

## UNFF20 CHAIR'S SUMMARY (Advance, unedited)

### INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with its Quadrennial Programme of Work 2025–2028 contained in the annex to [ECOSOC resolution 2024/15](#), the Forum, at its twentieth session (UNFF20), held technical discussions on its thematic priorities in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 (UNSPF), namely, [Global Forest Goal \(GFG\) 1, GFG3, and GFG5](#), as well as other items [in its agenda](#). This Chair's summary consists of a summary of discussions at UNFF20 (Section A), and Chair's proposals for consideration of UNFF21 (Section B), as well as the input to 2025<sup>12</sup>, and 2026 sessions of the HLPF (Section C, and Section D). This Chair's summary is not a UNFF consensus negotiated outcome.

### A. CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF UNFF20 DISCUSSIONS<sup>3</sup>

2. In their opening remarks, the [Chair of UNFF20](#), [President of ECOSOC](#) and the [President of the UN General Assembly](#) (GA), and [the Assistant Secretary General](#) (ASG) for Policy Coordination of Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) addressed the Forum. They highlighted the Forum's major achievements since its existence, the current global challenges and the UN liquidity crisis, and emphasized the Forum's critical role in addressing these challenges. The speakers emphasized the need for stronger multilateralism, enhanced financing, and accelerated implementation efforts, building on the outcomes of the Midterm Review of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), and the Pact for the Future. The Forum members were also encouraged to actively engage in the discussions at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Spain, and the 2025 Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC.

#### I. Summary of discussion on item 3, 4 and 6

3. Following the introduction of the Secretariat Note contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/2](#), and the [policy brief on the UNFF20 thematic priorities](#), the [UNFFS Director](#) made a statement on the Secretariat's activities and achievements since UNFF19. She highlighted the main activities in advancing implementation of ECOSOC resolution 2024/15. She indicated some major achievements made during the past year, including issuance of Monthly UNFF Updates, joint analytical study with CBD on the interlinkages of GFGs and Global Biodiversity Framework, organization of the first Forest Pavillion at COP29, and increased number of Country-Led Initiatives (CLIs) by UNFF members. Referring to the current UN liquidity crisis and its multiplying adverse impacts on the already limited Secretariat's resources, she called for sustained and increased support to the Secretariat. The UNFF Secretariat presented the [Policy Brief on UNFF20 Thematic Priorities](#).

4. During the general discussion, several Members made statements, highlighting the following main points:

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<sup>1</sup> This will complement the [Input of UNFF20 Bureau to 2025 session of HLPF](#).

<sup>2</sup> Input by the Forum to the 2026 HLPF may be reorganized and adjusted to align with the ECOSOC President's template, upon its receipt.

<sup>3</sup> UNFF20 opening statements, UNFFS Director opening remarks, concept note for the panels, presentation by the panelists, and those updates presented during UNFF20 and shared with the Secretariat are available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>

- (a) Many representatives emphasized the significance of forests for addressing several global challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, poverty, food and energy insecurity especially in rural areas, and for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and girls.
- (b) Many speakers renewed their commitments to the implementation of the UNSPF and indicated that the UNSPF is a key global framework for promoting SFM, which contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the three Rio Conventions, and promotes synergy and coherence on forest related issues.
- (c) Many representatives reported on actions taken by their respective countries at the national and regional levels to advance implementation of the UNSPF and achievement of the GFG1, GFG3 and GFG5, and called for strengthened international cooperation and collaboration, including science, technology, and finance to support countries' efforts to halt deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.
- (d) One representative emphasized the importance of international cooperation based on respect for national priorities and circumstances, affirming that each State has the sovereign right to implement its own public policies, and further noting that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a non-binding framework, and that its goals may be interpreted and pursued by each country in line with its national context and sovereignty.
- (e) Several representatives welcomed identification of "dryland forests" as an emerging issue for discussion at UNFF20, noting the important services provided by this type of forests to countries, and local communities, and stressed the need for increasing the visibility of, and financing for dryland forests and more concerted global efforts in this respect.
- (f) Several speakers also referred to the risks and threats to forests, including wildfires, natural disasters, and climate change; called for enhanced collaboration at the regional and global levels to address these threats; halt deforestation and forest degradation, and encouraged CPF to further support countries to address these challenges.
- (g) Several countries highlighted the special situation of LDCs, SIDs, and LFCCCs and called for strengthened support for these groups of countries, including for the development of forest rehabilitation strategies, and action plans.
- (h) Several speakers referred to the upcoming COP30 of UNFCCC, and some related initiatives such as the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), as an innovative means to promote blended forest financing, and the "United for Our Forests group" initiative, aiming at protecting forests in developing countries through promoting South-South cooperation.
- (i) Several representatives welcomed adoption of the GA resolution on UN Decade on Afforestation and Reforestation in Line with SFM and called for enhanced international cooperation to facilitate observance of the Decade.

