

Major Groups-Led Initiative in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests

**Fostering Collaborative Actions and Internal Coordination Mechanism
for Major Groups and other Stakeholders: Recommendation for the
Nineteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests**

**Nairobi, Kenya
4-6 March 2024**

Report of Workshop Proceedings

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Background and Context.....	4
3. Organization Matters	5
4. Opening Ceremony	6
5. Lessons learned from other MGoS Coordination Mechanism.....	6
6. Dynamics of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders	10
7. Key Messages to the 19 th UNFF session	12
8. Establishment of International Arrangement on Forests Major Groups Internal Coordination Mechanism (IAF MG-ICM).....	14
9. Identification of untapped opportunities with CPF members and sub-regional organizations	15
10. Closing Ceremony	17

Advance Unedited Version

Acknowledgments

This is the fifth Major Groups-Led Initiative (MGLI) in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). It aims to foster collaboration and coordination among Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) involved in forest-related United Nations processes. The Initiative was organized with a view to developing recommendations for the Nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF19). The MGLI was made possible thanks to the generous support from the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV).

UNFF MGoS also acknowledges the valuable support and facilitation provided by the Forum secretariat and UNEP for this initiative.

The MGLI steering committee consisted of the following members:

- Mr. Binsar Sihotang, International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA), representing Children and Youth
- Ms. Lucy Mullenkei, Indigenous Information Network (IIN), representing Indigenous Peoples
- Mr. Andrei Laletin, Friends of Siberian Forests, representing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Ms. Martha Nunez, Ecuadorian Coordinator of Organizations for the Defense of Nature and the Environment, CEDENMA, representing NGOs
- Mr. Ghan Shyam Pandey, Global Alliance of Community Forestry (GACF), representing Farmers and Small Forest Landowners
- Ms. Mia Crawford, International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA), representing Farmers and Small Forest Landowners
- Dr. Ernest Foli, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (CSIR-FORIG), representing the Scientific and Technological Community
- Ms. Cecile Ndjebet, The African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests, representing Women
- Ms. Ms. Fernanda Rodrigues, Forest Women Network, representing Women
- Ms. Gertrude Kabusimbi Kenyangi, Executive Director, Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment, Uganda, representing Women
- Ms. Njeri Kariuki, Sustainable Development Officer at Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests, liaising officer for Major Group and Other Stakeholders within the Secretariat

The steering committee expresses its appreciation to the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Consumer Protection, the Forum secretariat, the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), MGoS representatives from other forest-related UN processes including the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The steering committee is grateful to all meeting participants for their thoughtful contributions and to the meeting facilitators and rapporteurs for recording the discussions.

This draft report was compiled by the steering committee with the support of the Forum secretariat. Once finalized, this report along with other workshop outputs can be freely used for public purposes with proper attribution.

- **Executive Summary**

A total of sixty-five (65) representatives from Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) met in Nairobi to discuss how to strengthen their contributions to the International Arrangement on Forests. This Major Groups-led Initiative (MGLI) was the first-time stakeholders from several forest-related UN processes met to foster collaborative actions and coordination among stakeholders. The MGLI aimed to improve understanding regarding MGoS roles, responsibilities, coordination, strategy, inclusivity, and transparency in stakeholder engagement within United Nations governing bodies. Moreover, the initiative discussed the contributions, initiatives, lessons learned, and challenges faced by MGoS in the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), and the achievement of the global forest goals (GFGs).

Information sharing sessions provided insights from MGoS from key forest-related processes including the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and the United Nations Framework for Climate Change (UNFCCC) on their governance structures and how they organize themselves and coordinate engagement within their respective intergovernmental processes. FAO, as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), also shared perspectives on how FAO involves relevant stakeholders in the organization's work while the African Forest Forum (AFF), a regional organization shared its work on mainstreaming gender in SFM in Africa. UNEP shared experiences on how the programme engages stakeholders in activities linked to the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Participants discussed key messages for the upcoming Nineteenth Session of the United Nations Forum Forests (UNFF19) based on the UNFF19 thematic priorities and adopted the Nairobi Declaration 2024: A Global Call for Stronger Forest Commitment.

The MGLI also established the self-organized stakeholder platform called the International Arrangement on Forests Major Groups Internal Coordination Mechanism (IAF MG-ICM), adopted its draft Terms of Reference, and elected its interim Co-Chairs.

1. Background and Context

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) recognizes the critical role played by Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) in implementing the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) and the Global Forest Goals (GFGs). MGoS contributions are fundamental to the collective vision of sustainable forest management (SFM). The Forum emphasizes the importance of continuous collaboration and dialogue to strengthen these efforts. Building on this commitment, UNFF Member States acknowledge the valuable contributions of MGoS in shaping global forest governance. Further, the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad hoc Expert Group in preparation for the mid-term review (MTR) of the international arrangement on forests (IAF)¹ welcomed the initiatives spearheaded by MGoS in preparing their contributions and feedback to the nineteenth session of the UNFF (UNFF19).

The meeting held at the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) in Nairobi from 4 to 6 March 2024 was the fifth in the series of MGLI's to contribute to the UNFF process. It was made possible through the generous financial contribution from the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer

¹ [Co-Chairs' Summary](#)

Protection (BMELV), Federal Republic of Government of Germany with the support of the Forum secretariat.

This MGLI aimed to prepare MGoS contributions and feedback to UNFF19. A key aspect of this support involved exploring how effective coordination mechanisms can enhance knowledge sharing and strengthen MGoS contributions toward UNSPF implementation. UNFF MGoS was able to hear and learn from MGoS from other forest-related processes and UN Conventions including UNFCCC, UNEA, and HLPF on how they organize and coordinate themselves.

In developing their recommendations to address the UNFF19 thematic priorities, the MGoS adopted the following theme for the MGLI *“Fostering Collaborative Actions and Coordination Mechanism for Major Groups and other Stakeholders: Recommendation for the Nineteenth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests”*. Participants focused on discussion on three topics:

- Knowledge Sharing: Discussions and lessons learned on opportunities and challenges faced by MGoS from various different forest-related processes, including UNEA, HLPF and UNFCCC;
- Ways and means to strengthen MGoS Coordination within the International Arrangement on Forests as well as across different UN forest-related processes; and
- Key Messages to UNFF 19, including the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration 2024: A Global Call for Stronger Forest Commitment.

2. Organization Matters

Venue and Duration of the Meeting

The Major Groups-Led Initiative (MGLI) took place at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya from 4 to 6 March 2024.

Attendance and Participation

The MGLI was attended by 65 participants from 26 countries representing six out of the nine official Major Groups as identified in Chapter 23 of Agenda 21: Children and Youth; Farmers and Small Forest Landowners; Indigenous Peoples; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Scientific and Technological community; and Women.

Also in attendance were representatives of the UNFF Secretariat, FAO, UNEP and regional entities such as the Africa Forest Forum (AFF).

