



United Nations

United Nations Forum on Forests

Report on the sixteenth session

Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 2021
Supplement No. 22





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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution for adoption by the Council

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

.. please insert text of E/CN.18/2021/L.3 ..

B. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

2. The United Nations Forum on Forests recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its sixteenth session and provisional agenda for its seventeenth session

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its sixteenth session;¹

(b) Notes that the seventeenth session of the Forum will be held at Headquarters from 9 to 13 May 2022;

(c) Approves the provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Forum as set out below:

Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

... please insert text of E/CN.18/2021/L.1 ...

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2021, Supplement No. 22 (E/2021/42).*

C. Decision brought to the attention of the Council

3. The following draft decision adopted by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its sixteenth session is brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council:

Dates and venue of the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

... please insert text of E/CN.18/2021/L.2 ...

Chapter II

Organization of the session

A. Work of the session

4. The United Nations Forum on Forests, pursuant to the organization of work adopted on 14 April 2021, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2021/213, and taking into account the impact of the prevailing conditions relating to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the working arrangements for its sixteenth session, convened seven virtual informal meetings to consider the items on its agenda. The proceedings of the virtual informal meetings are reflected in annex I to the present report.

5. The Forum held its sixteenth session through virtual informal meetings and considered draft proposals, including the draft report on its session, through silence procedure (see annex II on correspondence relating to the work of the session).

6. On 29 April 2021, the Forum, upon the recommendation of the [f] Chair (Suriname) and pursuant to Council decision 2021/213, adopted through a silence procedure draft resolution E/CN.18/2021/L.3, entitled “Programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2022–2024” (see chap. I, sect. A), submitted under agenda item 6 (Adoption of the Forum’s programme of work for the period 2022–2024).

7. Also on the same date, the Forum, upon the recommendation of the Chair (Suriname) and pursuant to Council decision 2021/213, adopted through a silence procedure the following draft decisions:

(a) Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (E/CN.18/2021/L.1), submitted under agenda item 8 (Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Forum) (see chap. I, sect. B);

(b) Proposed dates and venue of the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (E/CN.18/2021/L.2), submitted under agenda item 7 (Dates and venue of the seventeenth session of the Forum) (see chap. I, sect. C).

8. On 30 April 2021, the Forum, upon the recommendation of the Chair (Suriname) and pursuant to Council decision 2021/213, adopted through a silence procedure its draft report (E/CN.18/2021/L.4), submitted under agenda item 9 (Adoption of the report of the Forum on its sixteenth session), and entrusted the Rapporteur with its finalization in collaboration with the secretariat, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2021 session.

B. Election of officers

9. The Forum, pursuant to Council decisions 2020/205, 2020/206 and 2020/219 and upon the recommendation of the [m] Chair (Slovakia) of its fifteenth session, elected through a silence procedure that expired without objection on 2 July 2020, Kitty Sweeb of Suriname as Chair, and Javad Momeni of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Jesse Mahoney of Australia, as Vice-Chairs of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum.

10. The Forum, pursuant to Council decision 2021/213 and upon the recommendation of the [f] Chair (Suriname) of its sixteenth session, elected through a silence procedure that expired without objection on 14 April 2021, Musah Abu-Juam of Ghana and Tomasz Markiewicz of Poland as Vice-Chairs of the Forum at its

sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, and appointed the Vice-Chair, Javad Momeni of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to serve concurrently as Rapporteur of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum.

C. Agenda

11. . On 14 April 2021, the Forum, upon the recommendation of the [f] Chair (Suriname) and pursuant to Council decision 2021/213, adopted through a silence procedure the provisional agenda of its sixteenth session as contained in document E/CN.18/2021/1 and the provisional organization of work of the session, taking into account the modalities recommended by the Bureau of the sixteenth session of the Forum.²

12. The provisional agenda of the sixteenth session of the Forum read as follows:

... please insert text of E/CN.18/2021/1 ...

D. Documentation

13. The documentation considered by the Forum at its sixteenth session is set out in annex IV to the present report. Other relevant documentation is also available on the website of the Forum (<https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>).

² Circulated in a letter dated 3 February 2021 from the [f] Chair (Suriname) to all permanent representatives and permanent observers through e-deleGATE.

Annex I

Proceedings of the virtual informal meetings of the sixteenth session of the Forum

- A. Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:**
- (a) Thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022 in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030;**
 - (b) Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:**
 - (i) New announcements of voluntary national contributions;**
 - (ii) Updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities;**
 - (c) Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities:**
 - (i) Contributions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its member organizations and the United Nations system to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on the workplan of the Partnership;**
 - (ii) Contributions of regional and subregional organizations and processes to achieving the thematic priorities;**
 - (iii) Contributions of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on major group workplans;**
 - (d) Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2021, the work towards a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other international forest-related developments;**
 - (e) Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests in 2021;**
 - (f) Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network;**
 - (g) Monitoring, assessment and reporting:**
 - (i) Forum flagship publication;**
 - (ii) Global core set of forest-related indicators;**
 - (iii) Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020.**

1. The Forum considered item 3 at its second to sixth virtual meetings, from 26 to 28 April 2021. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretariat on technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and adoption of the Forum’s programme of work for the period 2022–2024 (E/CN.18/2019/2);

(b) Note by the Secretariat on implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners towards achieving the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022 (E/CN.18/2019/3);

(c) Note by the Secretariat on means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (E/CN.18/2019/4);

(d) Note by the Secretariat on monitoring, assessment and reporting: progress on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument, and voluntary national contributions (E/CN.18/2019/5).

2. At the second virtual informal meeting, on 26 April 2021, the [m] Officer-in-Charge of the Forum Secretariat introduced the reports on item 3 “Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests”.

3. For the Chair’s summary of the discussions, see annex III.

General discussions

4. At the second virtual informal meeting, on 26 April 2021, the Forum held a general discussion (on item 3 (b) and (e)) and heard statements by the representatives of the [f] United States, [m] China, [m] Bangladesh, the [m] Holy See, [m] Turkey, [f] Australia, [m] Malaysia, [f] Ghana, [f] Guatemala, [m] Mongolia, the [f] Russian Federation, [f] Ukraine, [m] Indonesia and [m] Japan.

5. A statement was also made by the [f] European Union (on behalf of its Member States), in its capacity as observer.

6. The representative of the [f] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (also on behalf of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests) participated in the discussion.

7. At the fifth virtual informal meeting, on 28 April 2021, the Forum held a general discussion (on item 3 (f)) and heard an introductory statement by the [f] representative of the Forum Secretariat.

8. Statements were made by the representatives of [f] Malaysia, [m] Indonesia, [m] Peru, the [f] United Kingdom, [f] Argentina, [f] Mexico, [f] Switzerland, [m] China, [f] Ukraine, the [f] United States, [f] South Africa, [m] Fiji, [f] Japan, [m] Panama, [m] Brazil, [m] Chile and [f] Ecuador.

