



Midterm Review of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)

Assessment B: Actions related to the Forum

Secretariat

(ECOSOC Res. 2022/17, Annex, item B)

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UNFF Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting | October 2023 | Vienna

Presentation Outline

- **Brief introduction**
- **Assessment and findings**
- **Recommendations**



Introduction – Assessment B actions

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.



Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat - Key Achievements

- The achievements made by the Secretariat are substantial and critical for the implementation of the objectives of the UNFF.
- 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, catalyzed 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.



Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat: Gaps and Limitations

There are various gaps and limitations that are expected to be addressed to increase the effectiveness of the Secretariat through:

- More resource mobilization.
- Recognizing and addressing all types of challenges related to forests.
- Providing annual updated information on Secretariat staff.
- Seeking external additional support, either through hiring consultants or through assistance from the CPF members in various forms.



Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat: Need for more transparency

- Member States indicate that they have little insight into the inner workings of the Secretariat, including staffing, expertise, and capacity.
- Member States indicate that the current need for more transparency requires that the Secretariat prepare and share a detailed work plan that is measurable and clearly presents the expected results.
- The Secretariat may wish to improve the maintenance of knowledge management and learning products by racking the lists of available information, including lessons learned, best practices, issue briefs, policy briefs, and advocacy materials.

Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat: Need for enhanced capacity

- The Trust Fund is playing a critical role in enhancing the capacity of the UNFF Secretariat. Special attention is paid to the role of the UNFF Trust Fund through Assessment E.
- In addition to the Trust Fund, there is a need for 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.

Assessment of the UNFF Secretariat: decision-making processes

- 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 and should work in accordance with the Strategy of the Subprogramme 8.
- As part of DESA, the UNFFS is an integral part of the UN Secretariat and inter-departmental network of the UN system. Like other bodies within DESA, the UNFFS has no power to decide about regular budget allocation.
- The Secretariat has the authority to decide about the priority matters to include in its detailed annual work plan, the kind of information to disseminate, and the target audience.



Recommendations – Capacity of the UNFF Secretariat

1. It is recommended to undertake more resource mobilization and maintain a balanced approach to the wide range of challenges related to forests.
2. 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.
3. Identify and implement options for providing professional staff positions to increase the size and diversify the expertise of the UNFF Secretariat.

Recommendations – Capacity of the UNFF Secretariat (2)

4. Options 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 whole.

Recommendations – New opportunities and additional actions

5. Improve the structure and content of the official website of the UNFF.
6. Achieve greater synergies with other international cooperation mechanisms, to enhance contribution of forests to address climate change , land degradation, or biodiversity loss.
7. Increase synergies with financial organizations.
8. Share information more frequently with delegates at the permanent missions of Member States in New York to raise awareness, further highlight the benefits of forests, and increase the visibility of the Secretariat's work.
9. 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.



Recommendations – Planning in phases (short term)

10. Short -term (1-2 years) possible actions:

- a. 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.
- b. All UNFF Members States, to translate the “theoretical Universal Membership” into a real, tangible, and effective Membership, which means that all UNFF Members States should have a national focal point that serves as the main contact of the UNFF Secretariat, UNFF members and national stakeholders.

Recommendations – Planning in phases (medium term)

11. Medium- term (3-5 years) possible actions:

- a. A review of the mandate of the Secretariat to update its functions.
- b. 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
 - (i) Strengthen the technical capacity of the UNFFS with additional expertise as suggested on paragraph 64 of the as 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.



Recommendations – Planning in phases (long term)

12. Long- term possible actions:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Prioritize and consider the future work of the UNFFS through short term planning, medium term planning, and long- term planning to achieve a gradual improvement that can be sustainable.



— GLOBAL —
FOREST
— GOALS —

Thank You!

A copy of this PPT is available on the UNFF website at:
<https://www.un.org/esa/forests/events/aheg-iaf-mtr/index.html>

