

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

Assessment on actions related to the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

David Henderson-Howat

December 2022

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS		<i>page</i>
I.	Executive Summary	3
II.	Introduction	5
III.	Assessment methodology	6
IV.	Actions related to implementation of the Communication and Outreach Strategy of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-30	6
IV A.	<i>Background</i>	6
IV B.	<i>Assess progress made in the implementation of the COS by members of the Forum, the secretariat, the Partnership, regional organizations, and relevant stakeholders, and identify ways to address the challenges to furthering its implementation</i>	7
IV C.	<i>Assess the impact of the communication and outreach activities carried out to promote the strategic plan and the global forest goals, including the International Day of Forests and the usefulness of its themes to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of forests, as well as the visibility of the Forum's work within the United Nations system</i>	15
IV D.	<i>Identify additional communication options, platforms and channels that have come into prominence in recent years to better reach target audiences and with greater impacts</i>	17
IV E.	<i>Explore ways to make use of the capacities of members of the Forum and other players and partners at the global, regional, and national levels to strengthen advocacy on the implementation of the strategic plan</i>	20
V.	Conclusions and Recommendations	22
	List of Acronyms and abbreviations	26
	List of Annexes	27

I. Executive Summary

This Report, prepared for the midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests, provides an assessment of actions related to the implementation of the Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS) of the United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-30 (UNSPF). After reviewing progress made in implementing the COS, it identifies challenges, including the need to do more to reach audiences beyond the “forest community” and to engage more effectively with high-level decision makers. In addition, there is a continuing need for educational and outreach activities. It also recognises that, while there is growing political momentum on forest matters, much of this is associated with developments that are unrelated to COS implementation. The annual IDF celebrations have been successful in raising awareness of the importance of forests and trees and have reached large numbers of people around the world. Social media are widely used for communication and outreach, but as communication channels are rapidly evolving there is a continuing need to assess new opportunities, taking a professional approach to ensure that they are used cost-effectively. There is also an urgent need to strengthen advocacy by making renewed efforts to explain how forests can contribute positively to addressing critical global challenges, and by carefully targeting the content and presentation of messages to meet the varying needs of different audiences.

It is recommended that the ad hoc expert group may wish to consider inviting UNFF to:

Note with appreciation of the efforts made by Member States, the UNFF Secretariat, other CPF partners, regional and sub-regional organisations and Major Groups to implement the COS of the UNSPF, and invite them to continue this work;

Acknowledge in particular the valuable role played by the CPF Communicators’ Network and the other Forest Communicators’ Networks in coordinating communication and outreach activities and in sharing best practice;

Welcome the continued enthusiasm for participating in the IDF celebrations, with their carefully selected annual themes;

Recognise the need to do more to reach out beyond the “forest community” to non-forest industries such as agriculture and mining, to engage with high-level decision makers, and to raise awareness of the GFGs;

Stress the importance of educational and youth outreach activities and the need to help the next generation understand the benefits of forests and trees;

Note that the COS continues to provide a useful framework for action, and that further implementation requires a professional approach that makes cost-effective use of available resources and of existing and emerging communication options;

Invite Member States to consider opportunities to strengthen advocacy, for example through actions that help high-level politicians and senior government officials to understand better the contribution that forests and trees can make towards achieving wider policy goals;

Invite its Secretariat to make greater use of its convening power to widen participation in the Forum's high-level round tables in order to strengthen engagement beyond the forest-sector;

Invite its Secretariat to develop short, sharp policy briefs, and to extend its series of flagship publications in order to highlight the benefits that trees and forests bring for other global priorities;

Invite its Secretariat to make progress in upgrading the structure and content of its website, and to develop a communication plan setting out its proposed activities and associated objectives, messages and communication channels for different audiences, together with metrics for monitoring and evaluation;

Invite CPF members to continue efforts to raise the visibility of forest-related issues at international forums and meetings, to continue to seek ways to take initiatives that improve understanding of linkages between the forest sector and other sectors, and to use social media and appropriate publications to help raise awareness of the GFGs;

Encourage CPF members engaged in the Global Forest Education Initiative to make full use of the opportunities it presents to raise awareness of the importance of forests, and the role of sustainable forest management, through elementary (primary) and secondary school curricula.

Invite regional and sub-regional organisations to consider the possibility of developing regional communication and outreach strategies with messages that reflect regional priorities and needs;

Invite UNFF Major Groups to continue to use their voices to highlight concerns and propose practical solutions to problems associated with the world's forests.

II. Introduction

1. This is one in a series of ten reports containing independent assessments carried out in preparation for the 2024 midterm review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), in accordance with paragraphs 28-30 and the Annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17. The timeframe for conducting these assessments is from May 2015, when the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) adopted the draft ECOSOC Resolution on the “International arrangement on forests beyond 2015”¹, until the end of 2022.

2. This Report provides an assessment of the effectiveness of the IAF with regard to implementation of the Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS)² of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 (UNSPF)³. In accordance with section H of the Annex to ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17, this Report addresses the following actions:

- Assess the progress made in the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy by members of the Forum, the secretariat, the Partnership, regional organizations, and relevant stakeholders, and identify ways to address the challenges to furthering its implementation, including challenges with regard to achieving greater visibility of the strategic plan and the global forest goals.
- Assess the impact of the communication and outreach activities carried out to promote the strategic plan and the global forest goals, including the International Day of Forests and the usefulness of its themes to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of forests, as well as the visibility of the Forum’s work within the United Nations system.
- Identify additional communication options, platforms and channels that have come into prominence in recent years to better reach target audiences and with greater impacts.
- Explore ways to make use of the capacities of members of the Forum and other players and partners at the global, regional, and national levels to strengthen advocacy on the implementation of the strategic plan.
- To perform the above-mentioned tasks, the UNFF secretariat, in consultation with members of the Forum, partners and the member organizations of the Partnership, should conduct an assessment and submit its findings to an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group on preparations for the MTR of the IAF.

3. This Report is intended to assist with the MTR by providing relevant information for consideration by the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group, to be convened by the Forum towards the end of 2023 in accordance with paragraphs 30 (a) and 30 (b) of ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17. The consultant who wrote this Report was David Henderson-Howat - Annex 1 contains a brief biography.

¹ E/RES/2015/33

² As contained in Annex 1 to UNFF Resolution 13/1 (see E/2018/42)

³ See E/RES/2017/4

III. **Assessment methodology**

4. The following sources of information were used in the preparation of this Report:
- Responses to a consolidated Questionnaire, containing questions proposed by the consultants preparing this suite of Reports. This Questionnaire served as the vehicle for consultations with UNFF members, relevant partners and stakeholders, and was circulated on 9 August 2022 by the Chair of the UNFF 18 Bureau to all UNFF member states, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), regional and subregional partners and major groups. Annex 2 contains the Questionnaire responses relating to the COS.
 - UN documents and Voluntary National Reports relating to the IAF, UNSPF and COS; relevant websites; and other publications. Annex 3 contains details.
 - Discussions with a number of individuals. Annex 4 contains details.
5. Throughout the process of preparing this Report, there was close consultation between all the consultants engaged in preparing the ten reports in this series. The aim of this consultation, which was conducted through online meetings and the circulation of drafts, was to seek to ensure a consistency of approach between the assessments. The consultants held discussions with the Director of the UNFF Secretariat, and other Secretariat staff, on 27 July and 25 October 2022. While the UNFF Secretariat facilitated the preparation of this Report by providing administrative support for the consultants, the views expressed in the Report, including the conclusions and recommendations, are those of the consultant.

IV. **Actions related to implementation of the Communication and Outreach Strategy of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030**

IV A. **Background**

Development of the COS

6. The UNSPF was approved by ECOSOC on 20 April 2017 and subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly on 27 April 2017⁴. Building on the vision of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (the 2030 Agenda), it contains six Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and 26 associated targets to be reached by 2030. The UNSPF recognises the essential need for effective communication and outreach and, as part of the process of drafting the COS, the UNFF Secretariat held an expert meeting in September 2017, in collaboration with the UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators' Network, to gather lessons learned from successful communication and outreach strategies related to forests. Based on input from that meeting, a draft COS was presented to UNFF 13 and, following further consideration by the Forum, the COS was agreed in May 2018.

Outline of the COS

7. In summary, the aims of the COS are to (a) raise awareness of forests and trees as being vital to life on Earth and human well-being; (b) promote sustainable forest management (SFM); (c) raise

⁴ See A/RES/71/285

awareness of the GFGs and encourage implementation of the UNSPF; and (d) amplify communications from the forest community. It describes the role that Member States, entities within the UN system, other members of the CPF, regional organisations, Major Groups and other partners can play in implementing the COS. It also recognises the potential importance of influencers/opinion-makers/communication networks, and the need to promote public awareness and action. The section on key messages draws from the UNSPF and highlights the need to communicate the idea that forests sustain the daily lives of people everywhere. Communication methods and activities proposed by the COS include the use of websites, social media, events and advocates/messengers. With regard to success criteria, it suggests using voluntary national reporting to the Forum as a means of tracking communication and outreach activities. Finally, it notes that the COS is an evolving document which could be reviewed and updated, as needed.

Resources for implementing the COS

8. Resources available for implementation of the COS include inputs from Member States, the UNFF Secretariat, CPF members, regional and sub-regional organisations, and Major Groups. In order to help co-ordinate action and make effective use of available resources, the UNFF Secretariat works closely with other members of the CPF Communicators' Network, and liaises with the FAO Regional Forest Communicators' Networks. In addition, the UNFF Secretariat benefits from advice and guidance received from the UN Department of Global Communications and the Strategic Planning and Communications Service of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The UNFF Secretariat also participates in the interdepartmental UN Communications Group SDGs task force.

International Day of Forests (21 March)

9. In 2013, the UN General Assembly⁵ decided to proclaim 21 March of each year as the International Day of Forests (IDF) in order to awareness of the importance of forests and trees outside forests. The IDF has now become a major event and provides a powerful platform for public outreach activities on forests. The UNFF Secretariat collaborates with the CPF Communicators' Group to propose an annual theme for each IDF to UNFF; to promote the IDF celebrations; and to develop associated communication products.

IV B. Assess progress made in the implementation of the COS by members of the Forum, the secretariat, the Partnership, regional organizations, and relevant stakeholders, and identify ways to address the challenges to furthering its implementation. ,

Introduction

10. Members of the Forum, the UNFF Secretariat, CPF partners, regional and sub-regional organisations, and Major Groups have undertaken communication activities through their websites, traditional media and social media, publications, events, and educational and youth outreach. Section IV B of this Report first examines progress made by each of these actors by providing an illustrative summary of their actions, largely based upon official documentation prepared for UNFF sessions, voluntary national reports to UNFF 15, website reviews, the *Global Forest Goals Report 2021* and responses to the Questionnaire.⁶ It then considers ways to address challenges with regard to

⁵ By its resolution A/RES/67/200

⁶ See Annexes 2 and 3 for further details.

furthering implementation of the COS, also noting that the COS is not the only driver for these communication and outreach activities. Challenges with regard to achieving greater visibility of the UNSPF and the GFGs are considered in Section IV C.

Actions taken by Members of the Forum

11. The actions and commitment of Forum members are key to the implementation of the COS as countries are well placed to raise awareness of the importance of forests and trees, to promote SFM, to make effective connections between the GFGs and action on the ground, and to amplify communication through their networks at national and sub-national level.

