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संयुक्त राष्ट्र स्थित भारत का स्थायी मिशन
न्यूयॉर्क

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December 05, 2013

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York presents its compliments to the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat and has the honour to refer to its message UNFF-13-L-HMM-219 dated 16th July 2013 and subsequent message reference No.UNFF-13-HMM-L-284 dated 25th October 2013 seeking the views and proposals of member States and other stakeholders on the International Arrangements on Forests (IAF).

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations has the further honour to enclose herewith the submission of Government of India conveying its views on the IAF.

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, the assurances of its highest consideration.



The United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat
Department of Economic and social Affairs
United Nations Plaza, DC2-2301
New York

Country/Organization: India

Date of Submission: 29th November, 2013

**UNFF Intersessional Activities on the International Arrangement on Forests
Format for Soliciting Views and Proposals on the International Arrangement on Forests
United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat
July 2013**

1. According to the multi-year programme of work adopted in 2007, the overall theme of the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF11) in 2015 will be “Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the international arrangement on forests (IAF).” At this session, the Forum will review the effectiveness of the IAF and decide on its future.¹
2. In preparation for UNFF11 in 2015, the Forum has made a number of decisions during the last fourteen years.² Most recently, Member States through Resolution 10/2 of UNFF10 decided to undertake several intersessional activities to ensure UNFF11 has a strong basis to review the effectiveness of the IAF and make a decision on the future of the IAF.
3. One of the three components of the intersessional activities on the IAF, as outlined in Resolution 10/2 of UNFF10, is to solicit views from Member States and other relevant stakeholders on the IAF. Specifically, the Resolution invites countries, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its member organizations, other relevant organizations, relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, instruments, organizations and processes, major groups and other stakeholders to submit views and proposals to the Forum’s Secretariat on the six key issues set out in paragraph 5 of the same resolution, and the full range of options on the future international arrangement on forests. The UNFF Secretariat should provide the compilation of these views and proposals to the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1) on the IAF³.
4. This format has been prepared by the Forum’s Secretariat to facilitate submission of the inputs on the IAF to AHEG1. The electronic version of this format is available at: (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/docs/Views-on-IAF.doc>). Member States and other relevant stakeholders are invited to download this format and use it to submit their views and proposals in English. The explanation in each box should not exceed 150 words. Member States and other stakeholders are kindly requested to submit the original copy of the completed format in word processing software, with a scanned copy of the official letter from their respective organization/ministry/mission, via email to: unff@un.org, with copy to Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi at: moeini-meybodi@un.org, and Ms. Thida Sam at: sam2@un.org. All inputs should be sent to the UNFF Secretariat by **30 October 2013**.

¹ Resolution 1 of UNFF7 and its annex (E/2007/42), please see:

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/349/31/PDF/N0734931.pdf?OpenElement>

² ECOSOC Resolutions 2000/35 and 2006/49, Resolution 1 of UNFF7 and its annex (E/2007/42) and Resolution 2 of UNFF10 and its annex (E/2013/42)

³ OP 5 and 6 of Resolution 2 of UNFF10 and paragraph 2 of its annex- Please see:

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/321/90/PDF/N1332190.pdf?OpenElement>

**Format for Soliciting Views and Proposals on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)
July 2013**

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Section A: Full range of options for the IAF

A.1 Please select (with X in front of the options below) and explain the preferred option for the future of the IAF:

- A legally binding instrument on all types of forests
- Strengthening of the current IAF
- Continuation of the current IAF
- Other options (please describe) _____

Section B: Performance of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and its processes since 2000, and future options for UNFF

B.1 Please explain if you consider the current UNFF structure and its biennial sessions as sufficient to take necessary actions and to provide policy advice and guidance on all issues related to all types of forests and at all levels:

Current UNFF Institution needs strengthening in terms of manpower and financial support with scope for regional representation to effectively address hugely diverse forestry issues and challenges faced globally and to play a critical role in evolving post 2015 SD Agenda. Biennial sessions are quite appropriate, however, more intersessional activities on specific forestry themes & issues with comprehensive Multi Year Programme of works of various programme partners (CPF, Major Groups, MFIs etc.) need to be promoted for greater understanding and coordinated action on forestry issues among major stakeholders. The intersessional activities & AHEG meetings have been very useful in creating platforms for bringing together experts/ professionals in the forestry related fields for building consensus on important forestry issues. Building capacity of all relevant stakeholders, better coordination among them and their continuous engagement is necessary which can be guided by UNFF.