9. A statement was also made by the [f] European Union (on behalf of its Member States), in its capacity as observer.

10. The representative of the [f] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations also participated in the discussion.

11. The [m] representative of the Forum Secretariat responded to comments made and questions posed by delegations.

12. At the sixth virtual informal meeting, on 28 April 2021, the Forum held a general discussion (on item 3 (g) (ii) and (iii)) and heard introductory statements by the [m] representative of the Forum Secretariat; the [f] Deputy Director of the Forestry Division

of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Tiina Vahanen; the [m] Deputy Director, also of the Forestry Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Ewald Rametsteiner; and the [f] Senior Researcher of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, Stephanie Linser.

13. Statements were made by the representatives of [m] Indonesia, [f] Mexico, [f] Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), [f] Canada, [f] Ukraine, [f] China, [f] Malaysia, the [f] United States, [m] Japan, [m] Kenya, [f] Australia, the [f] Russian Federation, [m] New Zealand, the [f] Republic of Korea and [m] South Africa.

14. Statements were also made by the representatives of the [m] Asian Forest Cooperative Organization and the [m] Amazon Cooperative Treaty Organization.

15. A statement was made by the [m] Vice-Chair (Australia).

Launch of the Global Forest Goals Report 2021

16. At the second virtual informal meeting, on 26 April 2021, the Forum held a panel discussion (on item 3 (g) (i)) on the launch of the Global Forest Goals report 2021, chaired and moderated by the [m] Vice-Chair (Australia) who made a statement.

17. Opening remarks were made by the [m] Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (pre-recorded) and the [f] Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (pre-recorded).

18. The [m] Officer-in-Charge of the Forum Secretariat presented the key findings of the report.

19. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Deputy Director-General of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China, Liu Xin (pre-recorded); the Chief Conservator of Forests of Kenya, Julius Kamau (pre-recorded); the Director of the Canadian Forest Service, Maureen Whelan; the Manager of Strategic Corporate Planning in the Forestry Department of Jamaica, Davia Carty (pre-recorded); the Chief State Counsellor at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Slovakia, Boris Greguška (pre-recorded); and the Director of the Forestry Division at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Mette Wilkie.

Interactive panel discussions

20. At its third virtual informal meeting, on 27 April 2021, the Forum held an interactive panel discussion (on item 3 (a) and (d)), chaired and moderated by the [m] Vice-Chair (Poland).

21. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Ivonne Higuero; the Director of Programmes at the Global Environment Facility, Gustavo Fonseca; and the Director of Operations at the International Tropical Timber Organization, Sheam Satkuru.

22. In the ensuing interactive discussion, statements were made by the representatives of [m] Indonesia, [m] Brazil, [f] Peru, [m] Japan, [f] Mexico, [m] Kenya, the [m] Democratic Republic of Korea, [m] Malaysia, [f] Argentina, the [f] United States, [m] China, [f] Australia, the [f] Russian Federation, [m] El Salvador and [m] New Zealand.

23. A statement was also made by the [f] European Union (on behalf of its Member States), in its capacity as observer.

24. The representative of the [m] Asian Forest Cooperation Organization also participated in the discussion.

25. At its fourth virtual informal meeting, on 27 April 2021, the Forum held an interactive panel discussion (on item 3 (a) and (c)), chaired and moderated by the [m] Vice-Chair (Ghana).

26. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, Mette Wilkie; the Head of the Joint European Commission for Europe and the Forestry and Timber Section of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab; the Deputy Executive Director of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation, Lu Wenming; the Executive Director of the Brazilian Tree Industry, José Carlos da Fonseca Junior; a representative from Wageningen University and the International Forestry Student Association, Frederik Buchholz; and a representative of the Forestry Network of Sub-Saharan Africa, Joseph Cobbinah.

27. In the ensuing interactive discussion, statements were made by the representatives of [f] Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), [m] Japan, [m] Kenya, [f] Peru, [m] Indonesia, [f] Mexico, [f] Finland, the [f] United States, [m] Guatemala, [m] Brazil and [m] Malaysia.

28. A statement was also made by the representative of the [m] United Nations Environment Programme.

29. The representatives of the [m] Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and the [m] International Union of Forest Research Organizations also participated in the discussion.

B. Forum trust fund

30. The Forum considered item 4 at its seventh virtual informal meeting, on 29 April 2021. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests (E/CN.18/2021/6).

31. At the same meeting, the Forum held a general discussion on the item and heard statements by the representatives of the [f] Republic of Korea and [m] China.

C. Emerging issues: impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on forests and the forest sector

32. The Forum considered item 5 at its first virtual informal meeting, on 26 April 2021. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the impact of the pandemic on forests and the forest sector (E/CN.18/2021/7).

33. At the same meeting, the Officer-in-Charge of the Forum Secretariat introduced the report.

High-level round table on major forest-related developments

34. At the first virtual informal meeting, on 26 April 2021, the Forum held its high-level round table discussion on major forest-related developments chaired and moderated by the Chair (Suriname) who made a statement.

35. Statements were made by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Munir Akram (Pakistan) (pre-recorded); the [m] President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, Volkan Bozkir (Turkey); the Deputy Secretary-General of

the United Nations, Amina Mohammed; the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Qu Dongyu (pre-recorded); and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema.

36. Statements were also made by the following lead discussants: the Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Tina Birmpili; the Director of the Transparency Division of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat, Donald Cooper; and the Executive Director of the Pulp Manufacturers Association of South Africa, Jane Molony.

37. In the ensuing interactive discussion, statements were made by the Minister for Environment and Climate Action of Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), João Pedro Matos Fernandes; the representative of [m] Slovenia; the Director of the National Institute of Forest Conservation and Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife of Honduras, Mario Antonio Martinez Padilla; the Deputy Minister for Forestry in the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Patrik Mlynar; [m] Honduras; the Special Envoy to the Alliance for the Preservation of Tropical Rainforests of France, Pierre Henri Guignard; the Vice-Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Nicaragua, Javier Gutiérrez; the Deputy Minister of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia, Agus Justianto; the Director-General for European and International Forest Policy at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany, Eva Mueller; the Director at the Office of Conservation and Water in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs of the United States, Christine Dawson; the Director-General of the International Cooperation Center at the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China, Chunfeng Wang; the representative of the [m] Republic of Korea; the Director of the Promotion and Competitiveness Directorate of Peru, Marco Llanos; the representative of [m] Colombia; the Director-General of the Forest Service of Brazil, Pedro Neto; the representative of [f] Argentina; the Chief Conservator of Forests of Kenya, Julius Kamau; and the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the [m] Philippines, Marcial Amaro.

38. The observers for the [m] Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and the [m] International Union of Forest Research Organizations also participated in the interactive discussion.

39. The [m] Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs made closing remarks (pre-recorded).

40. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex III.