- *Websites:* Official websites, including those of Environment Ministries as well as Forest Departments, are widely used to provide open access to forest-related information. This includes general information aimed at the public and more technical information for policy-makers, the industry and other specialist audiences. General information helps raise awareness about the benefits of forests, the importance of SFM and, depending upon national circumstances, may include other useful products such as guides to forest recreational facilities. The technical information may include material relating to forest policies and laws, forest administration, forest resources, forest industries, community forests and standards of good practice for SFM, as well as funding and training opportunities. Some countries use their websites to provide information about the UNSPF and GFGs, including linkages between with national forest strategies, in their national languages.
- *Traditional and social media:* Many countries have worked with traditional media, such as the press, magazines, radio and television, to raise awareness of the importance of forests, promote SFM and announce new programmes and initiatives. The annual IDF celebrations also provide a good source of newsworthy stories. Social media is increasingly used, for example to publicize events and initiatives, and to draw attention to other sources of forest-related information, such as websites, publications and YouTube videos.
- *Publications and other communication products:* Many of the publications and other communication products (such as videos) which are aimed at the general public seek to raise awareness of the environmental role of forests as a sustainably managed resource. Publications targeted at more specialist audiences include technical bulletins and statistical handbooks. Increasingly, these publications are being made available in electronic formats.
- *Events:* A wide range of events, many of which are linked to the IDF or similar national celebrations, have been organised to raise awareness of the importance of forests, trees and urban green spaces. These are sometimes launched by high profile politicians or celebrities and may include educational activities; cultural activities, such as art, music, film, and theatre festivals; photography competitions; forest wellness weeks; participation in exhibitions and fairs; and scientific or technical symposiums. In addition, regular meetings with stakeholders provide venues for building consensus around forest policies and forest management practices - a total of

142 countries, representing 95 percent of the total forest area report that they have platforms to enable the participation of stakeholders in forest policy development.⁷

- *Educational and youth outreach:* Activities related to educational and youth outreach include designing and creating programmes for teachers, parents and community leaders; the integration of forest-related themes into national curricula; the development of resource material for teachers; and the use of experiential learning programmes, such as school forest plots, Forest School and guided forest tours. As well as reaching out to the younger generation, such activities have also helped to widen the network of forest champions among teachers.

Action taken by UNFF secretariat

12. Implementation of the COS is a key component of the work of the UNFF Secretariat and it works closely with other CPF member organisations through the CPF Communicators' Network in order to enhance synergies and amplify reach. The Secretariat also encourages national focal points to disseminate the UNSPF and related communication products within their networks.

- *Website:* The UNFF website sits within the DESA website, and the DESA Strategic Planning and Communications Service provides advice on website development and maintenance. While the top DESA webpages are in all six UN languages, the UNFF website is in English only. The top-level navigation menu on the UNFF homepage has links to: *Forum/Documents/Events/CPF/Major Groups/Regions/Outreach*. In addition, the UNFF Clearing House on Forest Financing has its own website, but this is not clearly signposted from the main UNFF website. A number of Questionnaire responses suggested that the website should be upgraded, by improving its structure, by updating and enriching its content, and by making it easier to undertake online document searches.
- *Traditional and social media:* The UN Department of Global Communications provides the UNFF Secretariat with guidance on how best to showcase the role of forests within the broader messaging of the UN on sustainable development, implementation of the 2030 Agenda, climate action and biodiversity protection. There have been about 75 UNFF-related news releases since 2015, of which about one-third relate to IDF celebrations. These news releases focus on newsworthy stories, including statements made by the UN Secretary-General on forests, rather than routine events, such as Forum meetings. Social media activities form an increasingly important component of the UNFF Secretariat's communication campaigns. Prior to Forum meetings, the Secretariat issues social media advisories which highlight the main areas for discussion and provide links to the UNFF website, to UN TV webcasts and to relevant DESA Facebook and Twitter accounts. These social media advisories also contain hash tags (such as #UNForests, #GlobalGoals and #SDGs) and links to a Trello Board which contains further links, infographics, Twitter and Facebook cards, and GIF images with captions in all UN languages about the importance of forests to peoples' lives. These digital resources are shared through the DESA Facebook and Twitter accounts, with social media focal points within the UN system, and with UNFF national focal points and other partners.

⁷ See page 99 of *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020* (FAO, 2020), Main Report.

- *Publications and other communication products:* In 2019, UNFF reproduced the text of the GFGs and their associated targets in a well-illustrated brochure that also identified the SDGs associated with each GFG. Subsequently, the UNFF flagship publication, *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*, reviewed progress towards achieving the GFGs and targets and included infographics and success stories; a shorter *Overview of Progress* complemented the full report. Recent publications have also included three DESA policy briefs, relating to forest fires, forest financing and the role of forests in green recovery from the COVID-19, and a quarterly newsletter on forest financing opportunities which is shared with UNFF national focal points and other email subscribers. Other communication products, such as films and visual images relating to the annual IDF themes, are available on the *Outreach* section of the UNFF website.
- *Events:* The UNFF Secretariat regularly organises side-events in the margins of other key international conferences and meetings. In addition to liaising with CPF partners regarding side-events at CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC meetings, it organised side-events during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) sessions of July 2018, July 2021 and July 2022. The UNFF Secretariat also facilitates side events in the margins of Forum meetings, and organises annual high-level events relating to the annual IDF theme at the UN Headquarters in New York. Meetings of the Forum, and important intersessional meetings, are covered by the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB)*⁸, which has a network consisting of an estimated 50,000 readers interested in multilateral environmental negotiations, all of whom can subscribe to receive daily reports and summaries. Forthcoming UNFF meetings and intersessional activities are also publicised by the ENB, as well as through news releases, social media and the UNFF website
- *Educational and youth outreach:* There is limited capacity within the UNFF Secretariat to undertake extensive educational and youth outreach programmes. However, in the context of IDF theme of “forests and education”, and working with the US Forest Service, it invited youth representatives to create a video and participate in the IDF 2019 opening ceremony in UN HQ.

Actions taken by the CPF

13. The CPF is a voluntary interagency partnership of 15 international organizations, institutions and secretariats⁹. It is chaired by FAO and the UNFF Secretariat, which is itself a member of the CPF, provides the secretariat. While many CPF members have their own substantial programmes on forests, CPF partners also undertake a number of joint initiatives, including implementation of the

⁸ Earth Negotiations Bulletin (IISD), available at <https://enb.iisd.org/topics/forests>, accessed 23 August 2023. For information on readership see <https://enb.iisd.org/about/linkagesteam.htm>, accessed 12 October 2022.

⁹ The CPF members are the Centre for International Forestry Research, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Environmental Facility Secretariat, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, the UNFF Secretariat, the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and the World Bank.

COS. The CPF Communicators' Network coordinates strategic forest-related communication, facilitates action to increase impact, advises on the IDF themes and supports promotion of the IDF.

- *Website:* The CPF website (in English, French and Spanish) is hosted by FAO and was upgraded in 2021 to become more secure, user-friendly and compatible with mobile devices. There are clear links from the CPF pages on the UNFF website to the CPF website. The CPF website includes information about current and previous CPF joint initiatives, including Forest Landscape Restoration, Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World, the Global Forest Education Initiative, Global Forest Expert Panels, and the IDF. FAO also hosts an IDF website, in all UN languages, which offers key messages, details of many events around the world, including the traditional high-level IDF panel discussion held in the FAO Rome headquarters, and other IDF communication products.
- *Traditional and social media:* Many of the items in the *News* section of the CPF website publicise events organised by the CPF or its individual members, announce publications, or cover other newsworthy stories such as the CPF Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Awards. The CPF Communicators' Network helps coordinate social media activity: for example, all digital assets for the IDF social media campaigns are made available on an IDF Trello board, which contains Twitter cards, Facebook cards, Instagram cards, posters and GIFs (in all UN languages).
- *Publications and other communication products:* The quinquennial FAO *Global Forest Resource Assessment* (FRA) is the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment of global forest resources and its findings contribute to monitoring progress in implementing the GFGs. In addition, a number of significant publications resulting from joint CPF initiatives make explicit reference to the UNSPF and one or more of its GFGs.¹⁰ The biennial FAO *State of the World's Forests* (SOFO) is another important communication product: it refers to the UNSPF and GFGs in its 2018 and 2020 editions, but not in its 2022 edition.¹¹
- *Events:* FAO and the UNFFS have organised major CPF events aimed at making progress towards achieving the GFGs. Many of these have focussed on halting deforestation: in 2018 there was a CPF Conference on *Working Across Sectors to Halt Deforestation and Increase Forest Area*; in the margins of the 2021 HLPF there was a CPF event on *The role of forests in time of crisis: sustainable production and consumption patterns to turn the tide on deforestation*; and there have been high-level CPF Dialogues about *Turning the tide on deforestation* during the UNFCCC COP 26 in 2021 and COP 27 in 2022. CPF partners also organised forest-related side events at the UNFCCC COP 24 in 2018 and COP 25 in 2019, as well as the UNCCD COP14 in 2019. These events have provided opportunities to raise awareness of the UNSPF and its synergies with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and land degradation neutrality initiatives. In addition, a presentation was made about the UNSPF at a CBD consultation workshop on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in June 2019. Other meetings that provide important venues for

¹⁰ These include *Forest and water on a changing planet* (2018), *Forests, trees and the eradication of poverty: potential and limitations – a global assessment report* (2020); the CPF Brochure on *Turning the Tide on Deforestation: Flagship initiatives of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests* (2021) and the CPF statement on *Challenges and opportunities in turning the tide on deforestation* (2021).

¹¹ See paragraph 1 of Annex 5 for further detail.

furthering the aims of the COS include the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), which meets in Rome every two years, in parallel with a World Forest Week, and periodically reviews implementation of the UNSPF, and the World Forestry Congress, which explicitly linked its six sub-themes to the SDGs and GFGs at XV WFC 2022.

- *Educational and youth outreach:* In 2021, CPF launched a joint initiative on capacity building for forest education. It aims to catalyse action, generate awareness and support, and foster partnerships to sustain robust, holistic and inclusive forest-related education and knowledge-sharing systems. The scope of this joint initiative includes actions to strengthen formal forest education in schools, as well as through professional tertiary education and training.

Actions taken by regional and sub-regional organisations

14. As illustrated below, regional and sub-regional organisations have the capacity to play a major part in implementing the COS through their extensive networks.

- *Websites:* Many of the regional and sub-regional organisations have comprehensive websites that provide information about their members, meetings and publications. The African Forest Forum (AFF) website shares AFF products related to SFM. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) website includes information about its Forest Program for the Basin and Amazon Region (2021) and links to the Amazon Regional Observatory, with its repository of scientific, technical and socio-cultural knowledge. The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management (APFnet) website covers policy dialogue, projects and capacity building, with links to reports, videos and scientific papers. The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC) website includes a wide range of communication products, stories and training resources. The COMIFAC (Central African Forestry Commission) website includes information about its sub-regional convergence plan. The Forest Europe (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) website contains details of its workstreams on SFM, forest risk knowledge and green jobs/forest education, together with its mechanism for rapid response to emerging issues. The Montreal Process website includes details of its work on criteria and indicators. The UNECE website has a section relating to the work of the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section; this includes a quarterly Forest Information Billboard and lists the 200 members of its Forest Communicators' Network. The International Bamboo and Rattan Organization website explains how bamboo and rattan can contribute to several of the SDGs.
- *Traditional and Social media:* Many of these websites include news items and provide links to social media. The changing approach to communication is illustrated in the Forest Europe *Work Programme 2021-24*, which explains that “merely sending press releases is no longer effective ... [and so] we will offer information via a variety of online and offline channels” and “make good use of social media”.
- *Publications and other communication products:* The websites provide access to a very wide range of technical and general publications. In addition, several of the websites contain links to YouTube videos; for example, the Center for People and Forests has links to 23 YouTube videos relevant to

its work, APFNet has links to 18 videos and the Montreal Process website contains a short public service announcement video, also available on YouTube, promoting sustainable forestry.

