

Country/Organization:

Date of Submission:

**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

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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**.

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

July 2013

Ministry / Organization: International Forestry Students' Association

Name of official submitting the views: Urs Dieterich

Address: 508 Orange Street, New Haven CT, 06511

Phone/Fax: +1 203 606 7765

E-mail: urs.ifsa@gmail.com

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 X

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:

- Yes, biennial multi-lateral meetings are sufficient.
- Potential actions to increase effectiveness may include: Fostering more intersessional exchange among countries, increasing bilateral initiatives and communication on common goals, intra-regional meetings, incorporation of expert-level opinion in political agenda-setting.
- We would like to see UNFF play a more active role in all negotiations occurring at the UN with regards to climate, sustainable development, industry, trade, land tenure, rights of indigenous peoples. Forests don't exist in isolation, and issues threatening forests cannot be solved in isolation. Unless members of the UNFF are empowered to have a voice in these other negotiations, we are afraid that forests will remain a marginalized topic.

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:

B.3 Please provide your view on the future options for the UNFF:

- Continued mandate to facilitate multi-lateral intergovernmental forest-related policy-processes
- Forum to develop initiatives and provide input for monitoring and evaluating progress made in SDGs relating to forest topics
- The Forum needs to be expanded and strengthened.

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

- Work toward how forests can be included in the SDGs. Be it as part of a “Natural Resources” SDG, as a separate SDG in itself, or as part of a range of SDGs by referral to how forests play a role in accomplishing the objective of the respective SDGs.
- The UNFF can play an extremely important role. Sustainable management of forests are linked to sustainable livelihoods, and protection of ecosystems.

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

- Involvement of additional stakeholders
- Opportunity to discover new issues and to look at challenges from another perspective through a specific country-lense.
- Dealing with issues according to national priorities, or dependent on expert opinion.

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:

- MGs provide vital input and increase the legitimacy of UNFF processes
- MG contributions could be enhanced by linking major group initiatives with expert groups. This way, major groups would raise points important to their constituencies and in expert group discussions the relevance of the issue and potential means for problem amelioration could be analyzed. This may lead to more actionable outcomes of major group involvement.
- A suggestion could be to have UNFF delegates rotate in the UNFCCC consultations, and ECOSOC meetings, and vice versa. This could trigger more cross-sectoral learning and knowledge transfer.

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:

- Both initiatives have led to a variety of actions to promote awareness of citizens of the vital role of forests in our economy, in our social life, and for ecological processes.
- More media coverage could have amplified some of the positive responses from countries and civil society.
- Linking public events to current political processes on the occasion of initiatives like the Forest Day and the IYF could further increase their impact on societal awareness, and ultimately influence policy-making processes.

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 X

Not sure

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

- Creating accountability mechanisms to achieve better implementation of commitments.
- Emphasizing the cross-sectoral linkages and spill-over benefits of effectively implementing the four GOFs and progressing with the Forest Instrument.

C.3 Please indicate progress in achieving the GOFs:

Adequate

Inadequate

Not sure X

GOF1:

GOF2:

GOF3:

GOF4:

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

- Creating accountability mechanisms to achieve better implementation of commitments.
- Emphasizing the cross-sectoral linkages and spill-over benefits of effectively implementing the four GOFs

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

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:

- The forest instrument can serve as a framework for possible forest-related SDGs.
- Policy-learning from how implementation occurred in different countries can inform how forest goals can be linked to other benefits for a variety of stakeholders. This may increase uptake and implementation of commitments through SDGs and in the post-2015 development agenda.
- The four GOFs serve as a foundation in constituting indispensable baseline commitments toward a better forest management, increased political priority, and consideration of public benefits when deciding about multi-lateral forest governance.

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 X

Not sure

Additional explanation:

We believe that forests are extremely important to the wellbeing of our planet. Additionally, forests are related to so many other critical issues such as climate change, sustainable development, industry, rights of indigenous peoples, land tenure. In light of all the above, we think we need an extremely strong and robust team at the UNFF. We believe we need to expand the human resources at UNFF and send delegates to every other UN body working on these allied topics. We need more interdisciplinary work across the UN bodies.

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

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 forum may be able to embrace its role as a facilitator of the consultation of expert opinion even more than before. Bringing together the CPF members, each with their own objectives and views on forests, to create a common vision is a mandate that the forum could pursue more rigorously.

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:

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:

- Input of expert opinion
- Emphasis on the various roles forests play for certain stakeholder groups
- Shaping the discourse of how forests can cater to the agenda of different interest groups.

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:

- Besides enhancing public funding for forests, private sector finance needs to be embraced. Some of the distrust toward private involvement in the stewardship and financing of forests needs to be overcome.
- There need to be clear guidelines on how private sector finance can be mobilized. This needs to be done under consideration of the needs of forest communities and safeguards for biodiversity.
- Furthermore, the potential of Public-Private Partnerships should be explored further. A common vision and the potential for mutual benefits should be created by embracing transparency and synergistic agenda-setting.

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