B.2 Please describe the UNFF's performance and list its key achievements in implementing its principal functions, as stated in ECOSOC resolutions 2000/35 and 2006/49⁴:

UNFF since its inception has provided a useful platform by facilitating dialogue among countries and other major stakeholders and has given continuous thrust on mobilising public opinion in support of forestry issues globally. The performance of UNFF since 2000 has been highly appreciable. In around a decade's time, UNFF has been able to bring various relevant & complex forestry issues into focus at important global fora & fostered international cooperation. It has provided a coherent & comprehensive forest policy and reaffirmation of commitment for SFM. In the ongoing international dialogues in the fields of Climate Change, REDD+, Sustainable Forest Management, UNFF has been actively engaged & kept updated the Member States to formalise forestry's important role in UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD. UNFF's Voluntary reports have provided good opportunities to assess the country's progress on achieving GOFs, MDGs, NLBIs etc. UNFF has achieved reasonable success in achieving its main objectives like awareness raising & increasing political commitment, coordinating action on complex forestry issues, drawing attention towards strengthening forest finance for implementing SFM. It has also strengthened cross sectoral coordination.

B.3 Please provide your view on the future options for the UNFF: Global community should continue to work for finding more effective role of forestry in the progress towards achieving sustainable development and well being of humanity while fully complying with principle 2 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development which states that States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies. Addressing drivers of deforestation, forest degradation, climate change impacts, biodiversity loss need collective efforts. UNFF is the best option to continue to guide/ steer action on forestry issues at global level. It would be appropriate that the existing arrangement is strengthened. UNFF as an institution has already gained good expertise, capacity & experience. It has global recognition and support of member countries. The time is to build upon the present strength and work for greater coordinated action on forests by integrating forestry in the various programmes sustainable development and making it a critical part of strategies & action programmes under existing international conventions.

B.4 Please describe the potential roles for UNFF in implementing the UN post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs:

As of now the exact and final shape of UN post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs are not very clear and no finality on SDGs has come out, therefore, it is not possible to comment at this stage. However, India has deep appreciation for the excellent work done by UNFF in fulfilling its mandate in spite of its limited resources. India acknowledges significant contribution made by UNFF and expect that UNFF will continue to play an important role in guiding forestry related action in future by mobilizing greater international support in the forestry sector from various stakeholders, multilateral financial institutions, major groups

⁴ Please see these documents at:

- http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/2000_35_E.pdf
- http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/iaf/2006_49_E.pdf

including the private sector. Financing SFM is also great challenge & requires, multiple approaches and cross sectoral support with UNFF playing a critical role .UNFF with its vast experinece is best suited to coordinate forestry related action in existing as well as furure conventions in multisectoral levels/platforms. UNFF can help in evolving international policy framework for REDD+ and guiding effective implementation.

B.5 Please describe the role and impact of Country-Led Initiatives and ad hoc expert groups in the work of the UNFF:

There have been a number of significant country led initiatives in respect of achieving Sustainable Management of Forests, Four Global objectives on Forests and implmentation of Non Legally Binding Instrument in last few years. The Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meetings on strengthening Forest Finance were a good success in drawing attention of various stakeholders towards the huge gap in demand and availability of financing in the forestry sector for ensuring SFM. However, much still needs to be done. This momentum needs to be maintained by continuous support, follow up and coordinated efforts of UNFF. UNFF Sessions have attracted large number of countries, organizatuions, stakeholders, youth, women, members of Civil Society Groups, Media etc. India has exchanged experiences with other countries and taken a number of initiatives in the forestry sector like initiating Green India Mission and green rural development through MGNREGA schemes.

