

**Co-Chair's summary of the discussions during the first meeting of the Open-ended
Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests
24-28 February 2014, Nairobi, Kenya**

Summary of discussions

Opening session

1. Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Chair of the Bureau for UNFF11 expressed particular pleasure in welcoming experts to this meeting in his home country. He also extended a warm welcome to Professor Judi Wangalwa Wakhungu, the Cabinet Secretary for Water, Environment and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kenya, and to Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN.

2. Highlighting the fact that the International Arrangement of Forests (IAF) is at a critical juncture, Ambassador Kamau explained that the IAF, including the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), was created by Member States fourteen years ago. The UNFF is unique both because it is the only global intergovernmental policy body within the UN system that deals comprehensively with all socio-economic and environmental issues related to all types of forests and trees outside forests, and their interlinkages with other critical issues such as agriculture, biodiversity, climate change, desertification, energy, and water, and because it is the only ECOSOC subsidiary body that has universal membership, including 197 Member States of the UN and States Members of the Specialized Agencies. A key success for UNFF was the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI, or Forest Instrument) and the four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) adopted by the UNFF and subsequently by the UN General Assembly (GA); this was the first-ever globally agreed instrument on all types of forests, and these developments brought global forest policy to a new stage. UNFF has also successfully raised the profile of forests on the global development agenda and influenced international policy agreements on forests in other fora, including the forest chapter of the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which drew almost entirely from the UNFF2 Ministerial Declaration, and the section on forests in *The Future We Want*, the outcome document from the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20 Conference), which drew mainly from the UNFF9 Ministerial Declaration. The Forum has consistently highlighted the multiple and cross-

sectoral benefits of forests in addressing global challenges, and has undertaken major analytical work in areas such as forest financing, and forests and economic development.

3. Ambassador Kamau reminded experts that UNFF is neither a convention nor an organization and does not have the same level of resources: expectations regarding UNFF should correspond to its status and resources. He suggested, however, that despite these limitations UNFF has contributed significantly to policy development and implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests worldwide, and has made outstanding achievements, even in comparison to the forest-related conventions and organizations. Nevertheless, the work is far from over and there is a need to work together to further strengthen all components of the IAF. He looked forward to a decision at UNFF11 on the future of the IAF that should substantively increase political commitment for sustainable management of all types of forests and trees outside of forests. He suggested that implementation should be a major component of the final agreement on the future of the IAF, which should have clear and solid provisions to support countries in implementing sustainable forest management (SFM) policies, including the Forest Instrument, to monitor implementation of the Forum's decisions, to strengthen the Forum and its secretariat, to integrate forests in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the development agenda beyond 2015, and to strengthen the connections between the Forum and regional organizations and processes, UNFF national focal points, Major Groups and other stakeholders. He informed experts that during the Eighth Session of the Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs, held in New York from 3 to 7 February 2014, which he had the honour of co-chairing, panelists and participants had made clear it that forests are key resources of wood and other forest products, water supplies, medicines, livelihoods, ecosystem stability, carbon storage and other vital services. In addition, the need to recognize the role of collective action and respect the rights of indigenous peoples and other forest dwellers, and their vital role in SFM, was noted; and the importance of capacity building, technology transfer and financing in relation to SFM were also emphasized, as well as science-based policy making, partnerships and multi-stakeholder participation. In conclusion, Ambassador Kamau encouraged experts to participate actively and constructively during the forthcoming meeting (AHEG1), as its outcome, together with that of the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG2), should provide a strong basis for UNFF11 when it makes its decision on the future of the IAF, and responds to the important opportunity of integrating forests with the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. Finally, he thanked the

Government of the UK, as well as other donor countries for their generous contribution in organizing this meeting and for supporting participation of experts from eligible countries in AHEG1.

4. Welcoming experts to Kenya, Professor Judi Wangalwa Wakhungu, the Cabinet Secretary, provided an overview of recent developments in Kenyan forest policy and the significance of forests to the Kenyan economy, its environment, and its people. She referred to the Kenyan Government's vision which is to lift Kenya to a middle-income country by 2030. Forestry will be a key component of this strategy. Noting that the main drivers of tropical deforestation vary from continent to continent, she pointed out that fuelwood collection and charcoal production (which provide some 70% of domestic energy) are still the main drivers of deforestation in Kenya. In addition to their direct economic value, she also explained that the role of forests is important in protecting water catchments and that hydro-power (dependent on such water catchments) accounts for some 46% of electricity production in Kenya. She noted that the three pillars of SFM (economic, environmental and social) continue to be viewed separately, and that this undermines sustainability. She advocated going beyond this zero-sum approach to embrace and recognize the benefits of multi-functionality as a way of addressing potential conflicts. She outlined six key blocks that should provide the foundation for SFM: formulating policies and legislation, defining the relationship between national and county governments, reconciling the demands of commercial forest management with environmental needs, basing decisions on sound interdisciplinary science, managing forests at the landscape level, and ensuring participation and ownership in the management process. She was pleased to note that this AHEG meeting would have stakeholder input, and referred to its importance in setting the scene for the IAF beyond 2015. She urged experts to keep in mind the objectives and purpose of the IAF and to take into account the connections with SDGs and the post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

5. Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General, DESA, UN thanked experts, as representatives of a community of practice, for their role in raising the profile of forests through the UNFF, and reiterated the timeliness of this meeting given the wider discussions on SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. Noting that Ambassador Kamau had already touched upon a number of key successes of the current IAF and UNFF, he also highlighted the extensive capacity-building work of the UNFF Facilitative Process, adding that many of these activities had relied on effective collaboration among regional and

international forest-related organizations, including, in particular, through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). He added that the outcomes of the Forum sessions had significantly impacted the work of the other forest-related bodies. He informed experts that UNFF decisions, outcomes and analytical products have been referred to in more than one hundred resolutions, decisions and official outcomes of the Governing Bodies of forest-related organizations and conventions. In considering how to build on these successes in the future IAF, he pointed out that any decisions regarding a legally binding instrument on all types of forests and a global forest fund still remain with governments. Undoubtedly, actions taken on these two important issues would be defining factors for the future IAF, but lack of agreement on them should not prevent progress in addressing gaps and shortcomings in the current IAF. He emphasized the need to build on successes and address areas of weakness. Recognising that, currently, the Forum and its outcomes are better known at the global level than at regional and national levels, he suggested that the future IAF should improve outreach and engagement with stakeholders at the regional and national levels. The UNFF11 decision on the future IAF should also pave the way for mobilization of new and additional resources, from all sources, for sustainable management of all types of forests, implementation of the Forest Instrument and achievement of the GOFs, as well as increased awareness on the work of the Forum. The new phase of the IAF beyond 2015 should also strengthen implementation of the NLBI and GOFs, facilitating implementation of the Forum's decisions at the national and regional levels, and strengthen the capacity of the UNFF national focal points to foster greater national ownership and greater recognition of the value of forests. In addition, in the new phase of the IAF, the budgetary and human resources of the UNFF Secretariat should be strengthened in a sustainable manner.

6. Mr Gass also suggested that collaboration and coordination between UNFF and other forest-related bodies, and in particular the Rio Conventions, should be further strengthened. Members of the Forum at UNFF11 might also wish to devise measures to ensure provision of funding for the CPF joint activities as well as the strengthening of its secretariat, to increase the sense of ownership and revitalize engagement of all CPF members in the work of the CPF; and to ensure equitable burden and credit-sharing among its members, as well as a clear method of work. Such measures would strengthen the CPF and its support to the work of the Forum. He added that reviewing the IAF and designing its future is closely connected to the broader discussions on SDGs and the post-2015 UN development agenda. While delegates had expressed varying views on what was the best course of action for integrating forests in the SDGs during the recent eighth session of the OWG on SDGs, there had been general

convergence about the vital role of forests for sustainable development and the need for integration of forests in the SDGs. Noting that there had been broad convergence on the value of the existing goals, objectives and targets on forests, including the GOFs and the Aichi Targets, he was pleased that there would be an opportunity to discuss a CPF Summary Paper on forest related targets for SDGs during the meeting. He hoped that through successful AHEG meetings and UNFF11, members of the Forum would be able to crystalize their vision for forests in the post-2015 development agenda, providing a conduit for the Forum to connect to the broader sustainable development agenda and interact with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. He concluded by assuring experts of DESA's continued support for the IAF and UNFF.

7. After thanking experts for electing them, the Co-Chairs reminded experts of the key intersessional activities of the review of the IAF as mandated by UNFF10. The first component is to solicit views on the IAF from countries and all other relevant stakeholders ; following an invitation to submit these views and proposals, 46 responses had been received. The second component is to carry out an independent assessment of the IAF; members of this team were present at the meeting and the Co-Facilitators would be making a progress report on the work of the team. The third component is the work of this expert group, tasked with reviewing the performance and effectiveness of the IAF, also taking into account the connection with and implications of the continuing deliberations on the SDGs and the post-2015 UN development agenda. The AHEG mandate is to review all relevant inputs and suggestions regarding the IAF, as well as the final report by the independent assessment team, and based on this review at its second meeting to provide its recommendations to UNFF11 on the future of the IAF. The Co-Chairs explained that the discussions and outcome of this first meeting of the AHEG would inform the continuing work on the independent assessment and serve as a basis for the second meeting. They indicated that they would prepare this non-negotiated Co-Chair's summary of the presentations and substantive discussions. They also explained that the proposed organization of work provided for plenary sessions, which would include presentations, as well as parallel working group meetings.

8. Introducing the official and other relevant documents for the meeting, Mr Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, UNFF Secretariat, said that the three official documents were the Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.18/AEG/2014/1), the Secretariat Note (E/CN.18/AEG/2014/2), and the Compilation of views and proposals on the IAF

(E/CN.18/2014/INF1), which – due to its length - was made available on a CD. He explained that the Secretariat Note aimed to provide an overview about the components of the IAF, the elements of the review and the tasks of the AHEG. ECOSOC resolution 2000/35 had laid the foundation for the IAF and established the UNFF. The IAF, which is not formally defined, consists of the UNFF itself; the Forum’s “membership”, including Member States of the Forum, acting individually and working together as the Forum; the UNFF Secretariat; the voluntary partnership of the CPF and other relevant inter-governmental organizations that contribute to the work of the UNFF individually and collectively; regional organizations and their processes; and Major Groups who take part in the Forum’s sessions. The IAF also includes implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the Forum, as well as the NLBI (Forest Instrument) and the four GOFs. According to the relevant resolutions, the elements of the review of the IAF are: consideration of a full range of options, including a legally binding instrument on all types of forests, strengthening of the current arrangement, continuation of the current arrangement and other options; past performance of, as well as future options for, the IAF; progress towards implementation of the Forest Instrument, and its effectiveness, and achievement of the GOFs, as well as the relationship of the Forest Instrument with the international conventions and intergovernmental organizations; the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally agreed development goals; the Forum’s Secretariat; the CPF and its contributions to the work of the Forum; means of implementation, including establishment of a voluntary global forest fund, and the Facilitative Process; and the UNFF within the context of the UN sustainable development framework and the UN development agenda beyond 2015. Mr Moeini-Meybodi then announced the Bureau’s decision that the second meeting of the AHEG would take place from 12-16 January 2015, in New York. Outlining the OWG process on SDGs, he explained that the Co-Chairs had issued a letter on Friday 21 February identifying potential Focal areas, as a basis for further discussion. In this context, the Bureau had asked the Secretariat to distribute a CPF Summary Paper on *Forest Related Targets for Integration in Sustainable Development Goals*, so that it could be discussed on Thursday 27 February.

9. The Co-Chairs invited the Co-Facilitators for the independent assessment of the IAF to provide a progress report. Mr. Hans Hoogeveen (The Netherlands) explained that he and Ambassador Saiful Abdullah (Malaysia) were co-facilitating the work of the consultants undertaking the independent assessment, which was mandated by UNFF Resolution 10/2 and complemented other elements of the review process. He reminded experts that the objective

of the independent assessment of the IAF is to assist and inform the AHEG in preparing for UNFF11. The assessment is to analyze the achievements, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the IAF since 2000. It is also to assess the impact of the UNFF's work and the sustainability of actions and make recommendations, which would include creative and innovative options, to the AHEG. The terms of reference for the assessment were finalized by the Bureau in June 2013. These terms of reference include the scope of and framework for the assessment, its objectives, the deliverables and a substantive context for the work of the consultants and the Co-Facilitators. He explained that the IAF Team is comprised of five consultants, one each from the UN geographic regions, and two Co-Facilitators, one from the North, one from the South, appointed by the UNFF11 Bureau to act on its behalf to facilitate the production of a single consolidated report for submission to the AHEG. The five consultants are: Juergen Blaser, Switzerland, from the Western European and Others Group; Mafa Evaristus Chipeta, Malawi, from the African Group; Maxim Lobovikov, Russian Federation, from the Eastern European Group; Jorge Illueca, Panama, from the Latin American and Caribbean Group; and Ricardo Martinez Umali, the Philippines, from the Asia-Pacific Group.

10. Mr. Hoogeveen further explained that the team aims to provide an evidence-based analysis of the achievements with regard to the objectives, strengths and shortcomings of past and current work within the framework of the IAF. The final report of the independent assessment will be prepared prior to the second meeting of the AHEG and will be presented as an input to AHEG, which will then review the report along with other inputs. There are three phases to the work: the inception phase (now complete), the inquiry phase (still underway), and the analytical phase leading to conclusions and recommendations (which would begin after AHEG1). The team is working through a matrix approach, under which each regional consultant works on inputs from his particular region; in addition they have responsibility for themes, as follows - reviewing UNFF and its processes since year 2000 (Maxim Lobovikov and Ricardo Umali), reviewing the secretariat and CPF (Juergen Blaser and Mafa Chipeta), reviewing financing (Maxim Lobovikov and Ricardo Umali), and the UNFF in the context of UN Sustainable Development framework/inter-sectoral context (Jorge Illueca and Juergen Blaser). The IAF Team formally began its work in conjunction with the UNFF Facilitative Dialogue Workshop on the IAF, which was held in Vienna, Austria, in October 2013. The IAF Team joined the UNFF11 Bureau meeting in Vienna and received guidance from the Bureau on its work. The Team also participated in the Vienna

workshop on the IAF. After the Vienna workshop, the consultants participated in a number of forest-related international meetings and met with various stakeholders, taking every opportunity to collect views on relevant issues.