Annex II

Correspondence relating to the work of the sixteenth session of the Forum

- 29 June 2020 Letter from the Chair (Slovakia) of the fifteenth session on the election under silence procedure of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum
- 2 July 2020 Letter from the Chair (Slovakia) of the fifteenth session on the conclusion of the silence procedure and election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum
- 3 February 2021 Letter from the Chair (Suriname) of the sixteenth session on the recommended modalities and provisional organization of work as recommended by the Bureau of the sixteenth session of the Forum
- 9 April 2021 Letter from the Chair (Suriname) of the sixteenth session on the adoption under silence procedure of the provisional agenda and organization of work of the sixteenth session of the Forum, and on the election of the Vice-Chairs and the appointment of the Rapporteur of the sixteenth and seventeenth session of the Forum
- 16 April 2021 Letter from the Chair (Suriname) of the sixteenth session on the conclusion of the silence procedure on and adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of work of the sixteenth session of the Forum, and on the election of the Vice-Chairs and the appointment of the Rapporteur of the sixteenth and seventeenth session of the Forum.
- 26 April 2021 Letter from the Chair (Suriname) of the sixteenth session placing under silence procedure the draft resolution entitled “Programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for 2022-2024” (E/CN.18/2021/L.3), the draft decision entitled “Proposed dates and venue of the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” (E/CN.18.2021/L.2) and the “Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” (E/CN.18/2021/L.1).
- 27 April 2021 Letter from the Chair (Suriname) of the sixteenth session placing under silence procedure the draft report for the sixteenth session of the Forum (E/CN.18/2021/L.4).
- 3 May 2021 Letter from the Chair (Suriname) of the sixteenth session on the conclusion of the silence procedure on and adoption of the “Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” (E/CN.18/2021/L.1), the draft decision entitled “Proposed dates and venue of the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” (E/CN.18.2021/L.2), the draft resolution entitled “Programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for 2022-2024” (E/CN.18/2021/L.3), and the draft report for the sixteenth session of the Forum (E/CN.18/2021/L.4).

Annex III

Summary by the Chair of the sixteenth session of the Forum

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This Chair's summary summarizes the technical discussions at the sixteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF16), including UNFF16 High Level Round Table in Section II.A. The Chair's proposals emerging from the UNFF16 technical discussions are contained in Section II.B, for transmission to UNFF17. Section III is the Chair's summary of relevant UNFF16 discussions and constitutes the Forum's input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2021 (HLPF 2021) using the template provided by the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This Chair's summary is not a consensus negotiated outcome of the Forum.

II. CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF UNFF16 TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

2. As a technical session, UNFF16 deliberations were conducted in accordance with the guidance provided in Annex I of ECOSOC resolution 2020/14. Accordingly, the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2021–2024 includes two thematically linked bienniums: 2021–2022 (UNFF16 and UNFF17) and 2023–2024 (UNFF18 and UNFF19). The thematic priorities are to be based on the six Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and 26 associated targets, taking into account the post-2020 programme of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and other relevant international developments. The thematic priorities for each biennium should be decided upon by the UNFF Bureau, in consultation with members of the Forum.

3. The UNFF16 Bureau decided that GFG1 and GFG2, along with three cross cutting GFGs (GFG4, GFG5 and GFG6) should be the main thematic priorities for UNFF16 and UNFF17. Accordingly, the thematic priorities for UNFF16 and UNFF17 are: (i) Reversing the loss of forest cover; (ii) Enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits; and (iii) mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence, for sustainable forest management³.

A. SUMMARY OF UNFF16 TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS

Agenda item 5: Emerging issues “Impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on forests and the forest sector”

4. The Officer-in-Charge of the UNFF Secretariat introduced the Secretariat Note on Agenda Item 5 (E/CN.18/2021/7) on the impacts of COVID-19 on sustainable forest management.

High-level Round Table on major forest-related developments⁴ (26 April 2021)

5. Following Chair's opening remarks, the President of the ECOSOC, the President of the General Assembly, Deputy Secretary-General, Director General of FAO, and Executive Secretary of the CBD delivered remarks at the opening segment of the High-Level Round Table. The representatives from UNCCD and UNFCCC also shared remarks. This was followed by an interactive discussion, during which participants from governments, international organizations, and private sector discussed how forests can be part of the solution to current global crises in the post COVID-19 era, and how to further engage the private sector to contribute towards efforts to address these challenges. Several Members of the Forum also highlighted their initiatives in preserving forests and promoting sustainable forest management. The USG of DESA made closing remarks at the end of the interactive discussion. Representatives from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Portugal on behalf of the EU, Slovenia, USA, Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) and IUFRO made statements.

³ For more information about the decision of the UNFF16 Bureau, including the interlinkages/contribution of the thematic priorities of UNFF16 to the SDGs³ under review of 2021 session of the HLPF, and international forest related developments please see: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>.

⁴ Please see the concept note of the UNFF16 High Level Round Table at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>.

6. Main points emerging from the discussions at the high-level round table included the following:
- (a) The COVID-19 crisis continues to impact all countries around the world, devastating the lives of people, upending economies, threatening societies, increasing inequalities, negatively affecting the lives of women and girls disproportionately, and thus creating major setbacks to global efforts to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
 - (b) The COVID-19 crisis has negatively impacted on the delivery of sustainable forest management, including forest governance and forest financing availability, and the livelihoods of forest dependent people, creating potential setbacks in efforts to deliver the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and the Global Forest Goals.
 - (c) The COVID-19 global pandemic has been a stark reminder that protection, conservation and restoration of nature, in particular, forests, is essential for preventing future infectious and zoonotic diseases. Forests have the potential to offset many of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global challenges. It is therefore critical to strengthen sustainable forest management and actions to halt illegal and unsustainable forest practices in post-pandemic recovery strategies. Forests and trees outside forests, and agroforestry can also play an important role in addressing hunger and food insecurity in the post pandemic era.
 - (d) The interlinked and mutually reinforcing threats of climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, forest fires, desertification, land degradation, pollution and other disasters continue to threaten the life of people and ecological integrity of the planet. Forest-based actions, grounded in sustainable forest management, have a crucial role to play in addressing these threats, in line with relevant international agreements.
 - (e) The UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 and its six Global Forest Goals provide a framework of forest-based actions for the synergetic implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity and the outcome of its ongoing consultations on the post 2020 global biodiversity framework.
 - (f) Upcoming international conferences, including the High-Level Political Forum in July 2021; the Food Systems Summit and High-Level Dialogue on Energy in September 2021; and COP15 of the CBD and COP 26 of the UNFCCC in the later part of 2021, along with the launch of UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, all offer opportunities to help shape an inclusive and sustainable future for all.
 - (g) Science and technology, adequate financial resources and increased capacity building, data collection and analysis are all critically important in addressing the negative impacts of COVID-19 and reducing the risk of future pandemics. A better science-policy-society interface, increased investment and more effective governance, are essential for a better recovery from the current crisis.
 - (h) Strengthening inter-sectoral consultation, cross-sectoral collaboration, and stakeholder engagement are important steps to ensure sustainable and integrated land-use planning. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for enhanced use of online learning platforms, and the expanded use of information and communication technologies.
 - (i) Appropriate policy and fiscal frameworks are needed to facilitate and promote private sector involvement in sustainable supply chains. The private sector should be responsive and agile, and more proactive in advancing sustainable forest management practices.
 - (j) An assessment of the challenges faced by countries, as well as strategies and recovery measures taken by countries to reduce the impacts of COVID-19 on forests and the forest sector, should be conducted by the UNFF Secretariat with the aim to build forward better, in collaboration with Members of the Forum, CPF member organizations and stakeholders. .
 - (k) The proposals contained in the Note by the Secretariat on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector, the content of which was derived from the studies on the initial assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on SFM, are very valuable and encouraged to be implemented at the national, regional and international levels.

