



## FOREST RELATED TARGETS FOR INTEGRATION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Summary

Forests and trees outside forests are vital for sustainable development. Forests occupy one-third of the Earth's land area, and about another half of the total remaining land area features sparsely scattered trees. These renewable natural resources are crucial for tackling many of the issues identified in *The Future We Want*, such as poverty, food security, climate change, biodiversity, sustainable production and consumption, and social inclusion, particularly meeting the basic needs of vulnerable people and ensuring their well-being.

The benefits of forests and trees outside forests are generated at the management unit, landscape, subnational, national and global scales. Socio-economic and environmental services provided by all types of forests go well beyond forest boundaries, benefit all humankind and maintain conditions for life on Earth. Increasing forest benefits for sustainable development is a clear, concrete, aspirational and easy-to-communicate concept.

Integrated approaches are needed for enhancing the multiple contributions of forests to sustainable development goals (SDGs) as they will harness synergies and balance cross-sectoral tradeoffs between forests and other closely interlinked development issues.

Several international instruments and processes offer a range of goals, objectives, targets and indicators on forests, based on which forest-related targets and indicators for the SDGs can be developed. These include, among others, the Millennium Development Goals; the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (Forest Instrument) and its four shared Global Objectives on Forests agreed by the United Nations Forum on Forests and subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA); the International Tropical Timber Agreement; the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including its 5 Goals and 20 Aichi Targets; the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and decisions on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+); the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, including the concept on land degradation neutrality embraced at Rio+20; the UN Zero Hunger Challenge; and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration.

Based on this background, the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests<sup>1</sup> provide as input the following ten targets for forests and trees outside forests for integration in the SDGs, building on existing goals, objectives and targets of the above-mentioned global intergovernmental instruments and policy fora, many of which have been adopted and reaffirmed by governments at the Rio+20 Conference and in UNGA resolutions. Such input is applicable to different constellations of SDGs, and can be transferred and tailored by countries to their national and local circumstances, capacities and level of ambition.

**Target 1: All the world's forests are managed sustainably.** Sustainable forest management (SFM) aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations. This target focuses on the long-term sustainability of forest resources and landscapes. It is a positive, aspirational, action-oriented, forward-looking and easy-to-communicate concept that addresses, in a balanced way, all the pillars of sustainable development. SFM is a tool for balancing diverse objectives and managing their tradeoffs through participatory decision-making processes. It is applicable to all countries,

---

<sup>1</sup> Members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) that have supported this paper are: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO); the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN); the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO); the Global Environment Facility (GEF); the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD); the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); the UN Development Programme (UNDP); the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention to Combat Climate Change (UNFCCC); the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFF); the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF); and the World Bank.

including countries that have lost their forests and wish to re-establish them as well as countries that are committed to halt the loss of forest cover. This target can be easily translated to national conditions as SFM covers all forest activities and functions, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and is applicable at all geographic scales. The Member States of the United Nations have already made a political commitment to achieving SFM in the Forest Instrument. Parties of the CBD have also committed to functions of SFM, in line with Targets 5, 7, 11 and 15 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

**Target 2: The world's forests and tree resources improved.** The value of forests and trees outside forests as natural assets is determined by both their quantity (area and volume) and quality (e.g. their composition and health). The extent and quality of forests and trees outside forests are easy concepts to communicate. This target underpins biodiversity, climate, and all the other multiple benefits of forests.

**Target 3: Climate change mitigation benefits from forests increased.** Deforestation and forest degradation are a major cause of global carbon dioxide emissions, but sustainably managed forests are important carbon sinks. Protecting forests, improving forest management and establishing new forests all increase the climate-mitigation benefits of forests. Carbon stocks in harvested wood products in use can also be increased.

**Target 4: Direct and indirect contributions of forests and trees to food security and nutrition increased.** Forests and trees are major sources of nutritious foods, such as fruits, nuts, leaves, oils, honey, wild meat and insects, and 2.4 billion people rely on fuelwood for cooking. Forests boost agricultural productivity and benefit agriculture by, for example, regulating the climate, providing fresh water, and harbouring pollinators.

**Target 5: Poverty reduced through increased income and employment from forests.** Hundreds of millions of people worldwide obtain income and employment from forests, especially in developing countries. Empowering women in the forest sector creates significant employment and business opportunities for them and has important spillover benefits for households and communities in terms of food security, health and education.

**Target 6: Forest-related biodiversity conserved and improved.** Forests hold up to 80 percent of all terrestrial biodiversity. Biodiversity underpins forest productivity, resilience and adaptive capacity and is essential for maintaining ecological processes such as carbon sequestration, pollination, seed dispersal and decomposition. Biodiversity is fundamental for food security.

**Target 7: Fresh water supply from forest areas improved.** Forests are natural filtration and storage systems that supply an estimated 75 percent of usable water globally. Forests promote the infiltration of rainwater into soil and then into groundwater, providing water supplies in dry periods and helping reduce flood peaks.

**Target 8: Resilience of people and forests against slow-onset and extreme events increased.** Forests and trees increase the resilience of food-production systems and therefore the resilience of households to shocks and slow-onset changes. SFM increases resilience through approaches that value and apply local knowledge and in which management is adapted over time based on monitoring, evaluation and learning.

**Target 9: Contributions of forests to a green economy increased.** Forests and trees will play a crucial role in the move to a green economy, providing, for example, a sustainable source of bioenergy and biomaterials, recreation opportunities, and diverse genetic materials for foods and medicines.

**Target 10: Increased financial resources from all sources to sustainably manage forests.** The current level of resources allocated to SFM is insufficient. Action is needed at all levels to mobilize sufficient financing from all sources to manage the world's forests sustainably.