11. Ambassador Abdullah then provided information about subsequent progress. He said that a second series of meetings of the IAF Team were organized from 7 to 11 January 2014 in New York. These meetings were held in conjunction with the seventh session of the Open Working Group (OWG7) on the SDGs. This provided the IAF Team with the opportunity to meet many of the participants in the OWG7. In the margins of the OWG7, the Team met with representatives of several countries. The Team also conducted a series of interviews with a number of Member States and with various stakeholders, including the UNFF Major Groups Focal Points. The Team also met with Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; Mr. Thomas Gass; Mr. Ivan Koulov, Executive Officer in UN DESA; and with the UNFF Secretariat staff. In addition, the Team conducted interviews with a number of CPF member organizations, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the World Bank. During these meetings, the Team asked a range of questions aimed at assessing the effectiveness and success of the IAF, including achievements, constraints and shortcomings of the current arrangement and how to address them in the future IAF. The Team also received the views and proposals of countries and stakeholders on the IAF that were provided in response to the survey prepared by the UNFF Secretariat. Looking ahead, Ambassador Abdullah said that based on current progress the co-facilitators are confident that the Team will deliver the result on time. Members of the IAF team would be present throughout AHEG1, during which each team member would meet with the representatives from his respective region to gather further information related to their work. During the week, the IAF Team will also interview a number of other CPF member organizations. Immediately following AHEG1, the Team will start to begin preliminary analysis by assembling their findings and developing initial conclusions. The final report of the IAF Team will be submitted by mid-September 2014.

12. During the subsequent Q&A session, several experts asked whether there would be an opportunity to see an interim report from the independent assessment team; they were concerned that, to date, they had received no information in writing about progress with the independent assessment, which should provide an important input to their deliberations. They asked the team to share as much information as possible, as soon as possible, including a time

frame for the assessment. A number of experts stressed the importance of this work and the need for the independent assessment to produce a report that is strategic rather than technical and analytical rather than descriptive. Recognizing the complexity of the work, they also said that it should be forward looking with due weight given to the future IAF, as well as reviewing the current IAF. The importance of finding innovative ways to implement the decisions of the Forum effectively was stressed, including the need to address financing of SFM, taking account also of broader developments in the financing of sustainable development and links with other multi-lateral bodies and the Rio Conventions. There was also the question of bridging the gap between politicians and scientists, to enhance political understanding of the role of forests. In addition, some experts asked about engaging with the OWG process to secure a stand-alone SDG and/or forest related targets and indicators, highlighting also the need for the team to consider the impact of the post-2015 development agenda and the relationship between the future UNFF and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

13. Responding to these questions, the Co-Facilitators explained that the team had been asked to carry out an independent assessment and that their report would not be an official, or negotiated, document. At present the team is still in the inquiry phase, collecting ideas and information. They added that team is keen to operate in an open and transparent way, making available information about the meetings it has held and their proposed meetings with countries and other stakeholders. The regional meetings later in the week would provide a further opportunity to discuss this with the consultants. They added that the team would be producing an initial draft of their Report in mid-June; this would be shared with the Bureau as the Bureau had commissioned their work, and needed to confirm that it was on track. Partial reports will not be published, but the final report (expected in mid-September) should be placed immediately on the UNFF web-site; it is also the intention to get the final report translated well in advance of AHEG2. The Co-Facilitators also agreed that it is crucial for the report to be strategic, forward looking and innovative, with thorough analysis of options and recognition of the need to make the wider connections highlighted by experts.

Discussion on the submitted views and proposals on the International Arrangement on Forests

14. Introducing the discussion on views and proposals on the IAF, the Co-Chairs reflected on a number of common themes that had emerged from the compilation. These included positive views about CPF, but a sense that it could be improved; a lot of support for the International Year of Forests (IYF); suggestions about strengthening links with regional and sub-regional levels; concern about the transparency of the UNFF budgetary process; strong views for and against having a legally binding agreement; positive views about Country Led Initiatives (CLIs), Organization Led Initiatives (OLIs) and Ad Hoc Expert Groups (AHEGs), but some concern that their outcomes were not fully taken into account subsequently; a desire to strengthen involvement of Major Groups; uncertainty about how the review of the IAF would fit with the complex and multiple ongoing processes related to the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda; and divergent views about financing implementation.

15. The expert from Iran said that addressing deforestation requires different solutions at different levels. At the national level forest committees are needed but there is also a need for more cooperation at regional and international levels. He proposed a “New UNFF” body with adequate human and financial resources that should be able to tackle these challenges. UNFF can and should lead discussions on the governance and finance. He also highlighted the need to give particular attention to the issue of dust storms, and the special needs of Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs).

16. The expert from Bolivia quoted the results from the Rio+20 meeting (and in particular paragraph 56 of the outcome document *The Future We Want*) which he said should be reflected in the IAF mandate as it affirms that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools in order to achieve sustainable development. The expert mentioned that the UNFF should recognize that the anthropocentric approach no longer works and that time has come for a cosmocentric approach. In this regard the UNFF must consider the approach of “Living well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth”- recognizing that forests are part of Mother Earth, a living being that shares the Earth with human beings. He stated that this approach has been already recognized in the First Universal Session of the Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the UNEP and in the conceptual framework of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2013). He said that there is a need for CPF members to broaden their views, including understanding of “Living well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth” instead of focusing on the green economy,

considering the recognition of the rights of Mother Earth. In this direction, there should also be greater understanding of the knowledge that comes from indigenous peoples. The UNFF must strengthen the holistic view of forests, creating linkages between the fragmented discussions of forests among different Conventions, articulating mechanisms for financing for forests and promoting the creation of a Global Forest Fund, since current funds are fragmented and not holistic. Countries cannot fulfill targets and commitments if they have no means of implementation for those targets and commitments. Finally, the expert mentioned that promotion of fair trade of products stemming from the sustainable management of forests, and addressing the problems of displacement of deforestation and forest degradation pressures into some developing countries, are key factors for helping countries to achieve the GOFs.

17. The expert from India emphasized the role of UNFF in providing a platform for countries and stakeholders to exchange views on furthering SFM. She identified forest financing and capacity building as areas of concern for developing countries, especially in the context of combatting climate change. She stressed the need for greater visibility on forests in the SDGs and post-2015 deliberations, to ensure that forests get their due recognition of their role in economic, social, and cultural development of the global community. She noted a need for broad-based commitment to achieving the objectives of SFM by the Forum, forest-related organizations and processes, as well as other related conventions/instruments.

18. The expert from Ghana said that the current arrangements of the IAF should be strengthened. Work done so far towards achieving the GOFs is inadequate: forest degradation is still on the high side in many countries, official development assistance (ODA) is dwindling, and the contribution of forest to food security is still vague in the minds of many governments. The NLBI has significantly improved forest management in Ghana, enhancing cooperation between the forest management authorities and local communities who own the forest resources. There is therefore the need to encourage other countries who have not yet implemented the NLBI to do so in the future IAF. As a way forward, there is the need to establish a Global Forest Fund and National Forest Funds to secure a more sustainable source of funding for forest activities. There is also the need to build capacity of member countries in forest accounting so that financial values can be put on other services that forests provide rather than just timber (e.g. watershed protection, ecotourism from wildlife resources etc.) It is only when the real values of the forests are determined and

known that governments will begin to put more value on forests and make conscious efforts to allocate adequate financial resources for SFM. The celebration of the IYF in 2011 and the International Day of Forests (IDF) in 2013 are good platforms for creating awareness on forest resources.

19. The expert from Colombia said that UNFF fulfilled its role by maintaining a high profile for forests in the international agenda and that the highlight was the adoption of the NLBI. For the future, implementation of the NLBI should be the priority, including providing support to countries in its implementation. In this regard, the CPF should be the technical arm of the Forum, supplementing the political role of UNFF. A strategic implementation plan for 2015-2025 should be formulated with clear objectives for implementing the NLBI as well as forest-related SDGs; this should also set out the roles of, e.g. the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The UNFF should consider adapting the NLBI to take account of Rio+20 developments and the SDGs. The SDG forestry targets should be based on the GOFs and the CBD Aichi targets. There is a need to mobilize finance from all available sources. The participation of regional organizations should be strengthened; this is fundamental to implementation at the country level. The CPF should be strengthened to help with implementation.

20. The expert from Japan spoke as a member of the Montreal Process. He explained that as the Montreal Process is composed of 12 countries it was difficult to agree on a composite response to the questionnaire, so individual countries had responded. In addition, he advised that the IAF independent assessment team should interview the Montreal Process through the current chair (Australia) in order to collect information about its full range of activities relevant to the IAF.

21. The expert from Nepal said that forest lands are facing increasing pressure from land-use change to non-forestry uses such as agricultural expansion, urbanization and infrastructure development which are causing forest fragmentation. In addition, forest fires, encroachment and illegal felling, are major causes of forest loss and degradation. He pointed out that forests are not high on the political agenda, and non-forestry sectors are given higher priority. To enable stronger implementation, the focus should be on having a sustainable

financing mechanism, capacity development, institutional strengthening, highlighting the role of forest ecosystems and the values of forests, and strengthening the IAF. The targets developed by CPF for the SDGs should be simple, easy and objectively reportable by developing countries; they should also include all kinds of benefits – for example at present there is a target included on mitigation benefits but not on adaptation benefits.

22. The expert from Canada said the UNFF performed as best it could, considering the soft nature of the mandate; while an LBI would not necessarily be the outcome, improvement is needed. CPF is a success, but as it is a voluntary structure it has limitations which should be acknowledged and managed. It is important to note that UNFF is a policy forum, not a delivery arm. By clearly recognizing this there should be less danger of fragmentation or competition with CPF members. CPF can also help convey messages from UNFF at the regional level through existing bodies. There is a unique opportunity to recast the IAF. The secretariat requires adequate resources; it would be easier to assess needs if there were more transparency – the review of IAF provides an opportunity to recalibrate these needs.

23. The expert from Angola said that its submission identified strengthening the current IAF as the best option. The major challenge confronting the performance of UNFF is the decline in the means of implementation, mainly financial, to support SFM in developing countries, LFCCs and islands. In this perspective, the creation of a voluntary Global Forest Fund is crucial. The UNFF and IAF should emphasize the importance of forests for sustainable development, environmental and ecosystem services maintenance, as well as enhancing livelihoods for the majority of forests dependent communities. The UNFF biennial sessions should be used not only to define and discuss the contribution of all stakeholders, but also to optimally review the UNFF work on these matters. Although SFM is a challenge of global concern, many of the solutions are found at the regional and local level. CLIs and AHEGs play a critical role in the work of the UNFF in filling the gap between local expertise and successful initiatives, and international decision-making level. The nature of those two mechanisms have proved to be critically effective in terms of technical expertise; therefore it is fundamental to empower them so that they continue to play an important role in providing substantive and effective contributions to the work and future of the UNFF.

24. The expert from the EU said that the EU and its 28 Member States have provided a submission which explains that the EU remains open to all options at this stage, and would like the review process to be factual and forward looking. The role of the independent expert assessment will be crucial in this respect, along with AHEG discussions. In order to find creative and innovative solutions, there will be a need to think outside the box, moving away from the sterile debate between legally or non-legally binding options. There is also a need to move away from the status quo and to take this major opportunity to address the current fragmentation and achieve the original objective - that UNFF should serve as the highest-level policy forum for discussing forest issues in the UN. In considering future options, it will also be crucial to take into full consideration, and ensure consistency with, the overarching framework post-2015 (including developments in forest-related conventions, and Rio+20 follow-up, the SDGs, and also the work on financing for development and financing for sustainable development). The linkage with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will also need to be clarified. Ways to foster inter-agency cooperation and collaboration, within and outside the UN, should also form part of the considerations of the future IAF, building on experience with the CPF.

25. The expert from the United States highlighted some points from its submission. The US is in favour of enhancing, strengthening and streamlining the current IAF over other options. It believes that the NLBI was, and continues to be, a significant achievement. Its focus on national actions recognizes countries' sovereignty, conditions, and responsibilities, while its inclusion of international actions recognizes that cooperation among countries and institutions can complement, support, and enhance domestic efforts. The NLBI provisions remain coherent and relevant, and the US would like to work together to find ways to strengthen their impact. The GOFs also continue to be relevant. Regarding finance for SFM, the US noted that forest financing had increased substantially, but its distribution remains uneven, and there are still bureaucratic bottlenecks at both donor and recipient ends. Attention to climate change has given a major boost to forest funding. ODA is only a part of forest funding; financing needs to come from all sources - public and private, domestic and international. Mobilizing money means having enabling environments, with underlying good governance, clear land tenure, ease of doing business, and a sound investment environment. There is a lot of work to be done on valuing forests and SFM in the areas of natural capital accounting and payments for ecosystem services, as well as in the more traditional areas of production forestry and timber markets. There is a need to acknowledge the full range of

forest contributions in economic policy. The CPF is a major positive achievement, but needs to be fine-tuned to function in a more effective and coherent manner; it can potentially be a critical part of the IAF going forward. Inputs and connections with regions, private sector, civil society and other Major Groups are valuable as these stakeholders have a key role in SFM. There should continue to be an effective and compact secretariat. With respect to the post-2015 development agenda process, the values and multiple functions of forests should be recognized and incorporated into the SDGs as they are developed. There needs to be a creative and innovative process to ensure successful outcomes for UNFF11 and for forests.

26. The expert from Panama highlighted key points from its submission, stressing the global importance of tropical forests. The secretariat should support implementation at the national level and the Forum should provide leadership on forests, rather than having this fragmented among a number of fora. There should be a legally binding instrument.

27. The expert from Mexico said UNFF has had an important role in enhancing the recognition of forests including at the national level. While it has had other successes, there is space for improvement. CPF has limitations that should be addressed at each organization's level; collaboration should be enhanced, especially with the Conventions. Discussions about a Global Forest Fund continues because there is not enough financing available; but it is questionable whether a single instrument will solve all problems, so it may be better to focus on strengthening existing mechanisms. IYF and IDF have been important in raising awareness of forests at the national and local levels.

28. The expert from Kenya said that the AHEG, along with the work of the independent assessment team, is an important opportunity to consider improvements to the IAF. He referred to the benefits of capacity building and the importance of working with stakeholders, stressing the importance of effective SFM implementation.

29. The expert from Dominican Republic said that her country had sent a submission. There is a need for holistic analysis to promote the importance of forests, which are often seen as being incidental rather than the main focus. Financing for SFM should be enhanced because without adequate funding it is not possible for countries like Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to achieve forest objectives and implement agreements.

30. The expert from Tunisia said that many measures had been taken in his country to implement the NLBI and secure SFM. The national forest programme had been revised, and there was a quest for higher visibility of the forest sector, valuing all benefits and not just forest products. However, there is a need for more active participation by local communities and the private sector. Political support should be enhanced and good governance should be guaranteed. UNFF has advanced the international forest dialogue and CPF should be strengthened. Financing is an issue. There is a need to take more advantage of payment for ecosystem services and reflect the value of the emerging green economy in national accounts.

31. The expert from Indonesia said that the current IAF should be strengthened, especially with regard to implementation, which forms part of the IAF mandate. The Facilitative Process had been useful, though its coverage was limited. There is also a need to take account of the post-2015 development agenda.