## II. Summary of discussion on item 3a, and its subitems (i), (ii) and (iii)

5. The representative of the Republic of Congo presented the outcome of [the 1st International Conference on Afforestation and Reforestation](#), organized in July 2024 as a CLI in support of the work of UNFF.
6. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:
  - (a) Representatives of Morocco informed that it would hold a CLI on technology, finance and forest community development in June 2025. Representative of Austria announced that it would hold a CLI on sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches in February 2026 in Vienna, Austria. Representative of Türkiye announced that it would hold a CLI on forest fires /wildfires later this year. Representative of the Republic of Korea informed that together with AFOCO, it would hold a CLI on enhancing public-private resource mobilization for forests in October 2025.
  - (b) The representative of Georgia announced its new Voluntary National Contribution to advance implementation of the UNSPF.<sup>4</sup>
  - (c) Several representatives informed of their willingness to announce VNCs in support of UNSPF, and some provided updates on their already announced VNCs. Some countries also expressed challenges about finance and capacity to implement their VNCs.
  - (d) Many representatives informed of the actions taken to align their forest-related national strategies, frameworks, and policies in support of the UNSPF and its GFGs, as well as other international commitments, including through their VNCs, NDCs, and NBSAPs, in the areas of forest conservation and restoration, advancing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in production forests, strengthening forest governance and law, promoting rights allocation for Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and participation of local communities, as well as initiatives such as fire management and community-based forest management.
  - (e) Many representatives expressed their countries' commitment to advancing the GFGs and to the implementation of the UNFF19 High-Level Segment Declaration to address deforestation while mitigating climate change and conserving biological diversity and improving livelihoods.
  - (f) Several representatives indicated the potential of the VNCs to be a key tool in helping countries to address the drivers of deforestation, as well as climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation, through large scale afforestation and reforestation, forest restoration, enhanced sustainable forest management and law enforcement at the national level.
  - (g) Many representatives called for strengthened international cooperation to enhance the capacity of developing countries to accelerate the implementation of the UNSPF and indicated that promoting SFM is a key means for their countries to eradicate poverty, and improve livelihoods for local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women and girls.

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<sup>4</sup> The announced VNCs are available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vncs/index.html>

- (h) Some representatives shared experiences in revitalizing commercial forestry through the improved supply chain and concession systems to certify timber and other forest products and commodities.
- (i) Many representatives highlighted the importance of strengthening forest data quality and security and a coherent reporting system.
- (j) Many representatives called for increased funding for implementation of the UNSPF, technological collaboration and capacity building, for developing countries.
- (k) Several representatives highlighted the important role of forests in food and energy security, and rural development. Developing countries are more dependent on biomass and if alternatives energy sources are not provided, forests will continue to be degraded.

### III. Summary of discussion on item 3b, and its subitems (i), (ii) and (iii)

7. Following introduction of the Secretariat Note contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/3](#), the representative of FAO/[CPF Chair](#) reported on the work of the CPF and presented the [CPF work plan for 2025-2028](#), and identified actions for future enhanced effort. The representative of INBAR reported on the outcome of the UNFF Expert Group (EGM) among UNFF regional partners, held in January 2025 in Bangkok-Thailand. The UNECE made a presentation on “UNECE Forests For a Sustainable Future”. The representative of the Secretariat of the [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\)](#) delivered presentation on the SADC Forestry Strategy. The representative of the Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group reported on the [outcome of the Major Groups Training Workshop](#).

8. During the general discussions, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Many representatives acknowledged the important role of the CPF in supporting countries’ efforts to accelerate progress towards the GFGs through its Joint Initiatives, encouraged further work on data on forest finance, and forest fire management, including through partnership with national institutions, regional partners and major groups.
- (b) Several representatives expressed support for the CPF Joint Initiative on “Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World”, “Communicators’ Network”, Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Forestry and “Integrated Fire Management”.
- (c) Some representatives the CPF to enhance its support through increased access to technical training and capacity building, expanded knowledge sharing and peer learning platforms, facilitation of funding opportunities for SFM, enhanced assistance to tropical forests countries to mobilize investment and develop carbon market instruments, and stronger support for forest monitoring, governance and law enforcement, as well as to the work of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) and its Clearing House.
- (d) Many representatives called for further update by the CPF on its work related to the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators.
- (e) Several representatives shared their project and programme experiences in partnership with CPF member organizations, regional and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups, in the areas of mangrove conservation and restoration, land use assessment, forest inventory

management, enforcement and monitoring in forest conservation, fire management and hazard risk reduction, such as GEF STAR 7 programme and EU Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme, NDC Partnership Action Fund, GCF REDD+ Readiness, EuroClima programme, and Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism programme.

- (f) Several representatives emphasized the importance of a coordinated approach involving all stakeholders to promote efficient use of limited resources and ensure a fair and sustainable future for forests and forest-dependent communities, particularly in promoting equitable access to financial resources for developing countries, Indigenous Peoples, women, and girls.
- (g) Some representatives underscored the need to support small-scale forestry and agroforestry initiatives for addressing the planetary crisis, enhancing ecosystem restoration, and building community resilience to climate change. They also urged the importance of collaboration with private sector and philanthropic entities to achieve GFGs.
- (h) Some representatives emphasized the important role of the CPF in advancing stronger interlinkage between science, policy, finance and technical issues in support of UNFF members.
- (i) Several representatives welcomed the activities of the CPF and its member organizations in implementing relevant provisions of ECOSOC resolution 2024/15 including the CPF Briefing in April 2025, and invited the Partnership and its members to continue its efforts to implement the provision of the resolution, take concrete steps to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the GFGs by 2030, and to report its progress to the Forum at its twenty-first session.