- *Events:* The websites give details of a large number of events. In addition to organisational business meetings these include, for example, events aimed at capacity building, side-events in the margins of international meetings, and IDF celebrations.
- *Educational and youth outreach:* Examples of educational and youth outreach include the student debates on IDF themes that have been organised by the Center for People and Forests, with FAO and UNEP; and the Youth Forest Policy Days organised by Forest Europe, IFSA, IUFRO and the Global Landscapes Forum in December 2022.

15. In addition, FAO has six FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, each of which have specifically discussed the implementation of the UNSPF. FAO also has Regional Forest Communicators' Networks that cover Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Mediterranean and Near East, and the Caribbean, together with a Global Coordination Group on Forest Communication. Since 2018, these networks have organised a number of training workshops on effective communication, and their website also includes a communication toolkit.

Actions taken by Major Groups

16. The UNFF Major Groups¹² have the potential to play a valuable role in implementation of the COS by engaging with broader society through their extensive networks. However, while many of the Major Groups' constituent organisations are well-resourced organisations with powerful communication capabilities, these resources are not necessarily available to the Major Group representatives who participate in UNFF-related activities. For many of these representatives it can be challenging to secure adequate resources for effective communication within and beyond their networks; their activities aimed at COS implementation are illustrated below.

- *Websites:* Information on the UNFF Major Groups is contained within the UNFF web-site. This includes details of Major Group focal points and Workplans. It also includes the *Youth Call for Action*, which was adopted at the XV World Forestry Congress in 2022 and seeks inclusive and equitable access to high-quality forest education.
- *Traditional and Social Media:* UNFF Major Groups have carried out a number of social media campaigns, including the preparation and implementation of IDF 2020 informational materials (C&Y MG) and using social media to strengthen communication networks with over 100 partner members (NGO MG).
- *Publications and other communication products:* Examples of outputs produced by the UNFF Major Groups include the publication of *Gender Outlook Brazil* (Women MG) and documentation

¹² The Major Groups are: Business and Industry, Children and Youth (C&Y), Farmers, Indigenous People, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Local Authorities, Scientific and Technological Community (S&T), Women, and Workers and Trade Unions.

of Traditional Forest Related Knowledge (S&T MG). There was also a photography exposition on *Women in the forest* during the XXV IUFRO World Congress in 2019 (Women MG).

- *Events:* Events organised by UNFF Major Groups include a webinar series to build capacity among the youth delegation prior to UNFF 14 (C&Y MG); side events at CBD and UNFCCC COPs (NGO MG); a special session on Forest Landscape Restoration at the XXV IUFRO World Congress in 2019 (S&T MG); capacity building for Indigenous leaders to strengthen skills in advocacy capacity (NGO MG); capacity building to access forest-based decision-making structures in Nepal (Women MG); webinars to discuss new FSC gender indicators in Brazil, and on gender equality in the forest sector (Women MG); a side-event on gender equality in the forest sector during the XXV IUFRO World Congress in 2019 (Women MG); and a webinar on gender-based suffering of women working in forest related sectors (Women MG).
- *Educational and youth outreach:* Examples of educational and youth outreach activities include teaching primary school students about the benefits of forests (C&Y MG); collaboration in training, education and awareness for university students on such issues as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, mining and logging (C&Y MG); a webinar series for capacity development in writing and workshop facilitation skills (C&Y MG); and training students and young professionals to become forest ambassadors (C&Y MG).

Addressing the challenges to furthering the implementation of the COS

17. The Questionnaire responses and other evidence considered for this Report suggest that two key challenges for furthering the implementation of the COS are the continuing need to do more (i) to reach audiences beyond the “forest community” of policy-makers and practitioners engaged in forest-related activities and (ii) to convey messages about the urgency of achieving the GFGs to high-level politicians and senior officials in governments and international organisations. In addition, there is the continuing challenge of reaching out to children and youth so that the upcoming generation understands that forests and trees are vital to life on earth and human well-being.

18. The urgent need to work more closely with the agricultural sector is evidenced by the fact that agriculture expansion is the most significant driver of global deforestation. In addition, there is scope to increase synergies, and reduce potential conflicts, with other sectors including water, energy, mining and rural development. There have been a number of significant initiatives aimed at strengthening cross-sectoral linkages: the 2018 CPF Conference on *Working Across Sectors to Halt Deforestation and Increase Forest Area* attracted speakers from the food and agriculture sectors, and, within FAO, both COFO and the Committee on Agriculture discussed *Agriculture and Forest linkages* at their meetings in 2022.¹³ However, many of the other communication actions described in this Section of the Report have been internal to the “forest community” of those engaged professionally in forest policy-making and forestry practice. Questionnaire responses also noted that forest-related issues are still not widely visible outside environmental forums, that there is a need to cross sector barriers and that “UNFF tends to speak to the converted”. This need for greater engagement with

¹³ See COFO/2022/4 and COAG/2022/12.

cross-sectoral audiences, including through the development of targeted communication approaches for non-forest industries, such as agriculture and mining, was also recognised at UNFF 16.¹⁴

19. In highlighting the difficulty of achieving high-level engagement on forest-related issues at the international level, Questionnaire responses stressed the need to raise the profile of forests in international forums other than UNFF and to engage with high-level officials in organisations, such as FAO and the Rio-Convention Secretariats, whose portfolios extend beyond forestry. There is also a need to engage more effectively with senior politicians and senior officials in key “central” ministries, such as finance ministries, and other non-forest ministries at the country level. In order to secure high-level interest and engagement in forests, it is important to develop, and clearly articulate, strong messages about the contribution of forests to wider policy agendas

20. A number of the Questionnaire responses also highlighted the importance of doing more to reach children and youth. They suggested that opportunities to do this include the use of social media, the identification of “champions” or “influencers” and the strengthening of educational outreach, for example, by providing more information about the value of forests and trees at pre-school, elementary and secondary school level through joint working with Education Ministries and other partners. Developing appropriate materials requires a professional approach, with a good understanding of how these forest-related issues can fit into wider school curriculums and be presented in a lively, engaging way through appropriate teaching aids such as short videos and games as well as written material.

21. In addressing these challenges, there will always be the need to work within resource constraints, making best use of available budgets. Work done over the past four years to implement the COS has demonstrated the importance of good co-ordination, the value of sharing good ideas and scaling-up best practice, and the need to make effective use the opportunities provided by modern technology, for example through the use of social media and the use of well-designed and regularly updated web-sites that provide ready access to authoritative information. The CPF Communicators’ Network and the FAO Regional Forest Communicators’ Networks have the potential to play a key role in this regard, acting both as think-tanks and communities of practice, and there are opportunities to build upon their strengths. Looking ahead, it will be necessary to continue to adopt a professional, disciplined approach to communication so that proposed actions are compatible with available budgets and implemented cost-effectively.

IV. C Assess the impact of the communication and outreach activities carried out to promote the strategic plan and the global forest goals, including the International Day of Forests and the usefulness of its themes to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of forests, as well as the visibility of the Forum’s work within the United Nations system.

Impact of the communication and outreach activities carried out to promote the UNSPF, the GFGs and the visibility of the Forum within the UN system.

22. While the COS provides a broad framework of general guidance, it is difficult to assess the impact of the communication and outreach activities carried out to promote the UNSPF and GFGs in quantitative terms for a number of reasons. First, the aims of the COS are expressed in general language, using words such as “raise awareness” of the GFGs and “encourage implementation” of the

¹⁴ See paragraphs 12 and 22 of Annex III to UNFF 16 Report, E/2021/42-E/CN.18/2021/8

UNSPF. Secondly, the COS itself contains no evaluation strategy to help assess its impact, and there are no specific, measurable targets with agreed metrics, survey protocols and baseline data. Furthermore, at least some of the activities described in Section IV B would probably have taken place even if there not had been a COS. One Questionnaire response noted that, while elements of the UNSPF had been implemented through national forest policies, this was not directly related to the COS. Another response said that the “groundswell of support for forests in the context of climate change and biodiversity ... coincides with the IAF but does not result from it”.

23. Notwithstanding the difficulties in undertaking a formal assessment, the Questionnaire responses did include a number of positive comments about the impact of the COS, noting for example that communication and outreach activities had helped to raise awareness of the role of forests in achieving SDGs, raise the profile of UNFF within the UN system, deepen understanding of UNFI and UNSPF and strengthen SFM. It was also suggested that the publication of the *Global Forest Goals Report 2021* had helped to highlight the role of UNFF in promoting SFM. In addition, one response noted that while there was no reference to the UNSPF in the context of the launch of the *Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use* in November 2021, the subsequent launch of *The Forestry & Climate Leaders’ Partnership* (FCLP) in November 2022 did make linkages with the UNSPF¹⁵. On the other hand, a number of responses noted that the UNSPF is not yet the guiding document on forests across the UN system; that the UNSPF and GFGs are not widely known; and that achieving greater visibility of the GFGs amongst other UN bodies and international entities remains a challenge. The brief review in paragraph 1 of Annex 5 indicates that where forest-related publications by international organisations (other than UNFF) do make reference to the UNSPF and GFGs this is often just a brief name-check without any explanation of their significance as a global framework for action on forests adopted by the UN General Assembly. Meanwhile, an analysis of Google search results for key terms relating to the work of UNFF in paragraph 2 of Annex 5 also suggests that the UNFF, UNSPF and GFGs have a relatively low visibility. One response suggested that the low visibility of the UNFF and the UNSPF/GFGs are linked and that a possible avenue to explore to achieve greater visibility of the UNSPF and GFG is to raise the profile of the UNFF within and outside the UN system. Another response said that the GFGs are not sufficiently recognized beyond the forest community mainly because the UNFI is non-legally binding, leading to a lack of financial resources.

24. “Raising awareness of the GFGs” is an explicit aim of the COS. However, increasing the visibility of the UNSPF and its GFGs will require further effort by Forum members, CPF partners and other stakeholders. They need to make full use of appropriate opportunities to highlight the importance and relevance of the UNSPF and its GFGs in, for example, their public statements and publications, and on their websites. In addition, the UNFF Secretariat could do more to support these efforts if it had sufficient budgetary resources to allocate at least one staff member to work exclusively on communication. It has also been suggested it might be possible to improve the branding of the GFGs by learning from the way in which the SDGs have distinctive icons and shorthand titles, such as “Life on Land” for SDG 15.¹⁶ As it is difficult to memorise the wording of the GFGs, the use of informal shorthand titles might help to increase familiarity with the individual GFGs.¹⁷

¹⁵ See <https://www.fclp.info/>, accessed 13 December 2022.

¹⁶ See <https://imfn.net/global-forest-goals/>, accessed 9 December 2022.

¹⁷ For example, informal shorthand titles for the six GFGs could be along the lines of: “Reverse forest loss” (GFG1), “Improve forest benefits and livelihoods” (GFG2), “Protect forests and use sustainable forest products” (GFG3), “Mobilise forest finance” (GFG4), “Promote inclusive forest governance” (GFG5) and “Cooperate and work across sectors” (GFG6).

The International Day of Forests and the usefulness of its themes to raise awareness of the multiple benefits of forests

25. The annual celebration of IDF by a large number of countries was widely recognised in Questionnaire responses as having been successful in providing a platform for raising awareness on the importance of forests and the role of SFM among a wider audience. IDF events often attract a high turnout and create “good news” stories about trees and forests that can be linked to attractive visual images. It is important that the IDF is carefully planned, with themes being identified well in advance to provide adequate lead times for developing messages and organising implementation at different levels. The IDF themes¹⁸ have given a distinct focus to each IDF, highlighting the multiple benefits of forests and interlinkages with the SDGs. For example, in 2022 FAO and IUFRO organised a high-level IDF event in hybrid form on *The role of forests in ensuring sustainable consumption and production* (SDG 12) which attracted about 1,000 participants and led to the publication of a policy brief on the subject. The IDF themes have also facilitated dialogue with non-forestry organisations, strengthening partnerships between forest practitioners/policymakers and those working in the other fields to which the themes relate. According to estimates, in 2021 the hashtag #IntlForestDay was included in over 22,000 tweets by over 14,000 contributors with over 145 million accounts reached (compared with 105 million accounts in 2019 and 82 million accounts in 2020). The analysis of Google search results in Annex 5 also suggests that visibility of the IDF is generally rising, and that the IDF appears to enjoy greater visibility than, for example, the International Day of Biodiversity. Questionnaire responses also made positive reference to the coordinating role of the CPF Communicators’ Network, including its selection of the annual themes; the information and material provided on the UNFF and CPF websites; the social media tool kit and Trello board; and the communication products, such as short videos, which have been televised as well as reaching millions of social media accounts. However, one response noted that IDF promotion should be better aligned among CPF partners, adding that the use of two logos may be confusing.