32. The expert from the UK said that there is consensus that the UNFF represents clear value: a space for forests to be discussed by experts dealing with all aspects of forest and forestry policy. This would be lost if responsibility for forests was ceded to or disbursed amongst other conventions, dialogues or organisations. It is important to consider radical options, asking what UNFF can, could and should do post-2015. The NLBI has more capacity for delivery: if it is not delivering on its objectives, this is not because it is a bad instrument; there is a need to investigate how better to implement it - and if under-resourced then resourcing options should be investigated. With regard to SDGs, it is important to recall that these are currently in the process of negotiation and the outcome for 2015 is far from clear. UNFF is not likely to dictate what they will say; rather, the outcome of the SDGs is more likely to influence what the UNFF does in the future. The UNFF and CPF can provide a good Forum for discussion where all the constituent issues affecting the crosscutting dossier of forests can be discussed, not least because it welcomes the involvement of the Major Groups, which provide important insights - this is one of the strengths of the UNFF.

33. The expert from China said that there is global consensus about the importance of forests, but also a dilemma. While forests are high on the political agenda in the sense that they are recognized in outcomes from (e.g.) Rio+20, they remain low on the agenda of implementing organisations and processes. He also referred to the recent paper from the SDG OWG where forests form the main substantive content of Focus area 17, yet it is entitled

“ecosystems and biodiversity”. After more than 20 years of global dialogue about forests, very little action in the field is related to UNFF and its predecessor bodies. There is a need to prevent further fragmentation of global forest governance, which has required countries to spend more time on bilateral and regional processes (e.g. in relation to illegal logging and trade). This opportunity should be taken to improve the institutional and financial framework for promoting and supporting SFM.

34. The expert from Finland said that the independent assessment of IAF will be extremely important, as analytical stocktaking is required to help inform consideration of future options. There is a need to be open-minded about the future. He added that there should be an opportunity for future inputs and submissions after the independent assessment team had reported.

35. The expert from Brazil said that Brazil supports the strengthening of current IAF and believes that UNFF structure needs to be further expanded. As it stands, the UNFF does not have an institutional structure, staff or support to promote the necessary actions to provide political advice and guidance to matters relating to forests. A more robust structure is required in order to promote effective guidance and concrete decisions regarding forest management. The UNFF should also serve as a catalyst for actions that promote SFM, assisting other forest-related conventions, agencies and organizations, and taking into consideration the needs of developing countries, as well as activities and initiatives that promote SFM worldwide. Moreover, it could be more productive if the UNFF held annual meetings with a shorter length instead of two-week biennial meetings. Key achievements had included the NLBI, the GOFs and raising awareness about forests and SFM. Looking ahead, a strategic planning framework based on the NLBI and GOFs could help secure additional financial resources and technical assistance. The UNFF may have a fundamental role in the efforts to implement the SDGs and the UN post-2015 development agenda, especially in light of the possible inclusion in the SDGs of targets and indicators on the various services and functions provided by forests. UNFF should be a forum that promotes SFM globally through creation of an exclusive fund to catalyze structural change towards SFM. There are many multilateral funds and initiatives finance activities related to SFM, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Forest Investment Program (FIP), UN-REDD and World Bank Carbon Funds, but there is no specific fund dedicated exclusively to SFM. Such a fund should be based on new and additional resources, with a mechanism that ensures the

effectiveness of activities; it should provide technical assistance to guarantee the implementation of its projects. The main donors and receivers for forest activities should devise the rules and objectives for the fund.

36. The expert from Guatemala highlighted a number of points from its submission. There is a need for changes to improve the IAF, but Guatemala is willing to discuss ways and means to do that. Financing has improved somewhat but remains fragmented, and is strongly connected with particular issues such as climate change and biodiversity. There should be a funding scheme to support implementation of the NLBI and GOFs.

37. The expert from Germany said that there is a dilemma, or contradiction, in that the IAF has many deliverables but the impact and effect at the country level remains low. These deliverables include: the concept of SFM and criteria and indicators/thematic elements for SFM; NLBI and its GOFs – there are many positive stories on implementation of the NBLI in pilot countries with good work by FAO but follow up action on the ground is needed; the Facilitative Process, with regional workshops on financing; AHEG meetings, including these on financing; CLIs that engage many stakeholders; science work through CPF members such as IUFRO; Major Groups, whose input should be further strengthened; national forest programmes and strategies; the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) of FAO, which responds to requests from international communities and provides forest policy makers with solid forest data. Despite having all these elements in place, implementation is lagging behind and many of the policy commitments are not fulfilled. The comprehensiveness of forest policies still remains a challenge and the multi-functionality of forests is not adequately reflected. The question is how to turn these good elements into a more systematic and widely implemented mechanism.

38. The expert from Argentina stated that he agreed with the views expressed regarding the need for financing for sustainable forest management. He said that, while Argentina has made a large legislative effort to protect forests, implementation also requires great efforts that must be supported with international financial resources. Regarding the need for a legally binding agreement, the expert said that he was convinced that the process is moving in that direction, but that intersessional processes like this AHEG should provide elements that facilitate discussion at the pertinent session of UNFF. The expert also noted that in view of

the ongoing OWG process on SDGs, other forums should avoid prejudging or predetermining the outcome of the work of delegations in New York.

39. The expert from Ethiopia said that Ethiopia is a country following a green economy strategy with an ambitious target of becoming a carbon neutral middle income country by 2025. He noted that they welcome the contributions of UNFF and IAF if these are streamlined with their growth targets. He also pointed out that the IAF should consider issues beyond forests; in Africa, forests are no longer islands but are part of a socio-ecological system which faces tremendous demand for timber as well as non-timber forest products. Current demands from the market and local subsistence livelihoods are increasing with population growth. Thus, the issues of joint forest management and community based watershed management should be focused upon as part of SFM. He noted that UNFF or the IAF should also consider fair valuation and payment for forest products along the value chain. The bottlenecks for implementing the IAF should be evaluated and solved from the perspective of least developed countries: at present, issues of capacity building and financing the NLBI are critical bottle necks. In identifying key issues for the way forward, the expert said that UNFF should be further strengthened; and more importantly, regional and sub-regional structures should also be strengthened. More concerted effort and contextual discussions at the regional level (in advance of AHEG discussions) will be vital in the future and will also benefit UNFF. Currently, efforts and ideas are fragmented. He suggested that regional organizations and processes should use bodies like the African Forest Forum, and similar ones in Asia, Latin America or Europe, to enable concerted effort. He noted that while UNFF is high up in the political structure, the Forum has faced limitations in securing financial resources from the UN; this should be evaluated further. The private sector should be considered as an important stakeholder not only in forest management but also in supplying funding.

40. The expert representing Major Groups said that when the UNFF was established the mandate was clear – development of policies and overseeing their implementation. However, now the Forum is deliberating on policy without overseeing implementation on the ground. There needs to be correlation between policy development and funding for implementation and monitoring. Implementation of any policy should be at different levels. Major Groups represent diverse groups and opinions: nevertheless they were able to submit a united view, despite having very different stakeholders. The Forum and secretariat should be strengthened

and interact more efficiently with other forest entities including the CPF to address the issues of implementation. One possibility is to sign MoUs with different entities and implementing agencies. The role of the Major Groups should be strengthened and they should become a CPF member through the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (the focal organization of Major Groups associated with UNFF).

41. The expert from the Farmers and Small Forests Owners Major Group said that the CPF proposal with regard to SDGs includes among others a target that all forests be managed sustainably. Small forest owners, community forests and indigenous peoples manage around one third of all forestland. In order to achieve this target an enabling environment is needed, with tenure rights recognized and fair market access. The outcome draft of the OWG includes several Focus areas – forests are under Area 17 (under the title ecosystems and biodiversity); however forests contribute to several other “areas” such as food security, health, climate, change, poverty eradication, so it is important to make sure that the contribution of forests is adequately reflected in the SDG process.

Presentation/Panel: UNFF Performance/Achievements/Strengths/Weaknesses/Areas for Improvement¹

Summary of presentations

42. Mr Zhong Zheng, an expert from China, made a presentation on performance of UNFF, its strengths, weakness and areas for improvement. After providing background information, he outlined its achievements. As a forum for continued policy development and dialogue among governments, international organizations and interested parties, it had set the GOFs at UNFF6 and adopted the milestone NLBI at UNFF7. To raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests, and trees outside of forests, it had launched 2011 as the IYF and declared March 21st to be the IDF. UNFF has also strengthened political commitment to SFM through ministerial engagement, helped ensure that forest-related issues are fully integrated into the outcome document of the UNCSD (*The Future We Want*), and highlighted the possibility of an SDG on forests. Other achievements include the research on forest financing and the establishment of the Facilitative Process. In outlining the strengths, he highlighted the broad representativeness of UNFF, with its universal membership, and its

¹ Copies of presentations are available on the UN Forum on Forests website (www.un.org/esa/forests)

position in the UN system that allows it to coordinate with other UN bodies and member states and integrate forests into the UN development agenda. He also noted that UNFF is the only independent platform to discuss multi-functional forest-related issues holistically within the UN.

On the other hand, its weaknesses are that with its focus on negotiating text the current UNFF arrangement cannot facilitate and guarantee the implementation of its resolutions on the ground; the current financing mechanism does not directly support UNFF member countries to implement its decisions (e.g. the Forest Instrument), especially given the existence of thematic and geographic gaps; some countries, especially developing countries, lack capability in implementing the UNFF resolutions; and cross-sectoral coordination is still weak - CPF lacks an effective working mechanism for coordination on SFM and support of UNFF. To improve the situation, he suggested that the IAF should be strengthened, including considering the option of a legally binding instrument, to achieve the four GOFs; forest financing should be strengthened, through e.g. better coordination among existing instruments and mechanisms, or establishing a new global forest fund; the Forest Instrument should provide a framework for action, and gaps in implementation should be bridged to achieve its objectives. FAO and other CPF members could also support countries in implementing the Forest Instrument, including through pilot projects or sites; cross-sectoral cooperation could be improved through strengthening the role of CPF to realize its full potential; a regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanism under UNFF framework could be established and enhanced; and the UNFF Secretariat's human and financial resources should be ensured in a compact way to meet its principal functions with support from CPF and member states.

43. Mr. Ichiro Nagame, Senior Policy Analyst for International Affairs, Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan also gave a presentation on the UNFF's performance. He reminded experts of the objectives, purpose and six principal functions of the IAF set out in ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35, and the additional functions and changes in modalities introduced by ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49. He then considered achievements against the objectives and functions, based on information available to him. In relation to meeting the objectives, key achievements were the NLBI and GOFs, the high-level ministerial segments, and IYF and IYD. Mr Nagame said that by adopting the NLBI and GOFs, UNFF has shown itself to be stronger than the previous processes, namely the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). Other strengths include its work as a forum for policy development, its Multi-Year

Programme of Work (MYPOW) and the adoption of the seven thematic elements of SFM. However, progress has been limited in relation to facilitating and promoting implementation of past resolutions, enhancement of cooperation and policy/programme coordination among relevant organizations, and monitoring and assessment. He suggested that, although some attribute the weaknesses of UNFF to its voluntary nature, there is a fundamental difficulty in monitoring and assessment of progress towards SFM based upon a global compulsory set of indicators in line with seven thematic elements; this is because the ecological, economic, social and institutional conditions and needs of each region are different and because hierarchical or cause-and-effect linkages are not fully analyzed. Mr Nagame then gave an example to illustrate the interaction and trade-offs between different forest functions and services. In concluding, he noted that current work on the harmonization of reporting through the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) in FRA2015 indicates the need to create a Global Forest Indicators Partnership. He proposed that, in addition to serving as a “forum”, UNFF - which adopted the seven thematic elements for SFM – could have a new role as a “platform” for reporting on indicators against these elements.

44. Ms. Elise Haber, Deputy Director, Conservation and World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Follow-up, Department of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa gave a further presentation on UNFF Performance. She said that while some people had accused UNFF of being a “talk-shop”, developments during and since UNFF5 had demonstrated that this is not the case, with negotiation and adoption of the NLBI and GOFs. She described the achievements of the UNFF as being the only global forum for comprehensive intergovernmental policy deliberation on forests, contributing to the achievement of internationally agreed development targets, encouraging and assisting countries (especially developing countries) to develop and implement strategies to conserve and restore forests and degraded lands, interaction with regional organizations on the implementation of SFM, and the development of partnerships. It has also raised awareness through CLIs, participation of Major Groups through multi-stakeholder dialogues, IYF and IDF. She said the Forum has managed to assist with a significant decrease in deforestation in the last decade, and that there is a need to capitalize on this by ensuring that the forestry profile is afforded the necessary political profile in the post-2015 development agenda. Despite progress, deforestation and forest degradation remain a serious problem for many countries; however the contribution of forests is still low on political agendas, which may be because forests are often part of a bigger Ministerial portfolio. She also questioned whether

the non-legally binding status of the UNFF affected access to international financial mechanisms. While GEF 6 explicitly incorporated climate change mitigation and will be providing a separate funding envelope of specific donor support, she expressed concern about the advantages of this for LFCCs. She then went on to explain that forests are long term investments and that the contribution of forests to the national budget not fully reflected, leading to an undervaluation of forests. She suggested that consideration be given to a global or regional forest fund. She also noted that that forests need to become politically more relevant in order to reap their benefits especially in developing countries, and asked whether this meant changing the status of the NLBI or leaving it to countries to improve the status of forests at a national level. Looking ahead, she also suggested using the GOFs as a basis for formulating a SDG on forests; however, there is also a need to take account of different national realities, capacities and levels of development.

45. Mr. Ian Gray, Senior Environmental Specialist, GEF also gave a presentation about UNFF performance. First, he summarized views expressed about the IAF in 2004: these were positive about CLIs, the increased political interest in forests and the collaboration achieved through CPF cooperation; but on the negative side, it was considered that the Forum focused on negotiating text rather than catalyzing action on the ground, and that it needed to streamline the proposals for action and facilitate their use. Areas for improvement identified in 2004 had included the need to strengthen both horizontal and vertical links (widening awareness of forest-related issues in other constituencies), to strengthen the enabling environment for SFM (in terms of finance, technology transfer and capacity), and to close the gap between UNFF and its impact on the forests themselves. Overall achievements of the IAF to date have included promoting a universal approach to SFM, keeping the international agenda spotlight on forests, building consensus through communication and exchange, developing the CPF as a means of cooperative support, streamlining reporting requirements and creating partnerships with regional groups. While another achievement had been the work on financing, Mr. Gray noted that although GEF had secured funding commitments of \$250 million through GEF5 following UNFF8, only 55% of this money had so far been disbursed. Mr. Gray added that strengths of IAF are maintaining the Forum with universal membership, the CLIs, OLIs and AHEGs, the organizational mix within CPF (which can link policy with support for action on the ground) and its position within the SDG context. On the other hand, weaknesses include concern about the utility of Forum sessions (which often cover “old ground”), follow up from AHEGs, CLIs and OLIs, the facilitation of country level

implementation, the difficulty in showing cause and effect relationships with forest elements of CBD, UNFCCC or UNCCD, and poor participation and interest by some important stakeholders. Accordingly, he suggested that areas for improvement are the need to implement decisions, coordinating CPF support and resources to secure concrete actions on the ground. There is also a need to further strengthen long-term political commitment in order to access funds and so translate discussion into implementation of internationally agreed actions.

