  - Section VIII is dealing with measures to enhance collaboration and synergies and to reduce duplication with regard to forest-related issues.
  - Section IX presents the conclusions
  - Section X offers some recommendations.
4. In accordance with Section B of annex to ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17, this assessment report will be submitted to the Open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group (AHEG) referred to in paragraph 30 of ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17.

## II. Assessment methodology

5. The following sources of information were used in the preparation of this report:
- a. Responses to a consolidated questionnaire, containing questions proposed by the consultant. This questionnaire was circulated by the UNFF Chair on 9 August 2022 with a request for comments by 30 September 2022. Annex 2 contains an extract of the parts of the questionnaire that are relevant to this report, and the names of Member States and organisations that responded to this part of the questionnaire.
  - b. Relevant UNFF documents, including reports of UNFF meetings, reports of the Secretary General and Notes by the Secretariat, together with other relevant literature. Annex 3 contains details.
  - c. Discussions with relevant individuals, including staff members of the UNFF Secretariat, Member States, and UNFF partners.
6. The consultant notes that its work faced some challenges and limitations, which were clearly considered and addressed to the greatest extent possible.
- a. Initially, only 17 countries, out of 197 Member States, provided their replies to the questionnaire. The consultant tried to address this problem by contacting about 30 focal points to get direct additional responses to the questions related to the Assessments B on the UNFF Secretariat. The consultant also compiled and reviewed documents, including reports on previous assessments.
  - b. Getting written response to the questionnaire as well as discussions with some countries was challenging because some focal points of the UNFF are also dealing with other international treaties and some countries have small forest departments with staff already burdened by a heavy workload. As a result, while relevant focal points were expected to reply to the UNFF questionnaire, some of them were busy preparing and /or attending various Conferences of the Parties, including the UNFCCC COP 27, Ramsar COP 14, and the CITES COP19. To address these challenges, additional exchanges were made with Member States.

- c. As a result of additional exchanges with Members States, the consultant received three additional responses to the questionnaire. Finally, the responses that are analyzed in this report come from 20 Member States. In addition, four organizations and one Major Group responded to the questionnaire. The quality of collected responses to the questions varied greatly: some countries did not provide any response to the specific questions related to the Assessments B, while other countries were able to provide detailed and significant answers. All collected responses relevant to the topics covered are reported in this document.<sup>15</sup>
7. Throughout the process of preparing this Report, there was close consultation between all consultants engaged in preparing the ten reports in this series. The aim of this consultation, which was conducted through joint (virtual) meetings and the circulation of drafts, was to seek to ensure a consistency of approach between the assessments. While the UNFF Secretariat facilitated administrative and communication matters with the UNFF Members for the consultants, the views expressed in the Report, including the conclusions and recommendations, are those of the consultant. This Assessment Report on the UN Secretariat is prepared by Tiega Anada. Annex 1 provides a brief biography of this consultant.

### III. Background and context

8. In 2000, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). The UNFF is a high-level intergovernmental policy forum mandated to address forest-related issues in an integrated and holistic manner and oversees the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and the United Nations forest instrument, as well as the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network. The participants in the Forum sessions include all United Nations Member States and permanent observers, State members of the UN Specialized Agencies, the UNFF Secretariat, Member organization of the Collaborative Partnership on Forest, regional organizations and processes, and Major Groups.<sup>16</sup>
9. Paragraph 10 of ECOSOC resolution 2000/35, 'Requested the Secretary-General to establish a compact secretariat, comprised of highly qualified staff, constituted in accordance with established rules and procedures of the United Nations and strengthen through staff from secretariats of international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, to support the work described above. In accordance with this resolution, the secretariat should service the Forum and support the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.<sup>17</sup> Through paragraph 17 in Section VI of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, the Council decided on the functions of the secretariat, which are described in Box 2.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Annex 2. Responses to Questionnaire

<sup>16</sup> See ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35

<sup>17</sup> See Paragraph 10 of ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35

<sup>18</sup> See Box 2- Functions of the Forum Secretariat

## Box 2- Functions of the Forum Secretariat

### (Paragraph 17 in Section VI of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33)

Through paragraph 17 in Section VI of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, the Council decided that the secretariat of the Forum :<sup>1</sup>

(a) Should continue:

(i) To service and support the Forum, its Bureau and related intersessional activities, including by organizing and supporting meetings, providing operational and logistical support and preparing documentation;

(ii) To administer the Forum Trust Fund consistent with guidance provided by the Forum, including regular and transparent reporting;

(iii) To manage the strengthened facilitative process;

(iv) To promote inter-agency collaboration, including by serving as a member of and providing secretariat services to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(v) To provide, upon request, technical support to country-led initiatives and similar initiatives led by international, regional and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups in support of the priorities of the Forum;

(vi) To liaise with and facilitate the participation and involvement of countries, organizations, major groups and other stakeholders in activities of the Forum, including intersessional activities;

(vii) To work within the United Nations system to support countries in aligning forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations on the post-2015 development agenda

(b) Should perform the following additional functions:

(i) Service and support the working group of the Forum, including by organizing and supporting meetings, providing operational and logistical support and preparing documentation;

(ii) Manage the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and implement its activities in collaboration with relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(iii) Promote coherence, coordination and cooperation on forest-related issues, including by liaising with the secretariats of the Rio conventions;

10. Since its establishment in 2000, the responsibilities of the Secretariat of the Forum have changed in its scope and complexity over the years, including in relation to servicing Forum processes and providing substantive and technical support to Members of the Forum.
11. Since early 2020 until early 2022, some of the Secretariat's activities in support of countries to mobilize financial resources for sustainable forest management were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many activities were undertaken at a slower pace than anticipated or postponed to 2021 or 2022, often resulting in the loss of momentum.

#### IV. Assessment of the achievements made by the Forum Secretariat in carrying out its Functions

12. The analysis of key findings are carried out, taking into account the answers to the questionnaire, prepared by the consultant regarding UNFF Secretariat. The analysis is also supplemented by reviewing the relevant documents, and decisions of the Forum regarding the Secretariat, analyses of the actions taken by the Secretariat during the period of 2015-2022 to implement UNFF resolutions, and analyses of other materials, taking into account Section B of ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17. The results of specific consultation with some Member States are also important sources of information considered in this report.
13. A summary of findings is presented below. This summary aims to provide an assessment of the extent to which the Secretariat has carried out its functions. Under each function, examples are provided to explain how the UNFFS fulfilled/not fulfilled/ or partially fulfilled those functions. Findings from a previous review as well as responses from Member States and stakeholders to the questionnaire related to the UNFF Secretariat are provided in this summary. Explanatory notes from the consultant are included to provide additional views, as needed, as well as conclusions and recommendations.
14. This review is made for each function of the UNFF Secretariat, as contained in ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, and is provided below:

**Function (i): - To service and support the Forum, its Bureau, and related intersessional activities**, including by organizing and supporting meetings, providing operational and logistical support, and preparing documentation. The Secretariat should also continue to service and support the working group of the Forum, including by organizing and supporting meetings, providing operational and logistical support, and preparing documentation.

15. Before examining the findings of the current assessment, it is useful to recall the results of the Independent Assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests.<sup>19</sup> According to the report of Independent Assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests in 2014, the UNFF Secretariat

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<sup>19</sup> See Report on the Independent Assessment of the IAF (September 2014): <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IAF-Assessment-Report-Final-12-Sep-2014.pdf>.

made logistics arrangements, prepared documentation for the UNFF Sessions and expert meetings, supported and serviced the UNFF Bureau, carried out the intersessional activities, contributed to CLI, RLI, MGI and OLI, as requested, encouraged continuing dialogue with a view to global convergence, tracked progress in the implementation of the Resolutions of the Forum, as well as on important policy issues relevant to forests, as well as other developments related to SFM.<sup>20</sup>

16. There are some similarities between the findings from the 2014 Independent Assessment Report and the recent views from Member States and organizations that contributed to the current assessment. These new findings<sup>21</sup> indicate that the UNFF Secretariat is still providing important assistance to the UNFF Forum, examples of the continued support include:
  - a. Annually organised five-day sessions, as well as high level events , in hybrid format allowing for discussions on emerging issues and address forest-related global challenges.
  - b. Organization of Expert Group Meetings together with Major Group workshops to foster synergies geared towards strengthening forest governance frameworks in addition to sharing lessons learned and best practices.
  - c. Organisation of open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert groups that will take place in 2023. It can be noted that the Secretariat has previously organised two AHEGs in 2016 to facilitate negotiation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.<sup>22</sup>
  - d. Continuous facilitation of involvement of Member States, organizations, major groups, and other stakeholders in activities including intersessional activities within the scope of resources.
  - e. Dissemination of all documentation prepared for consideration at UNFF sessions, and resolutions and outcome report from UNFF discussions on sustainable forest management, thereby ensuring transparency.
  - f. Following up on the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.
17. The consultant understands that the UNFF Secretariat is expected to continue providing regular updates, through its annual reports, especially on the work progress on the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) to all Member States.
18. A review of the Reports for UNFF sessions since 2015 by the consultant reveals that the Secretariat provided logistical arrangements, documentation, and support to delegates regarding seven UNFF sessions: UNFF11 in 2015 to UNFF 17 in 2022. The review of the outcome of UNFF17 shows that some

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<sup>20</sup> See paragraphs 52-02 , 55-13, and 55-14 of the Independent Assessment of the IAF (September 2014): <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IAF-Assessment-Report-Final-12-Sep-2014.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> See Annex 2-responses relevant to Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat (Assessment B)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/aheg/iaf-strategic-plan-1/index.html>  
<https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/aheg/iaf-strategic-plan-ii-2016/index.html>



findings from the 2014 Independent Assessment Report are still relevant to this report because the UNFF sessions will continue to take place and the Secretariat will have to renew its efforts to provide logistics arrangements, documentation, and support to delegates regarding all future UNFF sessions .

- 19 The consultant understands that even when UNFF Members consider that the work of the Secretariat is successful, this does not mean that everything is perfect. The performance has to be maintained and improved to ensure sustainability of success. The Secretariat has to keep striving for its improvement, even after it has achieved an acceptable level of performance. For example, the Secretariat may continue to increase its partnership with the Rio Convention to prepare and implement joint projects/programs that support SFM, Biodiversity conservation, climate Change mitigation/adaptation, and restoration of degraded land.

