

## CONCEPT NOTE

### **Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening the Engagement of Regional and Subregional entities in the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)**

21 to 23 January 2025, UNESCAP, Bangkok

#### **Background and Rationale**

According to paragraphs 25 to 28 of the Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC resolution 2015/33<sup>1</sup> on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) beyond 2015, regional and subregional involvement was strengthened; these entities are partners of the Forum and an integral component of the IAF beyond 2015. On 27 April 2017, the United Nations General Assembly approved a Resolution entitled “United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests” (UNSPF), which states that “regional bodies (...) provide a crucial bridge between international policies and national actions and are important partners in efforts to implement the strategic plan and achieve its global forest goals and targets”; Moreover, the Forum works with regional and subregional bodies and processes to identify ways to contribute to the global forest goals and targets, including by encouraging them to exchange information, enhance cooperation, raise awareness, strengthen stakeholder engagement and build capacity to scale up best practices within and across regions. Furthermore, “regional and subregional bodies and processes (...) are encouraged to build and strengthen synergies between the strategic plan and their policies and programmes, including in the context of their contributions to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.”<sup>2</sup>.

During its 19<sup>th</sup> Session – UNFF19, the Forum agreed on the text of a draft resolution later adopted by ECOSOC,<sup>3</sup> entitled “Outcome of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.” In the context of the midterm review of the IAF, section I of said resolution contains actions related to the involvement of regional and subregional partners, as follows:

#### ***“30. Invites regional and subregional partners:***

***(a) To sustain support to countries in their respective regions to prepare them for Forum and related sessions under other relevant conventions and frameworks;***

***(b) To pursue engagement of regional or subregional financial institutions, such as regional development and investment banks, to expand collaboration on issues related to forests and to attract funding for their forest-related activities and participation in relevant meetings;***

***(c) To explore options to organize regional and subregional partner-led initiatives to provide inputs to the Forum and implement regional, subregional and transboundary forestry initiatives leading to the achievement of the global forest goals;***

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<sup>1</sup> E/RES/2015/33

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/71/285

<sup>3</sup> E/RES/2024/15

*(d) To consider incorporating the contribution to the global forest goals in their respective plans, programmes and strategies, as appropriate;*

*(e) To strengthen collaboration across sectors and facilitate partnerships to promote sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches and restoration of ecosystems, contributing to improved livelihoods, including through building capacities of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, underlining the need to ensure sustainable patterns of consumption and production;*

*(f) To engage major groups and other relevant stakeholders in their forest-related activities;”*

Given the above, the UNFF Secretariat is organizing an Expert Group Meeting – EGM from 21 to 23 January 2025 at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, located at:

**The United Nations Building  
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue  
Bangkok 10200  
Thailand**

**Telephone (66-2) 288-1234**

**Fax (66-2) 288-1000**

### **Objective**

The main objective of the expert group meeting is to discuss how to implement paragraphs 30a through 30f of the UNFF19 omnibus resolution and options for further involvement of regional/subregional entities in UNFF's work, including at UNFF20. The discussions during the expert group meeting will be held in English and are expected to assist in exploring ways to strengthen the collaboration between the Forum's Secretariat and its regional/subregional partners, aiming at the Secretariat's better understanding of the needs of countries in the regions and identifying actions to address the related gaps and problems.

### **Format and expected outcome**

The expert meeting will last three days, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, with a one-hour lunch break at noon. It will consist of opening, closing, and working sessions and be highly interactive to trigger discussions and engage participants.

The outcome of the expert group meeting will be a concise summary of the key proposed actions and ideas. A brief overview of the EGM's discussions and suggestions will be incorporated in the pertinent UNFF20 official documentation for consideration by the Forum's members.

## Participants

The expert meeting will feature participants representing various UNFF regional and subregional partners. To access UNESCAP premises, please register as soon as possible at <https://indico.un.org/event/1015506/>.

Participants may wish to consider staying at the following hotels, which are close to UNESCAP:

[https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/Hotel\\_Offers.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/Hotel_Offers.pdf)

**Please note that hotel reservations should be made directly by the participants.**

## Health insurance coverage and visa-related matters

Participants who plan to attend the EGM in person **are responsible for making all necessary arrangements to obtain their visas.** Moreover, participants, **including those whose travel will be financed by the United Nations, are also expected to be in good health to travel and to ensure they have their own (international) health insurance arrangement.** **The UN will provide no health insurance coverage or reimbursement of visa-related fees or services.**

## Language

The expert group meeting will be conducted in English.

## Contact person

For further information, please contact Ms. Barbara Tavora Jainchill at [tavora-jainchill@un.org](mailto:tavora-jainchill@un.org).

**Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening the Engagement of Regional and  
Subregional entities in the work of the  
United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)**  
Bangkok, 21 to 23 January 2025

**Draft Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of Co-Chairs and Co-Chairs' opening remarks
3. Adoption of the agenda and program of work
4. Tour de table
5. Discussion on Section I, paragraph 30 of E/RES/2024/15, which invites regional/subregional entities:
  - (a) To sustain support to countries in their respective regions to prepare them for Forum and related sessions under other relevant conventions and frameworks;
  - (b) To pursue engagement of regional or subregional financial institutions, such as regional development and investment banks, to expand collaboration on issues related to forests and to attract funding for their forest-related activities and participation in relevant meetings;
  - (c) To explore options to organize regional and subregional partner-led initiatives to provide inputs to the Forum and implement regional, subregional, and transboundary forestry initiatives leading to the achievement of the global forest goals;
  - (d) To consider incorporating the contribution to the global forest goals in their respective plans, programmes, and strategies, as appropriate;
  - (e) To strengthen collaboration across sectors and facilitate partnerships to promote sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches and restoration of ecosystems, contributing to improved livelihoods, including through building capacities of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, underlining the need to ensure sustainable patterns of consumption and production;
  - (f) To engage major groups and other relevant stakeholders in their forest-related activities.
6. Co-chairs summary of the conclusions
7. Closure of the meeting

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21-23 January 2025 - Bangkok, Thailand  
Program of work**

Time	Tuesday, 21 January 2025	Wednesday, 22 January 2025	Thursday, 23 January 2025
9 am – 12 pm	<p><b>Item 1.</b> Opening Remarks by the Director of the UNFF Secretariat</p> <p><b>Item 2.</b> Election of the Co-chairs and opening remarks by the Co-chairs</p> <p><b>Item 3.</b> Adoption of agenda and program of work</p> <p><b>Item 4.</b> Tour de table</p> <p><b>Item 5.</b> Discussion on Section I, paragraph 30 (a) to (f) of E/RES/2024/15</p>	<p><b>Item 5.</b> continues</p>	<p><b>Item 5.</b> continues</p>
12 pm- 1 pm	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
1 pm- 5 pm	<p><b>Item 5.</b> continues</p> <p><i>Co-chairs highlight the key points of the day's discussions.</i></p>	<p><b>Item 5.</b> continues</p> <p><i>Co-chairs highlight the key points of the day's discussions.</i></p>	<p><b>Item 6:</b> Co-chairs summary of the conclusions</p> <p><b>Item 7.</b> Closure of the meeting</p>