Summary of discussions

46. In summarizing the discussion on UNFF performance, achievements, strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement, the Co-Chairs first considered how experts had assessed the performance of the UNFF and its key achievements. They noted that experts had stressed that the UNFF is the only intergovernmental forum providing a high level dialogue on global forest issues in an integrated and holistic manner and that furthermore it is participatory with its involvement of stakeholders. Experts also recognized that the adoption of the NLBI and GOFs was a key achievement. In addition, UNFF has catalyzed action by international organizations including CPF members. UNFF has also successfully raised political awareness on the importance of forests, including through the IYF and IDF.

47. Turning to the question of key areas to be strengthened in the work of the UNFF, they noted that UNFF members themselves had a role in promoting the work of UNFF at regional and national levels, and that forest priorities need to be reflected in national development plans to secure funding from multi-lateral agencies. It is also important to be clear about what forest issues are best addressed through UN processes at the global level, versus issues that are more appropriately or effectively dealt with at regional, national or local levels. During the discussion there was considerable critique regarding the patchy implementation of SFM: although there are high-level policy statements and resolutions, many experts stressed the key importance for implementation of finance, and other means of implementation (such as capacity building and technology transfer), as well as the critical role of governance and enabling policy environments. There was discussion about the role of the Forum in catalyzing finance, for example through the Facilitative Process, about the long-standing proposal to establish a global forest fund, about the importance of national level (domestic) forest finance, and about linkages with REDD+ initiatives and GEF's forest financing. Experts also

highlighted the need to raise the profile and awareness of forests and UNFF, both within UN and at the regional level. They emphasized the importance of adopting a cross-sectoral approach, recognizing that many of the drivers of deforestation (such as agriculture, mining, and infrastructure development) come from outside the forest sector. In terms of institutional arrangements, it was noted that while Resolution 2000/35 establishes the functions of the IAF, it does not allocate those functions among the different components of the IAF, and that clarification in this regard would be useful. This would aid discussions about the role of UNFF itself – which is primarily a political forum for policy dialogue – and about CPF with its diverse membership that includes the three Rio Convention Secretariats, UN specialized agencies, donors like the GEF and World Bank, the ITTO, and a number of research organizations. There were calls to strengthen the UNFF secretariat, noting that it is very small compared with the secretariats of other international bodies performing comparable functions. Experts requested the secretariat to report back to the Forum on how it had implemented requests for action. It was also noted that there may be a need to update the UNFF mandate to reflect for example the Rio+20 outcome (including recognition that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development – for example that of “Living Well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth”) and the post-2015 development agenda. Experts also suggested the development of a strategic plan or comparable instrument to guide the work of IAF beyond 2015 and to provide a framework for targets, monitoring and for shorter term MYPOWs (which should be flexible enough to accommodate emerging issues). They also recognized a need to strengthen participation by civil society and Major Groups (including the private sector), in part by providing more time for multi-stakeholder dialogue at UNFF sessions.

48. Experts also considered whether the current structure of biennial sessions of the Forum, supported by intersessional activities, sufficiently meets the needs for intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests. There were varied views on this; some experts agreed that current arrangements work well and that biennial meetings should continue; some suggested fewer, less frequent negotiation sessions; others suggested more frequent (but shorter) annual meetings. It was also suggested that regional meetings in intersessional years should be added to the current structure to promote regional engagement, and that there could be thematic meetings (e.g. on SIDS). However, experts also noted that “form should follow

function” and that, substantive issues regarding the future IAF and UNFF should be determined before reaching decisions on the frequency and type of meetings.

49. Finally, experts considered potential links with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Some experts asked for more information about this and a reference to the website was subsequently circulated. The view was expressed that it might be possible for the future UNFF to serve as a “clearing house” for providing integrated inputs, taking into account the multi-functional roles of forests, to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on forest-related issues.

Presentation/Panel: Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests/ Global Objectives on Forests - strengths, weaknesses, options for their improvement

Summary of presentations

50. Dr. Modesto Fernandez Diaz-Silveira, the expert from Cuba, gave a presentation on the NLBI and GOFs - strengths, weakness, options for their improvement. He explained that the international process on forests is not only one of the most important multilateral process but also one of the most politically sensitive, given its links with, for example, the economy, society, development, survival and sovereignty. The functions of forests range from timber production to wildlife habitat, and their role in soil and water conservation alone could be a sufficient reason to halt deforestation. Dr Diaz-Silveira recalled that the 1992 Rio Conference had struggled unsuccessfully to agree on concrete steps on forests, only agreeing the - still valid - “Forests Principles”. The debate continued through the IPF and then the IFF, producing a series of proposals for action which paved the way for UNFF. He also noted that much of the debate had centered on the question of whether or not there should be a legally binding agreement on forests. The adoption of the four GOFs (at UNFF6, in 2006) and the NLBI (at UNFF7, in 2007) had been important milestones, and Dr Diaz-Silveira outlined the purpose and principles of the NLBI, explaining that Parties had agreed to review progress, based on the GOFs, by 2015. He highlighted the key importance of GOF4 (on reversing the decline in ODA for SFM and mobilizing significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources), emphasizing that this GOF is not just about ODA. Dr Diaz-Silveira said that the strengths of the NLBI/GOFs included more visibility for forests at the international level, growing commitment from countries on forest issues, the linkage of

forests with the internationally agreed development goals (including the MDGs and the future SDGs), a modest reduction in deforestation, a steady increase in the area of protected forests (although the area of primary forests is still declining) and an increase in the implementation of SFM. In relation to weaknesses, he pointed out that it is not possible to enforce NLBI measures because it is not legally binding. While the GOFs provide guidance on what needs to be done, current financial mechanisms prevent developing countries from fully implementing SFM. Transparency, eligibility and conditionalities are hindering access to funding. ODA has been reduced or redirected away from forests: the 2012 study by the CPF Advisory Group on Finance showed that the significant increase in ODA linked to GOF4 was mainly directed to medium income countries, but developing countries with weaker economies are still in need of financial resources for SFM. Although climate-based financing for forests may well become a major source of funding, this should be seen as complementary to a direct financial mechanism for SFM and not as the only source of funding or the “solution”. Options for future improvement include strengthening the existing NLBI; adopting a Legally Binding Instrument; strengthening existing financial sources, reshaping them to allow full access by developing countries; and adopting a Global Forest Fund - he briefly outlined the concrete proposal for a Global Forest Fund which G77 had provided to UNFF8 and which remains valid.

51. Ms. Sibylle Vermont, the expert from Switzerland’s Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications also gave a presentation on the NLBI, GOFs and SDGs. She said that the Compilation of views and proposals (which included only 44 country and two Major Groups reports) revealed mixed views on the NLBI/GOF implementation, with 50% saying NLBI implementation was inadequate and 35% saying it was adequate; there were no trends regarding GOF 1-3, while she said that - based on responses - GOF4 was a “bit adequate”. Respondents said the weaknesses of the NLBI are that it is not being implemented (some saying because it is not legally binding and so is not on a level playing field with Rio Conventions); there is no reporting; it is not recognized by the forest sector; it is not known outside the forest sector; there is not much impact on national policies and practices; and that it is difficult to assess the NLBI contribution against forest-related conventions as they are complementary and mutually supportive. Respondents said that adoption of the NLBI was a key achievement and its strengths have been to raise the profile of forests in sustainable development and give a common understanding of SFM for policy advice, communication, cooperation, harmonization of processes, forest dialogues

at national and regional levels and bilateral aid. Ideas for improving implementation of the NLBI included making it legally binding, promoting high level meetings between Finance and Forest Ministers, improving linkages with forest-related conventions, developing better linkages with regional processes and national focal points, and securing support from CPF members through global and regional thematic programmes for NLBI implementation. Funding from all sources is also crucial: the suggested sources included a Global Forestry Fund (with a range of views about whether it should be voluntary and have links with a legally binding instrument), GEF, regional financing funds, better access to existing funds and use of the Facilitative Process. It was also proposed that there should be a monitoring, assessment and review methodology with monitoring guidelines and indicators synchronized with the Global FRA, seminars on integrating the NLBI in national forest programmes, demonstration projects and capacity building. At national level, action could include raising political will and interest to make SFM a priority, strengthening national legislation (to align the NLBI, national forest programmes and laws), national forest financing strategies, national accounting of forest values, and good governance with adequate enabling conditions ((including securing tenure and user rights). Funding suggestions included allocating forests a percentage of the national budget or the national investment fund, creating a national forest fund, payments for ecosystem services in the green economy, enabling conditions for private sector investments, private equity funds, taxes on private sector benefits and enhanced North-South cooperation and funding. Other ideas included having a national SFM trained team for reporting, translating the NLBI into national languages, and other awareness raising and stakeholder involvement. Wider cross-sectoral cooperation was also seen as important, recognizing the links with environment, climate, private sector investment, land degradation, and food security. Views on SDGs varied between having a stand-alone forest SDG and including forests in Natural Resources or Landscape SDGs. There was seen to be a need to convince on the multi-functionality of forests for economic and social development. In general, there was agreement about the usefulness of NLBI and GOFs; GOFs are already contributing to sustainable development and are potential indicators for SDGs (including cross-sectoral SDGs). Concluding, Ms Vermont stressed the importance of engagement beyond the forest sector as other forces (such as agriculture, mining and development) are often the drivers of deforestation.

52. Peter Gondo gave a further presentation on the NLBI/GOFs. He said the GOFs remain very valid and provide clear focus; however, the GOFs timeline is to 2015, they are not fully

achieved yet and there are no specific performance indicators. There are inadequate resources to support implementation; an increase in ODA from climate financing does not equate to an increase in ODA for SFM. He suggested improvement by extending their timeline, adding specific targets (e.g. Aichi targets), defining performance indicators, broadening the focus of GOF4, and linking to the SDGs. The strengths of the NLBI are that it provides a comprehensive, coherent over-arching policy framework and crystallizes the IPF/IFF proposals for action. However, the weaknesses are lack of implementation especially in developing countries, uncertainty about how to implement, weak impact on international cooperation and no specific resources for implementation. He proposed strengthening the NLBI by establishing a strategic implementation plan; establishing a subsidiary bodies along the model of the UNCCD Committee to Review Implementation (CRIC); establishing an implementation support unit to provide technical assistance to countries; having a regional unit or offices (or UNFF staff) to strengthen support for implementation through sub-regional institutions; developing concrete mechanisms for implementation, including finance; and improving capacity for (and actual) monitoring and reporting. Possible improvements to the institutional framework include increased staffing in the secretariat to facilitate implementation, strengthened National UNFF focal points, stronger links with regional and sub-regional levels, and increased capacity to provide support under the Facilitative Process (which he noted is important but constrained by lack of resources). He also explained that the weaknesses of the CPF are that members are independent entities that cannot be held accountable by the Forum; they can only be invited and not requested; they have own priorities, planning and budgetary cycles, with a weak sense of collective ownership of programmes and limited resources to support NLBI activities. He suggested strengthening implementation by the CPF through targeted funds in thematic or geographic areas that require support, establishing a fund to support CPF activities and strengthening staff capacity within the secretariat to support the CPF.

Summary of discussions

53. In summarizing the discussion on performance, achievements, strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement, in relation to the NLBI and GOFs, the Co-Chairs referred first to the consideration of the NLBI/GOFs in strengthening political commitment for forests at the national, regional and global levels. Experts recognized that the NLBI has untapped potential: while adoption of the NLBI was seen as a milestone, this did not translate into political and

financial support for implementation. The NLBI document is little known and although a significant number of forest policy actions that are commensurate with the NLBI have taken place at the national level since the adoption of the instrument in 2007, it is difficult to identify causal relationships directly attributing these to the NLBI. It was also noted that Governments face many competing priorities that can dominate their agendas and budgets (including poverty reduction, employment and food security) and that this would continue to be the case regardless of the legal status of the forest instrument.

54. Turning to the key actions needed to advance implementation of the Forest Instrument and achieve the GOFs, experts suggested carrying out a gap analysis at the national and regional level, comparing existing policies with actions contained in the NLBI; this would help identify areas of progress and areas where more effort is required. Another suggestion was to develop a strategic plan for implementation for the NLBI/GOFs, which could include identifying sets of achievable and measurable actions within the short term (2-3 years) to be able to demonstrate results. Experts also proposed the a strengthening and scaling up the Facilitative Process (regarding it as an example of a successful pilot), as well as making renewed efforts to address all sources of finance (including ODA, multilateral, bilateral, REDD+, private sector, national forest funds, global forest fund and the better use of existing funds) and to improve enabling environments. In addition, there is a need to improve the recognition of the role of collective action and the local efforts of indigenous peoples and local populations and the value added by local communities in managing forests sustainably. It was stressed that while the IAF has explicit functions laid down in the relevant ECOSOC resolutions, the particular role of UNFF in helping carry out these functions is not specified, and there is a need to clarify roles, including those of CPF members as implementing agencies.

55. Experts also considered how reporting on implementation of the NLBI/GOFs could be strengthened. They recognized that reporting should be streamlined and harmonized, exploring synergies with other UN bodies dealing with reports on forests; that the reporting burden should be reduced; that capacity-building and in some cases support for reporting is needed; and that reporting provides a useful snapshot of progress and helps identify gaps in implementation. However, two reporting challenges are that progress made in each of the four GOFs cannot be fully assessed independently of each other; and that given the voluntary nature of reporting, it is difficult to secure high response rates.

56. The next issue discussed by experts was whether the NLBI text should be amended. It was noted that in general the substance of the NLBI remains relevant today, although some elements of the NLBI need updating, notably because the GOFs have a 2015 timeline and there will be a need to add links with the SDGs, Rio+20 and the High Level Political Forum. There could also be improvement in presentation of the NLBI, by for example adding sub-headings to the sub-paragraphs in paragraphs 6 and 7 and improving the structure. Another possibility would be to include a mechanism for reviewing implementation, and it was suggested that the UNCCD Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) could serve as a model.

57. Finally, experts debated the pros and cons of a legally binding versus a non-legally binding agreement. Some said that legally binding status would make the instrument more politically significant, and bring with it associated means of implementation, especially financing. It was also noted that an LBI usually includes legal provisions such as compliance mechanisms, financing and other means of implementation, and institutional responsibilities, in which case this should enhance implementation and strengthen the overall agreement. On the other hand, there were concerns that, without financial guarantees, a legally binding agreement could represent an unfunded mandate. Concerns were also expressed about the transaction costs of negotiation.