**Function (ii) -To administer the Forum Trust Fund consistent with guidance provided by the Forum, including regular and transparent reporting.**

20. The literature review shows that, to ensure transparency, the Forum Secretariat has been able to report to the Forum at each session on the operation of the Fund, including the amounts contributed, the source of the contributions, and a description of how the funds have been expended. From 2015 to 2021, the Secretariat provided regular updates that clarify the overall evolution of the Trust Fund.<sup>23</sup>
21. It is useful to point out that additional requests are made to the Secretariat through ECOSOC resolution 2022/17 regarding the UNFF Trust Fund, as quoted below:

*“E. Actions related to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests*

*1. Assess the impact of voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests on supporting the core activities of the Forum.*

*2. Explore options to encourage sustained and adequate contributions to the trust fund.*

*3. Identify the key challenges and constraints with regard to mobilizing adequate resources for the trust fund.*

*4. The Forum secretariat should, in consultation with members of the Forum, undertake the above-mentioned tasks and present its findings and suggestions in a background note for submission to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group referred to in paragraph 30 of the present Resolution.”<sup>24</sup>*

22. It should be noted that the consultant has carried out an assessment on the UNFF Trust Fund in line with the above-mentioned requests<sup>25</sup>. Again, addressing fundraising obstacles remain a high priority in the

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<sup>23</sup> See UNFF11 in 2015 to UNFF 17 in 2022 at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/index.html>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N22/344/06/PDF/N2234406.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>25</sup> This assessment is contained in a separate report and is available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/preparations-for-iaf-midterm-review/index.html>

future work of the Secretariat. The Secretariat partially fulfilled its function related to the Trust Fund as confirmed by the responses to questionnaire from Member States and organization. The Secretariat is expected to increase efforts to get more funding, but Member States also recognize that there are obstacles that the Secretariat cannot resolve without additional support from the UNFF members. To increase the capacity of the UNFF Secretariat, Member States are encouraging organizations that have the possibility to provide in-kind contribution to continue and increase secondments to the Secretariat as well as other in-kind contribution such as the Junior Professional Officer Program, sponsored by the governments of some Member States.

23. The consultant notes that the above findings confirm that the UNFF Secretariat is expected to increase efforts on resource mobilization, with a particular emphasis on contributions from the private sector and philanthropic organizations. This will require exploration and implementation of new strategies and practical approaches to improve fundraising. Building effective and successful partnerships between the UNFF Secretariat and the private sector is not an easy intervention. It requires careful considerations of all possible advantages and disadvantages. If not carefully planned and implemented, this type of partnership can also result in a perception of “green washing,” which could be detrimental to the affiliation or reputational influence of the UNFF Secretariat.<sup>26</sup>
24. Moreover, a partnership with the private sector and philanthropic organizations cannot be developed by the UNFF Secretariat alone. It has to go through all prerequisites, required by the UN system. Therefore, it is a long process that will have to be in accordance with the respective United Nations rules and regulations as stated by the above resolution. There are strict rules for resource mobilization from the private sector and philanthropic organizations. The feasibility of some of these suggestions need to be further examined.

### Function (iii) -To manage the strengthened facilitative process (GFFFN) - Manage the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and implement its activities in collaboration with relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

25. According to the Assessment made by independent consultants in 2014, the Secretariat has been successful in managing the strengthened facilitative process, especially by assisting members of the UNFF through preparations for UNFF Sessions in a professional manner, timely production of the necessary documentation, logistical arrangements, raising funds to facilitate participation by eligible Member States and Major Groups, helping to build capacity for national reporting, making successful facilitation and coordination, forging good collaborative partnerships at the regional level and with civil society. The report of the previous assessment made by independent consultant indicate also that the Secretariat catalyzed complementary action by CPF members and the Major Groups and briefed New

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<sup>26</sup> See <https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1757&context=capstone>. See also [http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/repository/entri/docs/cop/Ramsar\\_COP10\\_res012.pdf](http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/repository/entri/docs/cop/Ramsar_COP10_res012.pdf) -Resolution X.12 Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector.

York-based permanent missions and regional groups on forest issues, and co-organized over thirty regional and global workshops/expert group meetings on issues of critical concern for countries.<sup>27</sup>

26. It is useful to note that since 2015, the strengthened facilitative process is named “ Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN)”. It is also good to refer to the other report that Mr. Jorge Illueca is preparing on Section D of annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17.<sup>28</sup> The detailed explanations about this function of the Secretariat is provided in Mr. Illueca report.<sup>29</sup>

Function (iv)- To promote inter-agency collaboration, including by serving as a member of and providing secretariat services to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and to continue to promote coherence, coordination, and cooperation on forest-related issues, including by liaising with the secretariats of the Rio conventions.

27. The findings of the consultant is consistent with the previous independent assessment carried out in 2014, which indicates that the Secretariat provided professional inputs to UNFF and other intergovernmental meetings. It catalyzed action in priority areas that need global, regional, national, and local attention, contributed to the inter-departmental work within the UN system. The Secretariat provided substantive contributions to other interdepartmental and interagency work, for example through promoting the role of forests in the current SDG process.<sup>30</sup>

Function (v) -To provide, upon request, technical support to country-led initiatives and similar initiatives led by international, regional, and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups in support of the priorities of the Forum.

28. Existing information from the UNFF website reveals that many initiatives have been organized by countries (CLI), organizations (OLI), and major groups (MGI) in support of the Forum. The Secretariat provided technical support to these initiatives. It is expected that the Secretariat will continue to provide its assistance to all new initiatives in the future. A count made by the consultant shows that from 2000 to 2015, 34 initiatives were carried out: <sup>31</sup>

Function (vi) -To liaise with and facilitate the participation and involvement of countries, organizations, major groups, and other stakeholders in activities of the Forum, including intersessional activities.

29. The analysis of documentation related to the organization of the UNFF Sessions reveals that the Secretariat has consistently involved countries, regional partners, and major groups in the UNFF sessions

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<sup>27</sup> See paragraphs 55-14 of the report by independent consultants in 2014.

<sup>28</sup> See Assessment D - GFFFN & Study on Financial Flow to Forests by Mr. Jorge Illueca

<sup>29</sup> See Assessment D - GFFFN & Study on Financial Flow to Forests prepared by Mr. Jorge Illueca

<sup>30</sup> See paragraphs 55-13 and 55-14 of the independent assessment carried out in 2014.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/initiatives/index.html>

and related intersessional activities The organization of work of each session of UNFF, including UNFF12, 13, 14, 16 and 17 shows the involvement of countries, CPF, international organizations, and regional partners, and major groups in the work of the sessions. In addition, their inputs have been included in a specific UNFF official document for all UNFF sessions, namely specific Notes by the Secretariat for each session of UNFF, which usually include contributions from other stakeholders and major groups as well.<sup>32</sup>

30. An analysis of existing information about the Forum Trust Fund, covering contributions/expenditures from 2015 to 2021 reveals an important contribution of the work of the Secretariat that facilitates the participation and involvement of countries, organizations, major groups, and other stakeholders in activities of the Forum, including intersessional activities. In this regard, the Secretariat, to the extent that the resources were available, provided support for delegates, and raised funds to facilitate participation by eligible Member States and Major Groups. The Secretariat is using the Trust Fund to support eligible delegates.<sup>33</sup>
31. Through the support from the Trust Fund, the travel of representatives and experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition accounted for:
  - a. 24% of total expenditures supported by the Trust Fund during the period 2015-2016.
  - b. 47 % of total expenditures supported by the Trust Fund in 2017.
  - c. 46 % of total expenditures supported by the Trust Fund in 2018 .
  - d. 36% of total expenditures supported by the Trust Fund in 2019 was related to travel for capacity development. This included travel of representatives and experts to the expert group meeting on the clearing house of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, and the expert group meeting on the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024, held in Geneva in November 2019, were funded from extrabudgetary resources. Additional travel assistance was provided to facilitate the participation of representatives and experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in Forum-related meetings in 2019; such meetings included the fourteenth session of the Forum, held at Headquarters from 6 to 10 May 2019.
  - e. 21% of total expenditures supported by the Trust Fun in 2020 travel related to capacity development. This included travel related to capacity development accounted for 21%. It is important to note that the delivery of capacity development activities was adversely affected by

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<sup>32</sup> See UNFF12, 13, 14, 16 and 17 at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/index.html>

<sup>33</sup> See Forum Trust Fund – Note by the Secretariat (2017) – contributions/expenditures for 2015 and 2016

Forum Trust Fund – Note by the Secretariat (2018) – contributions/expenditures for 2017

Forum Trust Fund – Note by the Secretariat (2019) –contributions/expenditures for 2018

Forum Trust Fund – Note by the Secretariat (2020) – contributions/expenditures for 2019

Forum Trust Fund – Note by the Secretariat (2021) – contributions/expenditures for 2020

Forum Trust Fund – Note by the Secretariat (2022) – contributions/expenditures for 2021

the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which resulted in some activities originally scheduled for 2020 having to be postponed to a later date.

- f. In 2021, it is important to note that, owing to travel restrictions related to the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, many of the Forum-related meetings, capacity development workshops, and key international events scheduled for 2021 were held in a virtual format.
32. 2020 and 2021 have been challenging for all travel plans, mainly because of the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, over the next years and subject to provision of dedicated contributions by donor countries, the Secretariat would be able to continue to support and facilitate the participation and involvement of countries, organizations, major groups, and other stakeholders in activities of the Forum, including intersessional activities.

### Function (vii) Work within the United Nations system to support countries in aligning forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations on the post-2015 development agenda.