IV D. Identify additional communication options, platforms and channels that have come into prominence in recent years to better reach target audiences and with greater impacts.

Range of potential communication options, platforms and channels

26. Social media channels and other communication tools have evolved rapidly since the UNSPF and its COS were approved. The number of social media users has doubled over the last five years to reach 4.6 billion, and the number of users of the internet has doubled over the past nine years to reach around 5 billion. About two-thirds of active social media users are under 40 years old. Facebook, with its 2.9 billion monthly active users, is currently the most popular social platform, but Instagram is the favourite social media platform for around a quarter of internet users aged 16-24. However, many people use multiple platforms and the relative popularity of these platforms is constantly changing in terms of demographics and the purpose for their use. About 22% of internet users use social media mainly for work-related activities; at least a quarter of those aged 16 to 34 follow influencers; and about 20% listen to Podcasts. However, these averages mask significant regional and national

¹⁸ The list of IDF themes is: 2015 - Forests and climate change; 2016 - Forests and water; 2017 - Forests and energy; 2018 - Forests for sustainable cities; 2019 - Forests and education; 2020 - Forests and biodiversity; 2021 - Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being; 2022 - Forests and sustainable production and consumption; 2023 - Forests and health.

differences: for example, there are significant differences in patterns of social media preferences between countries and there are also many people who remain offline, including 1 billion people in south Asia and 840 million in Africa.¹⁹

27. This growth in communication channels brings opportunities and challenges, and there is a constant need to assess what works best for different purposes. A recent OECD survey of 46 OECD member and non-member countries revealed that institutional websites and social media platforms are the most popular means for governments to engage with the public.²⁰ However, the growth in electronic communication channels is making it harder to attract attention and, particularly as commercial advertisers develop increasingly sophisticated techniques, the expectations of readers, viewers and listeners are rising. Moreover, people seldom find institutional websites by chance. Thus, the creation, dissemination and presentation of messages requires increasingly careful thought. Most Questionnaire responses highlighted the importance of social media platforms, including the opportunities they provide to reach new, younger audiences. Particular reference was made to such platforms as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, as well as the role of scientific platforms, such as ResearchGate and Google Scholar. Responses also stressed the need to understand the constantly evolving dynamics of social media uptake, and the value of using infographics, short animation films and other multi-media products that are tailored to suit local audiences.

28. In developing the use of these tools for implementing the COS, there is a need to recognise resource constraints and to work within the internal policies that many governments and international organisations have regarding the use of social media for official purposes. While some governments pay for advertising on social media, or pay influencers to reach young audiences, this is usually only for major campaigns, such as those relating to public health. Under UN rules, the establishment of institutional social media accounts is regarded as a strategic decision and they are only approved where there is a clear purpose, strategy and intended audience, together with adequate expertise, staffing and resources to maintain accounts effectively. At present, UNFF has access to the social media accounts and platforms approved for use by UN DESA, namely Facebook (886,000 followers), Twitter (115,000 followers) and YouTube (4,900 subscribers). This brings the advantage of reaching a far wider audience than would be likely if UNFF had its own accounts. The UN Department of Global Communications helps to tailor products for different thematic audiences and demographics, and works in partnership with platforms such as Google, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and WhatsApp to promote access to factual and trustworthy information. The UN also partners with media and entertainment companies to leverage their resources and talent through the SDG Media Compact; this offers potential for greater cooperation with the media on interesting forest-related stories (such as forest restoration and concerns over deforestation, fires, pests and disease) under the umbrella of SDG 15. FAO also controls the creation of its affiliated accounts in order to build up a large community of followers and avoid dilution of effort. The main FAO Facebook account has 2 million followers and there is a specific FAO Forestry Twitter account with 88,000 followers. One Questionnaire response suggested that UNFF should have its own Twitter handle: however, this would need to be adequately resourced in order to maintain an active and vibrant presence.

¹⁹ Figures from the Datareportal *Digital Global Overview Report 2022*

²⁰ OECD Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward (2021), chapter 5

29. The UNFF website, which is a key platform for implementing the COS, offers a highly regarded and authoritative source of information, attracts over 150,000 visits annually. As noted in Section IV B, a number of countries have requested that the web-site is upgraded, in terms of content, structure and functionality. This upgrade could draw inspiration from other UN websites that are highly regarded such as those of HLPF, ECOSOC and UN REDD which are effective both in covering thematic issues and in providing access to documentation. Pages focussing on specific thematic issues could be used, for example, to provide links to interesting material, such as the background analytical studies and associated briefs prepared for UNFF 13 and UNFF 14²¹, that can otherwise remain “buried” within the website. It would also be desirable for the new website to have multi-language functionality and to be mobile-friendly. In addition, ECOSOC has requested the UNFF Secretariat to explore options for establishing an online reporting platform²² and this may also have implications for future website design.

30. Wikipedia is another platform which provides information about the work of UNFF. Articles in Wikipedia are written collaboratively by volunteers. Anyone is free to contribute, although editors monitor contributions to ensure that they meet the necessary standards of accuracy and impartiality. At present Wikipedia has one relatively short article about UNFF, which quotes the GFGs but does not mention the UNSPF or *the Global Forest Goals Report 2021*. It also contains a note, dated November 2019, stating that parts of the article need updating. In the spirit of Wikipedia, this updating can be undertaken by anyone who is willing to contribute their time and expertise. It would also be desirable if the Wikipedia article on UNFF directed readers to the ENB for unofficial, but easily understood, reports of UNFF activities.

Making effective use of communication options, platforms and channels

31. As noted in Section IV B, Member States, regional organisations and Major Groups already make extensive use of social media, and the UNFF Secretariat and its CPF partners are successfully exploiting the power of social media through, for example, their social media toolkits and Trello boards. At the same time, they are also continuing to cater for communities that rely on traditional media. Regardless of the technology used for communication, there is a need to think through the way messages are presented, recognising that the approach taken will depend upon the audience. While a more in-depth approach may be required for expert audiences, complex messages do not capture the attention of wider general audiences. Particularly within large organizations there is the danger of having “too many pens” – people with different interests all keen to insert their own angle into the message, which then becomes too long and difficult to understand. For general non-specialist audiences, there is a need to be interesting, relevant and preferably entertaining, using local languages and human stories that inspire hope. If the various communication options now available are to be used effectively, this must be done in the context of carefully thought-out communication plans. Such plans need to be clear about the communication objective (is it, for example, to provide information, to shift perceptions, or to alter behaviour); about the target audience (and how it can be segmented into sub-groups for increased impact); and about the formulation of specific messages that will resonate with these target

²¹ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/background-analytical-studies/index.html>, accessed 19 December 2022.

²² See paragraph 24 of the Annex of ECOSOC resolution 2022/17.

audiences. Then, decisions can be taken about appropriate communication channels, taking into account costs and available resources, and recognising that it is counter-productive to engage with a particular platform without adequate resources to maintain a vibrant presence.

32. There is also the need to consider the best approach to monitoring and evaluation, where again resource implications need to be considered. Developing “outcome” measures that assess impact can be challenging and expensive, requiring for example *ex ante* and *ex post* surveys. The difficulty of interpreting results from such surveys is illustrated by a meta-study highlighting difficulties encountered when trying to measure changes in public perceptions of forestry within the EU²³. On the other hand, although “output” measures do not measure impact, they can be tracked fairly easily. Metrics for such output measures include the total number of visits to a website; the number of new visitors to a website; average visit duration; average pages per visit; number of downloads of key publications; number of accounts reached through social media; sharing of social media posts; numbers of articles published; participation at events; and feedback from events. These metrics should relate to the communication objectives and be collected in a consistent way in order to track progress over time.

IV E. Explore ways to make use of the capacities of members of the Forum and other players and partners at the global, regional, and national levels to strengthen advocacy on the implementation of the strategic plan.

33. As highlighted at the end of Section IV B, key challenges include the need to take messages beyond the forest community and to engage more effectively with high-level policy makers. Addressing these challenges requires stronger advocacy. The urgency for this was stressed at the XV World Forestry Congress in April 2022, which concluded that action must be taken now to accelerate and scale up progress towards global commitments on forests²⁴. In order to do this effectively, there is a need to explain clearly and succinctly how forests contribute positively, and in a significant way, to wider policy agendas, such as combatting poverty, hunger, climate change and biodiversity loss.

34. Opportunities for members of the Forum to strengthen advocacy depend to some extent upon the circumstances and dynamics of individual countries, but include the need to engage both with those people who have authority to make decisions, and with the people who can influence those in authority. As discussed earlier in this Report, there is a wide variety of communication channels available for reaching these target audiences, including meetings and events as well as social and traditional media. While some of this engagement may be formal, as for example when Ministers are invited to launch initiatives, informal engagement – often in the margins of other meetings - is also vital as relationships are built and maintained across and beyond government. Effective messaging is also crucial. The challenge is to avoid technical language and acronyms like UNSPF and GFG, but to communicate their ambitions in meaningful terms that relate to wider priorities and concerns. There is also the need to match the approach to the type of audience. The right approach for politicians might be to give one or two punchy and memorable statistics, supported by short high level policy

²³ See *Public perceptions of forestry and the forest-based bioeconomy in the European Union* (EFI, 2020).

²⁴ See FAO. 2022. *Building a green, healthy and resilient future with forests*. Rome, FAO. Available at <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2090en/cc2090en.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2022.

briefs. The right approach for experts working in non-forestry sectors might be to provide more detail about the linkages between forests and their sector.

35. The UNFF can use its position in the UN system to support the work of its members in strengthening advocacy. It can produce more short, sharp policy-briefs that highlight synergies with, and threats from, other sectors. It can extend its series of flagship publications, not only to highlight progress made in implementing the GFGs, but also to explain the positive impact that this offers for addressing other global priorities, such as food security, water, jobs, climate change, biodiversity and land degradation. It can also deploy its convening power to attract more high-level decision makers, including those working in other sectors and on other forest-related initiatives, such as the Tropical Forest Alliance, to its high-level round tables. Doing this successfully will require considerable thought and effective facilitation so that these high-level round tables move beyond prepared statements to generate real dialogue and also have clear outputs, such as a policy-brief and/or short video clips presenting highlights suitable for dissemination via social media.

36. A number of CPF members, including the secretariats of the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC, are well-placed to strengthen advocacy by continuing their efforts to raise the visibility of forests, and their contribution to other agendas, at non-UNFF international forums and meetings. The CPF can also continue to strengthen advocacy through its leadership of high-profile initiatives, such as the UN Secretary-General's initiative on *Turning the tide of deforestation*.²⁵ In addition, CPF can build on its experience in organising the 2018 Conference on *Working across sectors* to provide more venues that bring together wide range of participants from different sectors in order to discuss high-profile issues relating to forests.

37. The regional and sub-regional organisations can use their powerful networks to support countries in strengthening advocacy through regional cooperation. Opportunities include making use of the Ministerial meetings organised by such organisations as COMIFAC and Forest Europe; and scaling-up the Regional Forest Communicators' Networks' capacity-building work on advocacy. One Questionnaire response suggested the formulation of regional strategies, and there are already examples demonstrating how regional communication strategies can provide a framework for ensuring that messages reflect regional needs and priorities²⁶.