MGLI Objective

The main objective of the MGLI was to solidify MGoS governance structures for the International Arrangement on Forests. The aim was to improve the understanding of MGoS roles, responsibilities, coordination, strategy, inclusivity, and transparency in stakeholder engagement within United Nations governing bodies. Moreover, the initiative discussed the contributions, initiatives, lessons learned, and challenges faced by MGoS in the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) and the UN Strategic Plan on Forests (UNSPF), and the attainment of the global forest goals (GFGs).

3. Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony took place on the morning of Monday, 4 March 2024; Speakers at the opening ceremony included:

- Ms. Juliette Biao, Director of the UNFF Secretariat
- Mr. Binsar Sihotang, Head of the IFSA UNFF Sub-Commission for the period 2022-2024 and the UNFF Children and Youth Major Group Focal Point.

The UNFF Secretariat Director, Ms. Juliette Biao, highlighted that the UNFF19 thematic priorities were a resounding call to action centered around enhancing forest-based economic, social, and environmental benefits. In particular, she stressed the need for increasing protected forests, and forest products from sustainably managed forests, mobilizing financing, strengthening scientific and technical cooperation, and promoting governance frameworks. She emphasized that UNFF19 and the midterm review of the IAF were an opportunity to take stock of progress, confront challenges, and chart a clear course toward 2030. Further, Ms. Biao expressed gratitude to the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) for their generous financial support, and to the Major Groups Steering Committee for their tireless efforts in organizing the MGLI.

Mr. Binsar Sihotang addressed the meeting participants, highlighting the goals of this gathering organized by major groups. "Our main focus is on the adoption of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for a coordination mechanism for Major Groups and Other Stakeholders within the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)". This initiative marks a significant step forward within the UNFF, aiming to enhance our collaborative efforts. Moreover, this meeting provides a valuable platform for major groups to engage in discussions on important topics, such as crafting key messages for the upcoming UNFF session and conducting a SWOT analysis of major groups. These discussions offer new perspectives that can influence member states in shaping strategic approaches to advance the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) and the Global Forest Goals. In summary, this gathering holds great significance for major groups, representing a moment of significant opportunity and collaboration. On behalf of the UNFF major groups, Mr. Binsar Sihotang expressed sincere gratitude to the UNFF secretariat, the German government, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (FAO and UNEP), and the African Forest Forum, for their support and participation in this meeting.

4. Lessons learned from other MGoS Coordination Mechanism

This session was facilitated by Ms. Mia Crawford, Forest Director EU and International Affairs, Federation of Swedish Family Forest Owners and Focal Point of the UNFF Farmers and Small Landowners Major Group. Introductory presentations provided an overview of stakeholder coordination mechanism from three different UN governing bodies addressing the following questions:

1. What do you see as key advantages and disadvantages of the coordination mechanism that you are involved in? Any musts that we need to take on board or any pitfalls to avoid?
2. To what extent do you think Member States should be involved in stakeholder coordination?
3. Is it an advantage to have a strong or weak mandate from the governing body?

UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee for the UNEA

Mr. Mohammed Abdullaouf highlighted that civil society stakeholders play a crucial role in supporting UNEP's mandate. The Stakeholder Engagement Handbook, a collaborative effort between UNEP and UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), provides detailed guidance on stakeholder involvement in UNEP. This handbook outlines the current rules, mechanisms, and practices for stakeholder engagement within UNEP's work, adhering to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Rules of Procedure.

The Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) acts as a facilitator, not a decision-making body, to coordinate and guide stakeholder engagement with UNEP. It comprises two elected representatives from each Major Group and two elected Regional Facilitators per region. All Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS)' organizations accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP are authorized to take part in the voting for their members of the MGFC. The elected facilitators serve a two-year term on the MGFC.

Members of the MGFC are responsible for upholding the guidelines outlined in the Stakeholder Engagement Handbook. They have to be able to allocate sufficient time to their functions in the MGFC. Their actions and interventions stem from regular interactions with their respective Major Groups. Key responsibilities include:

- Enhancing participation by maximizing MGoS representatives worldwide in UNEA and related meetings.
- Promoting balanced representation by gender, focus, and region at Regional Consultative Meetings (RCMs), ensuring participants have prior access to relevant agenda information.
- Facilitating the involvement of Major Group members with specific issue knowledge in UNEP-related work at local, national, regional, and UNEA levels.
- Providing general information, training, and capacity building on UNEP processes, as well as assisting in accessing information related to UNEP meeting agendas.
- Generating media interest, promoting educational programs globally, and maintaining web-based information hubs and listservs.
- Sharing issue-based information from MGoS with a wider audience.
- Coordinating the preparation of Major Groups policy papers.

The MGFC collaborates with regional networks, Regional Facilitators, UNEP's Secretariat, and Regional Offices. Meetings are held every two months, initiated by either UNEP or the MGFC co-chairs. Agenda and minutes of these meetings are made available publicly on the UNEP website.

Two Regional Facilitators per region are chosen by accredited organizations. Selection considers gender, sub-regional balance, and expertise relevant to upcoming UNEA sessions. Ideally, they come from different sub-regions within UNEP-accredited organizations, serving a minimum two-year term. As observers on the MGFC, they too adhere to the Stakeholder Engagement Handbook's Code of Conduct.

Regional Facilitators act in a purely facilitative and expert role, not formally representing their region or Major Groups/Stakeholders. They present agreed-upon regional positions emerging from Regional Consultative Meetings and other consultations during their term. Notably, in the absence of regional consensus, they cannot make official statements on behalf of their region.

Major Groups in the UNFCCC

Mr. Brusaporco stated that stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role within UNFCCC but does not have a formal coordination mechanism between MGoS. Unlike the MGoS in the UNFF process where stakeholders such as the Farmers Major Groups coordinate internally and nominate representatives to speak on behalf of their constituency, the UNFCCC process only allows for stakeholder participation as observers. Stakeholders, however, can submit contributions and attend meetings of UNFCCC.

He further noted that in the UNFCCC process, while building consensus is essential, balancing diverse interests within a stakeholder group can be challenging. Major Groups rely heavily on volunteers, and resource limitations can hinder their effectiveness. Governments need to consider how to best support meaningful stakeholder participation in the UNFCCC. This includes providing space for engagement and potentially some resources.

He stressed that stakeholder engagement requires commitment from both stakeholders and governments. Clear terms of reference and a strong vision are essential for effective engagement. Further mechanisms for building consensus and nominating representatives are also crucial.

Using the Farmers Major Group as an example of how Major Groups self-organize, Mr. Brusaporco explained that the Farmers Group has focal points that coordinate meetings, information flow, and submissions before and during UNFCCC meetings, most notably the Conference of Parties. The group strives for consensus on positions it presents, considering diverse member perspectives while building common ground.

While the UNFCCC MG does not have a formal coordination mechanism, Mr. Brusaporco saw a structured mechanism to be beneficial because it will ensure consistent messaging from the MGoS. Moreover, he recommended UNFF MGoS to develop clear terms of reference to help MGoS reach a consensus and build a shared vision. This will also ease integration for new organizations joining a particular UN process.