33. In addition to the above functions, it is useful to note that ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 decided that the secretariat should work within the United Nations system to support countries in aligning forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations on the post-2015 development agenda, which means to support countries in aligning IAF with the 2030 Agenda, which was adopted in June 2015 in Rio. In response to this request, the Secretariat supported Member countries of UNFF to adopt UNSPF, which integrates SDGs and 2030 Agenda. In addition, the UNFFs provided substantive support to the Forum for holding integrated discussions on the SDGs and GFGs in each session of the Forum. The Secretariat supported the Bureau to provide input to the HLPF and prepared Notes to support the discussions of UNFF on this matter. The Secretariat also assisted the inter-departmental work on forests and SDGs. For more information about this matter, it is recommended to look at Stephanie Caswell's report on Assessment G: actions related to UNFF contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially the section that deals with UNFFs work related to the SDGs.<sup>34</sup>
34. Despite these achievements, through their responses to the questionnaire, Member States consider that more efforts are still needed from the Secretariat to better work within the UN system to support countries in aligning forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations into the 2030 Agenda. For instance, the Secretariat could organize more thematic sessions/and or workshops on emerging issues with global relevance, including forests to facilitate more interactions on forest issues within the UN system

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<sup>34</sup> See <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/unff-seeks-to-strengthen-interlinkages-with-sdgs/> UNFF Seeks to Strengthen Interlinkages with SDGs. SDG KNOWLEDGE HUB by ISSD = 25 May 2022.

## V. Analysis of the Gaps in and the existing capacity of the Forum 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.

35. The analysis of the human resource capacity of the UNFF Secretariat reveals key gaps, including the small size of the Secretariat,<sup>35</sup> as well as limitations in terms of budgetary resources. The list of the Secretariat staff members is attached below in Box 3.

### List of UNFF Secretariat Staff Posts as of February 2023

The Regular Budget posts of the UNFFS are as follow:.

- One D2 Post
- One D1 post (vacant- recruitment is ongoing)
- One P5 post
- Three P4 post
- One P2 post (vacant- recruitment is ongoing )
- One G6 post
- Two G5 post (one of them is currently vacant- recruitment is ongoing)

Total: 10 posts

Apart from RB post, below are the post from the extrabudgetary resources

- Two P3 post

Currently, there is no JPO in the office.

36. There is also insufficiency of human and budgetary resources for CPF related activities that is entrusted to the UNFFS, as its Secretariat. Insufficient financial and human resources means that the Director of the UNFFS, has the added responsibility of dedicating a significant amount of time to fund-raising to cover the costs of badly needed extra-budgetary staff.
37. The analysis of the gaps reveals also significant issues that need to be addressed by the Forum Secretariat to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of its operations. These important issues include the need for: a) more transparency: b) a better dissemination of information: c) improvement of synergies with other international organizations working on forest-related issues, and d) further actions on fundraising to better support the implementation of SFM. There is also a gap in terms of

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<sup>35</sup> See Box 3- List of UNFF Secretariat Staff Posts as of February 2023

coordination and communication, including coordination with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the need to improve the UNFF website.<sup>36</sup>

**V.1. Gaps related to the fulfilment of Function (i): - To service and support the Forum, its Bureau, and related intersessional activities, including by organizing and supporting meetings, providing operational and logistical support, and preparing documentation.** The Secretariat should also continue to service and support the working group of the Forum, including by organizing and supporting meetings, providing operational and logistical support, and preparing documentation.

38. Despite the achievements made by the Secretariat to service and support the Forum, its Bureau, and related intersessional activities, Members States and organizations identified key remaining gaps in their responses to the questionnaire. These gaps are mainly related to the provision of updated and detailed information to facilitate the work of the Forum, its Bureau, and related intersessional activities. These specific gaps include:

- a. A need for greater dissemination of the activities carried out by the Secretariat annually. This is related to the need for sharing/communicating information about key elements of the Secretariat work plan, its priorities, lessons learned, and suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the work of the Secretariat. However, it is important to note that the UNFFS official workplan and priorities are decided by the Forum in its quadrennial programme of work, and resolutions. The key elements of the work plan are also reflected in the Subprogramme 8, which is reviewed and adopted by Member States under ECOSOC and GA.
- b. To ensure a better implementation of the UNFFS official workplan that is approved by the Forum, the Secretariat may wish to provide more details of the work plan through annual comprehensive explanation of priorities and methods of implementation.

**V.2. Gaps related to . Function (ii) -To administer the Forum Trust Fund consistent with guidance provided by the Forum, including regular and transparent reporting.**

39. The consultant considers that it is useful to point out that additional requests are made to the Secretariat through ECOSOC resolution 2022/17 regarding the UNFF Trust Fund, as quoted below:

*“E. Actions related to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests*

*1. Assess the impact of voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests on supporting the core activities of the Forum.*

*2. Explore options to encourage sustained and adequate contributions to the trust fund.*

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<sup>36</sup> See Annex 2. Responses to Questionnaire

*V3. Identify the key challenges and constraints with regard to mobilizing adequate resources for the trust fund.*

*4. The Forum secretariat should, in consultation with members of the Forum, undertake the above-mentioned tasks and present its findings and suggestions in a background note for submission to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group referred to in paragraph 30 of the present Resolution.”<sup>37</sup>*

40. For more information about the Trust Fund, it is recommended to read the Report on the Assessment E on the UNFF Trust Fund prepared by Tiega Anada. <sup>38</sup>

### V.3. Gaps related to Function (iii) - Manage the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) and implement its activities in collaboration with relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

41. In its paragraph 55-26, the previous independent assessment carried out in 2014 states that there is a need to get sufficient resources allocated to fund the joint activities of the CPF. Without additional funding, the Secretariat cannot fully meet the expectations related to the inter-agency collaboration.
42. The analysis of responses from Member States and organizations for this report reveals that there are gaps and weaknesses that the Secretariat has to address to better manage the GFFFN. In this regard, Member States and organizations request the Secretariat to improve the work on the GFFFN through enhancing synergy and coordination between the activities of the GFFFN with other CPF member organizations such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Tropical Timber Agreement, among others to the extent possible. This will help to reduce duplication of actions and improve collaboration and synergies, as well as the exchange of experiences. For additional information it is suggested to read Jorge Illueca’s report on the GFFFN and related gaps.<sup>39</sup>

**Gaps related to Function (iv)- To promote inter-agency collaboration, including by serving as a member of and providing secretariat services to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and to continue to promote coherence, coordination, and cooperation on forest-related issues, including by liaising with the secretariats of the Rio conventions.**

43. It is necessary to achieve greater synergies with other international cooperation mechanisms, to enhance contribution of forests to address climate change, biodiversity loss, or land degradation. These kinds of synergies could be both in the environmental sector and in other sectors, such as

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<sup>37</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N22/344/06/PDF/N2234406.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>38</sup> See Report on the Assessment E on the UNFF Trust Fund prepared by Tiega Anada.

<sup>39</sup> See Jorge Illueca’s report on the GFFFN and related gaps.



financial organizations like the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund, and regional banks (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank).

44. In addition, some responses to the questionnaire about the current Secretariat Assessment specify that there is a gap in terms of coordination and communication, including coordination with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, which is considered to be the scientific arm of the UNFF. Specific gaps about the coordination and communication identified by Member States include a weak positioning of the forestry sector in the international agenda and in the national agendas at the highest level, as well as low achievements with regard to sharing other countries' experience, sharing findings for successful cases from across the world.
45. Promoting cooperation among forest related organizations using the CPF mechanism is a continuous process. More efforts are needed to improve the contributions to other interdepartmental and interagency work, for example through promoting the role of forests in the current SDG process. In addition, the joint statement issued by the CPF is a good start in terms of area for joint work which requires collaborative implementation.
46. Member States also request the Secretariat to maintain an active platform for exchange of knowledge, skills as well as country-specific learnings that can support better understanding and decision-making for countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

**V.4. Gaps related to Function (v) and (VI)** -To provide, upon request, technical support to country-led initiatives and similar initiatives led by international, regional, and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups in support of the priorities of the Forum and Gaps related to Function (vi) -To liaise with and facilitate the participation and involvement of countries, organizations, major groups, and other stakeholders

47. Following a review of existing information, especially through the UNFF website, the consultant considers that there is a need to update the set of information about country-led initiatives and similar initiatives led by international, regional, and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups in support of the priorities of the Forum. Indeed, there is no information on the website related to the period from 2015 to 2021. An update would be useful to reveal the overall support provided by the Secretariat regarding this function, including all recent support.

**V.5. Gaps related to Function (VII)** – Work within the United Nations system to support countries in aligning forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations on the post-2015 development agenda

48. Despite significant achievements made by the Secretariat to fulfil this function, through their responses to the questionnaire, Member States consider that more efforts are still needed from the Secretariat to better work within the UN system to support countries in aligning forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations into the 2030 Agenda. For instance, the Secretariat

could organize more thematic sessions/and or workshops on emerging issues with global relevance, including forests to facilitate more interactions on forest issues within the UN system. For additional information about the gaps in respect to this function, please read the assessment report on Section G on the contributions of UNFF to the 2023 Agenda, prepared by Ms. Stephanie Caswell.<sup>40</sup>

## VI. Understanding UNFFS decision-making processes and procedures

49. The UNFF Secretariat provides substantive support to the UNFF and is located within the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The Director of the UNFF Secretariat reports to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The Director is the manager of Subprogramme 8 on Sustainable Forest Management of the UN Programme and Budget. The UNFFS is also a member of the CPF and also serves as the Secretariat of the CPF. As part of DESA, the UNFFS is an integral part of the UN Secretariat and inter-departmental network of the UN system.<sup>41</sup> In this context, it is useful to note that the UNFF Secretariat, like other bodies within DESA, has no power to decide about regular budget allocation.
50. To better understand the decision-making processes and procedures of the UNFF Secretariat, it is useful to examine the administrative, financial, and technical aspects of the decision-making processes and procedures. In this regard, it is important to note that the UNFFS is not an administrative and financial UN body. It is rather an expert body on substantive issues on forests. The UNFFS works in accordance with the provisions of the Subprogram 8 on Sustainable Forest Management of Programme 7 on Economic and Social Affairs of the UN Programme and Budget. Like other bodies within DESA, the UNFFS has no power to decide about regular budget allocation. A review of relevant matters related to the UNFFS is made by the relevant UN intergovernmental bodies, namely, ECOSOC Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC), Advisory Committee on Budgetary and Administrative Questions (ACBAQ), and the 5th Committee of the General Assembly. In this respect, Members of UNFF, through their respective representatives, have full authority and ability to review and revise matters related to the work of the UNFFS to ensure consistency with the decisions and recommendations of UNFF. It should also be noted that the Secretariat is required to constantly report to the above-mentioned bodies on the implementation of the provisions of its work plan, its results, impacts and achievements. Within this context, the consultant considers that the Secretariat has the ability to better plan its work, monitor the results, and decide about necessary adjustments to meet the expectations of the UNFF members, including new requests and emerging issues. The Secretariat has also the ability to decide about the best options to contribute to the functions of the UNFF.
51. In addition to several intergovernmental bodies that review the work of different parts of the UN secretariat work, their budgets, and workplan, there are also several evaluation and monitoring mechanisms within the UN that enforce the UN rules. For example, the Executive Office of DESA, UN

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<sup>40</sup> See assessment report on Section G on the contributions of UNFF to the 2023 Agenda, prepared by Ms. Stephanie Caswell.