#### **IV. Summary of discussion on item 3c**

9. Under this agenda item, several updates regarding major global forest related developments in the past year were provided. In this respect, a brief presentation made by UNFF20 Vice-Chair on Bureau's input to 2025 HLPF. The Director of Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development (OISC) provided an update on the themes and SDGs under review at the 2025 and 2026 HLPF. The representative of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) highlighted the key outcomes of the 2024 IUCN/IUFRO World Congress. Representatives from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), representative of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the representative of the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) also shared the key outcomes of COP16 of CBD, COP29 of UNFCCC, and COP16 of UNCCD, which were of significance to forests. Representative of Brazil made a presentation on the objective and scope of the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF). Representatives of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Congo provided respectively information on the background, objective, and the process leading to the adoption of the UNGA resolution 78/320 "Fostering sustainable forest management, including afforestation and reforestation, in degraded lands, including drylands, as an effective solution to environmental challenges", and the UNGA resolution 79/283 "United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management".

10. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Many representatives highlighted the pivotal role of forests in accelerating progress towards the SDGs, serving as a carbon sink, sustaining biodiversity, improving water quality and availability, supporting livelihoods, and contributing to food security.

- (b) Many representatives underscored the urgent need to counter negative trends in forest loss and accelerate the implementation of UNSPF and its GFGs as a global strategic framework on forests for transformational actions at all levels by 2030, including by taking urgent action against deforestation and forest degradation.
- (c) Many speakers stressed the need to work collaboratively to protect, conserve, sustainably manage, and restore forests and forest ecosystems in line with the UNSPF and its GFGs, SDGs, Paris Agreement, KMGBF, and UNCCD, and integrate SFM-related actions into national sustainable development strategies, the updated NDCs to the Paris Agreement and the revised and updated NBSAPs for the implementation of the KMGBF.
- (d) Many representatives encouraged further coherence, consistency, and synergies between UNSPF, KMGBF, and the Paris Agreement including through enhancing mutual support among the respective organizations, instruments and processes, including in the work of the CPF.
- (e) Many representatives indicated that sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches can contribute to the SDGs, and foster resource efficiency and circularity, recognizing the multiple values and contributions of forests to sustainable development, including through the efficient use of resources such as high-value products of woody biomass.
- (f) Some representatives welcomed the emergence and ongoing preparations of innovative financing mechanisms, such as the TFFF, to mobilize financing for SFM, especially tropical forests.
- (g) Some representatives supported the ecosystem-based community-led restoration underpinned by science, traditional knowledge and inclusive governance backed by strong public and multi-stakeholder participation.
- (h) Many representatives urged to take further collective action and international cooperation to mobilize financial and technological support, and capacity building for developing countries to sustainably manage forests as a strategic response to mitigate climate change and adopt to the adverse effects of climate change and as building blocks for long-term environmental resilience.
- (i) Some representatives underscored the need for GFFFN to prioritize high-impact, high-synergy forest ecosystem projects in support of accelerated progress towards the GFGs while contributing to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and KMGBF.
- (j) Several representatives welcomed the recent adoption of the two GA resolutions related to forests and urged UNFF to focus more on addressing deforestation, sand and dust storms, droughts, soil erosion, and desertification, including through joint research and analysis with UNCCD.
- (k) Some representatives recognized the role of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities in achieving the GFGs, SDGs and biodiversity goals and targets under KMGBF.
- (l) One representative highlighted the issue of forest health and forest-related disturbances and recommended that the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) could be considered in the future UNFF sessions and called for exploring the linkages between the Forum and the Framework. Another representative noted that forest health and ecosystems may be affected by various external stressors, including human-induced disruptions.

- (m) One representative opposed references to climate change and the Paris Agreement. The representative also expressed opposition to linking the global forest goals with the SDGs and 2030 Agenda in UNFF's work.

#### **V. Summary of discussion on item 3d**

11. The UNFF Secretariat provided a brief update on its activities related to communication and outreach, including the activities during the 2025 International Day of Forests.

12. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Many representatives welcomed the activities undertaken by the UNFFS in advancing communication and outreach work, including the UNFF Monthly Updates, and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work, raise awareness on forest issues across the UN system and related processes, and modernize the UNFF website and boost social media presence.
- (b) Many representatives referred to their national activities in celebration of the IDF and considered this Day as an opportunity to raise awareness of the significance of forests and strengthen commitment to SFM. The IDF brought together national institutions, civil society, and traditional leaders, and other relevant stakeholders, and promoted SFM outside the forest sector.
- (c) Many representatives recognized and welcomed the initiative of the Secretariat in organizing the Forest Pavilion during COP29 of UNFCCC, as it attracted many stakeholders outside traditional forestry sector. They encouraged the Secretariat to organize similar events during COPs of other Rio Conventions, including COP30 of UNFCCC, as part of a wider communication strategy of the UNFF Secretariat to raise awareness on forests, and promote synergy on forests, climate change, biodiversity and land.
- (d) Many other representatives recognized the important role of the UNFFS in raising awareness on forests in various global fora, and in promoting synergy and coherence on forest related issues. Considering the ongoing UN liquidity crisis, however, they encouraged the Secretariat to take a flexible approach in advancing this task, assess the impacts and cost-efficiency of the Forest Pavilion, and make the Forest Pavilion a "case-by-case" initiative during COPs of UNFCCC and other COPs of Rio Conventions. In this respect, these representatives disagreed with the proposal to institutionalize Forest Pavilion during COPs of UNFCCC.
- (e) The representative of the host country of COP30 of UNFCCC clarified that the programme of COP30 is not yet finalized and there will be more clarity on this issue next month in Bonn. As of now, there are several thematic pavilions at COP30, including one on "Nature".
- (f) The representative of FAO, on behalf of the CPF, announced "Forests and Economies" as the theme of the IDF 2026.