Launch of the UNFF Flagship Publication: Global Forest Goals Report 2021

7. A special launch event was held for the release of the first UNFFS/DESA flagship publication 'Global Forest Goals Report 2021'. The USG of DESA, and the Deputy Director-General of FAO made opening remarks at the launch event. The USG of DESA indicated that this inaugural report provided information on the actions taken and

the progress made towards the GFGs using national data and information from UNFF voluntary national reports (VNRs) and voluntary national contributions (VNCs), as well as biophysical data from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2020). He also noted that it included national success stories and best practices as well as the gaps and challenges which were identified by countries in their efforts to make progress towards the GFGs. He emphasized that this new DESA flagship publication provided a snapshot of the myriad actions that were being taken around the world. He emphasized that such efforts should be amplified and accelerated if the world is to meet the deadline of achieving the GFGs by 2030. The Deputy Director-General of FAO described how FAO was supporting countries in collection, analysis and use of forest data. She also highlighted FAO's efforts to strengthen national capacities for better and more transparent data. She noted that the Global Forest Goals Report 2021 was an excellent example of successful collaboration between the Forum Secretariat and the FAO Forestry Division and expressed FAO's readiness to continue this collaboration in the future. Following the opening segment of the launch event, the Officer-in-Charge of the UNFF Secretariat presented the key findings of the report. This was followed by panel presentations by representatives from China, Kenya, Canada, Jamaica, Slovak Republic and FAO. Panelists reported on their experiences in preparation of their voluntary national reports, and the challenges and opportunities in this regard. In his closing remarks, the Chair noted that countries who had provided national data and information that formed the basis of the report would have the opportunity to provide their factual corrections, if any, to the UNFF Secretariat within three weeks of the launch, by 17 May 2021. The Chair also informed that the discussion on item 3(g) would continue during the second meeting of the Forum on 28 April and that Members would have an opportunity to share their views on the flagship publication and future steps in this regard.

Introduction of the UNFF16 Official Documents

8. The Officer-in-Charge of the Secretariat introduced the Secretariat Notes, contained in documents E/CN.18/2021/2 on implementation of the UNSPF, E/CN.18/2021/3 on enhanced cooperation, E/CN.18/2021/4 on means of implementation, E/CN.18/2021/5 on monitoring, assessment and reporting, and E/CN.18/2021/6 on the UNFF Trust Fund.

Agenda item 3b: Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the UNSPF

(i) New announcements of voluntary national contributions

(ii) Updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities

9. Several Members spoke under this agenda item. Ghana announced new VNC for the period of 2021 to 2024 towards achievement of several targets of the GFGs, namely, target 1.2, 1.3, 2.3, 3.2 and 4.1. Australia, Bangladesh, China, Guatemala, Holy See, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, USA, Turkey, and Ukraine informed of several initiatives and actions which their respective governments have been taking in advancing the achievement of the GFGs. China, Indonesia and Ukraine also reported on the progress on their previously announced VNCs.⁵

10. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

- a) The UNSPF is a reference framework for ambitious and transformational actions. The actions in advancing achievement of the GFGs should address both the urgent needs of nature and humans, especially during the current global pandemic and its aftermath, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- b) Countries should be encouraged to announce the VNCs to accelerate achievement of the GFGs and provide updates on the progress made on their already announced VNCs, without duplicating the national reporting process.
- c) Countries are facing multiple challenges in achieving the GFGs, including lack of sufficient investment and resources. Some countries also face severe disasters such as forest fires which impacted negatively their efforts in restoring forests. International cooperation should be promoted to assist countries to deal with such challenges.

⁵ The announced VNCs are available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vncs/index.html>

- d) To accelerate achievement of the GFGs, it is important to: use existing frameworks and mechanisms; promote SFM and REDD+ practices worldwide; strengthen sustainable food systems and consider sustainability issues when developing new food systems; and address loss of forests and biodiversity and food insecurity.

Agenda item 3(e): Implementation of the UNSPF Communication and Outreach Strategy, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests in 2021

11. The themes proposed by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) for the International Day of Forests (IDF) “Forests and Sustainable Consumption and Production” for 2022 and “Forests and Health” for 2023 were supported. Representatives of Australia, EU, Mongolia, Russian Federation, USA, and FAO highlighted some of their activities in raising awareness on forests and promoting the IDF 2021.

12. The following main points emerged from the discussion:

- (a) Delegations welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat in implementing the UNSPF communications and outreach strategy, and encouraged additional UNSPF advocacy where appropriate, as well as its work regarding the role of forests during the COVID-19 pandemic through policy briefs and social media.
- (b) Delegations encouraged greater engagement with cross-sectoral audiences, including through the development of targeted communication approaches for non-forest industries such as agriculture and mining, to underpin and accelerate reach and uptake of the Forum’s communications and outreach messaging.
- (c) Online and social media should be further used as efficient means to address the broad public worldwide. Engagement of well-known persons in advocating for forests and implementation of UNSPF is also another effective communication means.
- (d) The XV World Forestry Congress, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and other global events provide opportunities to share the newly launched Global Forest Goals 2021 report. The 40-page summary of the GFG Report 2021 could be distilled further for a non-technical audience.
- (e) Creative digital and virtual planning of the IDF, even after the pandemic, should be further encouraged. The social media toolkit and Trello board successfully communicated IDF’s themes and reached an estimated 82 million accounts last year, and thus, need to be promoted.

Agenda item 3(a): Thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022 in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

Agenda item 3(d): Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2021, the work towards a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other international forest-related developments

13. The discussion on the thematic priorities was facilitated by a panel comprising representatives of the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the secretariat of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)⁶. Panelists presented the activities within their respective organizations, including the areas of their contributions to achieving the thematic priorities of the Forum. During the interactive discussions, representatives of several countries and partners shared their activities undertaken to advance and accelerate the achievement of the GFGs. The representatives of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, El Salvador, EU, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Russian Federation, USA, and AFoCO made statements.

14. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

- (a) Forests are the terrestrial ecosystem with the main reservoir of biological diversity and greatest capacity for carbon sequestration. Sustainably managed forests have a vital role in contributing to food security and sustaining livelihoods for many people worldwide, especially in areas where agricultural opportunities are

⁶ The concept note for panel 1 on 27 April 2021 is available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>

limited, such as forests and trees in dryland areas. Forests and trees in urban and peri-urban areas contribute significantly to a healthier environment and to more resilient cities. The function of forests in reducing disaster risks and strengthening community resilience is also indispensable for sustainable development and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- (b) Deforestation and forest degradation continue at an alarming rate in some regions. Climate change, biodiversity loss, disasters, forest fires, land degradation and other challenges are hampering the efforts of countries to advance implementation of the UNSPF and achievement of the GFGs.
- (c) Forests and forest-based actions play a key role in addressing multiple challenges that the international community faces today. Addressing these challenges and accelerating progress towards the GFGs require advancing an integrated sustainable approach towards land use planning and land use management and promoting inter-sectoral collaboration. Advancing an integrated sustainable approach to land and ecosystem management will also assist in promoting the “one health approach”. In this respect, increased afforestation, reforestation, and restoration efforts are needed.
- (d) Dissemination of information and success stories regarding implementation of the UNSPF, including on actions taken by governments to alleviate poverty among forest-dependent communities; efforts to strengthen the value chains of non-timber forest products; increased financing and public-private partnership; integration of the GFGs in national and international development programmes; and strengthened management capacity of local communities, as well as strengthened support to small and medium sized businesses, especially during the ongoing pandemic situation are key factors for achieving the GFGs and making progress towards the SDGs .
- (e) Enhancing governance, transparency and gender equality; empowering indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth; addressing illegal logging; applying science, scientific research and new technological tools, including digital technology; and enhancing international cooperation to support developing countries, in the areas of finance, capacity building and technology, have an important role in enabling countries to make progress towards the GFGs.
- (f) The UNSPF and its GFGs represent a central framework for forest-related action to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of its SDGs. Accelerated efforts should be made towards implementation of the Strategic Plan in order to achieve all GFGs by 2030; UNFF should also invite countries to consider forests’ contribution to meet the objectives of CBD and its present and future targets; development of National Forest Financing Strategies under the GFFFN should also contribute to national implementation processes of the 2030 Agenda commitments, the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement and the work on biodiversity and land degradation, among others.
- (g) Forest-related issues must be addressed in a holistic, coherent, consistent and mutually supportive manner at the national and international levels promoting the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The forthcoming meetings and events, such as the UN Decades of Action and Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the outcome of its ongoing consultations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provide important opportunities to foster further synergies among the intergovernmental processes, in accordance with their mandates and respective priorities, and to accelerate the implementation of the UN Forest Instrument and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

Agenda item 3(c): Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities

(i) Contributions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its member organizations and the United Nations system to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on the workplan of the Partnership

(ii) Contributions of regional and subregional organizations and processes to achieving the thematic priorities

(iii) Contributions of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on major group workplans

15. The discussion was facilitated by a panel comprising FAO, Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and representatives from UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, International Bamboo and Rattan Organization, Brazilian Tree Industry, International Forestry Students' Association, and Forestry Network of Sub-Saharan Africa⁷. Panelists presented a detailed description of the activities of their respective organizations/networks to advancing sustainable forests management, including those activities related to the thematic priorities of UNFF16. FAO also presented the CPF work plan for 2021-2024, including the CPF joint initiatives. Representatives of major groups also reported on the last outcomes of the year's meeting of major groups, as well as implementation of their workplans in support of the UNSPF. The representative of the Children and Youth Major Group shared the main outcome of the Major Groups-led Initiative Report 2020 "Cross-Sectoral Collaboration for Inclusive Forest Landscapes." During the interactive discussions, representatives of several countries and partners shared their activities and views regarding the engagement of stakeholders and partners in advancing implementation of the UNSPF and achievement of the thematic priorities of UNFF16. Representatives of Brazil, EU, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, USA, AFoCO, IUFRO and UNEP made statements.

16. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

- (a) The CPF work plan for 2021-2024, including its recurrent activities and joint initiatives was welcomed. CPF member organizations were invited to further enhance coordination and coherence on forest related issues at the global level, through their activities and initiatives. They were also invited to integrate the GFGs in their respective programmes, taking into account their mandates, and extend their capacity building support to countries, especially developing countries, in all areas related to SFM. Members of the Partnership were also encouraged to take a proactive role in various international fora, especially during the "super year of nature" and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The CPF Dialogue should also be better used. The governing bodies of the CPF members were invited to support the work of the CPF and its activities.
- (b) Regarding the work of the CPF on the global core set of forest related indicators, concerns were expressed over the expectation of finalizing these indicators, with low data availability for Tier 3 indicators. In this respect, the usefulness of holding additional workshops on immeasurable Tier 3 indicators was questioned. Some countries supported the finalization of methodology for indicators with greater data availability and consistency in methodology and welcomed continued flexibility in the suite of indicators as a means to provide a responsive indicator framework for current and future global priorities.
- (c) More information is needed on the planned CPF Joint Initiative, led by ITTO and WB, on "Pathways for Designing a Mechanism to Incentivize Deforestation Free Landscapes and Value Chains for Green Growth", including the process to engage with governments for input. Relevant CPF members were also cautioned to avoid providing an overly prescriptive or single approach to fiscal measures.
- (d) Regional and subregional partners have a key role in accelerating efforts towards GFGs by, exchanging information and data, and supporting capacity building and training activities in their member countries. Regional and subregional collaboration for landscape restoration, including for forests and trees in drylands, arid and semi-arid regions were also highlighted as essential elements for the success of countries in achieving the GFGs.
- (e) Participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular, women, youth, as well as private sector and philanthropic organizations are critical for achieving the GFGs, especially in the post pandemic era. The efforts of major groups in implementing their workplans to advance implementation of the UNSPF, as well as their intersessional activities were recognized. Countries were invited to support such activities, and to consider involving youth in their delegations in international meetings. Barriers to obtaining support from philanthropic organizations should be also explored.

⁷ The concept note for panel 2 on 27 April 2021 is available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>

- (f) The Forum has been successfully promoting the science-policy interface during its meetings and intersessional activities. These include, inter alia, preparation of scientific studies and papers, and participation of experts from scientific research organizations in the work of the Forum, and their active involvement in various panels. Such interface should continue, as the involvement of the scientific community enhances the understanding of synergies and trade-offs between different GFGs and related targets and assists in advancing implementation of the UNSPF more efficiently.

Agenda item 3(f): Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

17. The Secretariat made a presentation to officially launch phase I of the clearing house of the GFFFN. Members were encouraged to use this new platform to support its continued development and improvement over time. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Ecuador, European Union, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland, UK, Ukraine, USA, and FAO made statements. These representatives shared their views regarding the issues contained in the Secretariat Note on Means of Implementation. Several representatives also reported on their ongoing activities in advancing means of implementation.

18. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

- (a) Members of the Forum welcomed the support provided by the GFFFN to countries, as well as the operationalization of phase I of the Clearing House of the GFFFN. Given its important role in facilitating the access to financing for forests, the Network should be further strengthened to proactively provide further support to countries.
- (b) The GFFFN has an important role in supporting countries to mobilize finance for sustainable forest management from all sources, including through the development of National Forest Financing Strategies (NFFS). It is imperative to advance NFFS as an integral part of COVID -19 recovery and sustainable development programmes.
- (c) The Clearing House is a very useful tool for facilitating access of countries to information about forest financing opportunities, success stories and learning materials. In expanding and improving the quantity and quality of data of the Clearing House, it is important to continue collaboration with CPF members, other relevant international organizations and data providers to avoid duplication and to operate efficiently. The efforts of the UNFF Secretariat in operationalizing the Clearing House in a cost-effective manner, including by having the UN to host the website were welcomed. The Secretariat was requested to maintain the UN as the host of the website in future development of the Clearing House.
- (d) In preparation for the mid-term review of the International Arrangement on Forests in 2024, it is important to conduct intersessional activities to review the work of the GFFFN, its challenges and its impacts, in close collaboration with countries, relevant international organizations and partners, including International Financing Institutions.
- (e) Funding forests remains a major challenge for many countries, especially developing countries during the current pandemic situation. Long-term predictable resources and adequate economic incentives for implementing and achieving the GFGs, international cooperation and partnership in the areas of technology, capacity building, technical assistance and innovative funding are also critical for advancing implementation of the UNSPF. Some members of the Forum encouraged the Network to help countries access financing from the private sector and the philanthropic sectors, which may mean outreach to non-traditional partners.
- (f) To assist countries to confront forest financing challenges, especially during the current pandemic, international funding institutions and entities, like GEF and GCF, should enhance their mutual collaboration to efficiently meet forest financing needs of countries. The procedures to receive funding should be simplified, and funding of SFM activities to be integrated in their replenishment cycles and operational programmes.
- (g) Protecting and enhancing the world's natural assets, and the biodiversity that underpins them, is crucial to achieving a sustainable, resilient economy, as well as tackling poverty, climate change and preventing

future pandemics. Scaled up financing, including private sector funding is required to protect and restore nature and biodiversity.

- (h) Some Members welcomed the Secretariat's report on progress that has been made on the proposed UNFF Secretariat Office for the GFFFN in Beijing, China, and requested the Secretariat to continue to provide regular updates to the Forum on any related development. Some Members of the Forum emphasized the importance of following all UN rules, regulations, and protocols in the proposed office for the GFFFN. Some Members asked for the Secretariat to provide regular intersessional updates on this matter.

Agenda item 3(g): Monitoring, assessment and reporting

(i) Forum flagship publication

(ii) Global core set of forest-related indicators

(iii) Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020

19. The UNFF Secretariat provided a brief overview of the key points for discussion under this item, including lessons learned from the preparation of the flagship 'Global Forest Goals Report 2021', and future considerations for UNFF national reporting and monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR), in general. A representative from FAO delivered a presentation on the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020 in which she underlined the importance of capacity building for national correspondents and presented the key findings of the report. Another representative from FAO updated the Forum on the work on the Global Core Set of Forest related Indicators (GCS) including on developing selected Tier 2 and 3 indicators. A representative from IUFRO provided an overview of activities conducted by IUFRO Working Party (WP) 9.01.05 on Research and development of indicators for sustainable forest management.

20. Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal (on behalf of the EU), Russian Federation, South Africa, Ukraine and USA along with ACTO and AFoCO informed the Forum on initiatives and actions they had taken in support of monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) on SFM. Some of these representatives also identified opportunities for future enhancements to the Forum's MAR.

21. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

- a. Launch of the inaugural 'Global Forests Goals Report 2021' was welcomed. As a next step, it was recommended that efforts be made to disseminate the report widely, to audiences within and outside the forest sector, in order to increase its impact. It was suggested that due attention should be given to the analysis of the impacts of the first flagship with a possible view to build on the experiences and results gained from it. The possibility of making the report a recurrent flagship publication in conjunction with future cycles of the national reporting was discussed. In this regard, various suggestions were made, including the need to: consider the structure and content of the future publications reflect priorities identified by Members of the Forum, have an increased emphasis on policy recommendations, and synchronize the timing of such a future publication with the next FRA cycle to optimize the use of the already collected data.
- b. The need to encourage more countries to participate in the next UNFF reporting cycle was emphasized, to better reflect the Forum's universal membership and for a broader basis for an assessment of collective actions towards the GFGs. It was noted that further refinements should be considered to streamline the UNFF national reporting format through consultations with members, while recognizing the need to reduce reporting burden and strengthen the capacity of countries to prepare national reports;
- c. Further development of the global core set of forest-related indicators by the CPF was welcomed. However, it was noted that challenges persist in the context of Tier 3 indicators including in the context of GFG2 and GFG4, and consideration should be given to whether it is useful or possible to finalise Tier 3 indicators where there is no agreed methodology or where data or an acceptable proxy are not available. Extending the FRA could help address socio-economic aspects of sustainable forest management.
- d. The Secretariat was requested to continue to organize, jointly with FAO, capacity building workshop(s) on the GCS of forest related indicators and, national reporting to the Forum.

B. CHAIR'S PROPOSALS FOR TRANSMISSION TO UNFF17

22. Based on the technical discussions at UNFF16, the following Chair's proposals will be submitted for further consideration by the seventeenth session of the Forum in 2022:

Thematic priorities in support of implementation of the UNSPF

- a. Inviting Members of the Forum to accelerate efforts towards achieving GFG1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, including through mainstreaming and upscaling of forest-related actions in their national development programmes, as well as developing joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the UNSPF;
- b. Encouraging integration of forest-based actions in the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement, and the outcome of the ongoing consultations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in accordance with the mandates of the UNFCCC and CBD;
- c. Inviting the HLPF to recognize the UNSPF as an integrated framework for forest-related actions and international cooperation to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Voluntary National Contributions

Inviting Members of the Forum that have not done so, to announce voluntary national contributions in support of the GFGs and targets, and further encourage those members which have already announced VNCs, to inform the Forum on the progress made.

Communication and Outreach Strategy

- a. Encouraging members of the Forum, CPF members and relevant partners to share their best practices and success stories, as well as their communication materials in support of the implementation of the UNSPF, so that they can be showcased through the UNFF website;
- b. Welcoming the use of digital channels, in particular social media, as an efficient means for the Secretariat's outreach to public audiences, including the use of such channels for virtual celebrations of the International Day of Forests, and encouraging further promotion of social media toolkits for the Day and other key events, as well as greater engagement with "well-known persons" in advocating for forests;
- c. Encouraging greater engagement with cross-sectoral audiences, including through the development of targeted communication approaches for non-forest industries such as agriculture and mining, to underpin and accelerate reach and uptake of the Secretariat's communications and outreach messaging;
- d. Welcoming the themes proposed by the CPF for the International Day of Forests (IDF) "Forests and Sustainable Consumption and Production" for 2022 and "Forests and Health" for 2023, to enable timely planning for activities for the upcoming International Day.