<sup>41</sup> Secretary-General Report on the implementation of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/051/50/PDF/N1805150.pdf?OpenElement>

Programme and Budget Division, the UN monitoring bodies such as Board of Auditors, JIU,<sup>42</sup> and OIOS<sup>43</sup> are constantly monitoring strict compliance with UN rules and regulations. So, the UNFFS, like other parts of the UN, is not working in a vacuum, and its performance is being evaluated/monitored by Member States, and the UN internal bodies. Within this context, the consultant thinks that the Secretariat has the ability to better plan its work, monitor the results, and decide about necessary adjustments to meet the expectations of the UNFF members, including new requests and emerging issues. The consultant understands that the Secretariat has also the ability to decide about the best options to contribute to the functions of the UNFF.

52. The Secretariat should work in accordance with the Strategy of the Subprogram 8, which supports the intergovernmental forest policy dialogue through the United Nations Forum on Forests in line with the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work. The Secretariat has to contribute to the work of UNDESA, which generates, analyses, and compiles a wide range of economic, social, and environmental data and statistics to inform and advise Member States and stakeholders as they take stock of trends and policy options to tackle common problems, especially those related to Sustainable Forest Management.
53. Finally, the consultant understands that the Secretariat has the authority to decide about the priority matters to include in its detailed annual work plan, the expected results, the kind of information to disseminate, the target audience, the frequency of distribution of information, the content of the set of information, the relevant communication tools, and the right time to share each type of information.

## VII. Issues regarding transparency

### VII.1. Current requirements for more transparency

54. As requested in Section I of resolution 2015/33 on International arrangement on forests beyond 2015, paragraph (f), the UNFF Secretariat, as part of the IAF, should operate in a transparent, effective, efficient and accountable manner and should provide added value and contribute to enhanced coherence, cooperation, and synergies with respect to other forest-related agreements, processes, and initiatives.”<sup>44</sup>

### VII. 2. Need for transparency to increase Members States ' understanding of the Secretariat's functionality

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<sup>42</sup> See <https://www.unjiu.org/content/about-jiu>. The Joint Inspection Unit is the only independent external oversight body of the United Nations system mandated to conduct evaluations, inspections and investigations system-wide.

<sup>43</sup> See The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), which is the internal oversight body of the United Nations at <https://oios.un.org/>

<sup>44</sup> See <https://documents-dds-y.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/259/77/PDF/N1525977.pdf?OpenElement>  
Resolution 2015/33 decides “That the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015 should operate in a transparent, effective, efficient and accountable manner and should provide added value and contribute to enhanced coherence, cooperation and synergies with respect to other forest-related agreements, processes and initiatives;”

55. The gap analysis made by the consultant confirms that there is a clear need for more transparency. In this regard, some Member States indicate that they have little insight into the inner workings of the Secretariat, including staffing, expertise, and capacity. Increasing Members States' understanding of the Secretariat's functionality could serve to manage Members' expectations on Secretariat outputs. These Member States consider that greater transparency of the Secretariat's work is required to improve effectiveness of its operations. For some Member States, the need for more transparency requires that the Secretariat prepare and share a detailed work plan that is measurable and clearly presents the expected results. This can also help manage expectations from Member States and demonstrate ongoing progress towards IAF objectives. However, it is important to note that the UNFFS official workplan and priorities are decided by the Forum in its quadrennial programme of work and resolutions. The official workplan and priorities are also reflected in the Subprogramme 8, which is reviewed and adopted by Member States under ECOSOC and GA.

### VII. 3. Need for more Transparency with regard to the methods and tools for sharing information and addressing other communication issues.

56. Some Members States suggest exploring possibilities for the Secretariat to take additional steps to promote transparency about its activities, using not only information generated by the Secretariat, but also through collecting additional suggestions on promoting transparency through reliable independent evaluations. Some Members States are also requesting the Secretariat to maintain a balanced approach to the wide range of challenges related to forests in its activities and provide an organizational human resources chart and historical timeline documenting staff size. In response to this request, it is useful to note that the staffing table of the UNFFS is available in the current UN Programme and Budget, as well as the previous UN Programme and Budget. The staffing table indicates the regular budget posts of the Secretariat<sup>45</sup>. The consultant considers that, despite the availability of this table, some Members States may wish to get information on the historical evolution of the staff of the Secretariat. This could be used to explore and record staff data for distinct time periods (per year) to show cyclical changes over time. From an M&E perspective, this could help, for example, to assess if bottlenecks that occurred regularly are being resolved or not.
57. There is evidence that the methods and content of shared information need to be improved. For instance, some focal points specify that they cannot reply to the questionnaire on the Secretariat's Evaluation because they do not know what is happening or do not have relevant information on the subject.<sup>46</sup> The consultant thinks that, since these focal points believe that the Secretariat does not provide sufficient information, there is a need for clarification about available information. In this regard, it is important to address transparency issues by improving the frequency, content, and the way in which information on the work of the Secretariat is disseminated. In trying to make special consultations with Member States, the consultant noted that information on the names and contact details of the focal points of some UNFF Member States is not complete, while for other countries, there

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<sup>45</sup> See Box 3- List of UNFF Secretariat Staff Posts as of February 2023

<sup>46</sup> See Annex 2. Responses to Questionnaire B related to the Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat

is simply no name of focal point on the UNFF website.<sup>47</sup> However, it should be noted that the list of national focal points are being updated on a regular basis and on an ongoing basis by the Secretariat. More specifically, the UNFFS sends on an annual basis an official note verbale to countries, asking them to provide any change in the name of their national focal point, or provide information on their new national focal point, if they do not have one. The consultant believes that, since effective communication is a two-way and complete process of communication, where there is a continuous flow of information between the sender and the receiver, Member States may wish, when deemed appropriate, update the names and contact details of their focal points. This will facilitate dissemination of updated information by the Secretariat to all Member States.

58. To respond to the increasing need for transparency, it is not enough to share information that is generated by the Secretariat. It is critical to use independent evaluation, consultation with stakeholders, and overall assessments of the strengths, weaknesses, emerging challenges, and opportunities to address the obstacles. Taking all these elements into account, it is important for the Secretariat to convey significant consideration to ways and means that can be used to demonstrate and establish better transparency.
59. The Secretariat may wish to explore options, to the extent possible, to get a specific expertise so as to improve the work on Knowledge Management, which is defined by the World Agroforestry as “the process of capturing, developing, sharing and effectively using organizational knowledge”.<sup>48</sup> It is clearly understood that the Secretariat has no administrative or budgetary power to increase its allocated budget so as to create new staff positions. Therefore, it is highly desirable to get additional financial or human resources for the Secretariat, either through regular budget or through supplementary voluntary funding, so as to achieve an effective and efficient Knowledge Management process. This could lead to more systemic collection and analysis of materials and generate information to advise and adapt current and future evidence-based actions to help highlight the links between policy and practice. This would generate trustworthy products that can be transferred to UNFF Member States and CPF organizations. This could also influence connections between the CPF members and improve their capacity in relation to the implementation of the SFM. This option would also improve the maintenance of knowledge management and learning products and would track the lists of information generated by the Secretariat and independent investigation (lessons learned, best practices, issue briefs, policy briefs, and advocacy materials).
60. To take action and better inform the UNFF focal points who indicated that they could not respond to the questionnaire on the Assessment of the Secretariat because they do not know what is happening, the Secretariat may wish to adopt or update some additional communication tools such as an effective and efficient email Newsletter. With successful email newsletter, the Secretariat could deliver messages to exactly where the UNFF stakeholders want to see it. The Secretariat could consistently deliver valuable,

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<sup>47</sup> See [https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/UNFF\\_natl\\_focal\\_points\\_12Jan2022.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/UNFF_natl_focal_points_12Jan2022.pdf) The names and contact details of 20 Members States are missing on the list of UNFF National Focal Points, updated on 12 January 2022.

<sup>48</sup> See publication from the World Agroforestry on Knowledge Management at <https://www.worldagroforestry.org/kmu>

relevant information to the subscribers' inboxes, as a source of knowledge, products, and services. Some subscribers could actually forward the Secretariat's newsletter to other interested stakeholders, and this has the potential to help the Secretariat to grow its audience. The Secretariat can tailor its newsletter, based on the habits and preferences of the subscribers to increase their engagement with the Secretariat. The management of an email newsletter can also be a way to update the list of the UNFF focal points and their contact details. It is noted that the adoption and management of a newsletter should not be based on the recruitment of additional staff positions, but rather to encourage the UNFF Staff to better share responsibilities to improve the fulfilment of the Communication functions of the Secretariat. An effective newsletter could be a powerful tool to better fulfil the role of the UNFF Secretariat with regard to the Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS), which requests the Secretariat to carry out a range of outreach activities to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of forests, and share best practices related to sustainable forest management. Using a newsletter, the Secretariat can improve its efficiency in sharing information products such as fact sheets, policy briefs, publications, press releases and news stories. For more information about communication issues, it is recommended to read the Report for Assessment H on COS of the United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-30, prepared by David Henderson-Howat.<sup>49</sup>

61. Overall, the consultant suggests that it is important to focus transparency efforts on where the Secretariat is today, what the stakeholders are expecting, what the Secretariat is looking to accomplish, and what needs to happen to get there. To increase transparency, the Secretariat can also request countries and partners to share their success stories, as well as lessons learned.