B.6 Please indicate how effective you consider the engagement of major groups in the work of the UNFF and provide suggestions on their further engagement:

UNFF has provided an excellent platform for sharing views with partners of Major Groups in its sessions and intersessional activities. It is relevant to mention that major groups have tremendous stakes in forests and will continue to play an important role in SFM. Efforts need to be made for continuous and effective engagement of these in evolving policy framework, and strengthening their role in implementing and promoting SFM. There is a need to develop a number of appropriate and effective communication strategies to renew their interests and contiuous engagement of such a diverse group of stakeholders. Tribals, Women, Youth, Forest Based industries can play an important role in forest conservation and SFM and derive optimum benefits. Their efforts and skills upgradation need to be supported by forest managers, NGOs , scientists with due publicity by media.

B.7 Please explain the role and impact of the International Year of Forests and the International Day of Forests in promoting greater awareness and strengthening political and public commitment for forests:

International Year of Forests in 2011 and its theme forests for people has brought forestry into the mainstream of discussions once again quite effectively. India organised a series of programmes on International Year of Forests in 2011 and this year for celebration of Internatioanl Day of Forests. But this momentum need to be maintained to engage various stakeholders, academia, media, corporate and private sector for generating a stronger political commitment and adequate resources for SFM. The positive aspects of forestry need to highlighted for engaging larger section of the society.

Section C: The Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (Forest Instrument) and the four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs)

C.1 Please indicate progress in the implementation of the forest instrument:

- Adequate
- Inadequate
- Not sure

C.2 Please provide suggestions on how to improve progress:

Some of the suggestions for effective implementation of are given below:

1. Greater financial and technical support to countries for awareness and capacity building among all stakeholders for supporting SFM.
2. Continue efforts of strengthening linkages of forestry sector & SFM to sustainable economic development.
3. Augmentation of efforts for greater resource mobilization for SFM in developing countries.
4. Focus on specific regional, national and sub-national forestry issues to address deforestation and forest degradation.
5. Enhancing ODA to developing countries for specific forestry sector programmes, etc.
6. Enhancing more coordination at Regional level.
7. Capacity building of stakeholders at national level for better coordination among nodal points of other concerned departments/ agencies.

C.3 Please indicate progress in achieving the GOFs:

	Adequate	Inadequate	Not sure
GOF1:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOF2:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOF3:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOF4:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.4 Please provide suggestions on how to improve progress:

Following measures are suggested:

1. Enhance cross sectoral coordination in the forestry sector through an appropriate institutional mechanism.
2. Vigorously pursuing effective communication strategies for increasing awareness to broader section of society on important forestry issues.
3. Continuing efforts for creating greater economic opportunities in the forestry sector

including increasing financial investment in afforestation, conservation, efficient processing and marketing of forest products and creation of jobs.

4. Ensuring adequate investment in creating a large pool of technically trained manpower, encouraging scientific research in the forestry sector including developing suitable models for rehabilitation of degraded lands, improving soil and water conservation and higher productivity.

5. Creating greater linkages with international conventions -UNFCCC, CBD & CCD, multilateral financial institutions, CPF members for integrated action in the forestry sector.

6. Working for greater international cooperation including knowledge sharing, transfer of technology, scientific capacity building,

7. Creation of Global Forest Fund for exclusively meeting the needs of forestry sector.

C.5 Please explain how implementation of the forest instrument has contributed to the implementation of forest-related international conventions, and vice versa:

The Policy and measures under the FI are comprehensive and include almost all the aspects of SFM. Though some of the elements of the Forest Instrument (NLBI) are already included in various programmes implemented under different forest related international conventions and have contributed significantly in achieving the targets of CBD, UNFCCC and CCD, still there is lot of scope for strengthening implementation of NLBI to accelerate achievement of target for these conventions. REDD+ under UNFCCC is a specific forestry intervention to enhance carbon sequestration through forest and trees, however, the progress is mainly on preparedness and a lot of work is required on developing international architecture to implement REDD+ effectively. Forests are very important storehouses for biodiversity and the measures taken towards SFM will certainly lead to enhancement of biodiversity. Forests are the most effective tools for combating desertification. The role of forests in maintaining water cycle, drought mitigation, food security, risk mitigation of forest dependent people is very important. Forest Instrument and forest related action in various international conventions are thus mutually supportive.