Further, he stressed that a well-functioning coordination mechanism relies on stakeholders being given the space to participate and engage meaningfully, beyond just speaking rights and resources. Governments should consider how to support stakeholder participation, acknowledging the time and effort it requires.

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development MGoS Coordination Mechanism

Ms. Kwatra, co-chair of the HLPF MGoS-CM provided an overview of MGoS-CM for the HLPF. MGoS in the HLPF process are guided by the principle of “leaving no one behind” and the Terms of Reference that was developed in 2020. The MGoS-CM is a self-organized platform for social groups and stakeholders committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It focuses particularly on year-round preparations for the HLPF and comprises 21 constituencies, each with 2-3 representatives, and is led by 2-3 Co-Chairs. The MGoS-CM can also create temporary task groups for specific activities, reporting directly to the co-chairs.

The MGoS-CM prioritizes broad, open, and transparent participation in the HLPF, upholding principles of human rights, gender equality, and non-discrimination. It can establish task groups for specific activities, which report to and coordinate with the Co-Chairs. The MGoS-CM interacts directly with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

The MGoS-CM operates on the following core principles of engagement:

- Human rights are central to sustainable development and democratic governance.
- Commitment to gender equality, social justice, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination.
- Recognizing that the inherent interconnectedness of all domains of life requires systemic and holistic responses in both policy-making and programme development and implementation; and
- The centrality of inclusive and democratic multilateralism, centered on the United Nations and based upon human rights, people-centeredness, equity and justice, solidarity, cooperation, and common but differentiated responsibilities, to ensure the democratic management of our commons and the advancement of the sustainable development agenda.

The MGoS-CM aims to advance the 2030 Agenda, ensure broad participation, especially from under-represented groups; safeguard MGoS rights to participate in the HLPF and related processes; acknowledge the critical role of MGoS in the 2030 Agenda; and foster greater cooperation and solidarity among MGoS constituencies.

Ms. Kwatra stated that following UN General Assembly Resolution 67/290, MGoS have the right to attend all HLPF meetings (official and preparatory); participate in discussions and submit written and oral contributions; make recommendations and organize side events (in collaboration with member states and the UN Secretariat).

While MGoS have thematic constituencies such as the Civil Society Financing for Development, Education and Academia Stakeholder Group, Farmer' Major Group Indigenous Peoples Major Group, other interested constituencies can apply to join. It also has three regional constituencies referred to as Regional CSO Engagement Mechanisms for the Africa, Asia-Pacific and ECE regions.

Key messages from the interactive discussion.

Key messages coming out of the interactive discussion (advantages and disadvantages) at the conclusion of the three presentations included:

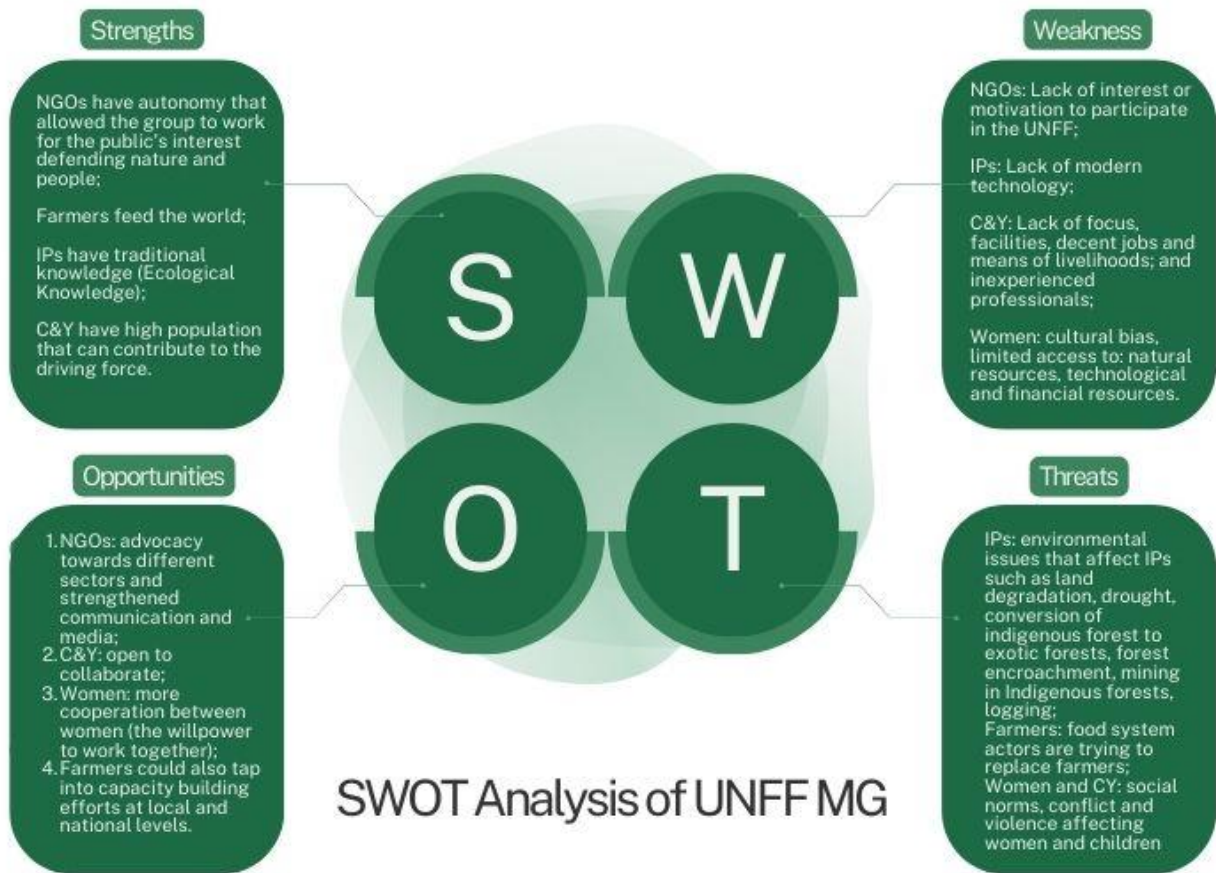
- The UNFF MGoS are well placed to play a unifying role particularly on global advocacy because SFM cuts across most of the SDGs. However, securing the active participation of the scientific community is critical to ensure that actions and messaging are evidence based.
- A coordination mechanism at the global level is crucial for the generation of joint statements, ensuring fairness and preventing dominance by stronger groups. In the case of UNEA MGoS, the regional dimension strengthens the groups coordination efforts by incorporating regional concerns and facilitating consultation within each region.
- Challenges arise from Member States' varying levels of engagement in the UNEA case. To address this issue UNEA MGoS have initiated activities to educate and inform countries more effectively.
- In the HLPF context, the MGoS-CM fosters mutual learning and capacity building. Newer groups benefit from the experience of established ones, gaining the expertise needed to effectively engage in the HLPF. The diversity of MGoS allows for a wider range of expertise across different areas. No single major group can be everywhere at once, so this structure ensures broader coverage. For instance, the women's major group can be relied upon to consider issues of older persons, youth, or persons with disabilities. This works both ways, with other groups doing the same.