## VIII. Measures to enhance collaboration and synergies and to reduce duplication with regard to forest-related issues

### VIII.1. Possible measures to better work within the UN system, to enhance cooperation among forest-related organizations and to improve the capacity of the Secretariat to achieve more collaboration with other institutions/organizations

62. To address substantive areas for improvements, it is critical to take measures to enhance collaboration and synergies, and to reduce duplication with regard to forest-related issues. In this regard, through their responses to the questionnaire, some Member States consider that more efforts are still needed from the Secretariat to better work within the UN system to support countries in aligning forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations into the 2030 Agenda. For instance, the Secretariat may wish to organize more thematic sessions/and or workshops on emerging issues with global relevance, including forests to facilitate more interactions on forest issues within the UN system. Member States also suggest expanding information sharing with the Permanent

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<sup>49</sup> See Report for Assessment H on Communications and Outreach Strategy (COS) of the United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-30, prepared by David Henderson-Howat.

Representations of Member States in New York to raise awareness, further highlight the benefits of forests, and increase the visibility of the Secretariat's work.

63. Since the Secretariat has no regional offices, an alternative could be to explore possibilities to increase UNFF presence across the globe through inviting the respective entities to appoint liaison officers based at United Nations Economic Commission regional offices like Addis Ababa, Bangkok, and Santiago, to improve collaboration with relevant regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions, and processes.
64. For promoting cooperation among forest-related organizations using the CPF mechanism, the Secretariat may organize virtual events on a regular basis to share such experiences which will boost the activities through new and useful information flowing from regions and countries.
65. Member States also consider that the Secretariat should further enhance the effectiveness of its performance in carrying out its functions,<sup>50 51</sup> including by strengthening the communications and partnerships with other international organizations and institutions, improving the structure and content of the official website of the UNFF, and undertaking closer monitoring of global policy issues on forests in other global fora.
66. To reinforce the capacity of the Secretariat for more collaboration with other institutions/organizations, it is highly desirable to consider and explore possibilities to address key constraints, including inadequate overall funding and human resources, unpredictable Trust Fund allocation, and need for greater number of qualified policy, research, and technical experts. In this regard, the consultant recommends, to the greatest extent possible, to explore all options for Additional Expertise needed to address the gaps and constraints impeding effectiveness of the Secretariat. It is highly desirable to identify and implement options for providing professional staff positions to increase the size and diversify the expertise of the UNFF Secretariat. This may include to the extent possible, at least a few positions in the following areas of work :
  - General support staff.
  - Technical experts on Communication, Knowledge Management and Learning.
  - Technical experts on Forests.
  - Technical experts on Information Technology (IT).
  - Dedicated staff positions within the Secretariat to support the CPF and to assure a smooth functioning of the CPF as a group.
67. Improvement of the advocacy role and strengthened collaboration on global forest issues and fulfilment of all Secretariat functions<sup>52 53</sup> are also subject to strengthening of technical capacity of the Secretariat, and its restructuring to a Division on Forests in DESA, which carries out more than routine secretariat

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<sup>50</sup> See paragraph 17 in Section VI of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33

<sup>51</sup> See Box 2 describing the Functions of the Forum Secretariat

<sup>52</sup> See paragraph 17 in Section VI of ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33

<sup>53</sup> See Box 2

services to the UNFF, and it would rather engage in broader issues of forests and interlinkages with other global issues such as sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity.

## VIII.2. Measures related to the mobilization of additional resources

68. It is necessary to achieve greater synergies with other international cooperation mechanisms, to enhance contribution of forests to address climate change or biodiversity loss. These kinds of synergies could be both in the environmental sector and in other sectors, such as financial organizations like the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund, and regional banks (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank). Increasing synergies with financial organizations could serve as additional opportunities to support countries in using the existing international financial resources in direct support to their local communities and indigenous peoples with the least possible intermediation, beyond technical assistance.
69. With regard to the mobilization of additional resources, the Secretariat is already working on the GFFFN Clearing house to provide countries with information on existing international financial resources, for which they can apply. Nevertheless, Members States expect the Secretariat to continue this type of work so as to ensure the sustainability of the impact of the GFFFN. In addition, the Secretariat should continue to facilitate exchange of scientific and technical data and knowledge during the Forum's sessions, as well as preparation of technical papers on new and emerging issues of concerns to forests and countries. For more information about the GFFFN, it is useful to refer to the other report that Mr. Jorge Illueca is preparing on Section D of annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17.<sup>54</sup>

## VIII. 3. Measures related to strategic planning

70. Concerning strategic planning, the consultant suggests that there is a need for the Secretariat to accelerate its efforts towards more strategic planning of its work and activities in support of countries, its communication activities, and in its collaboration with relevant partners and stakeholders. Supplementary Strategic Planning is needed to look at all possible actions because there are always various options for bridging the gaps between the current situation and the desired objectives. Strategic Planning can also be used to draw distinctions between realities and objectives. This involves planning around actions, timescales, priorities, and indicators. Prioritization is critical because it is important that the actions selected by the Secretariat address not only the high-level initiatives and over-arching goals, such as the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, but that they get articulated into short term actions that will be required to gradually achieve the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030.

## VIII.4. Additional measures to address remaining collaboration challenges

71. In spite of the above possibilities for improvement, given its extensive mandate, it appears quite likely that the Secretariat will continue to rely on external additional support, either through hiring consultants or through assistance from the CPF members in various forms, such as continued secondments or voluntary contribution to the UNFF Trust Fund. It is suggested to make the best use of

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<sup>54</sup> See Assessment D - GFFFN & Study on Financial Flow to Forests prepared by Mr. Jorge Illueca



existing resources, careful mapping of capacity gaps over time, as well as early consultation with CPF members on their ways and means to help bridge these gaps.<sup>55</sup>

## IX. Conclusions

72. The Secretariat of the UNFF plays a key role and contributes to the effectiveness of the IAF in achieving its objectives. The key findings of the assessment regarding Section B of ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17 on the UNFF Secretariat are provided below.
73. The achievements made by 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 are substantial and critical for the implementation of the objectives of the UNFF.
74. The significant achievements of all functions of the Secretariat demonstrate that this structure is one of the key pillars of the UNFF. It is useful to record some of the key achievements that confirm the critical responsibilities and realisations made through the support of the Secretariat. In this regard, the Secretariat provided technical and organizational assistance through the preparations for UNFF Sessions in a professional manner, timely production of the necessary documentation, logistical arrangements, support for delegates to attend meetings and building the capacity for national reporting. The secretariat also promoted good collaborative partnerships at the regional level and with civil society, catalysed complementary action by CPF members and the Major Groups, and made useful briefing of New York-based permanent missions and regional groups on forest issues.
75. However, it is also significant to highlight the fact that there are various gaps and limitations that are expected to be addressed to increase the effectiveness of the Secretariat. For example, the UNFF's Member States and organizations underline the pressing need to undertake more resource mobilization, maintain a balanced approach to the wide range of challenges related to forests, and get an organizational human resources chart and historical timeline documenting staff size. The Member States and organizations also indicated that, given its broad mandate, it appears quite likely that the Secretariat will continue to rely on external additional support, either through hiring consultants or through assistance from the CPF members in various forms. It is suggested to make the best use of existing resources, careful mapping of capacity gaps over time, as well as early consultation with CPF members on their ways and means to help bridge these gaps.
76. As requested in Section I of Resolution 2015/33 on International arrangement on forests beyond 2015, the UNFF Secretariat, as part of the IAF, should operate in a transparent, effective, efficient, and accountable manner and should provide added value and contribute to enhanced coherence, cooperation, and synergies with respect to other forest-related agreements, processes, and initiatives. Some Member States indicate that they have little insight into the inner workings of the Secretariat, including staffing, expertise, and capacity. Increasing Members States' understanding of the Secretariat's functionality could serve to manage Members' expectations on Secretariat outputs. These Member States consider that greater transparency of the Secretariat's work is required to improve

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<sup>55</sup> See Annex 2. Responses to Questionnaire

effectiveness of its operations. For some Member States, the need for more transparency requires that the Secretariat prepare and share a detailed work plan that is measurable and clearly presents the priorities as well as expected results. This can also help manage expectations from Member States and demonstrate ongoing progress towards IAF objectives. Therefore, it is important to highlight the need to improve the transparency with regard to the work of the Secretariat, including approaches and means used to collect data, generate information, and make the choice about the set of information that is shared with all stakeholders.

77. To enhance the capacity of the Secretariat, a special attention is paid to the role of the Trust Fund through Assessment E, prepared by Tiega Anada. It could be useful to look at the report on the Trust Fund<sup>56</sup>. Additional measures are identified by countries/organizations to enhance collaboration and synergies, and to reduce duplication with regard to forest-related issues at the global level, bearing in mind the mandates of different organizations and entities. These measures include continuing and increasing secondments and other in-kind contributions such as through the JPO program to the Secretariat, which could be a useful way to increase the Secretariat capacity with respect to technical and financial resources.
78. Although the UNFF Secretariat has made significant progress in fulfilling its functions, one should recognize that nothing is perfect and there are good reasons to expect the Secretariat to redouble efforts and continue to make progress. For instance, the Secretariat is expected to redouble efforts to accomplish further partnerships with the Rio Conventions and other organizations working on SFM, to enhance communication with the UNFF members, to demonstrate more transparency about the work of the Secretariat and improve the contribution of the Secretariat to the UNFF functions, and the CPF functions. There are at least three good reasons explaining the need to redouble efforts:
- i) The first reason is the fact that SFM is a complex process, involving all UN Member States and various organizations working at international, national, and local levels. This complexity requires continued efforts to search for suitable options to make a significant contribution to the implementation of SFM.
  - ii) The second reason is the nature of the functions and mandate of the Secretariat. These functions and mandates are all long-term directives and there is no function that can be fulfilled completely and forever.
  - iii) The third reason is the fact that in this world everything is subject to change and the work of the UNFF is no exception. All institutions/organizations have to adapt to a changing institutional, legal, economic, social, and environmental context. Continued efforts are critical to better understand the context, including key emerging challenges and opportunities that are relevant to the work of the UNFF Secretariat.
79. Therefore, the consultant believes that it is important to expect continued efforts not only from the UNFF Secretariat, but also from all relevant countries and organizations to collectively work within the United Nations system to support and align forests and the international arrangement on forests with their considerations on the post-2015 development agenda and beyond.