13. In response to some comments about the Forest Pavillion, the UNFFS Director explained that the first Forest Pavillion aimed to enhance coherence and contribution of forests to the global fight against climate change, in line with the Forum's guidance. The resources were provided by stakeholders who were

outside of the traditional UNFF donors, including the Asian Development Bank and Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

## **VI. Summary of panel discussion on: “Valuing forest’s ecosystems in national policy and strategy; the experiences, challenges, and the way forward**

14. This panel was organized under agenda item 3 and consisted of a keynote speech by the Minister of Forest Economy of the Republic of Congo, a presentation by representatives of UN Statistics Division as [Discussant](#), as well as four panelists from [India](#), the International Tropical Timber Organization ([ITTO](#)), [Yale University](#), and The [Nature Conservancy](#). The panel was moderated by the UNFFS Director.

15. During the interactive discussions, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Several representatives indicated that integration of ecosystem service valuations into policy and decision-making processes will enable more informed, evidence-based environmental management. Aligning investments and policies with the economic and ecological value of forests is critical to ensuring their effective management and conservation.
- (b) Several representatives indicated their actions at the national level for valuing forests, such as biodiversity valuation banks and conservation payment programmes. Some representatives highlighted the market-based mechanism such as payment for ecosystem services, as well as forest environment tax to mobilize domestic resources to distribute benefits to communities for conservation and management of forests. Some representatives indicated that their respective countries have developed innovative mechanisms for ecosystem services buying and selling.
- (c) Several representatives highlighted the challenges they are facing in valuing forest services, including the data gap in valuation, and their organization. Diverse ecosystems also make it difficult to generalize the services and the respective valuations. There is no established market for sellers and buyers of the services in many countries, and lack of standards making it difficult to compare different valuations. In several places, there is underrepresentation of the people in vulnerable situations such as indigenous peoples. Values also shift over time so how to make valuation time dynamic is challenging. Valuation is still at micro level and needs to be upscaled to lead to macro solutions.
- (d) Many representatives shared their lessons learned regarding forest valuation. The efforts should be multi-disciplinary. A modular approach should be adopted to advance national accounting. There is not one approach fit for all in ecosystem, and an inclusive and participatory approach is important to be applied. Private family forests are important – it is important to value them – for the services they provide.
- (e) Several representatives pointed out that communicating forest values is important to further promote the integration of forest valuation in national policies and strategies. Consistent methods should be used. Institutionalization and creating a regulatory environment are important. Significant investment and financing are needed, through various innovative mechanisms.



## VII. Summary of discussion on item 3(e)

16. The UNFFS introduced the Secretariat Note contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/4](#). The UNFFS Director also informed the Forum on the latest developments and progress in consultation on the establishment of the GFFFN Office in China. She informed that since the conclusion of UNFF19 extensive informal consultations were conducted, leading to resolution of all pending substantive issues related to the name, nature, scope of activities, and organizational and institutional arrangements of the office.

17. Accordingly, the key objectives and function of the office, once established, is to support and scale up the capacity development activities of the GFFFN through knowledge sharing, exchange of lessons learned and best practices, training, capacity building, research and multilateral cooperation. The UNFFS is the manager of the GFFFN and is the responsible body to carry out the secretariat functions of the UNFF, including, the functions and priorities of the GFFFN.

18. The head of the office operates and works under the direct supervision of the Director of the UNFFS. The programme of work of the office shall be consistent with and complement the programme of work of the UNFFS on the GFFFN. The UNFFS shall be the interface with Member States of the Forum, Bureau of the Forum and the UN bodies and entities. All requests for the GFFFN assistance from Member States shall be sent to the UNFF Secretariat for appropriate decision and follow up action, including for execution by the office.

19. The office shall regularly submit reports on its activities and implementation of its programme of work to the UNFFS. The UNFFS shall report on the activities of the office to the Forum. The office shall be managed and administered by DESA like all other DESA offices in different countries and will operate in accordance with the applicable UN regulations, rules, policies, and procedures. The full administrative and operational costs of this office will be funded from extrabudgetary sources from the host country's voluntary contributions. No costs of the office will be paid through the UN regular budget, or the Forum Trust Fund.

20. The office is expected to be operational for a minimum of 6 years, 2025 -2030, which can be extended subject to mutual agreement. A Steering Committee (SC), consists of representatives from DESA and host government, shall be established by DESA to provide advice on the operational aspect of the work of the office, including its annual work plan, programme implementation, and usage of the funds by the office to the head of the office. In addition, to ensure engagement of Forum members and partners, an International Advisory Group (IAG), consisting of select number of UNFF members and partners, shall be established by DESA. The IAG will advise on the substantive thematic focus of the annual programme of work of the office to the SC.

