



THE REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

To Whom It May Concern:

The United States' Mission to the United Nations is pleased to provide its submission of input for the review of the International Arrangement on Forests. Our mission thanks the United Nations Forum on Forests for allowing us to provide our views for this review.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie Kim', with a horizontal line underneath.

Julie Kim
ECOSOC Advisor
U.S. Mission to the U.N.

Country/Organization: United States

Date of Submission: November 30, 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**

Ministry / Organization: Foreign Affairs/U.S. Department of State

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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) We recommend enhancing the current International
- Arrangement on Forests, including through strengthening the role of the CPF to realize its full potential. _____

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: We believe the practice of large-scale biennial meetings is not the most effective use of resources to enrich the international policy dialogue on forests. It is our view that such high-level meetings could take place only every four years, with a more flexible and dynamic intersessional process linked to other processes, including those of CPF and its member organizations.

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: The top six achievements of UNFF to date are 1) Creation of the CPF, 2) agreement on the NLBI and the GOFs 3) Database on financing, 4) Streamlining of Forest Data Reporting (through the CPF), 5) Enhancing

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

international focus on reforestation and forest restoration, 6) raising awareness of forests issues in the UN system and more broadly, including through the International Year of Forests (IYF) and the International Day of Forests (IDOF).

B.3 Please provide your view on the future options for the UNFF: As noted in A.1, above, the United States recommends enhancing the current International Arrangement on Forests, including through strengthening the role of the CPF to realize its full potential.

B.4 Please describe the potential roles for UNFF in implementing the UN post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs: The potential role of the UNFF might be to highlight the importance of conserving, sustainably using, and restoring forests for achieving broader development goals. It might also serve as a conduit for taking a more cross-sectoral view of forests. The UNFF is not an implementing agency and its role in "implementing" the post-2015 development and SDGs needs to be strictly consistent with its mandate for promoting dialogue and mobilizing political will.

B.5 Please describe the role and impact of Country-Led Initiatives and ad hoc expert groups in the work of the UNFF:
We think that the CLI, OLI, and AHEGs which draw from the UNFF Multi-year program of work (MYPOW) are effective and at times more productive than the UNFF official meetings, allowing for more frank dialogue, focus on specific topics, and (especially through CLIs) genuine buy-in from countries, regions, and organizations involved.

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:
Since UNFF is a political, rather than an operational, body there are natural limits on the role of major groups in this forum. Still, the continued relevance of UNFF into the future will in large part depend on strengthening the engagement of actors beyond national governments and intergovernmental organizations. The UNFF Secretariat engagement with Major Groups has improved the quality and relevance of MG input to more recent meetings. CLIs also provide space for stronger MG participation.

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:
IYOF and IDOF are useful tools especially for conveying information to individuals outside the forest community. The US Forest Service received a significant amount of press coverage for activities related to IYOF and IDOF. Domestically, IYOF was a platform for the US to focus and highlight work on urban forests, wood as a "green" building material, and our watershed accessments.

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: The United States believes that progress is accurately and usefully measured in terms of actual progress towards achieving the GOFs, and an accounting of actions taken to achieve the substantive actions recommended by the NLBI, although policy and programmatic references to the "Global Objectives on Forests" or the "NLBI" may not always be explicit. By this measure, we believe there has been significant action by many countries and organizations, and assessments of the NLBI and GOFs have helped recognize this. Assessments by UNFF and others should pay careful attention to assessing the extent to which content of the goals and the actions called for in the NLBI are being taken, even when the language is not identical to the specific text.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.4 Please provide suggestions on how to improve progress: Progress has been made in restoring degraded forest lands in some places, and at stabilizing gross forest cover in temperate and boreal regions. However, the loss of primary forests remains a central concern, particularly in the humid tropics, since this is where deforestation rates are fastest and the loss of biodiversity is most acute. Progress could be improved by a more explicit focus on addressing the drivers of deforestation of primary tropical forests, such as industrial-scale agriculture, as well as mining, infrastructure development, and human settlements. Some progress has been made in improving livelihoods of indigenous and other forest dependent local communities in some places, particularly through the recognition of local land and resource tenure and the spread of community-based forest conservation, but more remains to be done on this. ODA for forest finance has increased dramatically since 2007, thus progress on GOF4 must be deemed adequate, although mobilizing additional resources from domestic resources and the private sector is needed.

C.5 Please explain how implementation of the forest instrument has contributed to the implementation of forest-related international conventions, and vice versa: As noted above in C.2, this question should be answered in terms of substantive progress on implementing the particular actions and goals articulated in the NLBI. Clearly, slowing the loss of primary tropical forests is key to addressing the terrestrial dimension of the extinction crisis that is at the heart of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Similarly, restoring degraded forest lands is central to achieving the objectives of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Conversely, the focus on REDD+ in the UNFCCC since 2007 has given a boost to efforts to implement many of

the objectives of the NLBI.