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<sup>56</sup> See Report on Assessment E related to the Trust Fund, prepared by Tiega Anada

## X. Recommendations

80. It is highly recommended to increase the capacity of the UNFF Secretariat, using a mixture of opportunities and actions, ensuring consistency between the responsibilities of the UNFFS that are growing and the corresponding human and financial resources that are required to keep pace. Members States could increase their recognition of the good performance of the Secretariat by increasing the human and financial resources, including from the regular budget of the United Nations, so as to enable it to perform its various functions efficiently and effectively.
81. With regard to the enhancement of the capacity of the UNFF Secretariat, it could be useful to identify and implement options for providing professional staff positions to increase the size and diversify the expertise of the UNFF Secretariat. This may include to the extent possible, at least a few positions in the following areas of work :
- General support staff.
  - Technical experts on Communication, Knowledge Management and Learning.
  - Technical experts on Forests.
  - Technical experts on Information Technology (IT).
  - Dedicated staff positions within the Secretariat to support the CPF and to assure a smooth functioning of the CPF as a group.
82. It is also recommended to the UNFF Secretariat to explore new opportunities and take additional actions to improve the effectiveness of its work. In this regard, the Secretariat is expected to improve the structure and content of the official website of the UNFF and undertake more sensitization of policy programs through high level political forums. It is also necessary to achieve greater synergies with other international cooperation mechanisms, to enhance contribution of forests to address climate change, land degradation, or biodiversity loss. These kinds of synergies could be both in the environmental sector and in other sectors, such as financial organizations like the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund, and regional banks (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank). Increasing synergies with financial organizations could serve as additional alternatives to support the search for options that countries can use with regard to existing international financial resources in direct support to local communities and indigenous peoples with the least possible intermediation, beyond technical assistance. The Secretariat is already working on the GFFFN Clearinghouse to provide countries with information on existing international financial resources, for which they can apply. Nevertheless, Members States expect the Secretariat to continue this type of work so as to ensure the sustainability of the impact of the GFFFN global issues such as sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity.
83. In addition, the Secretariat should further facilitate exchange of scientific and technical data and knowledge during the Forum's sessions, as well as preparation of technical papers on new and emerging issues of concerns to forests and countries. Improvement of the advocacy role and strengthened collaboration on global forest issues and fulfilment of all its functions are also subject to strengthening of technical capacity of the Secretariat, and its restructuring to a Division on Forests in DESA, which

carries out more than routine secretariat services to the UNFF, and it would rather engage in more broader issues of forests and interlinkages with other global issues such as sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity. It is suggested to share information more frequently with the permanent representations of Member States in New York to raise awareness, further highlight the benefits of forests, and increase the visibility of the Secretariat's work.

84. There is a need for strengthening the effectiveness of the UNFF Secretariat in terms of sharing other countries' experience and sharing findings for successful cases from across the world. It would also be useful if research/ analysis at the UNFF Secretariat could find peer countries that could share their respective experience, based on their similarities in different parameters (climate, population, geographic features, innovations, etc).
85. To respond to the increasing need for transparency, it is not enough to share information that is generated by the Secretariat. It is critical to use independent evaluation, consultation with stakeholders, and overall assessments of the strengths, weaknesses, emerging challenges, and opportunities to address the obstacles. Taking all these elements into account, it is important for the Secretariat to convey significant consideration to ways and means that can be used to demonstrate and establish transparency. It is important to focus transparency efforts on where the Secretariat is today, what the stakeholders are expecting, what the Secretariat is looking to accomplish, and what needs to happen to get there. To increase transparency, the Secretariat can also request countries and partners to share their success stories, as well as lessons learned. It is also essential to share not only positive changes, accomplishments, and progressive steps forward, but also share remaining challenges that require additional efforts to reduce obstacles. With increasing openness between the Secretariat and the UNFF members, the way to generate and present information can make a big difference in the outcome. To that end, it is equally important to keep the UNFF members in the loop frequently and consistently about all matters regarding the work of the Secretariat and the UNFF members, including achievements, challenges, obstacles, or goals that were missed. If done correctly, sharing the strengths and the weaknesses can inspire the UNFF stakeholders to enhance their commitment and better support the Secretariat and the CPF for the greater good of the SFM.
86. Since the Secretariat has no regional offices, an alternative could be to explore possibilities to increase UNFF presence across the globe through inviting the respective entities to appoint liaison officers based at United Nations Economic Commission regional offices like Addis Ababa, Bangkok, and Santiago, to improve collaboration with relevant regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions, and processes.
87. As for all intergovernmental organizations, continual improvement of the UNFF Secretariat is required. Therefore, the work of the UNFF Secretariat must be viewed as a process that is never finished. The work of the Secretariat can always be improved, and its efficiency must be enhanced continually, in line with the emerging needs of the UNFF members. To that end, the Secretariat has to continue to carefully plan its activities and monitor the overall results of its work through constant re-evaluation and adjustment, considering the achievements made, but also emerging issues and new requests from the UNFF Members that require further work.

88. It would also be beneficial to promote and support a continual process of learning, within the Secretariat, to cultivate innovation and improve the performance. As much as possible, sponsored trainings could be organized as well as visits to other organizations to continually learn more about opportunities that can lead to mutual benefits and to get new ideas and perspectives.
89. Even if the UNFF Members consider that the work of the Secretariat is successful, the performance has to be maintained. The Secretariat has to keep striving for its improvement, even after it has achieved an acceptable level of performance.
90. To improve the performance of the UNFF Secretariat, a new era of enhanced actions could be highly desirable to better appreciate the role of the Secretariat and provide necessary support for effective and efficient implementation of the functions of the Secretariat. A number of actions could be taken, by breaking up the planning into three phases, covering the short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years), and long term (over 5 years). This could allow to track immediate improvements while evaluating progress toward long term achievements. The different time frames of the proposed planning process should put the focus on time-sensitive aspects of the UNFF's work, together with possible budget allocation.
91. Possible Actions in the short term could include:
- a. Taking actions to increase the travel budget of the Secretariat so that a senior officer of the UNFFS can visit those Member States that do not have a focal point. This will enable a senior staff member to meet with high level officials, including the Minister in charge of Forests to enhance political will and commitment to the work of the UNFF. As a matter of fact, Resolution 2000/35 established the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and specifies that the Forum has universal membership, and is composed of all Member States of the United Nations and specialized agencies. However, the reality is that it is important to ensure that all UNFF Members States have an effective and efficient focal point. The list of national focal points of the UNFF as of January 2022 shows that there are 23 Member States that do not have any name and contact details of their focal point on the UNFF website.
  - b. To address this issue, in addition to the fact that the UNFFS sends on an annual basis an official note verbale to countries, asking them to provide any change in the name of their national focal point, or provide information on their new national focal point, if they do not have one, it could be useful to take additional action. In this regard, increasing collaboration is needed with all UNFF Members States, to translate the "theoretical Universal Membership" into a real, tangible, and effective Membership, which means that all UNFF Members States have a focal point that serves as the main contact of the UNFF Secretariat, UNFF members and national stakeholders.
  - c. To facilitate the work of the Secretariat it is necessary to get supplementary voluntary financial contribution from the UNFF members to support additional travel possibilities for the Secretariat staff.
92. Possible Actions in the medium term could include:
- a. A review of the mandate of the Secretariat to update its functions:

Considering the fact that the mandate of the UNFFS has been constantly expanded, while the resources, both budgetary and Human Resources, remained unchanged, it could be useful to examine how the functions of the Secretariat have been evolving since the adoption of Resolution 2015/33. This analysis of the functions could be made in light of the new developments since 2015. In this regard, during the UNFF sessions, additional requests are usually made to the UNFFS to carry out new activities. Other new activities are also emerging from the UNFF intersessional meetings. Therefore, it could be useful to examine all additional requests made to the UNFFS since 2015, so as to recognize the additional work that is still valid and include it into an updated mandate of the Secretariat.

b. This update will bring to light the real workload that is expected from the Secretariat. The updated mandate of the Secretariat will also be a base for a better understanding of the capacity needs of the Secretariat to effectively fulfil its mandate. Possible options for enhancing the capacity of the Secretariat could include:

- (i) Strengthen the technical capacity of the UNFFS with additional expertise as suggested on paragraph 64 of this report.
- (ii) Upgrade the UNFFS to a Division on Forests in DESA. This option could enhance the engagement of the UNFFS to expand its work on broader issues on forests and improve the interlinkages with other global issues such as sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity.
- (iii) Possible internal reorganization of the Secretariat to update the responsibilities of existing staff members and improve the results of the collective efforts made by the UNFFS staff.

93. It is important to note that all options that have the potential to increase the capacity of the UNFFS will require an update regarding the staff size as well as the allocated budget. These possible changes could be assessed and proposed to the relevant UN bodies that have the authority to make decision about administrative and financial matters.

94. Possible actions for the long term.

It should be noted that some of the possible options could take more than five years to be adopted and their implementation could be in the long term. Therefore, it is suggested to prioritize and consider the future work of the UNFFS through short term planning, medium term planning, and long term planning so as to achieve a gradual improvement that can be sustainable.