21. Furthermore, during the sixth formal round of consultation from 27 March to 1 April 2025, major progress was made by cleaning up three fourths of the pending legal issues in the draft Host Country Agreement (HCA). There are a few remaining legal, financial, and operational issues in the MoU which have remained to be discussed. Both sides agreed to hold the next round of consultation soon after UNFF20 with the view of concluding the negotiation on the draft HCA and draft MoU.

22. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Many representatives emphasized the significance of the provision of international financial and technological, and capacity building support to developing countries to supplement their national efforts in advancing the implementation of the UNSPF and the GFGs.
- (b) Many representatives welcomed the support provided by the GFFFN to members of the Forum, e.g., joint work with GEF/IUCN on primary forests and support to ACTO members and requested the Secretariat to continue to provide such support to members and called for increased financial and human resources to support the work of the GFFFN.
- (c) Many representatives supported the establishment of the proposed GFFFN office in Beijing as an effective means for scaling up capacity-building support for Forum members.
- (d) Many representatives emphasized that no resources from the UN regular budget and the UNFF Trust Fund should be used for the operation of the proposed GFFFN office.
- (e) Some representatives highlighted the importance of ensuring a clear delineation of tasks between the UNFFS and the proposed GFFFN office in Beijing.
- (f) One representative questioned the need for an external GFFFN office when it still requires staff at the UNFFS in UNHQ, creating extra overhead and travel costs and suggested limited resources be dedicated to New York operations rather than an external office. The representative also called for reconsideration of the Forum's decision on the establishment of the proposed office at the next session of the Forum.
- (g) Many representatives recognized the significance of provision of and access to forest financing data knowledge and information, and called for improved collaboration among data providers, including within the CPF, as well as the important role of the GFFFN Clearing House in this respect.
- (h) Referring to the proposal on developing a global hub, as one stop-shop for forest financing data, some representatives recognized the added value of the provision of access to comprehensive data, information and knowledge on forest financing, but indicated that a prior analysis of the impacts of the work of the GFFFN Clearing House, possible costs implications of developing the global hub, and also ensuring engagement of relevant CPF members in this exercise are important factors to be considered in this process.

23. In response to some comments, the UNFFS Director provided responses that the full administrative and operational costs of this Office will be funded from extrabudgetary sources from the host country's voluntary contributions. No costs of the Office will be paid through the UN regular budget, or UNFF Trust Fund. GFFFN staff is needed at UNFFS in New York to review country requests for the GFFFN assistance, preparation of official reports on the GFFFN to the Forum and other related normative work, as well as daily interaction and coordination with Office. On the global hub, she emphasized that the aim is to strengthen partnership among main global data providers, building on the work of the GFFFN Clearing House, with the objective of serving countries and stakeholders, using the existing mechanisms and resources. Developing the global hub is a long-term exercise which must be done through a stepwise approach and at this stage, no resources are required. It is just to begin a systematic and strategic partnership among main data providers.

24. Under item 3e, a panel discussion was organized on: “Significance of a global hub on data, information, and knowledge on forest financing opportunities and best practices; and the role of GFFN Clearing House”. The panel consisted of representatives of Germany, Brazil, FAO and the GEF secretariat, and was moderated by the representative of Canada. In their presentations, all panel speakers recognized the importance of the provision of and access to data, knowledge and information on forest financing, and supported the proposal for developing a global up, building on the work of the GFFN Clearing House. Developing a global hub requires closer collaboration among CPF members. It paves the way for unlocking finance for forests. It is important to collect data related to different types of financing for forests, e.g., data on blended financing, and biodiversity financing, and address the challenges related to data gaps, lack of unified and agreed methodology and indicators to generate new data, and issues related to harmonization and organization of available data.

25. During the interactive discussions, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Some representatives emphasized the importance of strengthening the capacity of UNFF members to be able to develop projects for submission to multilateral funding institutions and requested the UNFFS to conduct such training workshops, including through virtual means.
- (b) Some countries emphasized the need to ensure that forest financing is accessible and equitably allocated to Indigenous Peoples, and local communities as managers of forests.
- (c) Some representatives highlighted the importance of forest cooperatives in mobilizing resources and investment in forests and requested more information to be provided on the share of the cooperatives in funding and financing forest-related activities.

26. In reacting to the feedback from representatives, panelists supported the organization of virtual training workshops/courses on project development for submission to multilateral institutions. The importance of sharing the best practices among countries of the South was also emphasized. On data about the share of forest cooperatives in financing forests, it was indicated that there is no specific data, and more work needs to be done on this matter in the future.

#### **VIII. Summary of discussion on item 3f**

27. The UNFFS introduced the Secretariat Note contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/5](#). The Facilitator of the Capacity-Building workshop on reporting to UNFF presented the [workshop outcome](#). The representative of FAO presented progress on Global Core Set of forest-related indicators.

28. During the general discussions, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Many speakers emphasized the importance of the VNR and the next reporting to UNFF as the key means to monitor and assess the implementation of the UNSPF and the UNFI. They welcomed the launch of an online reporting platform for this cycle of UNFF reporting and called UNFF members to ensure the timely submission of their VNRs.
- (b) Many representatives expressed support for the work of the CPF members on this topic, including for FAO in the context of FRA, and highlighted the importance of streamlining and reducing reporting

burden on countries under different processes such as FRA, and UNFF and called for further collaboration among CPF members to further reduce the reporting burden.