- While a larger structure can be challenging to manage, it is important to be open to new voices to ensure inclusivity. New major groups or constituencies should align with existing major groups to the extent possible.
- The importance and necessity of amplifying MGoS voices using the media at both global and local levels was also stressed. There was a recommendation to establish a working group on media relations.
- The three presentations and the example of MGoS organization during the World Food Summit further demonstrated the need for a coordination mechanism across the different stakeholders at United Nations meetings.
- The UNFF secretariat can assist and facilitate UNFF MGoS to meet more regularly with Member States during the Forum sessions and intersessional period as well as engaging with the media focusing on science based and traditional knowledge; building MGoS capacity to engage in the Forum's work.

5. Dynamics of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders

Mr. Binsar Sihotang from the UNFF Children and Youth Major Group, facilitated a working group exercise focused on improving collaboration between different MGoS. During the first part of this session, participants were divided into teams representing their respective groups. Each group conducted a SWOT analysis to assess their own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

On strengths and weaknesses, the groups considered internal factors like their unique skills, reputation, available resources, and challenges like skill gaps, financial constraints, and communication inefficiencies. While on opportunities and threats, they explored ways to work together through potential avenues for collaboration, forming strategic partnerships and leveraging regulatory or financial changes. They also identified external factors beyond their control, such as shifts in government policies or environmental concerns, that could affect their work. By understanding each group's strengths and weaknesses, and working together on opportunities and threats, all these groups can contribute more effectively to sustainable forest management. This analytical exercise serves as a foundational step towards fostering enhanced cooperation and efficacy within the UNFF MGoS framework, ensuring alignment with organizational objectives, and promoting collective progress.



During the second part of this session, the groups focused on MGoS contributions to UNSPF implementation and their contribution to SFM and worked on identifying what each group does well, the areas they could improve on, how they can work together better, and potential challenges they might face.

Findings from the working groups included the following:

- The Women Working Group highlighted significant progress in promoting gender diversity and environmental stewardship. However, outdated views on gender roles, communication issues within the group, and limited influence in decision-making hold them back. Strategies to overcome these challenges include fostering collaboration, seeking support from larger organizations, and challenging societal stereotypes. Additionally, they must address persistent gender biases, violence against women, and the impacts of climate change.
- NGOs operate autonomously for the public good, tackling social and environmental issues. However, engaging with governments and securing funding can be difficult. Opportunities for improvement lie in collaborating with larger entities, expanding knowledge bases, and

strengthening communication. Further, they must remain vigilant against potential backlash, financial constraints, and external influences.

- Farmers have strong organizational skills and play a crucial role in food production but struggle to reach a broader audience and communicate effectively. To improve they can participate in larger forums, engage in continuous learning, and focus on ensuring food security. However, they must also be vigilant against threats such as land acquisition by corporations and shifts in agricultural practices.
- Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities possess valuable ecological knowledge but lack modern communication tools and access to resources. Improvement opportunities include participating in broader discussions and seeking external support. Further, they must address challenges such as their own rights and recognition, environmental degradation, and threats of displacement.
- Children and Youth bring diverse perspectives but encounter challenges in decision-making and establishing credibility. Strategies for advancement include showcasing capabilities and seeking support. They must also address threats such as environmental degradation and conflicts over resources.

This analytical exercise served as a foundational step towards fostering enhanced cooperation and efficacy within the UNFF MGoS framework, ensuring alignment with organizational objectives and promoting collective progress.

Additionally, each group discussed their individual work plans for 2023 to 2028 based on the SWOT-analysis and the Forum's draft quadrennial programme of work (4POW) for the period 2025 to 2028. A summary of the main findings from each group can be found in Annex III to this report.

6. Key Messages to the 19th UNFF session

During this session, Mr. Binsar Sihotang informed the meeting that the UNFF19 thematic priorities areas were (i) Enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits; (ii) Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests; and (iii) mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence, for sustainable forest management.

He asked participants to review the thematic priorities in working groups and develop recommendations to UNFF19 focusing on (a) MGoS main commitment to the Forum on advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) and (b) a demand to the Forum and Member States regarding the UNFF19 thematic priorities.

The following key asks from MGoS for UNFF19 thematic priorities, include to:

- Enhance partnerships with scientific organizations and, particularly, IUFRO, which has representation from 125 countries with about 650 organizations.
- Recognize illegal (forest) markets as a key driver of forest destruction.
- Recognize the urgent need to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation.
- Recognize and respect the territorial land rights of indigenous peoples and their communities. Recognize the importance of indigenous people and their systems of traditional knowledge and culture towards SFM, backed by science.
- Enhance mechanisms for offsetting forest conservation e.g., Enhance how climate finance can be accessed by local people (collective action).
- Acknowledge the newly established IAF MG-ICM and strengthen the MGoS engagement in IAF, including earmarking UNFF funding for support of MGoS participation in forest-related decision-making forums such as the UNFF.
- Actively support successful local initiatives, aiming to upscale and amplify their impact, particularly in connection with community exchange. Collaboration with emerging leaders and local governments is crucial in this endeavor.
- Strengthen efforts towards providing financial and technical capacity building to promote community-led initiatives, with a specific focus on empowering women to take the lead in these endeavors.
- Identify and cultivate markets for local producers from local people to increase livelihoods from timber and non-timber forest products.
- Fostering community exchanges to share and replicate good practices on SFM should be a key focus during the technical sessions of UNFF.
- Promote and participate in forest ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation programs and initiatives, within a holistic and intersectoral approach.

The participants also reviewed and discussed the draft Nairobi Declaration 2024: A Global Call for Stronger Forest Commitment. The final Declaration was adopted through a written procedure on 9 April 2024, see Annex 1.

7. Establishment of International Arrangement on Forests Major Groups Internal Coordination Mechanism (IAF MG-ICM)

Draft Terms of Reference for IAF MG-ICM

This session was facilitated by Ms. Mia Crawford, Forest Director EU and International Affairs, Federation of Swedish Family Forest Owners, and Focal Point of the UNFF Farmers and Small Landowners Major Group. Ms. Crawford presented the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for IAF MG-ICM which had been developed by the MGLI Steering Committee. The draft builds and largely on the ToR for the HLPF MGoS-CM. However, some elements of other stakeholder coordinating mechanisms were used too, including elements from the UNEP Stakeholder Engagement Handbook.

The draft ToR for IAF MG-ICM outlines the general principles for engagement, mandate, and objectives. The draft ToR also defines who can be involved in the stakeholder platform and what should be the activities and methods of work, including the roles and responsibilities of focal points and co-chairs.