## Annexes

### Annex1. Brief biography Tiega Anada, consultant

Tiega Anada, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Specialist is a former Secretary General of The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Born in Niger (West Africa), started his career as a forester, having earned university degrees in Agriculture, Forestry, Wildlife Management, Climate Change issues, and Watershed Management. Has been deeply involved in working on Biodiversity and Water resources Management at national level (Former Director of Wildlife and Fisheries in Niger), at sub-regional level (Regional Coordinator for IUCN in West Africa) and global level (Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands). Working for the West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WA BiCC) as Resilience and Adaptation Specialist, he coordinated and supervised all activities of the Program, including support to national and regional policies/strategies and legislative framework on Forests, Wildlife, fisheries, and protected Areas in 15 countries of West Africa, as well as site-based activities on coastal landscapes in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. From 2021 to 2022, he provided technical support to five countries in Central and West Africa on Strategic Planning including Sustainable Forest Management, Integrated River Basin Management, Integrated Coastal Management, and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

### Annex 2. Responses to Questionnaire B related to the Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat

**Questionnaire on the mid-term review of the international arrangement on forests: responses relevant to Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat (Assessment B): The Questionnaire on the Mid-term Review contained three questions specifically relating to the Assessment B, namely B1, B2, and B3. This summary highlights key points made by Member States and the organizations which responded directly to these questions.**

**Question B1: What are the achievements made by 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?**

<i>Member State /organization which responded directly to this question.</i>	<i>Responses from Member States and organizations</i>
Algeria	According to FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020, the rate of deforestation has decreased over the years, even though there is significant deforested area globally. In my opinion, this result would be due to the

	secretariat's efforts in supporting, through projects, the tools put in place to ensure sustainable forest management.
Australia	Australia appreciates the work of the Secretariat in progressing the objectives of the IAF and considers the overall work of the UNFF to be an achievement of the Secretariat. The Secretariat's function is to organise and tangibly connect goals with actions. We acknowledge the challenge of this task, particularly given resourcing constraints.
Bangladesh	<p>Generally, at the UN system, member countries are communicated and followed up through the Focal Points regarding implementation, monitoring, and reporting on different resolutions. In case of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 UNFF focal point for Bangladesh was communicated very few times, only for feedback like the current one. Hence, comments on progress made by secretariat would not be appropriate.</p> <p>Bangladesh as part of its commitment towards 2030 agenda and other national forest related priorities set out in its Perspective Plan 2041, undertaken several activities towards increasing forest coverage while maintaining the existing ones.</p> <p>Our experience reveals the need for strengthening the UNFF secretariat in terms of sharing other countries' experience, sharing findings for successful cases from across the world. It would also be useful if research/ analysis at the UNFF secretariat could find peer countries for each of the country whose experience might be useful for countries like Bangladesh, based on their similarities in different parameters (climate, population, geographic features, innovations etc)</p>
Botswana	<p>Securing limited financial support to members state focal points to attend inter sessional meetings</p> <p>Provision of technical support to member states on the interpretation of the documents alignment to the forest of individual member states</p>
Canada	GFFFN was a good achievement. The high-level panel at UNFF17 was also very good. Intersessional activities have continued through challenging circumstances.
China	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.



Colombia	There are no comments on this point.
El Salvador	Not yet explored.
Jamaica	Engaging member countries and providing technical support. Support given to member states is good.
Kenya	<p>Provided support to the international policy dialogue on sustainable forest management.</p> <p>Facilitated cooperation and coordination on global forest issue.</p> <p>Provided the focal point on all forest-related issues for the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.</p> <p>Has Served as the Secretariat for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.</p> <p>Securing limited financial support to member states focal points to attend inter sessional meetings.</p>
Malaysia	UNFF Secretariat actively provides regular updates to the member states on the progress report of GFG achievement and activities/celebrations on forest-related programs such as the International Day of Forests (IDF) and International Day for Biological Diversity. UNFF Secretariat also manages to carry out UNFF and several coordinating meetings, such as the UNFF Expert Group Meeting (EGM) Reporting on progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan on Forests 2030 (UNSPF) and EGM on the Impact of COVID-19 on Sustainable Forest Management.
Mexico	Despite the small size of the Secretariat, it fulfils its responsibilities, including the preparation and organization of meetings, as well as the facilitation and follow-up of requests and initiatives during the intersessions of UNFF.
Panama.	<p>The contributions and agreements reached at the country level, with the signing of the Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development for the period 2021-2025, between the Foreign Minister of the Republic Erika Mouynes and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Panama Cristian Munduate. This instrument is based on 4 work units, of which it was mentioned:</p> <p>Equality and social, economic, and environmental inclusion.</p>

	<p>Governance, institutions, citizenship, and justice.</p> <p>Climate change, comprehensive environmental management, and disaster risk reduction.</p> <p>Prevention of violence and protection of human rights.</p> <p>The Panamanian representation at COP26, headed by Eng. Milcíades Concepción (Minister of Environment), highlighted the financial support from organizations such as: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Natura Foundation, AILAC, Wetlands International, FAO and Ramsar Western Hemisphere Regional Center, for making possible the deployment of the Panamanian delegation to a distinguished event.</p> <p>Panama stood out as a world leader of 30x30 and also be one of the 3 countries in the world in carbon negative, facing great challenges. The country is preparing to create and strengthen policies on global warming issues, to achieve sustainability and resilience.</p>
Romania	<p>Achievements of the Secretariat in carrying out its functions are consistent with its tasks.</p>
Switzerland	<p>UN Member States have little information on how many staff members work in the secretariat, their tasks, and further the on-going level of available finance.</p> <p>The yearly budget document (PBI Subprogramme 8) encloses items we do not discuss and gives a false account of what is being done as it does not take into account the real work of the IAF. The website needs a proper and thorough reshuffle.</p>
USA	<p>Achievements of the Secretariat include management of the GFFFN and assisting and connecting Member States with existing financial forest resources, as well as creation of communication products around the GFGs, including the concise GFG pamphlet and International Day of Forests.</p>
FAO	<p>The Forum secretariat should be commended for its accomplishments during the last several years under rather challenging conditions, including limited capacities v.a.v. mandate and the extensive length of some recruitment periods. Among its achievements the implementation of the G3FN may be lauded in particular, but the exemplary collaboration in global reporting and the facilitation of the use of</p>

	existing information sources, such as the Global Core Set, should also be mentioned with appreciation.
Forest Europe	We congratulate the Secretariat on a very professional and good work.
IUFRO	IUFRO does not have sufficient insight to answer the following questions in detail.
ITTO	Not really relevant for another IGO to comment on but having the position for Director of the UNFF Secretariat vacant for around 2 years amid a lot of uncertainty about the position was not a positive impact on the Secretariat's ability to carry out its functions, etc and led to doubts amongst some observers about the commitment to strong/continuous leadership for UNFF.
Major Group for Children and Youth	<p>Annually organised five-day sessions, as well as high level segments, in hybrid format allowing for discussions which highlight emerging issues and address forest-related global challenges.</p> <p>Organization of Expert Group Meetings together with Major Group workshops to foster synergies geared towards strengthening forest governance frameworks in addition to sharing lessons learned and best practices.</p> <p>Established an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group to review work related to the midterm review of the forum with the report to be tabled at UNF19.</p> <p>Continuous facilitation of involvement of member states, organizations, major groups, and other stakeholders in activities including intersessional activities within the scope of resources.</p> <p>Made public all documentation and resolutions regarding the discussions on forest management thereby ensuring transparency.</p> <p>Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.</p>

**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?**

<i>Member State /organization which</i>	<i>Responses from Member States and organizations</i>
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<p>responded directly to this question.</p>	
<p>Algeria</p>	<p>There is a gap in terms of coordination and communication, including coordination with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, which is considered to be the scientific arm of the UNFF. However, this link is not obvious , given that the main tasks of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are to support the work of the Forum and its member countries in the implementation of the AIF and the UNFF strategic framework.</p> <p>Also, the UNFF secretariat, unlike other multilateral environmental agreements, does not transmit any official correspondence through the official diplomatic channel. This way of communicating directly with the focal point, which is responsible for the work required, is not sufficient to give weight to the UNFF and the implementation of the IAF.</p>
<p>Australia</p>	<p>Members have little insight into the inner workings of the Secretariat, including staffing, expertise, and capacity. Increasing Members’ understanding of the Secretariat’s functionality could serve to manage Members’ expectations on Secretariat outputs. We consider that greater transparency of the Secretariat’s work is required to improve effectiveness of its operations. We also emphasise the need to ensure the Secretariat functions as an arm for Members’ agreed actions and highlight the need for the Secretariat to ensure transparent and open decision-making processes, including prioritisation of actions. Any variation from agreed work (that draws on UNFF resources) should be clearly and openly communicated to all Members.</p> <p>We welcome measures that provide greater understanding around financial decision-making and prioritisation of work.</p>
<p>Bangladesh</p>	<p>Focal points and the forest management authorities being in their own country will be benefitted if the UNFF secretariat can share experiences gathered from other countries including overcoming global challenges such as striking right balance between development and increasing forest coverage while maintaining the existing forests.</p> <p>Also, the Secretariat may acquire adequate mechanisms and staffs towards maintaining an active platform for exchange of knowledge, skills as well as country-specific learnings that can support better understanding and decision-making for countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>Secretariat may organize virtual events on a regular basis to share such experiences which will boost the activities through new and useful information flowing from regions and countries.</p>