Presentation/Panel: Collaborative Partnership on Forests - its strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement

Summary of presentations

58. Ms. Eva Muller, Director, Forest Economics and Policy Division, FAO, gave a presentation on strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement for CPF, from FAO's perspective. She explained that CPF was formed in 2001 to support the work of the UNFF and to enhance cooperation and coordination among its 14 members (UN and non UN). It is chaired by FAO and is supported by the UNFF Secretariat. Since its inception, the CPF has produced over 40 joint CPF events, 26 CPF working level meetings, 10 analytical documents, 24 press releases, two joint videos, eight fact sheets, eight CPF progress reports to UNFF, 16 statements, a Strategic framework, three policy documents, two brochures (including one on

measuring forest degradation) and a joint Wangari Maathai award for forest advocacy. In 2012 the CPF Advisory Group on Forest Finance (AGF) produced a study on forest financing and CPF organized an Organization Led Initiative (OLI) on forest financing. To help advance a common message on SFM, in 2012 CPF released its eight factsheets on SFM in three languages. In 2013 CPF produced a new brochure that describes its objectives, its work in general and joint initiatives and achievements. Recently CPF produced its summary note on *Forest related targets for integration in SDGs*. She then outlined the strengths of CPF in supporting UNFF. CPF members represent a critical mass of key international organizations that provide information and technical support to the UNFF and mobilize financial resources to help implement UNFF recommendations. Members work through their own constituencies, supporting countries to put into effect recommendations from UNFF sessions. CPF members have provided considerable support to CLIs and have led OLIs. CPF members have seconded staff to the UNFF Secretariat, although in recent years this has become more difficult due to resource constraints (currently FAO is seconding one staff member to the secretariat with the generous funding of Germany). CPF provides statements and technical inputs to UNFF sessions. She then discussed strengths in cooperation and coordination, saying that, above all, CPF works because it is an informal and voluntary arrangement of partners that share a common goal, namely SFM. While the partnership arrangement is informal, the members are committed at the highest levels to contribute to the joint activities. Members have complementary mandates: development, research, advocacy, political support, financing and data collection. Examples of joint programming include work by FAO/ITTO and UN-REDD. CPF and its members provide the most effective, wide and reliable source of forest information, with the Global Forest Information System (a CPF initiative led by IUFRO); the Global Forest Expert Panels initiative led and coordinated by IUFRO; and harmonized reporting, including FRA and the joint forest sector questionnaire. Because it is informal and voluntary, the arrangement has been kept simple and unbureaucratic; many activities have been carried out with member's own funding. CPF enjoys high level recognition by countries and many of the Governing Bodies of the members. CPF reports to the Forum on action through the CPF Framework Paper. The collective expertise of CPF members provides a tremendous opportunity to provide support to countries on a broad range of issues, including technical inputs to global processes like the development of the SDGs. Turning to weaknesses, she said that each CPF member works mainly in accordance with its mandate and budget, and CPF organizations often compete for funding from the same donors. Financial resources are limited and UNFF makes an increasing number of calls on CPF

without considering their feasibility. CPF as a partnership does not have its own funding source and has to mobilize either voluntary funding from members or from donors to carry out activities. Not every CPF member has been equally interested and committed. In terms of areas for improvement, a more active role of all members of the CPF would be desirable. The membership of CPF should ensure no gaps in expertise. There is a need to renew the focal agency system. Renewed high level commitment might be needed, including from the Heads of the Agencies and Governing Bodies. CPF should also reconsider its relationship to the non-governmental sector (civil society, NGOs, private sector) and design ways for stronger engagement. Because of the informal character of the CPF, there is a real need for each national government, through its various ministries, to send clear and consistent messages to all Governing Bodies of the CPF member agencies; such signals will significantly increase the CPF's capacity to follow through on joint projects and initiatives. She added that it may also be worth thinking about a different institutional setup of the CPF, e.g. by creating something like a more permanent platform that has its own financial resources. In conclusion, she said that CPF has brought organizations closer together and has fostered trust and partnership working to varying degrees – but they are still 14 different organizations. Meanwhile, there are high and diverse expectations on CPF by UNFF member countries. Some strengths, such as its informal and voluntary nature, are also weaknesses and so it would be useful to have clarity through some sort of an agreement on what the CPF can and cannot do.

59. Mr. Tim Christophersen, who coordinates the work on forests and climate change in UNEP, including its role within the UN-REDD Programme, gave a further presentation about CPF's strengths, weaknesses and the areas for improvement. He said that he was presenting a personal view and would focus on the CPF objective to enhance coordination and cooperation. Over the previous seven years, two highlights had been the coordinated voice on forests which CPF had provided in the Climate Change debate (notably through Forest Days and the Global Landscape Forum) and the collaboration over joint messages regarding SFM (launched at Rio+20) which covered the relationship between SFM and biodiversity conservation (including logging in primary forests), the relation between SFM and REDD+, SFM in relation to indigenous peoples and local communities, climate change adaptation, gender, the multiple functions of forests, and food security and livelihoods. This work had strengthened the SFM 'brand'. IYF was another good example. CPF has worked well where there is willingness to invest time and resources in a truly collaborative effort. He also

referred to low points, or missed opportunities. First, CPF did not manage to bring the SFM concept into the UNFCCC REDD+ discussions, perhaps because common messages on SFM had not then been sufficiently developed; currently, work is underway to remedy this, which is important because REDD+ is addressing the drivers of deforestation such as agriculture, mining and energy. Second, there was a lack of coordination after the Bali announcement of additional funding for REDD+; instead of taking a coordinated approach, a number of CPF members developed somewhat overlapping work streams - again, the situation is now improving. Looking forward, he said that while CPF was established to support the UNFF its usefulness now reaches considerably beyond the Forum: indeed, the CPF is listed as the 'partnership of choice' by the CBD in almost all its forest-related decisions. He also suggested ideas about increased membership, referring to, for example, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL, with their recently strengthened efforts to address illegal logging, and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. He stressed that collaboration requires a deep, collective, determination to reach a clear objective and that it will be important to have such clear objectives on forests beyond 2015 (whether these come from the SDGs, from the Rio Conventions or from a future IAF.) He also pointed out that organization structure is at best only half of the recipe for successful collaboration, which also depends on the individuals who represent their organizations, who want to collaborate, and who are prepared to go to the limit of their organizational mandate, in order to build strong relationships, so that CPF can be more than the sum of its parts.

60. A statement from the CBD Secretariat was read out stating that forests have always been central to the work of the Convention as they harbour exceptionally high levels of biodiversity and provide a range of essential ecosystems services. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted in 2010 set out internationally agreed commitments on biodiversity as well as means of implementation to achieve them. Five of the targets are particularly relevant for forests. These are, by 2020, to at least halve the rate of deforestation and forest degradation (target 5); to manage areas under forestry sustainably (target 7); to protect at least 17% of land as part of improved protected area networks with connectivity across the landscape (target 11); to safeguard ecosystems that provide essential services (target 14) and to restore at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification (target 15). These targets support not only the extended Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity, adopted in 2002, but also the Forest Instrument

and the GOFs. Parties to the Convention are developing national targets under this framework, as part of their updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Later this year, at COP-12, the Parties will review progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and agree on any additional necessary action. The CBD Secretariat has worked with other CPF members to develop a range of studies on forest finance, climate change and forests, landscape approaches and links to the broader development agenda. The CBD Secretariat has also worked with other CPF members to advance common agendas through two series of capacity building workshops: in 2009 on biodiversity, forests and climate change (REDD+); and, currently, on ecosystem conservation and restoration in a landscape context. This work has helped countries to translate commitments into practical actions that address not only the conservation and sustainability of biodiversity but also contribute to food security, jobs, livelihoods and broader socio-economic objectives. The statement also said that CPF has been a useful mechanism to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues and avoid duplication of work among its members. A renewed CPF could play an enhanced role in supporting the practical implementation of all the globally agreed forest targets and objectives, as part of the broader sustainable development agenda. The review process offers Member States the opportunity to provide clear guidance on priorities that will enable the CPF to define and implement an agreed biennial work plan supporting national and regional efforts for implementation, and also to identify sources of funding to carry out the work plan. The international community has agreed ambitious targets and objectives for forests and biodiversity. In the view of the CBD Secretariat, these targets and objectives will be achieved only through acting together as partners, taking the actions needed to ensure that people and their forests remain healthy, resilient and productive for future generations.

Summary of discussions

61. In summarizing the discussion on the strengths, weakness and areas for improvement for CPF, the co-chairs first considered key achievements of the CPF in supporting UNFF. It was recognized that these include providing a common view on SFM, promoting SFM in other processes (such as the Forest Days at UNFCCC) and through the IYF; providing consolidated views on particular topics; presenting expert views through the Global Forest Expert Panels led by IUFRO, streamlining forest reporting and developing work on forest financing (including the CPF Sourcebook, the 2012 AGF study and the 2012 OLI). With these accomplishments, the CPF serves as a model for other processes and ownership is fairly

high among most of its members: the voluntary nature of the partnership means that it remains flexible and informal, without placing too much a burden on its members. However, CPF's voluntary nature is also a weakness as responsibilities and implementation of activities are often scattered. Other weaknesses are that the CPF does not always fulfill its mandate in supporting the work of the Forum and in enhancing cooperation and coordination among members; there is a perceived conflict of interest regarding the role of the UNFF secretariat, as a member of the CPF and as secretariat to the CPF; CPF members have different agendas, mandates, priorities, work plans and Governing Bodies, and this often results in varying levels of commitment, duplication and insufficient uptake of joint outputs; CPF members often compete for external funds; the CPF itself does not have dedicated funds; expectations about CPF differ, both within the partnership and externally; there is a lack of transparency and visibility of the functioning of the CPF (with, e.g. insufficient information about meetings, structure and outputs); there is no mechanism for assessing how far the CPF has responded to calls for action in UNFF resolutions; some experts also queried why FAO has the permanent chairmanship and suggested that rotation of this position might increase ownership of other CPF members. It was noted that the number of secondments from CPF members to the UNFF secretariat has declined significantly. It was also noted that UNFF10 decisions about CPF support for the design and implementation of joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests has not yet been fulfilled.

62. The Co-Chairs then turned to the main areas for improving the work of the CPF in the future IAF. It had been proposed that CPF members need to incorporate the NLBI and GOFs, as well as follow-up/ implementation of UNFF decisions more explicitly in their programmes of work; Member States need to ensure that this happens through their representatives in the various CPF member Governing Bodies. A mechanism or common strategy is needed to clearly define roles and responsibilities, as well as expectations of CPF members, UNFF and other stakeholders. It was also suggested that governance of the CPF should be revised through terms of reference to reflect the partnership's mandate, priorities, procedures to increase membership, arrangements for chairmanship, and provision of secretariat functions. In terms of membership, it was recognized that some additional members might be useful (the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the International Forestry Students' Association were mentioned), but that there are potential risks and elevated transaction costs in increasing CPF membership. Another suggestion was

that that members could be grouped around thematic clusters, based on different areas of expertise (as with the AGF), to reduce competition, build on comparative advantages and increase commitment among members. Experts also identified a need to strengthen collaboration with the Facilitative Process and other finance-related initiatives, and to institutionalize technical support activities on implementation and reporting. There would also be benefits in replicating, or scaling-up, successful pilots such as the Facilitative Process. CPF should have a role in keeping forests high on the global agenda. In terms of the review of the IAF, experts asked about the involvement of CPF members (recognizing that the CPF itself is also subject to this review). They also suggested that a task force might undertake an exercise – involving CPF members and the UNFF11 Bureau – to evaluate the current structure and explore options for improvement; for example, UN Water was identified as a successful example of a model that could serve as a reference for the future of CPF.

63. At the request of experts, Mr. Benjamin Singer, UNFF Secretariat, gave a short presentation about the Facilitative Process. This was launched in 2009 with the aim of assisting developing countries mobilize existing and new financial resources for SFM. It was kick-started with a project funded by the GEF and the UK on identifying gaps, obstacles and opportunities for forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs, followed by a German-funded project with the same objective, focusing on Africa and least developed countries (LDCs). In 2013, the Facilitative Process launched its third project aimed at better harnessing climate change finance for forests with funding from the UN. All in all, US\$ 3 million has been received, of which some \$ 2 million has been spent. These projects have so far resulted in over 30 recommendations on increasing forest financing in SIDS, LFCCs, Africa and LDCs; numerous studies, reports and fact sheets providing feedback on the findings; and a common forest financing strategy that will act as a blueprint for national forest financing strategies. Expected outputs for 2014 include an interactive Facilitative Process website that will act as an information platform on all forest financing issues, and a set of four short documentaries on forest financing success stories with an expected viewership of 250 million. Among the successes of the Facilitative Process is the awareness-raising among SIDS of the importance of SFM that contributed to Pacific SIDS collectively securing an US\$ 80 million programme from the GEF on ridge-to-reef activities, of which SFM is a major component. The main challenge faced by the Facilitative Process is the bottleneck caused by staff shortages within the UNFF secretariat which strongly limits the absorption capacity of the Process and its ability to fulfil all the functions of its mandate.

Presentation/Panel: engagement of Major Groups, regional organizations and processes in the current IAF: Strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement*Summary of presentations*

64. On behalf of the Major Groups, Mr. Urs Dieterich, Focal Point Major Group Children and Youth, gave a presentation about the Major Groups' engagement in the current and future IAF, including achievements, challenges and recommendations. He explained that the Major Groups, established at Rio in 1992, help to increase legitimacy of UN political processes through increased transparency, participation and empowerment. They are able to bridge the gap between political negotiations and stakeholder groups, achieving broader societal awareness of UN political discourses. Major Groups have participated in all UNFF Sessions and many CLIs, as well as organizing Major Group-led Initiatives. They had taken part in multi-stakeholder dialogues and contributed background papers and joint position papers which had united diverse groups. The founding of the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF) helps to institutionalize collaboration between Major Groups. However, a number of weaknesses remain, limiting civil society participation in the IAF. This results from low institutional priority, with little institutionalized Major Groups' engagement and insufficient staff at UNFF to facilitate Major Groups' inputs. In addition, there are no mechanisms to monitor implementation of civil society recommendations or to engage broad Major Groups networks in contributing to the monitoring of country commitments. It was felt that Major Groups input had little political relevance in the sense that Major Groups have only marginal influence on policy making and that the policy dialogue tends to be far removed from the needs of different stakeholder groups. During UNFF Sessions there are only plenary presentations during one three-hour multi-stakeholder dialogue and there is little opportunity for feedback from negotiators, with little direct interaction with policy makers. Major Groups' joint policy papers and recommendations are not reflected in the political agenda and there is inadequate cross-sectoral exchange with other processes. Mr Dieterich also highlighted the problem of low financial resources, noting that support for Major Groups' intersessional activities and biennial sessions relies on ad hoc funding. Structural recommendations put forward to help overcome these weaknesses included strengthening the UNFF secretariat; establishing regional liaison positions to facilitate and monitor implementation; the establishment of a monitoring, reporting and verification platform for

implementation; the institutionalization of cross-sectoral alliances; the engagement of Major Groups at all political levels; and establishing consultation with Major Groups in national and regional processes. The recommendations to finance Major Groups were to allocate targeted resources, funding outreach and advocacy initiatives and providing institutional funding to MGPOF; to build partnerships to “outsource” costs while increasing scope and competence; and to build a strategic funding network. It was also recommended that during UNFF Sessions there should be Major Groups meetings with the Bureau each morning; Major Groups should participate in briefings of UN bodies; Member States should be urged to invite Major Groups for consultations; and Major Groups meetings with inter-governmental organizations and other relevant actors should be facilitated. There should also be support for the MGPOF in establishing a website, raising awareness of their activities. Major Groups should report on the status of their constituencies. Major Groups focal points should establish transparent means of communication with constituencies; they should incorporate a range of opinions in Major Groups statements, acquire new organizational partners, reactivate focal point contributions, and develop a strategy for forests’ representation in SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, as well as establishing strategic networks with other natural resource organizations.