Ms. Crawford's presentation was followed by an interactive discussion on the draft ToR. Many participants welcomed the draft ToR and noted the need for MGoS to work together instead of working in silos.

Some participants sought further clarification on the election of Co-Chairs as well as the pros and cons of having two or three Co-chairs. Others opined that the Co-Chairs should be elected by acclamation with a clearly defined term limit taking into consideration the thematically linked UNFF 4POW.

Moreover, others stressed that the draft ToR should clearly identify the criteria for MGoS representation and the language in which the IAF MG-ICM would operate.

It was suggested that the draft ToR should also include a Code of Conduct/Ethic in the IAF MG-ICM for mediation and or a dispute resolution mechanism/channel led by the Co-Chairs; or a clause on the code of conduct with a preamble that explains the rules. UNEP MGFC presented its Code of Conduct. It was suggested that the IAF MG-ICM should develop such a Code of Conduct/Ethics based on the UNEP example and once adopted it could be attached to the ToR.

The need for the IAF MG-ICM to include the issue of accreditation in the draft ToR was also highlighted, noting that the UNEP MGFC only includes stakeholders accredited by UNEP. However, in the case of UNFF it may be more relevant to use HLPF as an example.

Based on the comments received during this interactive discussion, the MGLI Steering Committee revised the draft TOR and presented the revised version to the meeting on 6 March for final review and adoption. The representatives from MGoS decided to establish the self-organized IAF MG-ICM and adopted the draft ToR, see Annex II. Since not all MGoS were present in Nairobi outreach will be done in the coming six months to solicit the input from MGoS.

Appointment of interim IAF MG-ICM Co-Chairs

Mr. Binsar Sihotang and Ms. Mia Crawford volunteered for consideration as the interim Co-Chairs of the IAF MG-ICM for up to six months. Both were unanimously endorsed by representatives of MGoS to serve as the interim Co-Chairs of the IAF MG-ICM until a regular election of Co-Chairs is conducted. All MGoS

were encouraged to discuss within their constituencies and nominate both focal points as well as nominations for Co-Chairs during this interim period.

8. Identification of untapped opportunities with CPF members and sub-regional organizations

The discussion about the identification of untapped opportunities with CPF members and sub-regional organizations spanned around 90 minutes. This session was facilitated by Mr. Andrey Laletin from NGOs Major Group, each speaker had a 15-minute slot to present their working experience and relevant information, followed by interactive discussions among the participants. The session focused on collaborative initiatives in sustainable forest management, especially involving indigenous communities, women, farmers, youth, and other relevant stakeholders. Additionally, there was deliberation on how major groups could contribute to the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), with insights provided by the CPF (FAO and UNEP) and regional organizations (African Forest Forum).

The guided questions for this agenda were as follows:

1. Can you elaborate on the various collaborative initiatives being explored in sustainable forest management, especially in cooperation with indigenous communities, women, farmers, youth, and other pertinent stakeholders?
2. What avenues are available for major groups to contribute towards achieving the objectives of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF)?
3. What challenges and insights have emerged in attempts to incorporate Major Groups into your initiatives?
4. Could you provide a specific example, whether successful or challenging, of engaging Major Groups in your endeavors?

FAO – Landscape approach

Ms. María Ruiz presented FAO's perspective on how the organization involves relevant stakeholders in its initiatives. She indicated that FAO was exploring the realm of SFM through landscape protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation as well as an increase in efforts to prevent forest degradation to combat climate change. Further, the organization is exploring avenues for collaborative initiatives in sustainable forest management, particularly in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, women, farmers, youth, and other relevant stakeholders.

The challenges and lessons learned have included the efforts to integrate MGoS including exhaustive mapping in representativeness and in developing a global advocacy programme informed local stakeholders; Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, farmers, youth, and other relevant stakeholder organizations embedded in the design of interventions as executing partners.

UNEP – UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

Ms. Ann-Kathrin Neureuther, Communications Manager at UN Environment Programme presented the history and background to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration which runs from 2021 through 2030. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The presentation from UNEP focused on presenting an overview of the governance of the Decade, including some of the task forces and the action plan for the Decade. She shared the progress made since the start of the Decade. She highlighted the development of the UN World Restoration flagship and encouraged participants to engage in the Decade and in particular the submission towards the UN World Restoration flagship.

African Forest Forum – Gender Mainstreaming and Youth Engagement

Mr. Labode Popoola and Ms. Doris Mutta, representatives from the African Forest Forum (AFF) made a presentation on Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Forest Management in Africa.

The AFF is a pan-African NGO with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It is an association of individuals who share the quest for and commitment to the sustainable management, use, and conservation of forests and tree resources of Africa for the socio-economic well-being of its people and for the stability and improvement of its environment.

AFF seeks to promote the empowerment of all marginalized groups particularly women and youth whose representation, priorities, and needs are seldom addressed in the forestry sector.

AFF has a number of SFM projects with an explicit gender lens aimed at reducing women and youth's vulnerability by enhancing their socio-economic empowerment; by addressing informality in the production and marketing of non-timber forest products where women dominate; and by initiatives to inform legal reforms in land tenure, and institutional development through enhanced training and leadership development for women and youth.

Projects' design and implementation processes are designed to support women's effective participation in forest institutions, and in economic production and benefit-sharing processes in the context of socio-cultural norms that often make it difficult for women to participate in local forest governance as key stakeholders on an equal footing to men.

AFF has also organized a Youth for Forests Workshop #Youth4Forests to provide a platform for young people to engage with researchers in meaningful conversations about their views, vision, goals and ideas in shaping the future governance of the continent's forests; and how to make changes towards transformational change. The workshop strengthened the capacity of African youth on commercial creative skills required to run projects within a green economy. It provided a platform for youth voices to be heard in forest governance and decision-making processes.

9. Closing Ceremony

Mr. Ghan Shyam Panday, on behalf of the Farmers Major Group Farmer congratulated all MGLI participants for the successful conclusion of a very productive MGLI, the development and adoption of the IAF MG-ICM ToR. He also congratulated Mr. Sihotang and Ms Crawford on their election as interim Co-Chairs of the IAF MG-ICM mechanisms. Together with the Women's Farmers Group, Mr. Panday presented the UNFF Secretariat with gifts made from NTFPs.

Speaking on behalf of the Scientific and Technological (S&T) Major Group, Mr. Ernest Foli, S&T Major Group Focal point appreciated the MGLI steering committee's efforts to organize the MGLI and congratulated the interim Co-chairs of the UNFF Major Groups Internal Coordination Mechanism stating that the S&T Major Group looked forward to the practical implementation of the CM.

Ms. Cecile Ndjebet, Women Major Group Focal Point congratulated all the participants, she noted the importance of organizing such a meeting and thanked the UNFF Secretariat for their efforts. Ms. Ndjebet stressed that the achievement of the global forest goals and their associated targets was dependent on having enabling national policies at national levels, a robust implementation strategy, dedicated funding for community initiatives, and upscale successful sub-national initiatives.

Ms. Lucy Mulenkei, Indigenous Peoples Major Group Focal Point in her closing remarks thanked the MGLI steering committee and the UNFF Secretariat for their efforts in organizing the MGLI. Noting that Indigenous Peoples contribute to different processes in sustainable development and environmental topics, she encouraged collaborative efforts to work with and support them within these processes as the indigenous people are in turn ready to support works related to their values.

Mr. Andrei Laletin, NGO Major Group Focal Point expressed satisfaction that the MGLI was able to discuss issues important for the protection of forests, peoples, and SFM, like rights-based approaches, underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, TFRK. He added that NGOs were enriched with knowledge from the MGLI's experiences and participants' experiences, and look forward to implementing the internal Coordination Mechanism and working constructively with other MGs and UNFF Secretariat.

Binsar Sihotang on behalf of the MGC&Y thanked the Forum secretariat for its unwavering support in fostering the realization of the MGLI. Stating that the MGC&Y remained steadfast in its commitment to engaging with the Forum and showcasing the group's dedication to SFM, he stressed that MGoS possesses diverse perspectives and interests in forest management, as well as varying capacities and resources. The Forum serves as an invaluable platform for convening all stakeholders involved in forestry to explore how policy instruments can enhance forest management, making forest ecosystems a crucial component of nature-based climate solutions.

The meeting was officially closed by Ms. Juliette Biao, UNFFS Director who thanked the participants for their active participation and insightful contributions to the MGLI that had generated valuable ideas and shaped key recommendations to strengthen MGoS engagement in UNFF decision-making. After urging MGoS to continue this collaborative spirit to ensure a stronger MGoS voice within UNFF Ms. Biao declared the meeting officially closed.

ANNEX I: Nairobi Declaration 2024: A Global Call for Stronger Forest Commitment

We, the UN forest-related Major Groups and Other Stakeholders convened in Nairobi, hereby declare our shared commitment to addressing the critical challenges posed by threats to forest ecosystems recognizing the disproportionate impact these threats have on Indigenous Peoples, women and children, and affirming the urgent need for action in the face of unprecedented shocks in the forestry sector in recent years. Moreover, we commit to increase our efforts to collaborate among ourselves to provide more coordinated forest-related inputs to the various global forest-related processes, including forest, sustainable development, climate change, biodiversity and environment. Therefore, we have decided to establish a self-organized Major Groups and Other Stakeholder Internal Coordination Mechanism for the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF MG-ICM).

With profound concern, we see that the underlying causes of forest loss are not being adequately addressed, perpetuating cycles of environmental degradation that particularly affect vulnerable populations including women, children and Indigenous Peoples. The complexity of issues hinders the achievement of sustainable forest management at various levels. We reiterate our dedication to the International Arrangement on Forests, urging Member States to collaborate with stakeholders for the effective implementation of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests and its Global Forest Goals.

Underscoring the indispensable role of Indigenous Peoples, women and local communities in conservation efforts particularly in safeguarding intergenerational knowledge and practices, we commit to advocating for policies that safeguard their rights. These, include free, prior and informed consent and access to benefits as well as acknowledgement of their significant contributions to sustainable forest management; promoting gender equality within forest-related activities, ensuring women and children have equal access to resources, decision making processes, and benefits derived from sustainable forest management initiatives.

We stress the critical need for ensuring good forest governance, safe land tenure rights and gender equality in the pursuit of sustainable forest management. Recognizing the intersection of forestry, human rights, and the sustainable development goals, we emphasize the importance of addressing gender-based disparities and promoting inclusive approaches that empower Indigenous Peoples, women, children and local communities in forest management endeavours.

Expressing gratitude for the commendable initiatives by small holders, forest owners, and communities in adopting innovative and sustainable forest management practices, we also acknowledge the positive impact of incentives, with a rights-based approach.

Emphasizing the paramount importance of forest education within national programs, we highlight the necessity of involving the younger generation, particularly children, in sustainable forest management practices. These measures are essential for fostering awareness, understanding, and active participation in the preservation and sustainable use of forest ecosystems for the benefit of present and future generations.

We further underscore the significance of integrating both scientific and traditional knowledge, recognizing the value of a comprehensive and balanced perspective that combines the strengths of scientific understanding with insights derived from traditional knowledge and practices.

As a social community committed to positive change, we pledge to:

- Engage in initiatives aligned with sustainable forest management principles, acknowledging both scientific and traditional knowledge.
- Participate in sustainable forest management actions through collaborative efforts.
- Endorse responsible forestry products to minimize adverse effects of deforestation.
- Stay informed through joint initiatives, meetings, and coordination within stakeholders across different UN forest-related processes ensuring representation from diverse backgrounds.
- Monitor UN Strategic Plan for Forests implementation through assessments and evidence collection paying particular attention to gender-responsive and child-friendly indicators.
- Raise our voices in the promotion of positive actions aimed at the conservation and management of forests and respect for rights, but also to demand the political commitment of States and different actors.

We call upon Member States to consider:

- The MGoS proposal to establish the IAF MG-ICM and its draft ToRs, to authorize, and enable the IAF MG-ICM to interact with IAF components.
- Fulfil international commitments, aligning with UN Strategic Plan, Global Forest Goals, and Sustainable Development Goals.
- Build / strengthen the relevant interlinkages with the Rio Conventions: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.
- Develop ambitious targets for forest management, addressing the underlying causes of forest loss and multiple planetary crises.
- Re-evaluate forest-related policies with ambition, ending deforestation and forest degradation, and championing climate smart solutions.
- Prioritize forest education, elevating awareness for resilience in current and future generations.
- Accelerate actions towards a growing bioeconomy and multifunctional forest ecosystem management, with a holistic and intersectoral approach ensuring Indigenous Peoples, and women land tenure rights, and promoting forests for livelihood initiatives, poverty eradication and food sovereignty.
- Advocate for the establishment of universal rights to access information related to forests. Stress the importance of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity by ensuring that all stakeholders, including local communities in rural areas, have unrestricted access to pertinent information.

- Engage major groups and stakeholders in the international arrangement on forests and support initiatives fostering collaboration and enhancing their involvement in relevant discussions and decision-making processes within the UNFF, and at local levels.
- Welcome that major groups and other stakeholders has established a self-organized space for internal coordination among Major Groups and Other Stakeholders.
- Develop a robust implementation strategy and mobilize adequate funding to support Community initiatives and upscale successful initiatives carried out on the ground in various countries.

Sustainable forest management is our path towards achieving sustainable development and overcoming the multiple crises we face. We urge the political commitment to safeguard against and end deforestation by 2030. The time for decisive action is now.

Advance Unedited Version

Annex II: International Arrangement on Forests Major Groups Internal Coordination Mechanism (IAF MG-ICM): DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

ARTICLE I: PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT

The International Arrangement on Forests Major Groups Internal Coordination Mechanism (hereinafter referred to as the "IAF MG-ICM") comprise of representatives of autonomous social groups and societal constituencies referred to as the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS), as listed in Article IV, Section 1.