Botswana	UNFF secretariat does not have adequate capacity to provide support to the member states in terms of implementation of the UNFF strategic plan and as such an establishment of the division may close this gap.
Canada	It is difficult for members to understand who is doing what in the secretariat and why so many consultants are needed. Amplifying the impacts .
China	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 workload. 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.
Colombia	There are no comments on this point.
El Salvador	It is unknown, not yet explored, it will be possible to orient the country.
Jamaica	N/A
Kenya	The human capacity has been constraining the operation of the secretariat in terms of programme development and providing backstopping services to the members.
Malawi	Limited financial resources to enable it assist Member States.  It is not a UN agency but possibly a subsidiary of another institution (maybe IAF).  It does not have a regional or continental offices that could be doing coordination of UNFF at regional level.
Malaysia	Malaysia views that the collaboration between the UNFF secretariat and CPF members is important to enhance the capacity of developing countries to prepare Voluntary national reports and facilitate their access to available funding for

	technology development and transfer in the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 and the United Nations Forest Instrument.
Mexico	It is considered that it is necessary to achieve greater synergies with other international cooperation mechanisms, both in the environmental sector and in other sectors, as well as to support the search for alternatives so that countries can use existing international financial resources in direct support to local communities and indigenous peoples with the least possible intermediation, beyond technical assistance.
Panama.	<p>Natural resources provide daily the economic environment of a country (food, water, oxygen, minerals, in short), however, the governing body responsible for the administration of natural resources is not given sufficient economic resources to be efficient, effective and productive, in this sense, the secretariat should promote the member states, that governments give importance and economic recourse to the environmental portfolio to achieve not only the SDGs or the international agreements acquired, but also to guarantee that sustainability over time.</p> <p>Under this reference, that it helps us to have the best laws, if there are no resources to execute it, that it serves us to have the best environmental policy, if there are no resources to put them into action. Our peasants, our native peoples, our society it requires useful tools and instruments for its transformation in order to be a Developed Nation.</p>
Romania	I have no relevant information in order to consider such gaps.
Switzerland	As mentioned above under B-1: a list of all secretariat staff members with their tasks and phone numbers and mails would be good when we have to ask questions), the level of available finance. The website must be fully reshuffled.
USA	<p>Transparency of the Secretariat's work, through reporting at the annual UNFF sessions and throughout the intersession is important to improve the effectiveness of its operations. This includes fundraising activities, potential MOU developments, and internal UN System representations.</p> <p>At times, Forum discussions overly focus on administrative issues taking time away from policy discussions.</p>
FAO	Given its broad mandate, it appears quite likely that the secretariat should continue to rely heavily on external support, be it obtained through hiring consultants or provided by CPF members in various forms. To make these arrangements more efficient and help the secretariat to use existing resources best, careful mapping of capacity gaps over time would be needed as well as early

	consultation with CPF members on their ways and means to help bridge these gaps. These could be complemented by using the existing resources to hire external capacities, where support within the IAF cannot be found.
ITTO	Not enough knowledge of Secretariat structure and functions to comment but see about general comment about importance of strong/continuous leadership.
IUFRO	IUFRO does not have sufficient insight to answer the following questions in detail.
Major Group for Children and Youth	Has a small digital footprint, no dedicated social media channels or mailing list, unlike other UN agencies which affects its visibility outside policy actors.  Single location in New York hence difficulty in involvement with relevant regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions, and processes.

**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?**

<i>Member State /organization which responded directly to this question.</i>	<i>Responses from Member States and organizations</i>
Algeria	Improve coordination between the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the UNFF and member countries through the FAO Liaison Office, which must be effectively and responsibly involved.  Some important correspondence must pass through the permanent representations in New York to raise awareness and empower the high level of decision-making .
Australia	A work plan that is measurable and clearly presents the Secretariat's work to members would contribute to ensuring work of the Secretariat is open and transparent. This can also help manage expectations from members and also demonstrate ongoing progress towards IAF objectives.
Bangladesh	The UNFF Secretariat can strengthen communication with member countries and effectively plan activities so that the knowledge, experience, and expertise can be

	shared among member countries in making progress towards the objective of the international arrangement on forests and enhance collaboration.
Canada	General observation: It is unfortunate that questions on secretariat performance have been addressed through this questionnaire. As expressed by many delegations during the last UNFF meeting, an independent review would have added credibility and objectivity (a survey developed and distributed by UNFFS should not be considered as independent, even if a consultant does the review).
China	Strengthen the communications between the UNFF Secretariat and other international organizations and institutions.  Increase the participation of the UNFF Secretariat in relevant international conferences.  Improve the structure of the official website of UNFF, enrich the content of the website, and make it easier to query relevant information.
Colombia	There are no comments on this point.
El Salvador	Not yet explored
Jamaica	More sensitization of policy programs and have high level political forums. Create instrument for Ministerial level commitments at HLPF and monitor this- every five years could be considered.
Kenya	Recruitment of additional technical personnel.  Seconding of staff from willing and well-staffed member states to the secretariat.
Malawi	To have regional or continental offices that could be doing coordination of UNFF at regional level.  To make it a standalone UN institution on forests just like other UN agencies.  To do more on resource mobilization.
Malaysia	UNFF Secretariat works closely with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to make progress towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests.
Mexico	Promote a better positioning of the forestry sector in the international agenda and in the national agendas at the highest level, despite the current international context where economic and especially security issues seem more relevant. Support countries to develop financial alternatives for access to credit by owners and holders of forest land (smallholders, indigenous peoples, and local



	communities), seeking to generate the financial capacities of communities, for example, to develop productive and marketing chains.
New Zealand	<p>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.</p> <p>We note the work of the Secretariat on capacity building with members on forest financing strategies appears to be well appreciated by recipients.</p>
Panama.	We believe faithfully in the dialogue and continuous monitoring of the processes acquired, in this sense, we suggest that semi-annual meetings be held with the representative of the United Nations in Panama together with the Forestry Directorate to analyze the progress of the agreements agreed on forest management.
Peru	<p>Improve the efficiency and strengthen the capacity of the UNFF, including human and financial resources, and expand the impact of UNFF activities.</p> <p>Assess progress in implementing operations and resources of the Global Forest Finance Facilitation Network – GFFFN.</p>
Romania	Maintaining a balanced approach to the wide range of challenges related to forests, at global level
Switzerland	<p>It would also be good to have secondment of the CFP members as in the past.</p> <p>Stronger communication and outreach, including modernization of the UNFF website urgently required. Social media presence to be improved.</p>
The Philippines	<p>The UNFF Secretariat is recommended to provide regular updates on the work progress on the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) to all Member States.</p> <p>Moreover, it is also suggested for the UNFF Secretariat to provide advance copy of all documents to be discussed, as well as corresponding guide questions ahead of the actual consultation workshops, dialogue, and sessions of the UNFF.</p>
USA	An organizational human resources chart and historical timeline documenting staff size would be helpful to include.

	<p>We note in the past there were secondments to the Secretariat, which could be a useful way to increase Secretariat capacity with respect to technical and financial resources.</p>
FAO	<p>Given its broad mandate, it appears quite likely that the secretariat should continue to rely heavily on external support, be it obtained through hiring consultants or provided by CPF members in various forms. To make these arrangements more efficient and help the secretariat to use existing resources best, careful mapping of capacity gaps over time would be needed as well as early consultation with CPF members on their ways and means to help bridge these gaps. These could be complemented by using the existing resources to hire external capacities, where support within the IAF cannot be found.</p>
Forest Europe	<p>As mentioned above we could imagine that the Secretariat would organize more thematic sessions/and or workshops on emerging issues with global relevance to offer its Members and observers to interact more.</p>
IUFRO	<p>A focal person for scientific collaboration in the UNFF Secretariat should be nominated.</p>
ITTO	<p>Make the Director post higher level within the UN system so that UNFF has a louder voice in UN staffing and budget decisions. This will naturally form an attraction for other bodies to engage more and jointly influence perception on forests at the international level and within the UN system. ITTO</p>
Major Group for Children and Youth	<p>Enhance multilingual communication to increase visibility of its work and further highlight the benefits of forests.</p> <p>Increase UNFF presence across the globe through presence of staff or liaison officers based at United Nations Economic Commission regional offices like Addis Ababa, Bangkok, and Santiago, to improve collaboration with relevant regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions, and processes.</p> <p>Promptly rollout the implementation of the next phase of the UNFF Clearing house on forest financing and integrate databases which highlight funding sources that target women, youth, indigenous communities, lessons learned and best practices.</p> <p>Harmonize the data variables and methodologies of the national voluntary reporting on global forest goals to account for country differences and improve participation.</p>

## Annex 3 Relevant Documents

ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49: Outcome of the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests:

ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33: International arrangement on forests beyond 2015:

ECOSOC Resolution 2017/4: United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017–2020:  
<https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/ecosoc-resolutions/index.html>

ECOSOC Resolution 2020/14: Outcome of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) <https://www.un.org/en/ga/cpc/>

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ),

<https://www.un.org/ga/acabq/node/114>

UN-Programme Budget for 2022, Subprogramme 8 on SFM (Sustainable Forest Management)

Subprogramme 8 Budget resources from the UN regular budget pages 119-120 including posts

UNDESA Organigramme and the organizational chart of the UNFFS

The Joint Inspection Unit at <https://www.unjiu.org/content/about-jiu>

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) at <https://oios.un.org/>

<https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IAF-Assesment-Report-Final-12-Sep-2014.pdf>

UNFF website, available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/index.html>

<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/unff-seeks-to-strengthen-interlinkages-with-sdgs/> UNFF Seeks to Strengthen Interlinkages with SDGs. SDG KNOWLEDGE HUB by ISSD = 25 May 2022

ECOSOC Resolution on the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015 - E/RES/2015/33

General Assembly Resolution 71/285: United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 A/RES/71/285

Secretary-General Report on the implementation of ECOSOC resolution 2015/33: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/051/50/PDF/N1805150.pdf?OpenElement>

Report on the Independent Assessment of the IAF (September 2014): <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IAF-Assesment-Report-Final-12-Sep-2014.pdf>

Report of the SG on Reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options (2015)

Proposed programme budget for 2022 (See section on Subprogramme 8 - Sustainable forest management).

Report of the Special Session of the UN Forum on Forests (20 January 2017) E/CN.18/SS/2017/2

ECOSOC Resolution 2017/4: United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017–2020 E/RES/2017/4

Report of the 11th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests E/CN.18/2015/14

Report of the 12th session of the UN Forum on Forests E/CN.18/2017/8

Report of the 13th session of the UN Forum on Forests E/CN.18/2018/9

Report of the 14th session of the UN Forum on Forests E/CN.18/2019/9

Report of the 15th session of the UN Forum on Forests E/CN.18/2020/9

Report of the 16th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests E/CN.18/2021/

Report of the 17th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests E/2022/42-E/CN.18/2022/8

Additional consulted documents from the web

[eehttps://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1757&context=capstone.](https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1757&context=capstone)

[http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/repository/entri/docs/cop/Ramsar\\_COP10\\_res012.pdf](http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/repository/entri/docs/cop/Ramsar_COP10_res012.pdf) -Resolution X.12  
Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector.

[https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1757&context=capstone.](https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1757&context=capstone)

[http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/repository/entri/docs/cop/Ramsar\\_COP10\\_res012.pdf](http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/repository/entri/docs/cop/Ramsar_COP10_res012.pdf) -Resolution X.12  
Principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector