

Date of submission: October 10, 2014

Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs to UNFF11

Regional/Sub-regional Organization/Process:

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General Information

The multi-year programme of work – MYPOW (2007–2015) of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) sets a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. Since its eighth session in 2009 the Forum has solicited inputs from relevant regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, organizations and processes as an integral part of session deliberations.¹

¹ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the parent body of the Forum, through its resolution 2006/49, agreed to “Strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes, with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum.”

The eleventh session of the UNFF (UNFF11) will be held from 4 to 15 May 2015 in New York. In accordance with the Forum's MYPOW, the overall theme of UNFF11 is *Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward on the international arrangement on forests (IAF)*, with the following sub themes:

1. Reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options
2. Reviewing the progress towards the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (hereinafter referred to as the "Forest Instrument")
3. Reviewing the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

In completing this questionnaire, you may choose to extract the relevant information and include it in your submission, if information is already available, in existing reports and/or documents. Otherwise, you may provide the reference or document itself to the UNFF Secretariat, indicating the relevant section. Please note that the Year 2007 – the year of the adoption of the Forest Instrument (2007), should be used as a baseline throughout the document.

Moreover, in view of the limitation of sizing of the pertinent Secretary-General's report, the Forum Secretariat suggests no more than 250 words of written input per answer. We would be most grateful if you could send your inputs to **unff@un.org**, fax: +1 917-367-3186, by **30**

others, and the relevant documents will be posted on AFF's website.

Also the SADC Timber Association will go a long way in streamlining trade between the SADC countries and between the sub-region and countries outside it.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

- The private sector in wood processing, marketing and trade, is in many countries not well organised, its actors remain scattered, remains low in national government priorities and lacks a champion for its cause. In other words the private sector in forestry in the majority of African countries has yet to be established as an entity that one can dialogue

- Corruption is a serious challenge to overcome.
- Inadequate funding to develop and/or strengthen, as well as operationalise, institutions that can promote good forestry stewardship, including containing illegality in forestry and related activities.

5. List and briefly describe activities aimed at mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources for SFM.

FAO and AFF collaborated in organising an expert meeting on national forest funds (NFFs) in 2013 in Mombasa, Kenya. The meeting brought together 22 participants from 10 African countries including 4 from outside Africa. The meeting gave opportunity for knowledge sharing by specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities involved in establishing and successfully managing NFFs, conservation trust funds and climate/REDD+ funds. The activities that are currently financed are mainly afforestation/reforestation, forest protection/conservation, policy review/development, value addition, marketing and trade as well as training and research.

These funds are accessed through loans, grants, special windows, direct payments, and revolving funds, among others. The specific funding sources were identified for the participating countries. The major beneficiaries in these countries are mainly government ministries, communities, CSOs, and the private sector.

It was observed that the amount of interest charged for revolving funds needs to be reasonably low in order to prevent exclusion of the poor. Also improving awareness and decentralising access points will prove to be an effective way of improving access to these funds. Good fund governance is a crucial element to boost confidence of fund providers and ensure that funds are used for intended purpose only. In this regard, clear quantifiable targets, focusing on SMART activities, working with stakeholders outside the sector and focusing on value for money are important. Strong management for the funds, independent external evaluations, capacity building and clear accountability and reporting will greatly improve the governance of NFFs. All this, and other relevant information has been shared widely by FAO and AFF.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

The current progress in terms of establishing effective and efficient NFFs in Africa is highly uneven, with some countries having consolidated gains made over the last few years while others are behind.

B. Progress towards the achievement of the GOFs

1. Please describe actions taken by your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process and/or by other major stakeholders in your region/sub-region to help achieve the following:

GOF1, “Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation”

Many of the activities of the African Forest Forum have targeted reversing the loss of forest cover at various scales by participating in and supporting African delegates in forums that address this issue and identify measures to contain it. For example AFF participates in COPs

participating countries. The major beneficiaries in these countries are mainly government ministries, communities, CSOs, and the private sector.

Good fund governance was identified as a crucial element to boost confidence of fund providers and ensure that funds are used for intended purpose only. In this regard, clear quantifiable targets, focusing on SMART activities, working with stakeholders outside the sector and focusing on value for money are important. Strong management for the funds, independent external evaluations, capacity building and clear accountability and reporting will greatly improve the governance of NFFs.

All this, and other relevant information has been shared widely by FAO and AFF.

2. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on progress towards the achievement of the GOFs.

AFF and FAO have jointly worked on a number of issues related to GOFs, including climate change issues in African forestry, as well as on work related to the Great Green Wall of Sahara and Sahel Initiative. ICRAF and AFF have also collaborated on climate change issues as well as others related to 'greening the Sahel'. Practically all the work done by AFF contributes to achieving the GOFs.

C. Contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs

- 1.

3. Please provide additional information specific to your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process on MDGs forest-related work.

- MDGs combined social, economic and environmental goals to make wise use of available resources to improve the welfare of people and their nations, as well as their environment.
- However, no MDG focused exclusively on any of the three most abundant and life supporting resources; namely water, air and forests.
- Also only the utility aspects of these resources feature in practically all MDGs without capturing the full value of these three resources to human, animal and plant survival.
- Forests and trees are implicit in the 'environment' MDG, and appear only at the indicator level. The MDGs therefore downplayed forests.
- 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, hence the MDGs overlooked the forest sector.

Section 003-204-05-12 MCP MID 10.9121.2-12 MCP 12 0.5 ref 185 vd 0 5811518252

Yes.

3. What measures has your organization undertaken to strengthen the current IAF?

Please list the most important measures (maximum five):

- Provided key note presentation at AHEG1;
- Participated actively in the development of forest financing strategy;
- Backstopping of African delegates in preparation and negotiation during the UNFF sessions;
- Provided inputs to the deliberations of COFO22.

4. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened regional/sub-regional component in a future IAF?

A future IAF will have to:

- Establish mechanisms for increased collaboration at regional level; for example, designating staff at the Secretariat to guide the organization of regional sessions that feed into the biennial sessions of UNFF
- Strengthen how the regional component collaborates with other key global players and initiatives that relate to GOFs and NLBI, like major groups (that are weakly represented at regular UNFF sessions) and UN-REDD.
- Strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on implementation of its activities.
- Significantly improve catalyzing, mobilizing and generating financial and technical scientific resources to activities. This is an area that UNFF should put substantially more work into capitalizing on regional financial institutions.
- Strengthening international cooperation of forestry by increasing the visibility, appreciation and inclusion of forestry in many regional initiatives, fr18(i)-8)18

major stakeholders to support the work of UNFF? If yes, please evaluate the overall collaboration.