65. Mr. Dominique Reeb, Deputy Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, gave a presentation on engagement of the UNECE region with the IAF. After outlining the history of the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section as an early example of joint working, he described its current role, which includes data collection on forests and forest products markets, forest policy dialogues, communication and capacity building, and how it helps deliver the GOFs and some of the principal functions of the IAF. In particular, current work includes the preparation of a regional input with a report on the progress towards the achievement of the GOFs and SFM that will be presented at UNFF11. Its *Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy* has 5 pillars (sustainable wood production and consumption, the low carbon-forest sector, green jobs in the forest sector, valuation and payment for forest ecosystem services, and monitoring and governance of the forest sector); he explained that – as with the NLBI – the challenge would be implementation. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section is playing an active role in facilitating partnerships amongst stakeholders to support the implementation of the Action Plan. If successful, this approach at the regional level could provide a model for the global level (NLBI). He then reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of the IAF. Weaknesses include the

fact that it is not legally binding, that it is not visible or used at the regional level, that it has no links with UN Regional Commissions; there are no clear outputs or monitoring; and that it is unknown to other sectors. He noted that forests were not fully reflected in the draft SDG Focus area document. In that context he mentioned the expert workshop on “Forests and SDGs” that was held on 22 and 23 January 2014, in Geneva and said more should be done to raise the profile of forests in New York, with links between IAF and the SDGs and forest targets monitored by UNFF/IAF. His recommendations related to capacity, finance, outreach and implementation, links with SDGs, and coordination. He suggested adjusting capacity to the scope of work and increasing key capacities to reach out to, for example CBD and CITES. He also recommended having clear outputs, focused meetings, securing stronger commitments from countries, sharing implementation work with others (such as the UNECE/FAO), having a clear definition of the respective roles of UNFF and FAO, and developing better and stronger linkages with regional levels. He also proposed consideration of the idea of adopting the concept of UN Forests, along the lines of UN Water.

66. Mr. Alexander Buck, Executive Director IUFRO, gave a presentation on *Engagement of Major Groups, Regional Organizations and Processes in the IAF: the potential of policy learning*. He explained that he would be highlighting an approach to stakeholder engagement that could help in identifying policy interventions. While there is general consensus about the importance of SFM, there is frustration at the relatively modest pace and scale of change. Consequently, IUFRO has led a comprehensive assessment of international forest governance in the framework of the CPF Global Forest Expert Panels. The assessment was that forest governance arrangements are complex and there is a need to embrace this inter-sectoral and inter-institutional complexity (an approach described as “forests+”). Mr. Buck said that the key question is not about *what* to do to, but about *how* to do it in order to produce more enduring and effective results. IUFRO’s Task Force on International Forest Governance has been examining the potential of “policy learning” as a technique for better addressing forest-related challenges by drilling deeper into problems. It is particularly suited where there is no single authority, as is the case in the international forest regime. He explained that most stakeholder dialogues focus on understanding different perspectives and that this can lead to unsatisfactory compromise. Through policy learning, problems are defined conceptually as Type 1 problems which have straight-forward win-win solutions, Type 2 problems which require trade-offs, and Type 3 problems where, due to obligations of some kind, trade-offs are unacceptable. Land use allocation is usually treated as Type 2 problem, but resulting

compromise solutions are often short-lived. By analyzing causal pathways, policy learning can help establish when Type 2 problems are really Type 1 or Type 3 problems; this can speed up problem-solving. Mr. Buck illustrated this approach with the example of timber legality verification. Illegal logging is often treated as a Type 2 problem, with stakeholders compromising on standards, but verification offers an opportunity for win-win solutions by building a coalition of forest companies and environmental groups. Although supply chain tracing can impose costs on producers, compliance verification can bring paybacks for legal producers who are otherwise forced to compete with lower-cost illegal products. Policy learning can be used to harness collective knowledge from stakeholders and to reveal new combinations of policy instruments. This may be useful for multi-level deliberations on forests and so be a new function of the IAF.

Summary of discussions

67. Summarizing the discussion on the key successes of Major Groups in supporting the work of the Forum, Co-Chairs highlighted the following: Major Groups' involvement in the Forum is considered one of the strengths of UNFF; the role of multi-stakeholder dialogue and Major Groups Initiatives in Brazil and Ghana; enhanced coordination among Major Groups (including creation of the Major Groups Partnership on Forests); and the Major Groups' ability to bring innovative ideas/different point of views to the political dialogue (governments do not have all the answers). Major Groups also provide different perspectives on issues, making the process more transparent and creating ownership of decisions taken. Major Groups are also closer to on-the-ground implementation, with close links to communities, so they are well placed to raise awareness on the international forest policy dialogue at the local level and to help promote follow-up actions at national and sub-national levels. The active involvement of Major Groups has helped in achieving progress in certain areas including in combating illegal logging. However, there are a number of key constraints that Major Groups face in their engagement and substantive participation in the work of the Forum. The Forum is not attractive to many stakeholders as they do not see any practical impact on the ground from decisions. There is a lack of sufficient funding to support participation of Major Groups in UNFF and related meetings, which is necessary to ensure the effective contribution of stakeholders in the international forest policy dialogue. Some Major Groups can feel marginalized and "not heard", especially when they have a low institutional capacity. There are no mechanisms to implement recommendations related to

Major Groups. The private sector is largely absent from UNFF; representatives that sometimes attend are not from the large industries which have a significant role in the implementation of SFM. There is also a need to engage with those working in industries directly linked to deforestation. Major Groups also lack an institutional relationship with the CPF. Finally, it was noted that although there is value in Major Groups presenting a composite view, there are dangers if this dilutes their diverse perspectives.

68. The Co-Chairs then summarized the discussion about how the engagement of Major Groups in the work of the Forum could be further strengthened. It was suggested that a review of the UN Rules of Procedure (or possibly an analysis by a lawyer) might identify ways to give more flexibility on when and how Major Groups are given the floor. It was proposed that an advisory group be created to channel Major Groups' input to the Forum, ensuring that Major Groups (including private sector and NGOs) views are conveyed to the UNFF. It was also suggested that Governments should collaborate with Major Groups at the national level, and should include representatives of Major Groups in their official delegations to UNFF meetings, noting the particular benefits of encouraging academia and the scientific community to provide further input to the policy dialogue. To encourage greater participation, the time allocated to multi-stakeholder dialogues should be increased and Major Groups' participation should be streamlined in all intersessional activities, which could be reported during multi-stakeholder dialogues (which could usefully include countries as well as Major Groups). If UNFF sessions alternate between regional and global meetings, regional meetings should be an opportunity to further engage Major Groups. Cross-cutting Major Groups' networks should be created to address cross-cutting forest-related issues such as poverty reduction as well as women, youth and children's rights. There should also be efforts to encourage business and industry participation by raising the profile of UNFF among the private sector; and to seek engagement in UNFF from indigenous communities, advocacy and conservation NGOs and youth and children. Reference was made to the need for the UNFF secretariat to have the capacity to facilitate greater engagement by Major Groups. It was also proposed that it would be useful to carry out a comparative review of how Conventions, UN bodies and CPF members interact with Major Groups.

69. In summarizing the discussion on achievements, constraints and areas for improvement in relation to regional processes and the UNFF, the Co-Chairs noted that the participation of regional processes in UNFF is very important, but that there is room for

improvement. Experts pointed out that regional processes help implement UNFF decisions, as they are closer to implementation of sustainable forest management, and benefit from local experience. It was also noted that in some regions, regional processes work very effectively and undertake extensive preparations at regional and sub-regional levels, prior to UNFF sessions. At the same time, experts noted that regional process engagement in the work of Forum is hampered by a weak interface, and that some regional and sub-regional processes play a weak role in implementing the NLBI, GOFs and UNFF resolutions. Experts recognized that there is a perception that the UNFF does not provide necessary flexibility for input from FAO Regional Forestry Commissions. It was also felt that UNFF does not attract as many relevant stakeholders, when compared with certain regional processes.

70. Key actions identified to strengthen regional engagement included the need for the new IAF to clearly define roles for regional processes including regarding the modalities for providing their input to UNFF. The need for definition and recognition of relevant regional stakeholders was also seen as crucial. In this regard, it was suggested that the UNFF should look beyond traditional regional processes to engage with processes such as ASEAN, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, APEC and ACTO. Experts noted that existing regional structures could be strengthened by setting up integrated programmes of work to address region-specific priorities, and that decisions of the Forum should be incorporated into the programme of work of regional processes. Experts recommended that two-way communication and feedback channels between the UNFF and regional and sub-regional processes should be improved, and regional success stories should be scaled up to the global level. It was also noted that regional processes could serve as a bridge to promote UNFF objectives at regional and national levels. Another way to strengthen engagement would be for FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, which meet between UNFF sessions, to provide direct input to UNFF. Experts recommended that the UNFF Secretariat share information regarding the IAF review with regional entities, so they can contribute to it.

Presentations/key note speeches: the way forward for the future International Arrangement on Forests, as well as its interconnection with the Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 development agenda

Summary of presentations

71. Ms. Stephanie Caswell gave a key note presentation on the *Way forward for the future IAF and interconnections with SDGs & post-2015 UN development agenda*. She explained that there seemed to be general agreement during the meeting on: the need to strengthen policy and programme coordination at the international level and reduce fragmentation; regional and sub-regional engagement and stakeholder engagement; the Facilitative Process and access to funding; monitoring, assessment and reporting; the science-policy interface; and impacts and implementation at national level. There was, however, less convergence at this time on the form of the future IAF. Some experts suggested negotiating a new forest treaty of some kind; some suggested strengthening existing IAF institutional elements (e.g. UNFF, CPF and secretariat); many experts from developing countries in particular suggested establishing a global forest fund; and several experts said it was good to be creative and think outside the box. It was recognized by many that it is too early to focus on form: functions should be considered first. Reflecting on the history of forest negotiations, she said that the legally binding versus non-legally binding debate is not new. She briefly reviewed the evolution and outcomes of the debate since 1990, noting there have been shifts in country positions during this period. She then said that developments since 2007 provide a new context for looking at IAF options. When considering the issue of a legally binding instrument, some basic questions are whether it would be based on the NLBI (expressed in a legal framework), or something different; whether it would have general obligations or specific targets; what would be the funding mechanism (and the level of funds expected, and their sources); whether it would have universal membership (and whether that mattered); and when it would become operational – perhaps not before 2023 - and what happens to the IAF in meantime? Ms. Caswell said she would assume that whatever the outcome of that debate the current IAF would carry on for some years. She then outlined ten sets of initial proposals for strengthening the IAF:

- make the NLBI/GOFs and SDGs the centrepiece of the IAF: streamline and focus functions of IAF on implementation of the NLBI/GOFs/SDGs and clarify roles of IAF components. For example, UNFF serves as a high level policy platform and catalyst for NLBI implementation; CPF supports UNFF and promotes policy and programme coordination; UNFF members carry forward the intergovernmental forest policy dialogue and promote international coherence on forests by including relevant aspects of the NLBI in work programmes of CPF members; UNFF trust funds and other extra budgetary resources could be used to support, *inter alia*, “low cost - high

benefit” activities, e.g. helping countries prepare national reports, NLBI implementation plans, and public awareness strategies;

- reaffirm and extend NLBI/GOFs to 2025: in doing so incorporate forest SDGs into the NLBI; develop a new GOF5 on governance and enabling environment; rebrand the NLBI to improve marketing, understanding and awareness; and clarify linkages between paragraphs 6 and 7 of the NLBI with GOFs and forest SDG/targets;
- take a strategic approach to the MYPOW: develop a 8-10 year strategic plan for NLBI implementation with benchmarks or targets; take into account recent developments and the post-2015 development agenda; establish a 2-4 year programme of work focused on specific aspects of the NLBI (paragraphs 6 and 7)/GOFs/SDGs and linked to benchmarks/targets in the Strategic Plan;
- review and strengthen CPF in consultation with CPF members: clarify role of CPF within the IAF and its relationship to UNFF. Also consider: establishing basic operating guidelines, clarifying responsibilities, expertise, gaps and division of labour, including for the UNFF secretariat, identifying ways to strengthen the science-policy interface, increase ownership in CPF by all members, engage stakeholders and non-CPF organisations and processes; and establishing a CPF trust fund to increase capacity administered by UNFF secretariat and supported by contributions from UNFF members and budget allocations from CPF members. Also consider the role of UNFF members in supporting CPF through Governing Bodies of CPF organizations;
- strengthen regional/sub-regional inputs and impacts: support travel of regional representatives to UNFF sessions; organize “Region Days” at UNFF to highlight regional perspectives (UNFCCC Forest Day model); develop web-based regional communication tools (newsletter, portal, etc.); add a Regional Liaison position to the secretariat; convene regional meetings in non-UNFF years in coordination with regional bodies (perhaps rotating among UN regions);
- strengthen stakeholder engagement in UNFF: move beyond Major Groups/multi-stakeholder dialogue format to more interactive models with wider range of stakeholders. Engage the forest products industry and trade who represent major sources of investment. Make the UNFF attractive to industry, e.g. by creating platforms to discuss NLBI elements of interest to industry. Also, engage philanthropic organisations, who are a potential source of funds and who are expected to have a recognized role in the post-2015 development agenda. Set up an informal

advisory group to help the secretariat enhance stakeholder engagement and also consider Major Groups' proposals. Review UN rules of procedure;

- strengthen impacts of CLI/RLI/OLIs: Clearly focus CLI/RLI/OLIs on specific work programme topics; incorporate CLI/RLI/OLI outcomes and recommendations in Secretary-General Reports on work programme. Identify elements of a successful CLI/RLI/OLI process (e.g. planning, preparations, participation, timeframe, organization of work, etc.); revise current guidelines to take these suggestions into account;
- take the Facilitative Process to the next level: establish a “global forest mechanism” (drawing on UNCCD Global Mechanism model) to advise and help countries develop financing strategies for SFM/NLBI (short- medium- long-term), access financing to implement NLBI from a range of sources (and identify conditions needed for success); attract investment in SFM/NLBI (and get “investment ready”); connect with potential technical cooperation partners (North-South, South-South, triangular, public-private); and mainstream SFM into broader development frameworks. Set up a Facilitative Process unit within the secretariat but locate to maximize synergies (could be New York, Rome (FAO, UNCCD/GM), or elsewhere if a Member State made a good offer);
- strengthen monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) on NLBI implementation: establish streamlined standard reporting format with a core set of indicators; institute data sharing arrangements with FRA, ITTO, criteria and indicator processes etc. to better harmonize & minimize burdens, perhaps by setting up a “global forest indicators” partnership or platform; add a MAR Coordinator to secretariat; use UNFF trust funds to help countries prepare reports; establish a 5-year reporting cycle to allow a sufficient interval between reports to identify progress and trends and to avoid reporting fatigue, and synchronize with FRA; convene an AHEG or a subsidiary implementation body to review progress on implementation after each reporting cycle; mainstream MAR results into UNFF decisions;
- strengthen secretariat: clarify main secretariat functions, namely to support the intergovernmental process, support CPF and serve as a CPF member, administer trust fund(s), promote forests/SFM/UNFF as part of UN in New York. Establish clear priorities for secretariat – Forum should avoid unfunded ad hoc requests. Develop a 2-year work plan for use of regular budget (RB) and extra-budgetary (XB) resources based on priorities and capacity. Develop fund-raising strategy to increase XB

resources: not only funds contributed to trust fund(s), but also funds contributed for projects/activities and in-kind contributions. Urge secondments from CPF and UNFF members. Double RB posts to 16 (still compact!).