1. The fundamental principles for engagement are:

- Commitment to sustainable forest management of all types of forests;
- Utmost commitment to sustainable development, gender equality; combatting climate change, gender equality, ethnic and intergenerational justice, as well as to the eradication of all forms of discrimination and violence;
- Centrality of inclusive and democratic multilateralism, centered on the United Nations and based upon human rights, equity and justice, solidarity, cooperation and common but differentiated responsibilities.

2. The IAF MG-ICM will develop a code of ethics based on the code of conduct developed by UNEP accredited Major Groups and their representatives in the Major Groups Facilitating Committee, including Regional Facilitators. Once approved it will be annexed to this Terms of Reference.

ARTICLE II: MANDATE

1. The IAF MG-ICM is an autonomous and self-organizing space for internal coordination among the Major Groups as identified in Agenda 21 and their societal constituencies interested and committed to Sustainable Forest Management, and the advancement of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests, the Global Goals on Forests.

2. The mandate of the IAF MGs-ICM emanates primarily from the self-determination and commitment of MGoS constituencies to collaborate and coordinate their engagement. It also supported by the following resolutions and outcomes:

(a) Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations;

(b) Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, which established the nine Major Groups (A/CONF.151/26), as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992;

(c) ECOSOC resolution 2000/35 establishing the IAF.

ARTICLE III: OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the IAF MG-ICM are the following:

1. Strengthen and improve the contribution of MGoS towards advancement of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests with its Global Goals on Forests in directions and modalities which are coherent with the MGoS principles of engagement, as outlined in Article I;

2. Recognition of the critical role of MGoS in implementing sustainable forest management (SFM);

3. Widest possible substantive coordination with all social groups and societal constituencies, inclusive of all those not formally represented within the Internal Coordination Mechanism, ensuring geographical, constituency, gender, ethnic and age balance, while creating the widest possible space for under-represented and often marginalized voices;

ARTICLE IV. CONSTITUENCIES

1. The IAF MG-ICM will comprise representatives from the Major Groups as identified in Agenda 21, General Assembly resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992):

Women; Children and Youth; Indigenous Peoples; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Local Authorities; Workers and Trade Unions; Business and Industry; Scientific and Technological Community; Farmers.

2. In a second phase, other Relevant Stakeholders active in SFM might be part of the Internal Coordination Mechanism. Admittance and number of seats under this category will be subject to decision by the IAF MG-ICM, based on demonstrable inability and/or inappropriateness to join any of the other existing groups as well as on characteristics and governance requirements as outlined in Article IV Clause 2. (a).

(a) For constituency groups not already represented within the existing MGoS constituencies, applicants must be able to provide evidence of:

i. Global, inclusive and open participation mechanism of significant scope;

ii. Democratic governance organizational structure, including reporting mechanism;

iii. Alignment with engagement principles and code of ethics of the IAF MG-ICM as outlined in Article I;

(b) Applicants must submit to the IAF MG-ICM Co-Chairs a request which should include information on the applicant's mission, participating groups and organizations, activities, democratic governance structure, and meaningful established accountability, reporting and decision-making mechanisms. Applicants should also include information on how their organizing partners and/or focal points are elected, selected or appointed;

(c) Membership is granted upon approval of the IAF MG-ICM and if unsuccessful, applicants will be informed of the reasons for the decision, with an opportunity to appeal by clarifying any factual misinterpretations.

3. Designation and participation of official representatives on the IAF MG-ICM should unfold in accordance with the following modalities:

(a) Each MGoS will designate two principal and one alternate representatives to the IAF MGs-ICM. It is required that these designated representatives belong to different organizations;

(b) Each MGoS is responsible for its own procedures to identify their representatives, ensuring regional, gender and age balance as much as possible;

(c) Any interaction with, representation in, or accreditation of MG-ICM to UNFF, UNFF Bureau, CPF, UNFFS, and other UN and non-UN entities shall be subject to a decision of the Forum, authorizing and endorsing establishment of such coordination mechanism for external interaction and communication.

ARTICLE V: RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

1. Each MGoS constituency commits to actively supporting the work of the IAF MG-ICM, including attending its meetings on a regular basis, participating in ad hoc task groups and other activities as required to advance the mandate and objectives of the IAF MG-ICM, which include the following:

(a) Monitoring the status of preparations for the annual session of the UNFF, including status of reports that have implications for the work of MGoS,

(b) Exploring the need for direct resource development efforts to support the IAF MG-ICM activities and, if necessary, putting in place all necessary systems and procedures to ensure the proper administration of fund that might be raised.

ARTICLE VI: CO-CHAIRS

1. Elections and terms of office:

(a) The IAF MG-ICM will elect a minimum of two and maximum of three Co-Chairs from different MGoS, striving to ensure North-South and gender balance;

(b) Each Co-Chair will serve for a period of two-years, with the possibility of one year extension;

- (c) The IAF MG-ICM will have a rotating Co-Chair system, on a two-yearly basis but ensure one-year overlap to facilitate smooth transition and necessary institutional memory.
- (d) The incoming Co-Chair will be elected by IAF MG-ICM a month before the expiration of the respective term of office;
- (e) If a Co-Chair cannot complete a term of office, the IAF MG-ICM will convene to elect replacement for the remainder of the term of office. If the remainder of the term of office is less than six months, the replacement Co-Chair will be eligible for a two-year term of office without re-election.

2. The Co-Chairs, who will determine allocation of tasks among themselves and duly informed to the IAF MG-ICM, will be specifically responsible for the following activities, among others:

- (a) Facilitating the participation and contribution of all the constituencies of the IAF MG-ICM;
- (b) Monitoring the status of preparations and processes for the UNFF and related events of the follow-up to the UN Strategic Plan on Forests with its Global Goals on Forests, throughout the year;
- (c) Convening meetings of the IAF MG-ICM and proposing agendas, ensuring proper note taking, keeping records of participation, circulating the minutes, facilitating follow-up action on agreed decisions;
- (d) Coordinating the activities of the IAF MG-ICM, including possible through the task groups or thematic groups.

ARTICLE VII: METHODS OF WORK

1. Meetings of the IAF MG-ICM will be held on a regular basis and as needed, primarily through on-line meetings. The meetings will be convened by the Co-Chairs with 5 (five) working day notice, unless an urgent meeting is required;
2. A quorum of two-thirds of MGoS is required to conduct a formal meeting of the IAF MG-ICM where binding decisions are taken, with 5 (five) working days of advance notice;
3. The IAF MG-ICM aims to take decisions based on consensus; however, if consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be conducted with decisions being approved by simple majority of those present (if decisions are taken during meetings). Each MGoS will have one vote only. Should decisions be taken in the absence of a meeting, the proposals need to be served by the Co-Chairs with 5 (five) working days of decision-making space, with decisions being carried with single majority of the IAF MG-ICM;
4. Representatives of MGoS must demonstrate engagement in the work of the IAF MG-ICM and attend at least two-thirds of the meetings during a six-month period and actively participate in the work of the IAF MG-ICM to be able to maintain their right to vote.
5. Representatives of the IAF MG-ICM are expected to participate in or lead at least one or more of the activities carried out by example in ad hoc Working Groups (see Article VIII), where appropriate, other individual members of the MGoS constituencies beyond the designated representatives may also be invited to contribute.