38. With their extensive networks, Major Groups are often well-placed to play a valuable part in seeking to exercise influence and catalyse civil society, and to deliver messages about how forests can contribute to wider policy agendas. They can be effective influencers of both public opinion and decision-makers, and often have more flexibility than official organisations in how to express their views. This allows them to respond quickly to emerging issues and develop innovative approaches for achieving change. For example, a number of trade associations are running major campaigns to promote the use of wood as a sustainable material and several NGOs are powerful advocates for

²⁵ See *Turning the Tide on Deforestation*, available at <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7451en/cb7451en.pdf>, and the 2021 CPF Statement *Challenges and opportunities in turning the tide on deforestation*, available at <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/publications/en>, accessed 30 October 2022

²⁶ See for example the section on Communication and society in the *Forest Europe Work Plan 2021-24*.

SFM.²⁷ The UNFF could help strengthen advocacy by engaging more closely with private sector organisations and major NGOs in order to encourage them to look for ways to align communication messages relating to SFM.

39. Recognising the value of the IDF, a number of Questionnaire responses suggested that more use should be made of other International Days (and Weeks, Years and Decades) to strengthen advocacy on forests. Possibilities include the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-30), World Wetlands Day, World Wildlife Day, World Water Day, International Mother Earth Day, International Day of Plant Health, World Bee Day, International Day for Biological Diversity, World Environment Day, World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, International Day of the Tropics, International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, World Habitat Day, International Day of Rural Women, World Soils Day, and International Mountain Day. It is striking that many of these celebrations have images of trees or forests on the home page of their website. These celebrations all offer potential for wider outreach with tailored messages about the contribution of forests and trees.²⁸

40. Questionnaire responses also suggested inviting international celebrities to serve as global forest ambassadors or spokespersons to promote the UNFI. In its 2014 Report on the IAF, the independent team of consultants made a similar proposal, recommending that the Secretary-General should appoint a Special Envoy on Forests to raise political commitment for forests within the broader development agenda, by facilitating top-level connections with politicians and by enhancing the profile of the IAF among the Governing Bodies of other UN organisations that address cross-cutting issues relating to forests.²⁹ Such a proposal would require careful consideration to make sure that the role could be properly resourced and that it was sufficiently well defined to avoid overlap with the responsibilities of the UNFF Bureau Chair and the UNFF Director. However, it would be possible for the Forum, through ECOSOC and the General Assembly, to request the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy to strengthen advocacy on forests, with comparable functions to those of the Special Envoy for the Ocean³⁰. This would also send a strong signal about the importance with which forests are regarded within the UN system.

V Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions on progress made in implementation of COS

41. The COS has provided a useful general framework for guiding communication and outreach activities associated with implementation of the UNSPF. These activities, which have taken place at the global, regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national level, include extensive use of websites to make information publicly available; widespread engagement through both traditional and social

²⁷ See, for example, the Canadian Forest Products Association campaign on *Forestry for the Future* (at www.forestryforthefuture.ca, accessed 7 December 2022) and the WWF campaign *Forests Forward* (at <https://www.worldwildlife.org/initiatives/forests-forward>, accessed 7 December 2022).

²⁸ selected from *UN List of International Days and Weeks*, available at <https://www.un.org/en/observances/list-days-weeks>, accessed 8 November 2022.

³⁰ See <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/personnel-appointments/2017-09-12/mr-peter-thomson-fiji-special-envoy-ocean>, accessed 8 November 2022.

media; the production of a broad range of publications and other communication products; organising and contributing to a great many events; and educational and youth outreach. The annual celebrations of the IDF have generated a wide range of positive actions, and many of the other activities have also contributed to progress in implementing the COS.

42. Despite this progress, important challenges remain. In particular, there is an urgent need to do more to reach audiences beyond the “forest community” of policy-makers and practitioners engaged in forest-related activities, and to engage effectively with high-level decision makers. In addition, there is also the continuing need for educational and outreach, so that the younger generation is aware of the vital role of forests for people everywhere. A professional disciplined approach is required to ensure that experience is shared and that communication and outreach activities are planned and carried out cost-effectively. The various Forest Communicators’ Networks have made a valuable contribution towards achieving this, and their work should continue and, where necessary, be strengthened.

Conclusions on the impact of communication and outreach activities

43. Many of the communication and outreach activities carried out in recent years, including those associated with the IDF, have helped to raise awareness of the importance of forests and trees, and to promote SFM. However, the growing political momentum on forest-related issues is also attributable to activities and initiatives that are not associated with the implementation of the COS. Furthermore, the UNFF, the UNSPF and the GFGs continue to have relatively low visibility. Addressing this will require concerted action by all UNFF stakeholders, who should all make use of appropriate opportunities to highlight the importance and relevance of the UNSPF and its GFGs. It would be desirable if the UNFF Secretariat had sufficient budgetary resources to offer further support to these efforts by allocating at least one staff member to work exclusively on communication. Consideration should also be given to using informal shorthand titles (such as “Reverse forest loss”) to help make the individual GFGs more memorable.

Conclusions on additional communication options, platforms and channels

44. Effective use is already made of social media in implementing the COS, within the constraints of available resources and working within organisational policies on social media. This is, however, a fast-moving environment and there is a continual need to respond to new developments, taking care to ensure that communication plans are well thought through in terms of their anticipated benefits and affordability. These communication plans should specify their objectives, the proposed activities, audiences, messages and channels for these audiences, and metrics for monitoring and evaluation. The structure and content of the UNFF website should be upgraded.

Conclusions on strengthening advocacy

45. There is an urgent need to do more take to strengthen advocacy by taking messages beyond the forest community and by engaging more effectively with high-level policy makers. This means explaining clearly and succinctly how forests can contribute positively to wider policy agendas, tailoring messages appropriately for different audiences. The UNFF can help strengthen advocacy by using its convening power to invite more high-level decision makers, including those working in other sectors, to its high-level round tables. This should be complemented by the production of more short, sharp policy-briefs that highlight synergies with, and threats from, other sectors. CPF and its members

can help strengthen advocacy by providing leadership through high-profile initiatives that bring together high-level participants from different sectors; by publishing evidence demonstrating the beneficial contribution of forests towards achieving global priorities; and by continuing to raise the visibility of forest-related issues at international forums and meetings. In addition, there is scope for regional organisations to consider developing regional communication strategies incorporating messages that reflect regional needs and priorities. Major Groups can also use their extensive networks and independent voices to deliver powerful and fresh messages about how forest-related policies and practices can contribute to addressing global priorities.

46. Further opportunities to strengthen advocacy include making more use of the wide range of International Days and Weeks, together with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, to highlight the many benefits of forests and trees. Consideration should also be given to requesting the UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy for Forests to raise political commitment for forests within the broader development agenda.

Recommendations

47. In considering this Report, the ad hoc expert group may wish to *invite* the UNFF to:

Note with appreciation of the efforts made by Member States, the UNFF Secretariat, other CPF partners, regional and sub-regional organisations and Major Groups to implement the COS of the UNSPF, and *invite* them to continue this work;

Acknowledge in particular the valuable role played by the CPF Communicators' Network and the other Forest Communicators' Networks in coordinating communication and outreach activities and in sharing best practice;

Welcome the continued enthusiasm for participating in the IDF celebrations, with their carefully selected annual themes;

Recognise the need to do more to reach out beyond the "forest community" to non-forest industries such as agriculture and mining, to engage with high-level decision makers, and to raise awareness of the GFGs;

Stress the importance of educational and youth outreach activities and the need to help the next generation understand the benefits of forests and trees;

Note that the COS continues to provide a useful framework for action, and that further implementation requires a professional approach that makes cost-effective use of available resources and of existing and emerging communication options;

Invite Member States to consider opportunities to strengthen advocacy, for example through actions that help high-level politicians and senior government officials to understand better the contribution that forests and trees can make towards achieving wider policy goals;

Invite its Secretariat to make greater use of its convening power to widen participation in the Forum's high-level round tables in order to strengthen engagement beyond the forest-sector;

Invite its Secretariat to develop short, sharp policy briefs, and to extend its series of flagship publications in order to highlight the benefits that trees and forests bring for other global priorities;

Invite its Secretariat to make progress in upgrading the structure and content of its website, and to develop a communication plan setting out its proposed activities and associated objectives, messages and communication channels for different audiences, together with metrics for monitoring and evaluation;

Invite CPF members to continue efforts to raise the visibility of forest-related issues at international forums and meetings, to continue to seek ways to take initiatives that improve understanding of linkages between the forest sector and other sectors, and to use social media and appropriate publications to help raise awareness of the GFGs;

Encourage CPF members engaged in the Global Forest Education Initiative to make full use of the opportunities it presents to raise awareness of the importance of forests, and the role of sustainable forest management, through elementary (primary) and secondary school curricula.

Invite regional and sub-regional organisations to consider the possibility of developing regional communication and outreach strategies with messages that reflect regional priorities and needs;

Invite UNFF Major Groups to continue to use their voices to highlight concerns and propose practical solutions to problems associated with the world's forests.

List of Acronyms and abbreviations

2030 Agenda	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
APFNet	Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management
C&Y MG	Children and Youth Major Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COFO	FAO Committee on Forestry
COP	Conference of Parties
COS	Communication and outreach strategy of the UNSPF
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ENB	Earth Negotiations Bulletin
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FCLP	The Forestry & Climate Leaders' Partnership
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
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
IDF	International Day of Forests
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Association
IUCN	World Conservation Union
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
MG	Major Group
MTR	Midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the IAF
NGO MG	Non-governmental Organizations Major Group
S&T MG	Scientific and Technological Community Major Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SOFO	<i>State of the World's Forest</i> (FAO publication)
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNFI	United Nations Forest Instrument
UNSPF	United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030
WFC	World Forestry Congress

LIST OF ANNEXES		<i>page</i>
Annex 1	Brief biography of the consultant	26
Annex 2	Questionnaire responses relevant to this Report	26
Annex 3	List of documents, websites and publications consulted	35
Annex 4	Discussions with individuals	40
Annex 4.	External references to UNSPF, GFGS, UNFF, IDF and SFM	41

ANNEX 1. BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CONSULTANT

David Henderson-Howat is a past President of the UK Institute of Chartered Foresters. Earlier in his career he managed forests in Scotland and Eswatini. For six years he was the Forestry Commission Chief Conservator for Scotland. Then, in the early 2000s, he spent a year working for the UNFF Secretariat in New York, on secondment from the UK Government. He subsequently became head of agricultural and rural development policy within the Scottish Government. In addition, he served as Director of the Forestry Commission in England, where his responsibilities included advising UK Ministers on forest policy, and related communications, at a time when the possible privatisation of state-owned forests was in the spotlight. More recently he has undertaken consultancy work for UNFF and FAO, and made significant contributions to the 2016 and 2018 editions of *State of the World's Forests*. He has also chaired Scotland's National Access Forum, a stakeholder roundtable addressing issues relating to rights of recreational access over land, and is a member of his local Community Council in rural Scotland. He has degrees from Edinburgh University's Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, Cambridge University's Department of Land Economy and an MBA from Strathclyde University.

ANNEX 2. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGY OF THE UNSPF

There were four questions (H-1, H-2, H-3 and H-4) specifically relating to the COS in the Questionnaire on the Mid-term Review. While this Annex contains the responses to these questions, the Report also takes into consideration comments made in response to other parts of the Questionnaire that were relevant to communication and outreach activities.

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

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Summary of response</i>
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has developed a suite of communication products to promote the role of forestry and raise awareness of forests as a sustainably managed resource. This includes videos showcasing the forestry industry. The 5-yearly State of the Forest Reports promotes a greater understanding of SFM, informs the public about, the management, use and conservation of Australia's forests and acts as a key source of comprehensive and current information for use industry, governments, and research and educational institutions. The 2023 Report will be released on an online platform so that data can be updated more regularly and reach a greater audience; this will

	<p>include electronic versions of past reports, maps, data tables and spatial data products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> works bilaterally with neighbouring countries to promote SFM and understand barriers to implementing SFM. This has included a recent contribution to, and publication of, the FAO Pacific Outlook Study. a possible avenue to explore to achieve greater visibility of the UNSPF and GFG is to raise the profile of the UNFF within and outside the UN system. At times this has not happened (e.g. the Glasgow Declaration), however we were pleased to see linkages made for the recent FCLP. want to highlight the importance of providing strategic guidance to strengthen linkages and influence with other multilateral bodies and forest-related initiatives. there is room to improve on the COS by including the provision of measurable and specific targets to work towards, as well as actions required in order to meet goals/targets. there is added value in reaching out to other sectors that are both impacted by forests, and impact upon forests, to further shape the COS.
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have pithier communication of the GFGs similar to the SDGs (e.g. recognizable icons). UNSPF still not the guiding document for all forest-related work at the UN.
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of pilot sites for UNFI implementation in China has further expanded the visibility and influence of the UNFI and the UNSPF. through IDF celebrations, more people have deepened their understanding of UNFI, the UNSPF and especially the GFGs, and are more aware of the important role of SFM in sustainable economic and social development.
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional public education and visibility materials to support information particularly in elementary and secondary schools would support engagement.
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has recognised the important role of the COS in promoting sustainable development and SFM. celebrates all major forestry and biodiversity related events including IDF. additional initiatives include: (i) planted 48,227,458 (as of 6 December 2022) trees in Greening Malaysia Campaign - planting 100 million trees 2021-2025; (ii) established Central Forest Spine since 2006 to form an interconnecting network of protection forest through ecological corridors as part of integrated landscape management; (iii) takes account of forest considerations through multi-stakeholder involvement in development decisions such as forest management planning and policies, government allocations specifically for forest development and operations, and international financial support.
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participates in IDF. Especially since COVID-19 has promoted care for the environment, especially forests, highlighting the role of local peoples and indigenous communities. challenges include promoting the value of forest ecosystems for livelihoods in international discussions at the highest level; and promoting the close linkage of UNFF and the UNSPF with other international institutions and agendas related to forests (e.g. FAO, the 2030 Agenda, UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, CBD).
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> publishes information about decrees, agreements, treaties and commitments on official websites including those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

	<p>and the Ministry of Environment. All launches of social and environmental development programmes to the 2030 Agenda are published in the national press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 led to increased use of virtual communications. The first Regional Congress on Forests and Sustainable Landscapes was broadcast live on the different platforms and social networks of the Ministry of Environment. • address challenges through the joint formulation of regional strategies by working groups with forestry directors of the region and the UNFF secretariat.
Republic of the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the GFGs are published on the DENR Forest Management Bureau website. • overviews of UNSPF/GFGs are included in presentations and educational information.
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some of the activities mentioned in response to Question F-1 contributed to greater visibility of the forests, UNSPF and the GFGs. • IDF has been adequately celebrated and publicized. Examples given of website links.
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • while elements of UNSPF have been implemented through national forest policy, this is not directly related to the COS but follows regional communication from UNECE/Forest Europe.
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has organized and funded presenters, including government experts, academics, and youth from partner nongovernmental organizations, to speak at the UNFF and FAO Headquarters virtual and in-person events to commemorate IDF. Also produces IDF-themed newsletters, publication releases, social media, blog posts and organises community and school visits at local level. • greater visibility of IDF and the GFGs amongst other UN bodies and international entities, within and outside the environment fields, remains a challenge.
FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO, including the six Regional Forestry Commissions, have implemented the COS and strongly supports all its aims. • the IDF, World Forest Weeks and regional Forest Weeks are used to communicate, reach out and raise awareness with all COS target audiences. • communication and outreach efforts are amplified, designed and supported through: the five regional Forest Communicator Networks (for Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Asia-Pacific, Mediterranean and Near East, Latin America and the Caribbean); the CPF communication group; and the communication network of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. These communication networks operate both as think-tanks and communities of practice; opportunities have been identified, and partners mobilized, to implement communication campaigns and to maintain steady flow of information from the forest sector to the general public. Strengthening these networks further, including through stronger engagement and participation from countries, offers an immediate and cost-effective solution for increasing impact. • greater visibility for the UNSPF/GFGs could be achieved by strengthening the forest communicator networks, groups and initiatives and by appointing national communication focal points. In addition, the CPF joint initiative on forest communication could be strengthened to further coordinate and streamline communication efforts on all levels using similar messaging and various channels.
ITTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the UNSPF is reflected in the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026.
IUFRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides support through scientific information and knowledge (e.g. GFG 4 (target 4.5) and GFG 6 (target 6.2)). These contributions help to raise awareness of forests and trees, and their role in combating global challenges, and promote SFM.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an active member of the CPF Communicators Network. Contributes to and promotes outputs such as the IDF events, joint publications of CPF members, etc. Jointly organized a high-level event with FAO and other partners to mark the IDF 2022 theme and published a corresponding policy brief. • GFGs are not sufficiently recognized beyond the forest community, mainly due to the nature of the IAF (non-legally binding and having no substantial financial resources, compared to other platforms).
Forest Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Liaison Unit Bonn of FOREST EUROPE tries to implement the COS, but recognises the scope to do more.
Major Group Children & Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has integrated aspects of the UNSPF into its own work plan and organisational communication strategy as a means to raise awareness. • Has designed capacity building and awareness webinars, together with social media campaigns around forest-related international days such as the IDF. • delegates at various events have led social media campaigns to highlight best practices, success stories, and key actors. • has developed synergies with other organisations (participated in joint communication activities) to increase the impact of messaging about key achievements in the forest sector. • has a dedicated team tasked with production and relaying of attractive visual materials to promote awareness of the role of youth in contributing to SFM. • Challenges can be addressed through choosing appropriate communication channels such as social media, expanding the delivery of content to non-forestry audiences, translating policy proposals into messages that ordinary people identify with and collaborating with various organisations on campaigns across the year.

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

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Summary of response</i>
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further communication and outreach activities could be enhanced by demonstrating linkages and impacts across forests with different sectors. This can provide greater awareness to the value of forests and further raise the profile of the Forum across different sectors. • considers the online activity led by the FAO during the IDF this year to have been a success. The videos, interactive content and summarised content were useful and informative for a wider audience. • a shortcoming from this years' IDF was that linkages and impacts across forests within different sectors could have been better highlighted, in order to promote the value of forests and further raise the profile of the UNFF.
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • boost the key messaging for IDF through emphasis on a wider array of opportunities and international days. The detailed communications updates at UNFF sessions are very helpful.
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successes: deepened understanding of UNFI and UNSPF; awareness of forest resources protection and strengthened SFM; the GFGs Report, which highlighted the role of UNFF.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shortcomings: forests have less public influence than wildlife, even though the two are closely related; the form of communication and outreach activities should be more diversified and closer to local people; more short animation films or short videos could be produced.
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDF including information and material UNFF website a major success.
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> major successes: federal Government and states Government celebrate all major forestry and biodiversity related events, including IDF and the International Day for Biological Diversity. will continue to implement Communication, Education and Public Awareness of biodiversity and forestry.
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> successes: the number of countries joining the communication and outreach initiatives each year. shortcomings: the forest issue still not widely visible outside of environmental forums and platforms.
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> raising environmental awareness has been difficult. action taken through social platforms and media to disseminate, promote, educate, encourage and raise awareness includes local media (e.g. Televisora Nacional uploaded the Global Forest Resources Assessment Report (FRA 2020) onto its website). Also, more state entities are engaging in environmental issues: e.g. the Ombudsman's Office published a news item about IDF 2021 on its website. During the Natural Resources Month the Ministry of Education carried out schools events in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment. success: on track to fulfil all the international agreements that the country has entered into. shortcoming: the cost of using television, which is the medium with greatest impact, for mass dissemination of information.
Republic of the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDF raises awareness on the importance of forests and their vital role in poverty eradication, environmental sustainability and food security. SFM at the heart of addressing challenges of conflict-affected, developing, and developed countries. IDF activities are in line with the annual themes and include photography competitions, a symposium, a live streamed trivia game show, an infographic highlighting the role of forests in preventing the next pandemic, webinars and a forest wellness week. successes: IDF has informed and educated the general public about the importance of forests in their everyday lives. Social media played an important role by disseminating information and sharing initiatives about IDF.
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> welcomes the IDF and its coordinated thematic focus; organises national events and communication, using UNFF, UNECE and FAO material.
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use hybrid in person and virtual IDF planning to reach a wider audience. has produced and disseminated content with the aid of the UN social media toolkit, #IntlForestDay, FAO-produced videos, online quiz, key messages, as well as the UNFF-produced social media Trello board. successes: these communication products, and the millions of digital accounts reached last year.
FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> successes: forests increasingly on the global agenda: this is visible at e.g. the COPs of UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD, and the HLPF. Forests also increasingly recognized by the private sector for their climate change adaptation and mitigation potential. Annual campaigns such as IDF have a wider reach and greater impact among the

	<p>general public and policy stakeholders. (E.g. the FAO IDF 2022 campaign resulted in over 320 articles published by major national and international news wires and online news sources; the website was viewed over 16K times and 240 multilingual posts were shared on social media by FAO reaching 35.6 million accounts. FAO's IDF video spot was produced in 11 languages and broadcast by Deutsche Welle in English, German, Arabic and Spanish, Euronews, Africanews and France24 in French, English and Arabic, and featured in El País and by the Italian news agency Ansa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shortcomings: limited resources for forest communication. Campaigns such as IDF campaign are successful examples, but more targeted, appealing global campaigns are needed for greater impact. (E.g. a campaign on the benefits of wooden products could aim to change public perceptions regarding the benefits of forest management as opposed to strict conservation and protection.) With extra budgetary resources, such campaigns could be organized within the framework of the CPF Joint Initiative on Communication.
ITTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDF has raised awareness to an extent on the importance of forests but the audience needs to be widened to include international media. The main shortcomings are that the IDF remains within the rather closed forest community – all other CPF members and their respective membership should be included further.
IUFRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased awareness of the role of forests in achieving SDGs. • IDF a good entry point to communicate. However, IDF promotion should be harmonized and better aligned among CPF partners (e.g. the use of two logos may be confusing).
Forest Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDF a major opportunity to raise awareness of the public on specific topics around forests. Maybe the joint material for a proper promotion (e.g. policy brief based on latest science) could be improved.
Major Group Children & Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successes: consistent content delivery across various channels, especially around events enables easy follow up of activities conducted. • shortcomings: the COS has not aggressively pursued the possibility of targeting non-forestry audiences and so is not visible in conventional media and to non-forestry practitioners in general.