72. Ms. Caswell explained that many of these proposals would also apply in principle to the legally binding option, adding that the pros and cons of a global forest fund would need thorough discussion under all future IAF options. She added that it is important to recognize that the GOFs and the internationally agreed development goals (and, potentially, the SDGs) are part of the NLBI and its implementation and not separate, reminding experts that UNFF9 had agreed that the NLBI “is an integrated framework to implement SFM, achieve the GOFs and enhance the contribution of forests to internationally agreed development goals (IADGs)”. She also reminded experts that CPF organizations are sovereign with their own membership and mandates: this would not change under any IAF option. She added that reduced forest fragmentation at the international level can be achieved only if UNFF members coordinate in capitals across ministries and take consistent messages on forests/SFM/NLBI to CPF Governing Bodies. An effective IAF can foster coherence but it can’t “make it happen” without member state commitments. She noted that all CPF organizations are mechanisms for delivery of NLBI implementation at national level and that regional organizations also have considerable potential to be delivery mechanisms. In conclusion, Ms. Caswell noted that the SDG-OWG process offers an opportunity to go beyond MDG7 on environmental sustainability; that it is important – with or without a stand-alone SDG on forests – to have forest targets/indicators on all relevant SDGs (e.g. poverty eradication, food security, energy, etc); and that countries should work with UN missions in the coming weeks to make proposals for forest targets/indicators, drawing on, for example, the CPF and UNECE/FAO workshop proposals. She also noted that the post-2015 process is a huge undertaking with multiple work streams that would converge in the September 2015 GA session. The timing of UNFF11 (May 2015) offers an opportunity to send a message to the GA and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (if it meets before the GA) on the important contribution of forests/SFM and the future IAF to the post-2015 development agenda.

73. Professor Godwin Kowero, African Forest Forum (AFF), gave a presentation on the *Future of the international arrangement on forests and potential links to SDGs*. He began his presentation by recalling the objective and principal functions of the IAF as contained in

resolution 2000/35. The speaker underlined that any future IAF will need to examine at least the validity of the objective, purpose and functions of the current IAF. He provided an overview of key institutions and initiatives working on forest-related issues including the CPF, and pointed out that any future IAF would need to examine their modalities of work. Professor Kowero highlighted that technical sessions of the UNFF provide a good platform for a more technical and open discussion of issues. These include CLIs, AHEGs and side events which link science with development, focus on key issues in forestry development, and provide a basis for countries and relevant groups to raise issues they feel are important to forestry in their countries or institutions/groups. Intersessional activities allow for wider participation, provide an opportunity for an early buy-in by countries and groups, and allow for greater involvement of science based institutions, civil society and the private sector who have been largely absent at UNFF sessions. In order to make the IAF more responsive and accountable, Professor Kowero recommended that the UNFF secretariat could strengthen certain areas including facilitation of CLIs and AHEGs; collaboration with CPF members on implementation of GOFs and NLBI; increased collaboration at regional level and with other key players like the Major Groups and initiatives like the UN-REDD; and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on implementation of its activities. With regards to improving the UNFF biennial sessions, Professor Kowero proposed the Forum should catalyze, mobilize and generate financial and technical scientific resources for its activities. He noted that international cooperation on forestry could be strengthened by increasing the visibility, appreciation and inclusion of forestry in many global and regional initiatives, like SDGs, climate change, and green economy. He also highlighted the need for strengthened participation of Major Groups, academia, private sector and civil society, not only in biennial UNFF sessions but in its other activities. He also pointed out that there was a need to evaluate capacity of the UNFF secretariat and its organizational structure to make it more focused, effective and efficient. Professor Kowero recalled that while the MDGs combined social, economic and environmental aspects of the use of natural resources, no MDG focused exclusively on any of the three most abundant and life supporting resources, namely water, air and forests. He pointed out that many global development goals are formulated to express a desired improvement in human well-being, and less so on the wellness of a specific sector or resource. He emphasized that achievement of the MDGs in many countries comes with other immense challenges of restoring and proper development of these resources: water, air and forests. On the issue of integrating forests in the SDGs, he proposed three options: a stand-alone goal on forests; forests and trees in the SDGs as cross cutting issues; and forests

as a sub-goal in a specific SDG. If a stand-alone goal or a sub-goal on forests is not possible then targets and indicators should be identified to incorporate forests into the SDGs. These targets and indicators should ensure that the social and cultural benefits from forests and trees are improved; the resilience of forest ecosystems is enhanced; the ecosystem benefits of forests are increased; and the contributions of forests to the green economy are improved. In this regard he noted the importance of various forest-related institutions coming together to improve understanding of forests in the SDGs.

Summary of discussions

74. During the subsequent Q&A session, experts expressed their gratitude to the key note speakers. The expert from Iran made a statement on behalf of Low Forest Cover Countries. He said that according to the Global FRA of 2010, 48 countries are classified as having low forest cover. However, with the onset of climate change, the situation might worsen in the years to come. Although most LFCC countries are developing countries, three are OECD countries. Forests and trees provide invaluable products and services for the people as they depend on fuelwood, and other non-wood forest products such as fodder, windbreaks, housing material and shade; forests and trees are also important for rural livelihoods, agriculture and animal husbandry. Two billion people live in low forest cover countries that cover approximately 15% the global land area. The forests and trees provide important watershed and ecosystem services. Most of the LFCCs are facing challenges stemming from deforestation, land and soil degradation. On behalf of the LFCCs, he requested that the AHEG process and the independent assessment team maintain a balanced approach to all types of forests, but especially pay attention to LFCCs. He then indicated that through the Teheran process, the LFCCs wish to organize an expert exchange meeting before AHEG 2 to prepare for consideration of the post-2015 IAF, and requested support from the UNFF secretariat and the donor community to facilitate such a meeting.

75. Other experts also emphasized, with respect to the future of the IAF, the urgent need to take action now to prepare for UNFF11, given that there would be a need to move forward from the status quo. Suggestions included developing a draft annex to the NLBI reflecting developments since 2007; updating the GOFs (taking into account the interlinkages with each other and the NLBIs, emerging issues such as governance, and enabling conditions, the Aichi targets and the SDG process and post-2015 development agenda); working up a draft Strategic Plan and/or MYPOW; examining the CPF in more depth, including strengthening the science-policy interface; reviewing Major Groups and regional engagement; exploring options for the secretariat and trust fund; and considering linkages with the High Level

Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. In this context, the expert from China reminded other experts of the proposed CLI in China on the IAF review. Experts also stressed the importance of adequate finance, the need for the UNFF to remain within the UN system; the importance of raising the profile of forests within the UN system; and the potential role for UNFF in providing a thematic global forest information platform (as an interface with e.g. CPF members, science communities, regional organizations, and regional Criteria and Indicator (C&I) processes). In addition experts suggested that it would be useful to invite countries to submit further views and proposal on the review of the IAF in a second round before AHEG2.

76. Experts also raised questions about SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. A request was made to circulate output from work on targets and indicators carried out by UNECE/FAO, which was similar to, but different from, the CPF paper already circulated. The importance of recognizing integrated landscape scale approaches, the drivers of deforestation and cross-sectoral linkages was also stressed. In addition, the role of indigenous knowledge in strengthening SFM was highlighted, alongside the importance of having a vision of development that is not anthropocentric, but reflects the rights of nature. It was recognized that discussions on SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda are now entering a crucial stage, but the visibility of forests remains low in (for example) OWG consultation responses. It was noted that the subject of oceans had had a stronger profile than forests in the recent OWG paper on proposed Focus areas and this was attributed at least in part to effective advocacy. Suggestions were also made about where in the range of proposed Focal area forests had a contribution to make. Experts were urged to stimulate further input from their countries and others on forests. In this context, experts were reminded of the significance of paragraphs 193-196 on forests in the Rio+20 outcome document *The Future We Want*.

Closing session

77. During the closing session, experts agreed to take note of this Co-Chair's summary, which would also reflect that day's discussions and any factual corrections sent to the secretariat by the end of the following week. Experts were also informed that the inception report for the work of the independent assessment team would be placed on the UNFF website. A number of experts then spoke, expressing their thanks to the Co-Chairs and the secretariat for the organization of the meeting and its successful outcome, and to the Government of Kenya for its hospitality. The expert from China reminded experts of the importance of spending time on the design of AHEG2 and UNFF11 in order to achieve a

successful outcome from UNFF11 and, in this context, reiterated China's intention to hold a CLI on the IAF review. The expert from the Russian Federation referred to the incremental achievements over recent years and the need to strengthen the current arrangements; he also announced the Russian Government's commitment to provide regular contributions to the UNFF trust fund. The expert from Mexico and the expert from Guatemala both commented on the good progress that had been made at AHEG1. Echoing these remarks, the expert from South Africa also said that the World Forestry Congress would take place in Durban, South Africa during September 2015. The expert from EU said that AHEG1 had exceeded his expectations, but that it was the start of a long process. An expert from Switzerland announced a CLI in support of UNFF11 on Forest Governance and Decentralization, to be held on 3-6 February 2015; he recalled that this topic had been discussed at a global CLI in 2004 and at four subsequent regional CLIs, and said that the forthcoming CLI would be called "Interlaken+10" and, based on experiences and lessons learnt over the past 10 years, would make recommendations on forest governance and decentralization for a future IAF and in relation to the post-2015 development agenda. He noted that the previous CLIs on this topic were supported by Indonesia, South Africa, Mexico and Ukraine as respective host countries, a number of other countries from the North and the South, and CPF members and Major Groups, addressing global, regional and local issues and priorities of forest governance in the framework of decentralization. In addition, another expert from Switzerland announced that an informal support group for women engaged in UNFF and related discussions on SFM had been established; it would meet again during the FAO Committee on Forests meeting, to be held in Rome in June. An expert from the Major Groups said that in their view it had been a very positive meeting and they looked forward to continued active participation. The Co-Chairs thanked all the experts, the secretariat, the interpreters and the Kenyan Government.

Co-Chair's summary of the key points of the discussions during the first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests

78. Experts recognized the importance of the review of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), given the very serious challenges still facing the world's forests. Experts also recalled the provisions of the Rio+20 Outcome Document on forests². During this meeting,

² Paragraphs 193-196 of *The Future We Want*:

experts discussed a wide range of options and areas for improvement in the future IAF. Experts emphasized the need to increase political commitment to sustainable forest management (SFM), catalyze implementation on the ground, promote cooperation and coordination on SFM, and integrate forests in the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda. This part of the Co-Chairs' summary aims to capture key points made by experts during the meeting. This contains two Sections. Section (a) summarizes key points that were made in relation to the assessment of the current IAF (achievements, strengths and weaknesses) and Section (b) summarizes areas and options suggested for action or improvement. The Co-Chairs emphasize that these points and actions in these sections are not exhaustive and do not necessarily indicate consensus on these points, and that new options may be presented in the future.

(a) THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT IAF (ACHIEVEMENTS) STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES)

United Nations Forum on Forests

Achievements

193. We highlight the social, economic and environmental benefits of forests to people and the contributions of sustainable forest management to the themes and objective of the Conference. We support cross-sectoral and cross-institutional policies promoting sustainable forest management. We reaffirm that the wide range of products and services that forests provide creates opportunities to address many of the most pressing sustainable development challenges. We call for enhanced efforts to achieve the sustainable management of forests, reforestation, restoration and afforestation, and we support all efforts that effectively slow, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation, including inter alia promoting trade in legally-harvested forest products. We note the importance of ongoing initiatives such as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. We call for increased efforts to strengthen forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI) to achieve sustainable forest management. To this end, we commit to improving the livelihoods of people and communities by creating the conditions needed for them to sustainably manage forests including through strengthening cooperation arrangements in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity-building and governance, as well as by promoting secure land tenure, particularly decision-making and benefit sharing, in accordance with national legislation and priorities.

194. We call for urgent implementation of the Non-legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forests and the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on the occasion of the launch of the International Year of Forests.

195. We recognize that the United Nations Forum on Forests, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, plays a vital role in addressing forest-related issues in a holistic and integrated manner, and promoting international policy coordination and cooperation to achieve sustainable forest management. We invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue its support to the Forum and encourage stakeholders to remain actively engaged in the work of the Forum.

196. We stress the importance of integrating sustainable forest management objectives and practices into the mainstream of economic policy and decision-making, and to that end we commit to working through the governing bodies of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to integrate, as appropriate, the sustainable management of all types of forests into their strategies and programmes.