CPF and other relevant stakeholders

- a. Welcoming the development of the CPF work plan for 2021-2024, inviting the CPF to strengthen its support to the implementation of the Forum's 4POW 2021-2024 and the UNSPF through this work plan;
- b. Invites members of the Forum and the governing bodies of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support integration of the GFGs in their respective programmes, and scale up support for the implementation of the workplan of the Partnership and strengthening of its secretariat, as appropriate, consistent with their respective mandates, objectives and work programmes;
- c. Welcoming the efforts of regional/subregional partners, as well as major groups and other relevant stakeholders in contributing to the thematic priorities of the Forum for the 2021-2022 biennium, encouraging their continued active engagement in promoting implementation of the UNSPF and achievement of the GFGs, and emphasizing the need to identify the barriers for active involvement of the philanthropic organization in the work of the Forum.

Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

- a. Welcoming the launch of the first UNFF flagship publication ‘The Global Forest Goals Report 2021’ and encouraging its widespread dissemination to audiences within and outside the forest sector to increase the impact of the publication;
- b. Inviting consideration of making ‘The Global Forest Goals Report’ a recurrent flagship publication in conjunction with future cycles of the Forum’s voluntary national reporting;
- c. Inviting all Members of the Forum to submit national voluntary reports to the Forum during the next reporting cycle, to provide a broader basis to assess global progress towards the GFGs, and emphasizing the need to reduce reporting burden, and requesting the UNFFS to continue to organize, jointly with FAO, capacity building workshops to strengthen the capacity of countries to prepare such reports;
- d. Inviting the CPF to continue its work on the global core set of forest-related indicators and to report on progress at the future sessions of the Forum;
- e. Inviting the active engagement of all Forum members in testing the global core set of indicators.

Means of implementation

- a. Welcoming the support provided by the GFFFN to countries, as well as the operationalization of phase I of the GFFFN Clearing House in strengthening capacity to mobilize resources from all sources for sustainable forest management;
- b. Requesting the Secretariat to hold an intersessional workshop after UNFF17 to review the work of the GFFFN, its challenges, the impacts of the current GFFFN support to countries and the means to further increase access, within its mandate, to financing for sustainable forest management, and the efficiency of the Network, in close collaboration with Members of the Forum, relevant international organizations and partners, including International Financing Institutions as a contribution towards the midterm review of the international arrangement of forests in 2024.
- c. Inviting CPF member organizations and other partners to collaborate closely with the UNFF Secretariat in its efforts to develop the Clearing House phase II to ensure its cost-effectiveness and to avoid duplication;
- d. Encouraging members of the Forum, CPF members and other relevant partners to share their information on forest financing for publishing at the Clearing House, in particular the good practices and lessons learned from the member states on accessing financing for forests.
- e. Requesting the Forum Secretariat to provide regular updates to the Forum with regard to the proposed UNFF Secretariat office for the GFFFN in Beijing, China.

Emerging Issues: Impacts of COVID-19 on forests and forest sector

- a. Inviting countries to consider implementing the proposed responses and measures, contained in Section IV of the Secretariat Note E/CN.18/2021/7, including promoting the “one-health approach” at the national, regional and international levels, in line with relevant international agreements.
- b. Requesting the UNFF Secretariat, in collaboration with Members of the Forum, CPF member organizations and stakeholders, to conduct an assessment of challenges faced by countries, as well as the strategies, recovery measures and best practices to reduce the impacts of COVID-19 on forests and forest sector, and present it to the UNFF17.

III. INPUT TO THE HLPF 2021

This input to the 2021 High-Level Political Forum is based on Chair’s summary of the technical discussions during UNFF16 on agenda item 3(d), and the input provided earlier by the UNFF16 Bureau to the ECOSOC President. This input is not a consensus negotiated outcome of the Forum.

(a) Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the SDGs under review in the 2021 HLPF from the vantage point of the UN Forum on Forests

The wide-ranging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic serve as a reminder that the SDGs are closely interlinked and progress on one goal, or lack thereof, affects other goals. In particular, the zoonotic nature of COVID-19 and other recent epidemics such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (SARS), the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS), Ebola and the bird flu demonstrates the importance of stewarding forests and other landscapes, biomes and ecosystems⁸.

Through the effective COVID-19 response and recovery measures, the world can build forward better to realise sustainable development. In doing so, it is essential to make further progress towards eradicating deprivations; accelerating the universal provision of quality essential services; halting deforestation and reversing course on the degradation of forests and other ecosystems, greenhouse gas emissions, land degradation, biodiversity loss, wildlife trafficking and the deterioration of coastal waters⁹.

(b) Actions, policy guidance, progress, challenges and areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the SDGs and to the theme within the area under the purview of the UN Forum on Forests¹⁰

Despite the crucial contributions of forests to sustainable development, deforestation and forest degradation continue at an alarming rate in some regions. Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation are considered as drivers of zoonotic diseases, threatening public health, economies and livelihoods, and must be addressed in an integrated, effective, targeted and sustainable manner.

While progress has been made over the last decade in some regions where the rate of forest loss slowed and a number of international commitments and initiatives have been launched in recent years to halt deforestation¹¹, estimates indicate that 10 million hectares of forest continued to be lost annually from 2015 to 2020. The proportion of forest area globally declined from 31.9 per cent in 2000 to 31.2 per cent in 2020 owing chiefly to unsustainable agricultural expansion, recording a net loss of approximately 100 million hectares¹².

(c) An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global, regional and national levels, against a background of the COVID-19 pandemic in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs within the area addressed by the UN Forum on Forests

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to aggravate hardships among forest-dependent people and communities through job losses, reduced income, decreased remittances sent from migrant family members, reduced access to markets and information, increased physical isolation, lack of health services, and disruption to government-assisted programmes¹³. Socioeconomic vulnerabilities pushed many indigenous and local communities, including returning migrant workers, to retreating deeper into forests for food, fuel, and shelter in response to the risk of COVID-19 infection.

In several regions, lack of access to information and information technology has exacerbated the impacts of the pandemic on the livelihoods and income of forest-based communities. This was further aggravated by the failure

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ UN, DESA (2020), Policy brief on Achieving SDGs in the wake of COVID-19: Scenarios for policymakers. Available online at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-84-achieving-sdgs-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-scenarios-for-policymakers/>

¹⁰ A list of recommended actions and policy guidance in relation to forests and the UN Forum on Forests are contained in section (d) and (e) below.

¹¹ These international commitments and initiatives include: Sustainable Development Goal 15, Global Forest Goal 1, Article V of the Paris Agreement, Aichi Biodiversity Target 5 and 7, GEF objectives 1 and 3 for its cross-cutting SFM Strategy 2014-2018, New York Declaration on Forests, Bonn Challenge.