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

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Summary of response</i>
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does the UNFF Secretariat have a detailed comms plan to follow throughout the year? Could UNFF have its own Twitter handle?
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make better use of the popular electronic media (streaming media) platforms. • invite international celebrities to serve as global forest ambassadors or spokespersons to promote the impact of UNFI.
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater emphasis on the use of social networks and new technologies.
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social media.
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, Education and Public Awareness programmes are carried out to promote awareness on forest and biodiversity issues to the public. Such programmes are embedded in the annual plans of related government agencies and organized in partnership with the private sector and NGOs. Awareness activities

	<p>include environmental camps, nature walks, talks, exhibitions, quizzes, workshops, seminars, tree-planting, and radio shows especially in conjunction with commemorative events such as IDF, Earth Day, World Environment Day, World Wetlands Day and World Oceans' Day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To complement these activities, key agencies maintain nature education and interpretation centres to educate the public. Several local NGOs have also taken the initiative to create similar nature education centres. For example, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) maintains a network of Environmental Education Centres across Peninsular Malaysia in both urban and natural settings to promote awareness and engage the public in environmental discussions. This includes a Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) - MNS Nature Education Centre, an Ecocare Environmental Education Centre, an Environment Interpretive Centre, an Urban Environment Education Hub, a Nature Study Centre and a Discovery Centre
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicates at ministerial level with the foreign ministries and, if possible, with the offices of the Heads of State. constant campaigns through social networks. involve forest owners and managers in innovative communication and information dissemination initiatives that help them increase forest benefits.
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social networks platforms will help to reach more young people.
Republic of the Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter may widen the reach of campaigns and events.
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultants should connect with a communications expert and members of the FAO communicator's networks. interested in historical quantitative data regarding social media posts and retweets related to IDF tracking over the past few years. all communications (not only focused on IDF) with Member States and national focal points via the UNFF website, online key document searches, and other avenues should form part of this review.
ITTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CPF members communication channels, special editorial/Op-ed in The Economist, The New York Times etc. Twitter and other social media channels are also effective in reaching out to further audiences and perhaps should be a joint effort between CPF members.
IUFRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social media channels and other online communication tools are evolving fast and need to be evaluated constantly to see what works best for whom. There is no one-fits-all platform. The main challenges in communication are rather to cross sector barriers and to reach the general public. For this, local languages and skilled communicators at the local level are important.
Forest Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there have been good experiences with social media (Instagram stories, Twitter and TikTok to reach other target groups.
Major Group Children & Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dedicated newsletter and YouTube channel together with the other prominent social media channels to share updates regarding the UNSPF. working alongside conventional media houses such as news websites to promote various activities of the UNSPF.

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

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Summary of response</i>
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is an opportunity for communications across multilateral bodies, both within and external to the UN systems (including with other sectors such as the agriculture and mining sectors), to be strengthened and become a priority opportunity to promote the importance of forests.
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have pithier comms products and policy recommendations that governments can follow resulting from GFG reporting.
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate the UNSPF contents, in particular the GFGs, into national/institutional publicity programmes. • use various other international days to publicize the contribution of the implementation of UNSPF to relevant areas.
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continued engagement and collaboration at the regional level.
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborate with local media in member states. • advocate the UNSPF in other forums/meetings.
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organise capacity-building programs to increase the capacities of members of the Forum and other key players in implementation of the UNSPF. • continue supporting CPF members in providing expertise, data and knowledge to the policy discussions of UNFF.
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote greater synergy and coordination with other international cooperation mechanisms so that efforts are not diluted, but are strengthened and translated into direct positive actions.
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disseminate information about international agreements and policies. • better information on opportunities forest financing, such as a database on existing, new and emerging funding opportunities and a tool for sharing lessons learned and best practices from successful projects – this could be based on the CPF Online Sourcebook on forest financing. • create a virtual library with information about Forums and agreements.
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is committed to create and use synergies through the existing regional forest related processes
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication products could be even shorter, sharper, and reach new audiences through the greater use of infographics and multi-media.
FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening the five FAO regional Forest Communicator Networks, the CPF communication group and the communication network of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. • assigning dedicated communication focal points per country and organization to support streamlined communication, exchange, and experience-sharing through these existing networks. • facilitating and funding global communication campaigns, such as changing public perceptions regarding products made from wood (see response to H-2).
Forest Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within their time restrictions members and others already quite active.
Major Group Children & Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formalise the collaborations between communication networks of members to allow for more committed participation. • have educational outreach seminars focused on communication capacity building training.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• creating social media advisories shared in the lead up to events to harmonise communication and drive traffic to event content.• engaging organizations outside the UNFF membership that engage in similar activities as well as other UN Agencies.• engage in communication activities on policy priorities of importance to forestry, e.g. water and climate change, to highlight the UNSPF's potential contribution• UNFF high-level dialogues should integrate experts from various spheres of science of significance to forestry to discuss linkages.• vividly engage stakeholders outside forestry, e.g. environmentalists and agriculturalists whose activities complement one another• extensively reaching out to children and youth to utilise their competencies as digital nomads to highlight progress of activities of UNSPF.
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

ANNEX 3 LIST OF DOCUMENTS, WEBSITES AND PUBLICATIONS CONSULTED

1. General References

UN documents

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

Report of the 13th session of the UN Forum on Forests E/CN.18/2018/9 (the Annex to UNFF resolution 13/1 contains the Communications and Outreach Strategy of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030)

Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the UNSPF (UNFF 13 document) - E/CN.18/2017/2

Report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues (UNFF 13 document) - E/CN.18/2017/5:

Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the UNSPF (UNFF 14 document) - E/CN.18/2019/2

Note by the Secretariat on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues (UNFF 14 document) - E/CN.18/2019/6

Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the UNSPF (UNFF 15 document) - E/CN.18/2020/2

Implementation of the UNSPF : activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests – Information Note (UNFF 15 document) - E/CN.18/2020/3

Implementation of the UNSPF, including the contributions of the Forum’s regional and subregional partners and major groups, as well as involvement of its secretariat in major meetings: Note by the Secretariat (UNFF 15 document) - E/CN.18/2020/6

Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the UNSPF: thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022; contributions of members of the Forum; interlinkages between the global forest goals and the SDGs under review by the HLPF in 2021; implementation of the communication and outreach strategy (UNFF 16 document) - E/CN.18/2021/2

Note by the Secretariat on Implementation of the UNSPF: Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners towards achieving the thematic priorities of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum (UNFF 16 document) - E/CN.18/2021/3

Note by the Secretariat on policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022 (UNFF 17 document) - E/CN.18/2022/2

Websites

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

Publications

Global Forest Goals booklet (UNFF, 2019), available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Global-Forest-Goals-booklet-Apr-2019.pdf>, accessed 16 August 2022

Global Forest Goals Report 2021 and Overview of Progress (DESA UNFF) available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/outreach/global-forests-goal-report-2021/index.html>, accessed 16 August 2022.

2. Additional references for individual sections of the Report

Section IV B

Actions taken by Members of the Forum

Voluntary National Reports to UNFF 15, available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/unff15/index.html>, accessed 12 October 2022.

Actions taken by UNFF Secretariat

DESA website, available at <https://www.un.org/en/desa>, accessed 12 October 2022.

[UNFF website](https://www.un.org/esa/forests), available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests>, accessed 12 October 2022.

UNFF Clearing House on Forest Financing (Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network) website, available at <https://forest-finance.un.org/>, accessed 12 October 2022.

DESA SDG blog, available at <https://www.un.org/en/desa/sdg-blog>, accessed 23 August 2022.

UNFF 17 Social Media Advisory, available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/UNFF17-Social-Media-Advisory.pdf>, accessed 12 October 2022.

UNFF 17 Trello Board, available at <https://trello.com/b/b2ce0tXK/17th-session-of-the-un-forum-on-forests-2022-social-media-package>, accessed 12 October 2022.

Schedule of side events at UNFF 17, at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/UNFF17-side-event-schedule.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2022.

Forests: at the heart of a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic (DESA, 2020, Policy Brief number 80), available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_80.pdf, accessed 13 October 2022.

Financing sustainable forest management: a key component of sustainable COVID-19 recovery (DESA, 2020, Policy Brief number 88), available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_88.pdf, accessed 13 October 2022.

Wildfires – a growing concern for sustainable development (DESA, 2021, Policy Brief number 111), available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-111-wildfires-a-growing-concern-for-sustainable-development/>, accessed 6 December 2022.

Actions taken by the CPF

CPF website, available at <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests>, accessed 13 October 2022.

FAO IDF website, available at <https://www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/en/>, accessed 13 October 2022.

FAO Committee of Forests website, available at <https://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/committee-fo/en/>, accessed 30 October 2022.

CPF Work Plan 2021–2024, *Working together to reach the Global Forest Goals*, available at <https://www.fao.org/3/cb5687en/cb5687en.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2022.

CPF Statement on *Challenges and opportunities in turning the tide on deforestation* (2021), available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-statement-on-turning-the-tide-on-deforestation/index.html>, accessed 5 November 2022.

CPF Brochure on *Turning the Tide on Deforestation; Flagship initiatives of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests*, available at, <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CPF-brochure-COP26-flagship-initiatives.pdf> , accessed 13 October 2022.

IDF 2022 Trello Board, available at <https://trello.com/b/5dtkBirK/international-day-of-forests-2022>, accessed 23 August 2022.

Report from CPF Conference on *Working across sectors to halt deforestation and increase forest area*, available at <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/initiatives/halt-deforestation/en>, accessed 27 October 2022.

CPF High-level Dialogue on *Turning the Tide on Deforestation* at UNFCCC COP 27 – see <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/meetings/cop27-high-level-dialogue-of-the-collaborative-partnership-on-forests-on-turning-the-tide-on-deforestation>, accessed 7 December 2022

Document 21 in <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020/brc-ws-2019-01/documents> , accessed 25 August 2022

XV World Forestry Congress. *Building a green, healthy and resilient future with forests*. (FAO, 2022). Available at <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2090en/cc2090en.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2022.

FAO Forestry Working Paper 32, *Global assessment of forest education*, available at <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2196en/cc2196en.pdf>, accessed 14 October 2022.

FAO News release *Young champions stand up for nature and forests*, available at <https://www.fao.org/forestry/news/98972/en/> , accessed 4 November 2022.

Action taken by regional and sub-regional organisations

FAO Regional Forestry Commissions webpages, available at <https://www.fao.org/forestry/30106/en/>, accessed 30 October 2022.

African Forest Forum website, available at <https://afforum.org/>, accessed 14 October 2022.

ACTO website, available at <http://otca.org/en/about-us/>, accessed 14 October 2022.

APFNet website, available at <https://www.apfnet.cn/>, accessed 14 October 2022.

Center for People and Forests website, available at <https://www.recoftc.org/>, accessed 14 October 2022

COMIFAC website, available at <https://www.comifac.org/>, accessed 30 October 2022

Forest Europe website, available at <https://foresteurope.org/>, accessed 14 October 2022

Forest Europe Work Programme 2021, available at <https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FOREST-EUROPE-Work-program-2021-24.pdf>, accessed 9 December 2022

Montreal process website, available at <https://montreal-process.org/>, accessed 30 October 2022.

UNECE website, available at <https://unece.org/forests>, accessed 30 October 2022.

INBAR website, available at <https://www.inbar.int/>, accessed 14 October 2022

FAO Regional Forest Communicators Network, see available <https://www.fao.org/forestry/communication-toolkit/87164/en/> , accessed 7 November 2022.

FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, see <https://www.fao.org/forestry/30106/en/>, accessed 7 November 2022

Actions taken by Major Groups

Major Groups workplan, available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/major-groups/major-groups-workplan/index.html>, accessed 14 October 2022.

Progress in the implementation of UNSPF: contribution of Major Groups To UNFF 16 &17 thematic priorities, available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MGs-UNSPF-Implementation-rpt2020.pdf>, accessed 14 October 2022.

Note verbale dated 20 May 2020 from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN Secretary-General (submitting the report of the Major Groups-led Initiative on the theme *Cross-sectoral collaboration for inclusive forest landscapes* - E/CN.18/2020/8

Addressing challenges

Results from *FRA 2020 remote sensing survey* (FAO, 2022), available at

<https://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/remote-sensing/fra-2020-remote-sensing-survey/en/>, accessed 30 October 2022.

Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development *Guidance for Governments: Environmental Management and Mining Governance* (2021), available at <https://www.igfmining.org/announcement/igf-releases-guidance-for-governments-on-environmental-management/>, accessed 31 October 2022

Section IV C

OECD *Report on Public Communication : The Global Context and the Way Forward* (2022) – chapter 4 on Evaluating public communication, available at <https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/oecd-report-on-public-communication-22f8031c-en.htm>, accessed 7 November 2022

IDF websites, available at <https://www.un.org/en/observances/forests-and-trees-day>, <https://www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/en/> and <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/outreach/international-day-of-forests/index.html>, accessed 7 November 2022.

Section IV D

Datareportal *Digital Global Overview Report 2022*, available at, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report>, accessed 7 November 2022.

OECD *Report on Public Communication : The Global Context and the Way Forward* (2022) – chapter 5 Communicating in an evolving and fast-paced digital age, available at <https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/oecd-report-on-public-communication-22f8031c-en.htm>, accessed 7 November 2022

HLPF website, available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>, accessed 18 October 2022.

ECOSOC website, available at <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/home>, accessed 18 October 2022.

UNFF REDD website, available at <https://www.un-redd.org/>, accessed 13 December 2022.

Secretary-General's bulletin on Institutional use of social media, 21 May 2019 - ST/SGB/2019/5, available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/147/79/PDF/N1914779.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed 7 November 2022.

The UN on Social Media, available at <https://www.un.org/en/get-involved/social-media>, accessed 7 November 2022.

Social media and its use at FAO, available at <https://www.fao.org/get-involved/fao-on-social-media/en/>

FAO *Social media policy*, available at <https://www.fao.org/communications/policy/social-media/en/#:~:text=FAO%20presence%20on%20social%20media%20platforms&text=Use%20of%20institutional%20accounts%20allows,wide%20an%20audience%20as%20possible> , accessed 24 October 2022

FAO *Resources and References - FAO and Facebook*, available at <https://www.fao.org/communications/policy/social-media/facebook/en>, accessed 24 October 2022

Report of the Secretary-General on *Activities of the Department of Global Communications: strategic communications services*, 7 February 2022 - A/AC.198/2022/2 (paragraphs 25-43)

Report of the Secretary-General on *Activities of the Department of Global Communications: news services*, 7 February 2022 - A/AC.198/2022/3

Report of the Secretary-General - *Activities of the Department of Global Communications: outreach and knowledge services*, 7 February 2022 - A/AC.198/2022/4

SDG Media Compact, available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sdg-media-compact-about/>, accessed 7 November 2022.

Administrative instruction - United Nations website publishing, 19 May 2022 - ST/AI/2022/2

Introduction to Wikipedia, available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Tutorial>, accessed 7 November 2022.

UN Guidelines for communications and advocacy strategy for the Cooperation Framework, available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/guidelines-communications-and-advocacy-strategy-cooperation-framework> , accessed 7 November 2022

Public perceptions of forestry and the forest-based bioeconomy in the European Union (EFI 2020), available at <https://efi.int/publications-bank/public-perceptions-forestry-and-forest-based-bioeconomy-european-union>, accessed 27 October 2022.

FAO (2011) *Food Security Communications toolkit*, available at <https://www.fao.org/3/i2195e/i2195e.pdf>, accessed 13 December 2022.

Section IV E

Forest Europe Work programme 2021-2024, available at <https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FORREST-EUROPE-Work-program-2021-24.pdf>, accessed 10 December 2022.

Fulfilling the Promise: Best Practices for UN Advocacy to Promote Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/fulfilling-promise-best-practices-un-advocacy-promote-implementation-2030-agenda>, accessed 8 November 2022

Independent Assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests (2014), available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IAF-Assessment-Report-Final-12-Sep-2014.pdf>, accessed 8 November 2022.

ANNEX 4 DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS

Following the analysis of the Questionnaire responses, the consultant approached the national focal points in 29 countries, together with relevant contacts in six member organisations of the CPF, three regional organisations and four Major Groups, inviting them to offer supplementary views reflecting their experience with regard to implementation of the COS, either by online discussion or by email correspondence.

As a result of this, very helpful comments were received from the following individuals:

Canada: Christa Mooney (online discussion)

Germany: Matthias Schwoerer (online discussion)

Japan: Hideki Kawai (email correspondence)

Slovak Republic: Boris Greguska (email correspondence)

UNFF Secretariat: Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director; Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Senior Forest Policy Officer; and Ms. Mita Sen, Programme Management Officer, Forest Affairs (online discussion and email correspondence)

IUFRO: Gerda Wolfrum (email correspondence)

Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC): David Ganz, Executive Director (online discussion)

Forest Europe: Thomas Haussmann, Head of Liaison Unit (online discussion)

Major Group Business: Derek Nighbor, President and Chief Executive Officer, Forest Products Association of Canada (online discussion)

Major Group Children and Youth: Joshua Amaitum, International Forest Students Association (online discussion)

All these contributions are gratefully acknowledged and helped to enrich the Report; however, the views expressed in the Report remain those of the consultant.

ANNEX 5. ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL REFERENCES TO SFM, UNFF, UNSPF, GFGs AND IDF

In order an attempt to provide some quantitative evidence of the level of awareness of the UNFF, UNSPF and its GFGs, as well as the IDF and SFM, two short analyses have been undertaken. The first is an examination of the extent to which the UNSPF and GFGs are referred to in forest-related publications produced by international bodies other than UNFF. The second is a comparison of Google search results for “sustainable forest management”, “United Nations Forum for Forests”, “United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests”, “Global Forest Goals” and “International Day of Forests” for each of the years 2017-2021, together with three comparators, namely “Sustainable Development Goals”, “Convention on Biological Diversity” and “International Day of Biodiversity”.

1. References to the UNSPF/GFGs in a sample of forest-related publications by non-UNFF international bodies

The following forest-related publications were examined with a view to seeing whether, and how, they referred to the UNSPF and/or the GFGs.

- FAO *State of the World's Forests* (SOFO). SOFO 2018, which assesses the contribution of forests towards meeting the SDGs, used the GFGs to help identify the most forest-relevant SDGs; it also suggested that narratives relating to the role of forests in sustainable development should be linked with the COS. SOFO 2020, which examined the contribution of forests towards meeting global biodiversity goals, refers to the UNSPF in its list of relevant international instruments, but refers to the GFGs as the “UNSPF goals”. SOFO 2022 refers to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, but does not explicitly mention the UNSPF or the GFGs.³¹
- FAO's *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020*, refers to the UNSPF and GFGs, indicating that it is unlikely that the GFG target of increasing the world's forest area by 3 per cent (relative to 2015) will be met by 2030.³²
- The Report from COP14 of CBD, held in November 2018, “welcomes the adoption” of the UNSPF and the GFGs and targets and requests its Executive Secretary to continue to engage with the CPF on the further development of its work plan and joint initiatives to implement the UNSPF and the GFGs and their alignment with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets³³.
- The IUFRO Global assessment report *Forest and water on a changing planet* (2018) states that the UNSPF has helped “to frame the general debates about optimising environmental relationships” and refers explicitly to GFG 6³⁴.

³¹ See <https://www.fao.org/3/i9535en/i9535en.pdf> (SOFO 2018), <https://www.fao.org/3/ca8642en/ca8642en.pdf> (SOFO 2020) and <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofo/2022/en/> (SOFO 2022).

³² See page 125 of FAO (2020), *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020* Main report at <https://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/>, accessed 26 August 2022.

³³ CBD/COP/14/14, Decision 14/30. *Cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives*

³⁴ See <https://www.iufro.org/fileadmin/material/publications/iufro-series/ws38/ws38.pdf>, accessed 13 December 2022.

- The UNCCD booklet *Forests and trees at the heart of Land Degradation Neutrality* explains that the UNSPF serves as a global action framework for SFM across the UN system and beyond, and that it includes six specific GFGs.³⁵
- The UNEP flagship publication *Global Environment Outlook 6 (2019)* refers to the UNSPF in its list of recent milestones in land governance and sustainable development.³⁶
- The UNECE publication on the *State of Forests of the Caucasus and Central Asia (2018)* refers to “the objectives of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests”.
- The IUFRO Global assessment report, *Forests, trees and the eradication of poverty: potential and limitations (2020)* refers to the UNSPF and its “six goals”, but does not call them Global Forest Goals.³⁷
- Forest Europe’s *State of Europe’s Forests 2020* includes a section on major forest-related agreements of the United Nations, but does not explicitly refer to the UNSPF or the UNFF.³⁸
- The CPF Brochure on *Turning the Tide on Deforestation: Flagship initiatives of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (2021)* and the CPF *Joint Statement on Challenges and Opportunities in Turning the Tide on Deforestation (2021)* both highlight the UNSPF and GFGs, along with other international commitments to halt and reverse deforestation, including SDG 15, the New York Declaration on Forests (2014) and the Consumer Goods Forum’s 2010 pledge to achieve zero-net deforestation for key forest-risk commodities in global supply chains by 2020.³⁹

This analysis suggests that when non-UNFF documents refer to the UNSPF, they often do so briefly without explaining, for example, that is the global framework for action on forests adopted by the UN General Assembly. Meanwhile, some of the references to the GFGs give them different names, such as “UNSPF goals” or “objectives” of the UNSPF, and there is seldom any differentiation between the individual GFGs.

³⁵ See <file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Forest%20brochure%20-%20web.pdf>, accessed 26 August 2022.

³⁶ See page 377 of UNEP (2019) *Global Environment Outlook 6* at <https://www.unep.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6>, accessed 26 August 2022.

³⁷ See <https://www.iufro.org/news/article/2020/10/15/world-series-vol-39-forests-trees-and-the-eradication-of-poverty-potential-and-limitations/>, accessed 4 November 2022.

³⁸ See page 208 of Forest Europe (2020) *State of Europe’s Forest*, <https://foresteurope.org/state-europes-forests-2020/>, accessed 30 October 2022.

³⁹ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CPF-brochure-COP26-flagship-initiatives.pdf> and <https://www.cpfweb.org/50449-0941d79c54a6810d4c9eb2f45bbcb25f7.pdf>, accessed 13 December 2022.

2. Google key-word search results

A Google search on a laptop computer, customised for each of the years 2017-2021, revealed the following trends in results for “sustainable forest management”, “United Nations Forum for Forests”, “United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests”, “Global Forest Goals” and “International Day of Forests”:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
SFM	19200	22700	23000	28800	38700
UNFF	2290	1020	1100	1670	1230
UNSPF	39	74	151	164	238
GFG	49	98	296	169	396
IDF	2260	2560	3570	5570	6430

While the absolute numbers are subject to aberrations of the search engine, the trends and comparisons are of interest. SFM has a much higher profile than the more specific UNFF-related terms, and this has doubled over the five years. Results relating to the UNFF itself have fallen since 2017, when they may have been boosted by the adoption of the UNSPF, and have since remained static. There are relatively few results relating to the UNSPF and GFGs, although there was a marked increase in 2021 which may be attributable to the publication of *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*. There has also been a near trebling of results relating to the IDF, indicating a general growth in awareness.

For comparison, a similar Google Search for the “Sustainable Development Goals”, the “Convention on Biological Diversity” and the “International Day of Biodiversity” produced the following results, indicating that visibility of the SDGs is several orders of magnitude greater than the GFGs; that the visibility of the CBD is about 10-20 times greater than the UNFF; but that the IDF enjoys greater visibility than the International Day of Biodiversity:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
SDG	5.1 million	6.9 million	8.1 million	5.8 million	9.4 million
CBD	13.5 thousand	29.9 thousand	13.8 thousand	26.5 thousand	31.3 thousand
IDB	369	644	1260	1290	1470

Meanwhile, a similar Google Search for the “Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use”, for the one-year period November 2021 to October 2022, produced 8850 results; a search for the “Forests and Climate Leaders’ Partnership”, in the month in which it was launched (November 2022), produced 886 results; and a search for the “Global Forest Goals Report 2021”, for the 20 month period since its launch in April 2021 to December 2022, produced 311 results.