

Input to the 2017 meeting of the ECOSOC Integration Segment
Bureau of the 12th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Key contributions of forests to poverty eradication

Forests are a key driver for the eradication of extreme poverty. 1.6 billion people depend on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation. Forests provide many households with food and nutritional security, energy security, medicinal plants, shelter and furnishings. For the rural poor, the primary role of forests and trees outside forests is to provide direct consumption and barter of non-wood forest products, particularly for food and fuel, thereby providing livelihoods and pathways out of poverty.

In addition to their direct contributions for the rural populations, forests also contribute to meet growing demand for food, energy, water and environmental services, thereby sustaining and promoting human well-being everywhere.

Current work of UNFF to enhance contributions of forests to poverty eradication

As a functional commission of ECOSOC, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) is the only intergovernmental global platform with the mandate to address forest-related issues in an integrated and holistic manner, and promote coherence and synergies at all levels.

The UNFF has generated since its establishment in 2000 a number of policy recommendations and measures to achieve sustainable forest management (SFM), thereby enhancing the contributions of all types of forests to eradicating poverty everywhere.

The UNFF at its 2017 Special Session forged an ambitious vision for global forests in 2030, by agreeing on the first-ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030¹ (UNSPF), building on the solid foundation and the progress made towards SFM through the implementation of the UN Forest Instrument² (UNFI).

The UNSPF is a universal action plan for forests, encompassing and engaging all partners and stakeholders at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests, featuring a set of the six Global Forest Goals and 26 targets to be achieved by 2030, as well as the Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs) to their attainment.

The Global Forest Goals and targets of the UNSPF are integrated and interlinked, and foster enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies within and beyond the UN system. In particular, the Global Forest Goal 2 aims to enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people by 2030. The Global Forest Goal target 2.1 aims at eradicating extreme poverty for all forest dependent people by 2030.

The UNSPF also provides a roadmap to guide forest-related contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement adopted under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UNFI, among other international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals.

¹ E/2017/10

² A/RES/62/98 and A/RES/70/199. The UNFI provides countries with a framework to implement sustainable forest management (SFM), containing the four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and a set of national policies and measures to achieve its purpose, as well as international cooperation and means of implementation.

The UNFF is the responsible intergovernmental body for follow-up and review of the implementation of the UNSPF and the achievement of its Global Forest Goals and targets. Starting at its twelfth session (UNFF12), the Forum will operationalize the UNSPF through its quadrennial programmes of work (4POWs) that set out priority actions and resource needs of the Forum.

In accordance with the 4POW 2017-2020, the UNFF12 will focus on technical discussions and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, with the engagement of, and exchange of experiences among Member States, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), regional and subregional organizations, major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including via science-policy interface.

The technical discussions will take into account the theme and review cycle of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) for the period 2017-2018, including its 2017 theme “*Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*”, and the theme of the International Day of Forests in 2018. The Forum will provide its contribution to the follow-up, review and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets under consideration by the 2017 HLPF.

Key messages

Eradication of extreme poverty entails an integrated approach to natural resource management, taking into account a full spectrum of socioeconomic needs for natural resources while striking a balance with environmental sustainability.

The integrated landscape management aims at increasing synergies among multiple land-use objectives where the role of land-based natural resources such as forests and trees are better understood by all stakeholders and viewed from a broader perspective, encompassing forests, agricultural productivity, soil protection, water supply and distribution, biodiversity conservation, among others.

The UNSPF offers an unprecedented opportunity to guide strengthened action by all actors at all levels to safeguard forests and their multiple values and benefits and achieve SFM, thereby contributing to eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms.

Concerted and coherent actions at all levels are critical to implement SFM and eradicate poverty. While national actions hold the key to the successful implementation of the UNSPF, member organisations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), in particular the Rio conventions, have an important role in supporting the implementation of the UNSPF.

The effective implementation of SFM depends on the contributions of all relevant partners and stakeholders, including the UN system, other intergovernmental partners and stakeholders, regional and subregional organizations and processes, major groups and other stakeholders.

The UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) plays an important role in facilitating access for countries to resources to implement the UNSPF and achieve its Global Forest Goals and targets.