- Promoted a universal approach to SFM including by adoption of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI) and its four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs)
- Strengthened political commitment to SFM, including through ministerial engagement
- Raised the profile of forests on the global development agenda by influencing international policy agreements on forests in other forums (e.g. outcome documents from WSSD and UNCSD (Rio+20))
- Enhanced understanding and collaboration on critical issues of financing through research on forest financing and the establishment of the Facilitative Process
- Provided a unique universal intergovernmental forum, which holds high level global policy dialogue on sustainable management of all types of forests and trees outside forests, in an integrated and holistic manner
- Catalyzed action by international organizations including Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members to promote SFM
- Raised awareness on the importance of forests, including through the International Year of Forests and the International Day of Forest.

Strengths

- Broad representativeness of UNFF, with its universal membership
- Its position in the UN system provides great potential to coordinate with other UN bodies and member states and integrate forests into the UN development agenda and the SDGs
- Only global platform within the UN system to discuss multi-functional role of forests in an integrated and holistic manner
- Provision for stakeholders involvement
- Holding Country Led Initiatives (CLIs) and AHEGs which promote greater involvement of stakeholders and understanding of the critical issues for the process

Weaknesses

- Focus on negotiating text
- Cannot facilitate and guarantee implementation on the ground
- The financing mechanisms and other means of implementation (including capacity building, technology transfer and technical assistance) under the current IAF are insufficient for effective support of implementation of its resolutions (e.g. the Forest Instrument), especially with regard to thematic and geographic gaps

- Lack of clarity in relationship with CPF
- Promotion of SFM as a means to eradicate poverty through cross-sectoral coordination is still weak
- Little engagement with other sectors (such as agriculture, energy, infrastructure development and mining) that are major drivers of deforestation
- Lack of adequate resources and institutions to support the UNFF mandates including lack of adequate human and budgetary resources of the Secretariat
- Inadequate monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) mechanism on the implementation of its resolutions
- Full involvement of Major Groups has still not been achieved.

Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests/ Global Objectives on Forests

Achievements

- Is the first ever globally agreed framework on sustainable management of all types of forests
- Important milestones, which brought global forest policy to a new stage
- Helped raise visibility of forests in other global policy fora
- Has provided a framework for national, regional and global actions on SFM
- Promoted a coherent approach on SFM through providing a first explanation of the concept of SFM, and a plan of action on sustainable management of all types of forests Promoted the implementation of the forest-related conventions.

Strengths

- Provides a common understanding of SFM and an over-arching policy framework for SFM
- Contributed to strengthening political commitment to all types of forests at the global level
- May have contributed to a modest reduction in deforestation and steady increase in the area of protected forests
- Has great potential to raise the profile of forests in sustainable development and link the GOFs with the SDGs.

Weaknesses

- Difficult to assess its impact on Governments to give priority to forests in their national policies and practices

- Progress in its implementation is not satisfactory and there is a lack of adequate means of implementation (including finance, capacity building, technology transfer and technical assistance) for its implementation and reporting
- Deforestation and forest degradation continue; although the rate of forest loss is slowing, it is difficult to attribute this directly to NLBI/GOFs
- Lack of progress towards the fourth GOF has made it difficult to achieve sufficient progress towards the other GOFs
- Does not take sufficient account of the contribution that indigenous people and other local communities can make to SFM
- Too “forest-centric” – does not take sufficient account of emerging issues outside forests (e.g. climate, water, bioenergy)
- Not known well outside the forest sector, or even within the forest sector
- Inadequate monitoring, assessment and reporting mechanism in regard to its implementation
- Some countries cannot enforce it due to its non-legally binding nature, which also makes it harder to secure adequate means of implementation

Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Achievements

- Providing consolidated expert views on, and promoting, SFM (e.g. joint submission on *Rio+20 and Forests*; Forest Days/Global Landscape Forum at UNFCCC)
- Joint programming, e.g. through UN-REDD
- Work on forest financing (including the CPF Sourcebook, the 2012 Advisory Group on Finance study and the 2012 Organization-Led Initiative on Forest Financing)
- Reliable source of forest information (e.g. the Global Forest Information System)
- Contributed to harmonization of reporting, including Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) and the joint forest sector questionnaire, and Global Forest Expert Panels.
- Support to the CCLIs and holding OLI.

Strengths

- Includes international organizations that can collect and provide information, technical support and mobilize financial resources to help implement UNFF resolutions and decisions
- Members have complementary mandates: development, research, advocacy, political support, financing, data collection.

- An informal, flexible and voluntary arrangement of partners that share a common goal

Weaknesses

- Does not always fulfil its mandate in supporting the work of the Forum, including implementation at the national level, and in enhancing cooperation and coordination among its members
- Lacks an effective working modality, common programming and expectations
- CPF members have different agendas, mandates, priorities, work plans and Governing Bodies, and this often results in varying levels of commitment, duplication and insufficient uptake of joint outputs
- CPF members often compete for external funds; the CPF itself does not have dedicated funds; expectations about CPF differ, both within the partnership and externally
- Lack of engagement by the CPF Governing Bodies
- No mechanism for assessing how far the CPF has responded to UNFF calls for action in UNFF resolutions and decisions
- Lack of equitable burden and credit sharing among its members
- The high costs of seconding staff by the CPF to the UNFF Secretariat and the decrease of secondments from CPF members.

Regional processes and organizations

Achievements

- In some regions, regional processes work undertake extensive preparations at regional and sub-regional levels, prior to UNFF sessions
- Harmonization of reporting for FRA 2015 through the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire Partnership developed with regional data collection partners.

Strengths

- Some regional processes help implement UNFF resolutions and decisions, as they are closer to implementation of sustainable forest management, and benefit from local experience
- Serve as a bridge to promote UNFF objectives at regional and national levels.

Weaknesses

- Weak interface between UNFF and regional organizations and processes including (e.g.) Regional Commissions

- Lack of synergy among regional and sub-regional processes in implementing the NLBI/GOFs and UNFF resolutions and decisions.
- Not all regions hold regular meetings or have used their potential to involve in the implementation of the NLBI

Major Groups

Achievements

- Multi-stakeholder dialogue and Major Group Initiatives (in Brazil and Ghana)
- Enhanced coordination among Major Groups (including creation of the Major Groups Partnership on Forests)
- Bringing innovative ideas/different point of views to the political dialogue
- The active involvement of Major Groups has helped in achieving progress in certain areas, such as combating illegal logging.
- Submission of joint background/discussion papers to UNFF9 and UNFF10.

Strengths

- Provide different perspectives on issues
- Make the process more transparent and increase ownership of resolutions and decisions
- Closer to on-the-ground implementation, with close links to communities, so well placed to raise awareness on the international forest policy dialogue at the local level
- Can help promote follow-up actions on the ground at national and sub national levels.

Weaknesses

- Forum is not attractive to many stakeholders as they do not see any practical impact on the ground from decisions.
- Lack of sufficient funding to support full and effective participation of Major Groups in UNFF and related meetings
- Some Major Groups can feel marginalized and “not heard”, especially when they have a low institutional capacity
- No mechanisms to implement recommendations related to, and coming from, Major Groups
- Private sector is largely absent from UNFF
- No representation of major groups in CPF.

(b) AREAS & OPTIONS SUGGESTED FOR ACTIONS OR IMPROVEMENT

United Nations Forum on Forests

- Streamline and focus functions of IAF on NLBI/GOFs and SDGs/post 2015 development agenda
- Clarify the roles/mandate of UNFF and other components of IAF, with UNFF as a high level policy platform and catalyst for NLBI implementation
- Continue consideration of the option of a legally binding agreement
- Raise the profile and awareness of forests both within UN (including in relation to the SDG OWG process and post-2015 development agenda) and at the regional and national level
- Adopt a more cross-sectoral approach, recognizing that many of the drivers of deforestation lie outside the forest sector and the importance of a holistic approach on SFM
- Strengthen links with the Rio Conventions and other forest-related agreements, and cross-sectoral cooperation
- Consider updating the UNFF mandate
- Consider development of a Strategic Plan to guide the work of IAF beyond 2015
- Inclusion of support to address special needs of SIDS, LFCCs in the future work plan of the IAF
- Review the reporting process and its period, and synchronize it with the cycle of other relevant processes such as FRA
- Institute data-sharing arrangements with FRA, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Criteria and Indicators (C&I) processes etc. to better harmonize and minimize reporting burdens
- Set up a “global forest indicators” partnership or platform
- Add a Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting (MAR) Coordinator position to the UNFF Secretariat
- Use an AHEG, Subsidiary Implementation Body or some other mechanism to review progress on implementation of the NLBI after each reporting cycle
- Mainstream MAR results into UNFF decisions
- Note that substantive issues regarding the future IAF and UNFF should be determined before reaching decisions on e.g. frequency of meetings: “form should follow function”
- Consider links with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests/ Global Objectives on Forests

- Reaffirm NLBI and consider extending GOFs to 2025 and incorporation of the potential SDG forest related targets into the NLBI and GOFs
- Consider transition of NLBI under UNFF to a legally binding agreement
- Capitalize on the implementation of the NLBI, applying different visions and tools
- Consider need for developing additional GOF(s), including in such areas as governance, enabling environment and poverty eradication
- Strengthen monitoring, assessment and reporting (through UNFF MAR process) by establishing a streamlined standard reporting format with a core set of indicators and establishing a time bound programme of work focused on specific aspects of NLBI, identifying sets of achievable and measurable actions (linked to UNFF Strategic Plan)
- Advance implementation of the NLBI and the GOFs, through carrying out a gap analysis at the national and regional level, comparing existing policies with actions contained in the NLBI; so as to help identify areas of progress, and areas where more effort is required
- Improve presentation of NLBI to help its wider understanding and promotion.

UNFF Secretariat

- Strengthen the Secretariat and clarify the main secretariat functions, namely to (i) support the intergovernmental process, (ii) support CPF as a CPF member, (iii) support CPF as its secretariat and (iv) operate as part of DESA, within the UN system
- Establish clear priorities for the Secretariat and improve transparency in relation to priority setting and budgets
- Develop work plan for use of Regular Budget and Extra-budgetary funds based on priorities and capacity; develop fund-raising strategy to increase XB resources
- Urge CPF members and UNFF members to second staff to secretariat
- Increase the number of Regular Budget posts.

CPF

- Review and strengthen CPF in consultation with CPF members
- Invite CPF members to contribute to review of IAF
- UNFF to decide on ways to make the relationship with CPF more direct
- Consider task force – involving CPF members and the UNFF11 Bureau – to evaluating the current structure and functions of CPF, and explore options for improvement (including a possible model based on UN Water)
- Strengthen links between UNFF and CPF: clarify the role of CPF within the IAF and its relationship to UNFF; establish basic guidelines on its method of work and

operation; clarify, responsibilities, expertise, gaps and common expectations and division of labour, including for the UNFF Secretariat

- Governance of the CPF should be revised through terms of reference to reflect the partnership's mandate, priorities, procedures to increase membership, arrangements for chairmanship, and provision of secretariat functions
- Increase sense of ownership in CPF by engaging all members, stakeholders and non-CPF organisations and processes
- Establish a CPF trust fund, possibly administered by the UNFF Secretariat and supported by contributions from UNFF members and budget allocations from CPF members
- Urge members to incorporate the NLBI and GOFs, joint programmes and follow-up/implementation of UNFF resolutions and decisions more explicitly in their programmes of work; Member States can ensure that this happens through their representatives in the various CPF member Governing Bodies
- Consider the pros and cons of having some additional members (e.g. the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Major Groups Partnership on Forests, INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the International Forest Students' Association), recognizing the risk for CPF becoming too big
- Group members around thematic clusters, based on different areas of expertise (as with the Advisory Group on Finance), to reduce competition, build on comparative advantages and increase commitment among members
- Strengthen the link between UNFF and the Governing Bodies of the CPF member organizations
- Strengthen the science-policy interface with UNFF.

Finance and other means of implementation

- Consider taking the Facilitative Process to the next level, e.g. by establishing a "global forest mechanism" (along the lines of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification model) to advise and help countries develop short- medium-long-term financing strategies for implementing SFM/Forest Instrument/GOFs, access financing from a range of sources, attract investment in SFM/Forest Instrument/GOFs, and connect with potential technical cooperation partners
- Consider setting up a unit within the UNFF Secretariat to run this enhanced Facilitative Process, with a representative in New York, Rome or elsewhere to maximize synergies

- Consider the establishment of a Global Forest Fund, linked to the SFM needs of developing countries, under the aegis of UNFF
- Make renewed efforts to address all sources of finance (including ODA, multilateral, bilateral, REDD+, private sector, national forest funds, Global Forest Fund and the better use of existing funds), as well as capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer for implementation of SFM/Forest Instrument/GOFs
- Work together to mobilize contributions for funds (including through UNFF Trust Fund) to support, *inter alia*, countries preparing national reports, Forest Instrument implementation plans and public awareness strategies
- Consider using UNFF trust funds to support, *inter alia*, countries to prepare national reports, NLBI implementation plans, public awareness strategies.
- Improve enabling environments to attract investment in SFM.

Regional processes and organizations

- Clarify roles for regional processes, including with regard to the modalities for their input to UNFF
- Consider looking beyond traditional regional processes to engage with others at the regional and sub-regional level (e.g. ASEAN, APEC, Congo Basin Forest Partnership, ACTO)
- Suggest that regions incorporate UNFF resolutions and decisions that relate to their regional priorities into their programmes of work
- Improve communication between UNFF and regional and sub-regional processes
- Clearly focus CLI/RLI/OLIs on specific Work Programme topics of UNFF
- Incorporate CLI/RLI/OLI outcomes and recommendations in Secretary-General Reports
- Support travel of regional representatives to UNFF sessions
- Organize “Region Days” at UNFF to highlight regional perspectives and promote regional success stories
- Develop web-based regional communication tools (newsletter, portal, etc.);
- Add a Regional Liaison position to the UNFF secretariat
- Convene regional meetings in non-UNFF years in coordination with regional bodies.

Major Groups

- Consider scope within UN Rules of Procedure to address Major Group concerns about when and how Major Groups are given the floor

- Consider establishing an advisory group as an additional mechanism to strengthen stakeholder engagement through detailed discussion and consideration of the views of Major Groups and as a channel for Major Groups' input to the Forum
- Encourage Governments to collaborate with Major Groups at the national level, and include representatives of Major Groups in their official delegations to UNFF meetings
- Increase time allocated to multi-stakeholder dialogues
- If UNFF sessions alternate between regional and global meetings, regional meetings should be an opportunity to further engage Major Groups' participation
- Consider ways to ensure sufficient resources for participation of Major Groups in UNFF sessions, and consider inviting them to join the CPF
- Consider creating Major Groups' networks address cross-cutting forest-related issues such as poverty reduction as well as women, youth and children's rights
- Encourage business and industry participation by raising the profile of UNFF among the private sector
- UNFF secretariat' capacity should be increased to facilitate greater engagement by Major Groups
- Consider undertaking a comparative review of how Conventions, UN bodies and CPF members interact with Major Groups.