C.6 Please describe how the forest instrument and the GOFs can contribute to the post-2015 UN development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals:

There are strong linkages between GOFs and Sustainable Development. Long term sustainability is not possible without sustainable management of forests. Forest Instrument addresses all the forestry issues comprehensively. Forests are critical for food security, water management, soil productivity, fisheries, maintaining longevity of dams by controlling soil erosion & siltation, biomass for energy, recreation & cultural services, storing biodiversity, supporting pollination etc. The products and services from forests are critical for society. Significant progress on GOFs is necessary to ensure ecological & environmental balance. Forestry, therefore, should be given adequate attention and support through cross sectoral programmes and interventions. Forests can be viewed as a critical sector for creating jobs. With growing population and resultant increase in demand for natural resources the focus should be more directed to enhance natural capital.

Section D: The Forum's Secretariat

D.1 Please indicate if you consider the structure, human and financial resources of the compact Secretariat of the UNFF adequate to fulfill its mandates:

- Adequate
 Inadequate
 Not sure

Additional explanation:

The role & mandate of UNFF is already quite comprehensive and in the light of Rio+20, ongoing review of international arrangement on forests and Post- 2015 UN Development Agenda, it has further broadened. It is required to engage member countries and major stakeholders on forestry issues. The Manpower and financial resources available with UNFF are not sufficient to shoulder the enhanced responsibility. There is urgent need of finding ways and means to strengthen UNFF for enabling it to play its role effectively. Member countries, CPF Members & Multilateral Institutions may be invited to support UNFF Secretariat.

D.2 Please provide suggestion(s) on strengthening the Secretariat of the Forum to enable it to fulfill its functions more effectively:

The current structure and available resources with the UNFF are highly inadequate to meet the requirement of increased work. Following suggestions are made:

1. There is a need to increase manpower at the Forum Secretariat. The Member countries may be invited to nominate their Representatives to the UNFF Secretariat on a fixed term basis to carry out work in support of UNFF. This can be done on rotational basis.
2. CPF members and major groups can also be requested for nominating their representatives to work for UNFF.
3. Considering the complexity and vast variations in forestry issues & challenges of different regions, creation of regional level institutional mechanism for strengthening regional cooperation in the forestry sector may be thought of which can be supported by CPF members.
4. The financial resources with UNFF need to be augmented with contributions from willing organizations and in this regard creation of appropriate mechanism may be considered.
5. Participation of private/corporate sector for supporting UNFF's activities may be encouraged especially in scientific research & development, involving communities, enhancing value of forest products and services, preparation of data base etc .

D.3 Please provide suggestion(s) on how the Forum Secretariat's role, as a CPF member and as CPF secretariat, should be strengthened:

There is a need for regular engagement of UNFF Secretariat with CPF Members to build on the work already done and enhance collaboration for future programs. Following suggestions

may be considered:

1. CPF members and major groups can be invited for nominating their representatives to work for UNFF.
2. Considering the complexity and vast variations in forestry issues & challenges of different regions, creation of regional level institutional mechanism for strengthening regional cooperation in the forestry sector may be thought of, which can be supported by CPF members based on their core programmes. FAO's regional offices need to be strengthened and supported by CPF members.
3. Every CPF member may take up specific thematic programmes to support UNFF in implementing FI (NLBI) in a time bound manner.
4. CPF members may channelize contributions from willing organizations to support UNFF and in this regard creation of appropriate mechanism may be considered.
5. CPF members may be encouraged to support especially in scientific research & development, involving communities, enhancing value of forest products and services, preparation of data base etc.