ARTICLE VIII: AD HOC WORKING GROUPS

1. The IAF MG-ICM may create ad hoc Working Group to undertake activities for accomplishing their objectives.
2. These ad hoc Working Groups, comprising representatives of the IAF MG-ICM, as well as individual members of the MGoS when appropriate, will carry out their work and report back directly to the IAF MG-ICM. In principles, these ad hoc Working Groups will be facilitated by selected members of the IAF MG-ICM, in coordination with the Co-Chairs;
3. Ad hoc Working Groups should have a limited time bound mandate and can be disbanded by the IAF MG-ICM, when their tasks are considered completed or not relevant anymore.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments by any MGoS of the IAF MG-ICM terms of reference shall be submitted in writing to the Co-Chairs. Approval by the IAF MG-ICM will require a qualified two-thirds majority.

Advance Unedited Version

ANNEX III: SWOT Analysis

Women working group

Strengths

- Women are more recognizable initiating a masculine job, it is more demanded, women are more in forests sector
- Internal Expertise
- Strong commitment to nature resources management, key more in agricultural production.
- Women leadership is more transparent and committed. (Internal)
- Increasing women as professionals in the forests sector, there are agronomist, environmental, conservancy.
- There are multilayers of women leadership from local to regional and international level.
- Women have developed creative initiatives to combat Climate Crisis and poverty elimination.

Weaknesses

- Cultural bias;
- Challenges to improve internal communication;
- Not consolidated the expertise within our members;
- Few representations in decision-making spaces;
- Limited access to: natural resources, technological and financial resources;
- Not consolidated the expertise within our members;
- Financial insecurity: no access to funding.

Opportunities

- More cooperation between women. The willpower to work together
- More youth & women joining into financial mechanisms
- Women work together and in partnership, this makes them stronger
- For women it is easier to create a community
- A big number of women in terms of the population compared with men
- Women programs given more priority geared to promote forest research
- Existence of climate finance and other financial mechanisms
- Women issues currently are a priority at the international level

Threats

- Cultural Bias
- lack of self esteem
- Lack of capacity for a transparent economic model
- Social norms
- Stereotypes
- Conflict and violence affecting women and children
- Lack of capacity training on gender rights
- Climate change

NGO working Group

Strengths

- Autonomy that allowed the group to work for the public's interest defending nature and people, creating epistemological bridges with communities. Question capitalism/economic model
- Networking
- SDGs implementation (promoting, supporting, collaborating in projects and initiatives, policies definition)

Weaknesses

- Lack of interest or motivation to participate in the UNFF;
- Not sufficient advocacy power to achieve the required incidence and impact;
- Limited financial resources and coordination among other NGO process and networks.

Opportunities

- Coordination/Synergy with other UN process and conventions;
- Capacity building in multiple fields;
- Advocacy towards different sectors and strengthened communication and media.

Threats

- Persecution/association of NGOs members (environment/human rights defenders);
- Some governments fear of NGOs;
- Precarious finances;
- Collusion between media-corporation government against environmental and social causes.

Farmers working group

Strengths

- Farmers are well organized and connected at various different levels (local, regional, national and global). They are a diverse group (small and big as well as many different practices);
- Farmers feed the world!
- Farming practices are based on both science and traditional knowledge. In addition, implementation of SDGs is at heart of Farmers' work with focused action for SFM, biodiversity, mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Weaknesses

- Patchy networks.
- Farmer organizations are also often not accredited with United Nations or ECOSOC.
- Experience language barriers.

- Farmer specific weaknesses include: rural-migration and urbanization. Young people move away from rural areas and farming; ownership and long-term tenure rights of land; they are also far from gender balanced; and land is often in center of conflicts.

Opportunities

- UNFF19 and the MTR process.
- Many global processes have increased attention to forest issues, such as Glasgow commitment to tackle deforestation, CBD framework and that Farmers are at the core of SDGs;
- The Summit of the Future;
- Technology and digital solutions. Farmers could also tap into capacity building efforts at local and national levels.

Threats

- Land grabbing by large multinational corporations.
- Many bringing forward “flaws solutions” under the label of nature-based solutions. This is a threat to SFM and sustainable farm practices;
- Food system actors are trying to replace farmers;
- Fragmentation of multilateralism. The Group also noted that multilateral negotiations are changing. The discussions increasingly take place with only governments delegation and not all governments are represented with increased closed meeting (informal, informal).

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities working group (IP & LC)

Strengths

- IP have traditional knowledge (Ecological Knowledge);
- Biodiversity preservation, conservation protection;
- Strong linkages between culture tradition and traditional ways of worship and a strong relationship with nature.
- IP have valuable resources such as traditional knowledge which is valuable for scientific research.

The group identified the following success projects in ecosystem restoration; community forest management (Indonesia); implementation of GBF; and active participation in UN process (UNFCCC, UNEA, CBD, UNFF).

Weaknesses

- Lack of modern technology;
- Ineffective liaison between IPs another MGoS;
- Limited participation of IPs due lack of finances;
- Lack of direct funding and intermediaries between funders and Ips;
- Destruction of Indigenous lives by use of technology such as GMOs;

- Ineffective communication and language barrier.

Threats

- lack of recognition of Indigenous Peoples by some Member States;
- Lack of interest on IPs issues;
- There are laws that do not favor the operation of IPs such as the Forest act and Climate change bill;
- Environmental issues that affect IPs such as the Land degradation, drought, conversion of Indigenous forest to exotic forests, forest encroachment, mining in Indigenous forests, logging;
- Economic trends that focus on replacement of indigenous trees with exotic by the states replacing the baobab trees with eucalyptus;
- Conflict within Member States and legal threats such as displacement of IPs from their land eg the Ogiek.

Children and Youth working group

Strengths

- Diverse representation within their MGoS;
- High population of children and youth across the world that contributes to the Groups driving force;
- Children and youth have the capacity to volunteer and are vibrant, are more tech oriented, creative, critical thinking and very adaptable and consider themselves as disruptors of status quo.

Weaknesses

- Terminal period of age;
- Systemic weaknesses: lack of focus, facilities, decent jobs and means of livelihoods; and inexperienced professionals.

Opportunities

- Growing space for youth engagement (quality of engagement still low);
- Open to collaborate;
- Policies that support inclusion of youths can lead to eventual change.

Threats

- Youth Tokenism, integrity, systemic corruption;
- A lack of considerations of ideas as the group's members are mostly considered young;
- Diminishing natural resources including biodiversity loss;
- High vulnerability to Natural Resources Conflict;
- Intergenerational conflict.