¹² UN, DESA (2020), Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020. Available online at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020.pdf>.

¹³ Linhares-Juvenal, Thaís (2020). Social protection for forest dependent communities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. FAO Forestry Technical Network Webinar (22 July 2020). Available online at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/49810-0e3cf49a1603cf7fc3ecb119381623888.pdf>.

to consider forestry activities as essential in some countries during the pandemic, resulting in income declines and increased risk of illegal activities such as poaching and illegal timber harvesting¹⁴.

The pandemic has also dramatically deepened inequalities and vulnerabilities of forest-dependent populations in some regions as many people, particularly women and youth, have lost regular and seasonal employment. Furthermore, communities lacking secure rights and access to forests faced serious livelihood-related distress and were less able to prevent the spread of COVID-19¹⁵.

(d) Cooperation, measures and commitments at all levels in promoting sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

The pandemic has generated opportunities to build forward better towards more inclusive and sustainable economies, including through forest restoration, conservation and sustainable use. The pandemic has highlighted the need to exchange best practices among countries including policies to support forestry sector and forest-dependent people, to enhance scientific research on the role of forests in addressing zoonotic diseases; make better use of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities; enhance forest education; and expand use of information and communication technologies.

The sixteenth session of the UNFF held technical discussions on the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 (UNSPF), including interlinkages between the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and targets and the SDGs under in-depth review by the HLPF in 2021. The UNFF16 also considered emerging issues on impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector to identify means to address these challenges, including through a high-level round table on major forest-related developments with the participation of senior officials of Members of the Forum and the UN system.

In advancing the implementation of the UNSPF and achievement of the GFG and targets, it is imperative to unlock the potential of the voluntary national contributions (VNCs) to the UNSPF to serve as the countries' plans to accelerate the progress on the GFGs, while contributing to other globally-agreed forest-related commitments and processes, including , as appropriate, the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, the CDB and the outcome of the ongoing consultations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, among others.

(e) Various measures and policy recommendations on building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

The UNFF at UNFF16 identified the following responses and measures, as well as policy recommendations for the sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and enhanced contribution of forests to inclusive sustainable development:

Integrate sustainable forest management into COVID-19 pandemic recovery plans. Sustainable forest management can make significant contributions to offset many of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for forest-dependent people and communities due to their vulnerabilities to crises such as pandemics. Integration of forest-based action in national programmes related to land use, including energy, mining and agriculture, will contribute to an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Renew commitment to internationally agreed forest-related goals and targets. Sustainable forest management practices may reduce the risk of future pandemics and must be prioritized, including through renewed commitment to the internationally agreed forest-related goals and targets. Healthy forests are vital to addressing many pandemic-

¹⁴ UN, DESA, UNFF Secretariat (2020). Background Papers on the Initial Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Sustainable Forest Management. Available online at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/events/egm-covid-jan-2021/index.html>.

¹⁵ FAO (2020), COVID-19 Forestry Webinar Week “Building back better: COVID-19 pandemic recovery contributions from the forest sector” (22-25 June 2020), Chairperson’s summary report. Available online at <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofo/covid-19-forestry-webinar-week/chairperson-summary-report/en/>

induced challenges, including through creating new jobs in afforestation, reforestation, agroforestry, **urban forestry, research,** conservation and sustainable use.

Promote the One-Health approach and include the value of ecosystem services in recovery plans. The current pandemic has highlighted the close interrelationship between the health of ecosystems, people, animals, including livestock and wildlife, and ecosystems. There is growing recognition of the need to work towards the “One-Health approach” to address global challenges, including, as appropriate, climate change, biodiversity loss and the risk of emergence of zoonotic diseases. The contribution of ecosystem services provided by forests should be assessed and included in the COVID-19 recovery plans and measures to enhance these values in the short, medium and long term.

Build momentum to halt illegal and unsustainable forest practices. The pandemic presents a unique opportunity to accelerate actions to tackle the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. It is important to build momentum to halt illegal and unsustainable forest practices to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and reduce the risk of future zoonotic diseases, minimize impacts on global trade and supply chains, leverage action to build more sustainable production and resilient supply chains, and provide more diverse livelihoods. .

Integrate investment in forests in the recovery plans. Countries should integrate investment in forests and forest management into their national recovery strategies, taking into account their national conditions and priorities. Integrating disaster-risk reduction, adaptive planning within forest sector and integrating national forest financing strategies as parts of the recovery plans are also useful to proactively plan for and manage future crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthen institutions and policies. In the long-term, countries, depending on their national conditions and priorities, may consider taking additional steps to adopt optimal sustainable and integrated land-use planning and other measures to utilize the full potential of forests; address policy barriers; promote sustainable forest management; improve tenure security; promote community engagement and secure their tenure rights to forests and forest resources; and embed social protection and inclusive measures within forest sector policies and planning.

Strengthening forest governance. Governance and support mechanisms to combat forest-related illegal activities, integrate disaster and risk mitigation approaches in planning, policies, and response mechanisms, and promote cross-sectoral collaboration, e.g. between forest, mining and agricultural sectors, are important steps to advance sustainable land-use planning and management.

Strengthening science and technology. There is a need for a better science-policy-society interface to inform policy and decision-making, in order to ensure the best science and technology is available in crisis response and recovery, as well as public awareness.

Strengthening data collection, analysis and exchange. The fast spread and pervasive impact of COVID-19 highlights the need for governments to provide effective, timely, and inclusive responses in addition to traditional data sources and data analytics tools.

Mobilize resources from all sources for forests. It is important to mobilize resources, by all stakeholders and from all sources, for forests at all levels in the post-pandemic era. At the international level, official financial flows to forests, including ODA, are more important than ever, along with technological cooperation and assistance, multi-stakeholder partnerships and capacity development. The UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network could also assist countries in addressing the adverse impacts of the pandemic on forests through development of national forest financing strategies.

Annex IV

List of documents

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title</i>
E/CN.18/2021/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/CN.18/2021/2	3 (a), 3 (b) (i), (ii), 3 (d), 3 (e) and 6	Note by the Secretariat on the technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and adoption of the Forum’s programme of work for the period 2022–2024
E/CN.18/2021/3	3 (c) (i), (ii), (iii)	Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners towards achieving the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022
E/CN.18/2021/4	3 (f)	Note by the Secretariat on the means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
E/CN.18/2021/5	3 (g)	Note by the Secretariat on monitoring, assessment and reporting: progress on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument, and voluntary national contributions
E/CN.18/2021/6	4	Note by the Secretariat on the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2021/7	5	Note by the Secretariat on the impact of the pandemic on forests and the forest sector
E/CN.18/2021/L.1	8	Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2021/L.2	7	Draft decision on the proposed dates and venue of the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2021/L.3	6	Draft resolution on the programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2022–2024
E/CN.18/2021/L.4	9	Draft report

Other relevant documentation is also available on the website of the Forum (www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html).

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