- (c) Many representatives welcomed the organization of the recent capacity-building workshop on reporting and invited UNFFS and FAO to regularly organize such workshops to strengthen the reporting capacity of UNFF members.
- (d) Many representatives welcomed the ongoing work related to the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators and invited CPF members, including FAO, to continue its work on this matter. Several representatives referred to the challenges in collecting data on the socio-economic values of forests.
- (e) Many representatives welcomed the progress on the indicators, as well as the establishment of the task force on the definition of forest degradation by FAO, and the importance of the ongoing work under the Montreal Process Sydney Initiative on “forest degradation”.
- (f) Many representatives welcomed the ongoing activities of the UNFF Advisory Group on Reporting and emphasized the need for a concise and focused GFG Report 2026.

#### **IX. Summary of discussions on agenda item 4**

29. The consultant made a presentation on the [Information Paper on Workload, Gaps and Needs of the UNFFS](#) in response to paragraphs 2a and 3 of [ECOSOC resolution 2024/15](#). She reviewed the secretariat’s responsibilities and staffing from 2000 to 2015, and its expanding activities in seven core work areas during the period between the reviews of the IAF in 2015 and in 2024, as well as its expanding activities as a member and CPF secretariat, as a division of DESA, and as part of the UNHQ in New York. She concluded that while the secretariat’s regular budget staff complement has remained fixed at 12 posts since 2016, the secretariat’s responsibilities, activities and deliverables have significantly expanded over time in several core areas of the Forum’s mandate. These expanding activities have created a challenging situation which the secretariat has met primarily by relying heavily on extra-budgetary resources from the Forum’s Trust Fund to supplement its regular budget resources. However, this is not a sustainable situation due to its unpredictable nature and has created uncertainty for the supported staff and the deliverables they work on. To perform its responsibilities and mandates in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner, she suggested five new regular posts, focused on: Communication and outreach (P3/P4); Finance and administration (P3); Capacity building (P4/P5); Website management, including needed upgrades (GS); and a post for full-time CPF Secretary (P4). She suggested the programme and budget implications of these suggestions be considered at UNFF21 in 2026.

30. During the general discussions, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

- (a) Many representatives recognized the detailed useful information provided in the Information Paper about the work of UNFFS, which helps them to have a better understanding of the scope and nature of activities of the UNFFS.
- (b) Many representatives indicated that they need more time to review this Paper and its content, therefore, suggested continuing discussion on this Paper at the next session of the Forum.

- (c) Several representatives opposed the suggestion made in the Paper regarding preparation of a PBI for consideration of UNFF21 on the addition of five new RB posts.
- (d) Many representatives recognized the current global financial situation, as well as the ongoing UN liquidity crisis, and the limited resources of the Secretariat, and indicated that the Secretariat should prioritize and sequence implementation of the Forum's decisions, in close consultation with Member States.
- (e) Several representatives recognized the decline in allocation of resources to the UNFF Trust Fund, and the CPF staff secondment to the UNFFS, and encouraged the Secretariat to use its resources more efficiently and focus on the priority tasks related to its core mandates, reduce its number of meetings and associated travel and make further efforts to mobilize funding from donors and various stakeholders to support its work.
- (f) Several representatives thanked the UNFFS activities in support of countries in the areas of MAR, forest financing, data access, and communication and outreach, and called for strengthened resources for the UNFFS to continue its capacity building support to Forum members.
- (g) One representative indicated that rebalancing RB posts to support UNFF would be a more equitable way to address this issue. UNDESA has over 400 posts and if UNFF Members believe that additional staff for UNFFS are needed, the representative suggested that ECOSOC consider UNFFS's staffing relative to other UNDESA subprograms and that members make a recommendation to that effect at UNFF21.
- (h) Some representatives said that they understand the challenges that the UNFFS are facing. However, consideration of the UNFFS resource needs and gaps should be made in the broader content of UN reform. In addition, this issue is also related to the result of the ongoing consultation on the establishment of the GFFN Office in Beijing.
- (i) One representative suggested that the UNFF explore the possibility of transitioning towards a binding agreement or formal convention, like the CBD or UNFCCC, and be further discussed in the next policy session in 2026.

31. In response to the comments, the UNFFS Director indicated that Secretariat's mandates have grown, but its capacity gap has not been addressed. UNFF19 outcomes contains over 120 actions, of which 35 are direct requests to the UNFFS. As a division of DESA and part of UNHQ, the volume of UNFFS work has also expanded in recent years due to the annualization of the UN programme and budget process; increased inputting to ECOSOC, HLPF and GA sessions; contributing to new GA forest-related initiatives; and complying with new UN system-wide management initiatives. The ongoing UN liquidity crisis is directly and significantly impacting the delivery on the mandate, as there is currently a complete hiring freeze, and the UNFFS is unable to fill an existing P4 vacant post, has lost a P5 position in support of GFFN, and is highly unlikely to be able to replace a G6 support staff when the incumbent retires in a few months. She stressed that reliance on extra-budgetary resources to support long-term UNFF core issues is unsustainable, although the Secretariat continues its resource mobilization efforts.