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: As addressed at Rio+20, the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of forests and ecosystems are central for efforts to achieve food and water security, as well as conserve biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A continued focus on sustainable forest management, including articulating the GOFs and provisions of the NLBI, can reinforce this message and be relevant for discussions on related issues such as land, degradation, food security and sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity.

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 UNFF Secretariat's dedicated and hardworking staff has been a key reason for UNFF accomplishments over the past years, in particular the critical functions of servicing and facilitating an effective UNFF intergovernmental process and catalyzing complementary action by CPF members and the Major Groups in support of UNFF objectives. The continued compact structure and an efficient use of resources can make the UNFF Secretariat a positive model for UN institutional stability and appropriate restraint. UNFF members, in UNFF sessions and outcomes, must provide clear priorities for the Secretariat's work, so that limited resources and personnel can be focused on essential work.

D.2 Please provide suggestion(s) on strengthening the Secretariat of the Forum to enable it to fulfill its functions more effectively: It is critical that the Secretariat remain focused on its central role in UNFF and the CPF. The Secretariat should not exceed its mandate and resources by straying into the implementation of activities that can be and are carried out by Member States, the CPF and its member organizations, other capacity-building organizations, and Major Groups. Stronger engagement of stakeholders and Major Groups in UNFF processes might allow the Secretariat to more effectively tap the diverse institutional and intellectual resources of the NGO, scientific and private sector communities.

D.3 Please provide suggestion(s) on how the Forum Secretariat's role, as a CPF member and as CPF secretariat, should be strengthened: The United States sees the CPF as a major success of UNFF. The UNFF Secretariat has been key in consolidating the CPF and facilitating its work, in

cooperation with FAO as Chair and a number of especially active members. As referenced in B.2, the Sourcebook on Financing is a valuable contribution and, together with work by a subgroup on finance, was important information for discussions on forest finance under UNFF. The Forest-Climate Action Plan is another positive example of the UNFFS working with CPF.

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 CPF was established as a main element of the International Arrangement on Forests. The CPF has and should continue to support the deliberations of UNFF through focused activities like its past work on forest finance and on forests and climate change. Further, the CPF has significant potential--already realized and still to realize--to: (a) constitute a core network for capacity-building, technical and policy support, financing, and implementation to achieve the GOFs and the actions set out in the NLBI; and (b) build awareness and encourage action to bridge the gap between discussions on forest policy and broader development dialogues, including in ongoing discussions to elaborate the post-2015 development agenda, in order to address forces that drive deforestation and to recognize the contributions of forests.

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: [Please see E.1 also.] The CPF as a whole has been an effective way to leverage and integrate the institutional strengths of various members: technical support, capacity-building, forest monitoring and information, outreach materials, research, and political support. CPF member organizations individually have made substantial contributions to sustainable forest management and to UNFF- and CPF-related activities, with the support of their members and governing bodies. When member states decide through UNFF to invite CPF action, UNFF members will need to be cognizant of the need for specific support through CPF member organizations and voluntary contributions to support such work. Beyond responding to specific requests, the CPF will continue to support the objectives of UNFF by marshalling international political will and technical support to advance actions such as those in the NLBI and the GOFs. Discussions on the IAF should include consideration of additional options for the CPF, such as engaging stakeholders, providing a forum between less frequent or shorter UNFF sessions, etc.

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: Increasing flows of finance in support of forest conservation, sustainable use, and restoration requires mobilizing finance from all sources, domestic and international, public and private. This, in turn, requires countries and communities to establish enabling

policy conditions that allow donor funds to be utilized effectively, and private sector investments to yield profits while benefiting forests and local communities. Just as important as mobilizing new funding for forests is redirecting finance away from activities that destroy or degrade forests. We need more investment in activities and programs that conserve and sustainably use forests. The question is not only "how much" forest finance but, critically, how to ensure "that financing for economic development and investment activities does not harm forests." SFM and timber markets are sources for employment and can play a role in economic development.

The United States does not favor the establishment of a "global forest fund", and does not believe that continuing debate on doing so is the most effective way to either increase financing for sustainable forestry or redirect funding from activities that damage forests and essential forest ecosystem services.

F.2 Please suggest concrete steps that UNFF, CPF members and other organizations should undertake to develop forest financing options: [Please see F.1.] The CPF Sourcebook on Financing is a useful and important reference, and we favor updating this as possible. Programs such as the GEF mechanism for sustainable forest management and various REDD+ initiatives demonstrate the potential to recognize and leverage forest contributions to other goals such as biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Lending institutions and their members can support safeguards and vetting processes to avoid activities that damage or degrade forests. The United States believes it is critical to recognize capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally friendly technologies on mutually agreed terms as fundamental contributions to support countries in improving forest management. Forest monitoring and information can contribute to transparency, stakeholder engagement, and performance which can help support an enabling environment and secure financing.