Section E: CPF and CPF Member Organizations

E.1 Please explain the impacts and sufficiency of the programs and actions taken by CPF and CPF member organizations in implementing resolutions and supporting the work of UNFF since its inception:

The organization led initiatives have been significant and reasonably successful in implementing resolutions of UNFF. There has been good progress on forest policy, law and governance. Also good initiatives have been made in assessing economic contribution of forests. Action on REDD+ readiness is also progressing well despite pending methodological and technical issues. However, there is still huge gap in action for holistically addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, improving forest based livelihoods, valuation of non cash & ecological services from forests for correct reflection of contribution of forestry sector in national economies. Each CPF Member, therefore, should play an important part in a specific theme of forestry in its area of influence.

E.2 Please describe how the CPF and its member organizations can further contribute to the work of the UNFF, and how to ensure availability of necessary resources for its activities in support of the work of the Forum:

FAO should continue to support UNFF and guide CPF members to have specific focal areas and can enhance support on forestry programmes within their mandate. There is need for greater and continued cooperation among CPF members to reduce duplication of works and greater resource mobilization on desired programme areas. Creating critical mass of technical manpower to drive forestry programmes and building capacity of stakeholders should be given high priority. World Bank, UNEP, GEF, UNDP can support funding of SFM through REDD+ Programmes. CBD programmes can strengthen livelihood programmes in forests by supporting biodiversity conservation and its sustained use, processing and value addition and sharing of benefits out of trade of biodiversity products. Combating desertification, drought proofing can create job opportunities in afforestation, soil & moisture conservation, forest protection. GEF is already supporting SFM which can be further enhanced. UNFF with CPF programme partners can enhance efforts in desirable and focussed programme areas and avoid duplication of efforts.

Section F: Financing options and strategies

F.1 Please provide views on financing options and strategies, including the creation of a voluntary Global Forest Fund, to generate resources from all sources for sustainable management of all types of forests and trees outside forests:

Though the various global conventions where Forest have a Sharp focus, have yet not been able to provide adequate technical and financial support to enhance the flow of various ecological services, conservation & SFM. Hence, there is need to identify the gap and need to flow of financing to forests from all resources.

Strengthening forest financing is critical for bringing new areas under forests/trees, addressing forest degradation, protection of existing forests & implementing SFM. Arranging adequate finance is a major area of concern for developing countries requiring augmenting finance in the forestry sector in a systematic and sustained manner. Creation of Global Forest

Fund on voluntary basis is a good idea, expected to help bringing together different agencies working in the forest related sectors for coordinated action.

2. Private & corporate sector including international NGOs may be encouraged to invest in forestry as part of responsible action with appropriate incentives considering expenditure on forestry as an important development expenditure. Programmes of water, rural development, agriculture, climate change mitigation & adaptation etc. should consider forestry an important component in their overall strategies.

F.2 Please suggest concrete steps that UNFF, CPF members and other organizations should undertake to develop forest financing options:

As there are no simple solutions to develop forest financing options to meet SFM needs, following suggestions may be looked into:

1. UNFF with FAO may coordinate international action on policy and governance and become a nodal agency for monitoring comprehensive action on forestry under international conventions.
2. Each CPF member/ Organization may adopt a special theme/ programme area for focussed action and work comprehensively.
3. Specific forestry components under GEF & Multilateral Financial Institutions
4. Building partnerships for involving Private/ Corporate Sector, foundations, NGOs, Industries etc. to contribute in specific programme areas on livelihood improvement, capacity building with appropriate incentives. CSR in forestry to be encouraged.
5. A component of forestry action to be made compulsory part of programmes in related sectors like agriculture, rural development. Industrial development, poverty reduction programmes, renewable energy, ecotourism, water, fisheries sectors etc.
6. Compensatory afforestation against diversion of forests must be ensured from the funding support of user agencies.
7. Universities & scientific institutions to enhance work on R&D for better economic opportunities in forestry sector.