## **X. Summary of discussion on agenda item 5**

32. UNFFS introduced the Secretariat Note contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/6](#). During the interactive discussions, several representatives made statements. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

- (a) Many representatives emphasized the importance of provision of voluntary contribution to the UNFF Trust Fund to enable the UNFFS to fulfil its responsibilities, in the areas of MAR, GFFFN, communication and outreach activities.
- (b) Some representatives called for other countries beyond the traditional donor countries, to contribute to the UNFF Trust Fund, and encouraged the Secretariat to also reach out to philanthropic organizations to mobilize support.
- (c) Several representatives urged increased voluntary contributions to the UNFF Trust Fund to support continuation of UNFFS capacity development for members, and partners, and expressed concerns over the lack of resources for participation of representatives of developing countries, and UNFF partners in UNFF meetings and events. Referring to the universal membership of the Forum and its inclusive nature, these representatives expressed concerns that lack of resources to support participation of UNFF members and partners, would lead to an imbalanced and non-inclusive policy decision making at the Forum, and impacts negatively the inclusive and participatory nature of the Forum.

33. UNFFS Director thanked all those countries contributed to the UNFF Trust Fund and indicated that absence of resources in the UNFF Trust Fund will negatively affect implementation of UNFF19 outcome. It is critical to implement the Forum's decisions in the lead up to the final review of the IAF in 2030.

## **XI. Summary of discussion on item 6**

34. The discussion on emerging issues was facilitated by a panel on dryland forests comprising representatives of Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Botswana, and the GEF, and moderated by the representative of SADC Secretariat.

35. During the interactive discussions, several representatives made statements. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

- (a) Many representatives highlighted the significance of dryland forests due to the wide range of services and their role in addressing climate change, combatting desertification, contributing to food security, and eradicating poverty. These vulnerable ecosystems face important challenges and are affected by unsustainable land-use policies and activities, droughts, and high-temperature, among others. These forests are essential for combatting desertification, protection of biodiversity, water regulation, combatting dust and sandstorms, improving livelihoods, and protection of soil. It is crucial to conserve these forests and enhance their resilience to droughts and wildfires.
- (b) Many representatives called for enhanced international cooperation and increased funding to promote sustainable management of dryland forests. Members of the CPF and the Forum should support countries efforts in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration.

- (c) Several representatives informed of their national activities for sustainably managing and conserving dryland forests. Despite these efforts, countries face several challenges, especially in the areas of finance, technology, and capacity building. They emphasised on the mandate of UNFF, and UNSPF, as well as technical committees such as the FAO's Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agro-silvopastoral Systems and the need to address issues related to all types of forests in a holistic and integrated manner.

## **B. CHAIR'S PROPOSALS FOR TRANSMISSION TO UNFF21**

36. Based on the technical discussions at UNFF20, the following Chair's proposals will be submitted for further consideration to the twenty-first session of the Forum in 2026:

***Chair's proposals on item 3, item 3a and its subitems i, ii, iii, item 3b and its subitems I, ii, and iii, items 3c, 3d, 3e, and 3f, item 4, item 5, and item 6***

- (a) Invite Members of the Forum to accelerate efforts towards achieving GFG 1, 3, and 5, including through the announcement of VNCs in support of these GFGs, and encourage integration of SFM-based actions in the national sustainable development strategies, and actions under other relevant multilateral environmental agreements.
- (b) Encourage UNFF members to promote technical and technological collaboration, including the use of innovative technologies for SFM, and enhance participatory approach in SFM activities.
- (c) Request the Forum Secretariat to further consider organizing, as appropriate, a forest pavilion at the COPs of UNFCCC on a case-by-case basis and subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources, in consultation with members of the Forum, and in cooperation with COP Presidencies, CPF members and relevant partners, with a view to raising awareness of the role and significance of forests as an ecosystem-based solution.
- (d) Welcome the communication and outreach activities carried out by UNFF members and partners, including CPF and its members, as well as the UNFFS, including its Monthly Newsletter, to raise awareness of the significance of forests, and encourage effective engagement in celebrating the IDF and in promoting outreach activities, and invite the Forum to address the related human and financial needs of the UNFFS to carry out its communication and outreach mandates in a sustainable manner.
- (e) Welcome progress made by the CPF and its members in implementing relevant provisions of Council resolution 2024/15, took note of the CPF Work Plan 2025-2028 and its Joint Initiatives, and invite the Partnership and its members to continue its efforts to respond to the provision of the resolution, take concrete steps to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the GFGs by 2030, and to report its progress to the Forum at its twenty-first session.
- (f) Welcome the support provided by the GFFFN to countries in strengthening their capacity to mobilize resources from all sources for SFM and invite CPF members to actively support and engage in the activities of the GFFFN.
- (g) Invite Members of the Forum and others in a position to do so, to provide voluntary financial contributions to the Forum Trust Fund to enable the GFFFN to respond and provide the requested support in an effective and timely manner.

- (h) Request the UNFFS, building on the experience gained from the GFFN Clearing House, within its existing resources, and in collaboration with relevant UN and non-UN data providers, to further elaborate for enhancing access to comprehensive and reliable data on forest financing flows, opportunities, knowledge and best practices, including the possible option of a global hub for consideration at UNFF21.
- (i) Request the UNFFS to provide a comprehensive written update to UNFF21, in accordance with paragraph 10d of ECOSOC resolution 2024/15.
- (j) Invite UNFFS and FAO to continue to assist in enhancing the reporting capacity of UNFF members, including through the organization of virtual workshops and online courses, to further reduce the reporting burden on countries.
- (k) Invite CPF members to continue their work with the aim of further enhancing the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators.
- (l) Invites the Forum to continue its consideration of the Information Paper on the Workload, Gaps and Needs of the UNFFS at its twenty first session.
- (m) Request the UNFF Secretariat, given the current liquidity situation and constraints, to use its resources more efficiently and focus on the priority tasks related to its core mandates and make further efforts to mobilize funding from donors and various stakeholders to support its work.
- (n) Invite UNFF members, in a position to do so, to contribute to the UNFF Trust Fund to enable the UNFFS to continue to provide its technical and capacity building support to Forum members and partners, carry out its communication and outreach activities, and support balanced, wider, and inclusive participation of representatives from developing countries, and UNFF partners in UNFF sessions, and related intersessional activities.
- (o) Invite Forum members, UNFFS, and CPF members to scale up support to address the needs of LDCs, SIDS, LFCCCs, dryland forests countries, and other countries with special needs to rehabilitate, restore, and sustainably manage their forests, enhance rural livelihoods, and combat desertification.
- (p) Invite UNFF Members and CPF to support the existing initiatives aimed at addressing the increasing threats of wildfires/forest fires, forest pests, and diseases, and enhance collaboration to ensure the sustainable management of existing forests ecosystems.

### **C. UNFF20 INPUT TO 2025 HLPF<sup>5</sup>**

The contributions of forests and the ecosystem services they provide are often undervalued or unrecorded in both national and international policy and economic frameworks. To address this gap, UNFF, its members, and stakeholders have continuously taken a wide range of sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based actions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind, bearing in mind environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets. These include actions at the policy, technical and operational level to address the root causes, e.g. drivers of deforestation and degradation of forests and promote sustainable forest management through a multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral approach.

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<sup>5</sup> This input accompanies the [input by the UNFF20 Bureau to 2025 HLPF](#).



In line with Global Forest Goal 1, countries have taken legislative and policy steps to combat forest loss and degradation, using existing laws and strategies as frameworks. Many updated these tools through stakeholder consultations. Some enacted laws to ensure deforestation-free markets. Despite coordination challenges, efforts were made to integrate forest concerns across sectors like energy and agriculture. In line with Global Forest Goal 3, many countries have taken concrete steps to protect and sustainably manage forests. They introduced laws and policies supporting protected areas, sustainable management, and markets for sustainably sourced forest products. As a result, about 18% of global forests are now protected, and more forests are under long-term management plans. However, progress varies across regions. In line with Global Forest Goal 5, many countries have established forest-related laws and policies, but enforcement varies, affecting their effectiveness. To combat illegal logging and trade, countries have introduced monitoring systems, traceability measures, and international cooperation efforts.

#### Suggested messages for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF

- i. Recognize the broad economic, social, and environmental benefits of forests, including watershed protection, food and medicine, and human well-being—and integrate forests into national and global responses to sustainable development challenges.
- ii. Address rising threats from forest fires/wildfires, pests, and diseases exacerbated by climate change through active forest management and silvicultural practices, especially in dry and arid regions.
- iii. Urgently advance implementation of the UNSPF, and halt deforestation and land degradation by 2030.
- iv. Encourage participatory decision-making that includes Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women, ensuring forest management is equitable, inclusive, and reflective of diverse perspectives.
- v. Mobilize and increase resources from all sources, mainstream forest management in development strategies, enhance cross-sector collaboration, and contribute to sustainable development.

#### **D. UNFF20 INPUT TO 2026 HLPF<sup>6</sup>**

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), along with its members and stakeholders, has consistently undertaken a wide range of actions to accelerate the implementation of the UNSPF in support of the advancement towards SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17. These actions leverage the role of forests in delivering broad benefits across all three dimensions of sustainable development and reinforcing interlinkages among the Goals and targets. Some countries and regions reported consistent efforts to promote sustainable and multi-functional forest management to enhance the effective use of forests and address the growing and competing demands for forest products and services. Countries, the private sector, and academia have promoted the use of wood in construction and energy, supporting SDGs 7, 9, and 11. They have used policies, incentives, and investments to boost innovation in forest-based industries. Collaboration is driving technological advances in sustainable wood materials and energy products, aiding industry development. Innovative financing methods are increasingly used to support forest conservation and ecosystem services.

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<sup>6</sup> The format of this input to the 2026 HLPF may need to be reorganized and adjusted to align with the relevant template to be provided by the President of ECOSOC.

Suggested messages for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2026 HLPF

- i. Recognize the multiple values and contributions of forests and SFM to sustainable development in its three dimensions, in providing essential ecosystem services, livelihoods, raw materials, as well as enhancing environmental resilience, which serves as a foundation and safeguard for advancing SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17.
- ii. Emphasize the need for accelerated implementation of the UNSPF as an effective means for the achievement of the SDGs and to enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels in support of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme.
- iii. Mobilize resources from all sources for sustainable forest management and the achievement of the Global Forest Goals, as an essential measure to maximize the contribution of forests to the SDGs.

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