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Regional and subregional inputs

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report highlights the importance given by regional and subregional entities to the social component of sustainable forest management and points out that forest-dependent people benefit from everything that forests have to offer, including livelihoods. At the regional level, there is an effort to enhance the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making, awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives. It is clear that marshalling the means of implementation, especially funding, remains a major challenge. The report emphasizes that sustainable forest management can be widely implemented in all regions and would enhance people's livelihoods. Finally, the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the four global objectives contained therein are being taken into account universally in the design and implementation of policies, as well as providing a basis for new instruments at the regional and subregional levels.

* E/CN.18/2011/1.



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I. Introduction

1. The multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests,¹ in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49, sets a new focus on regional collaboration and partnerships. In paragraph 2 (c) of resolution 2006/49, the Council agreed to strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes,² 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.

2. In the Forum's programme of work, relevant regional and subregional entities are invited to address issues and agenda items planned for each Forum session and to submit a concise summary of their deliberations to the Forum secretariat prior to the session. Such entities are also invited to contribute to the discussions of the Forum sessions, according to their respective mandates, while the Secretary-General is requested to prepare a report summarizing the entities' submissions. The first such report of the Secretary-General was prepared for the eighth session of the Forum (E/CN.18/2009/3).

3. To facilitate the submission of inputs for the current session, the Forum secretariat prepared an information note and a questionnaire. The present report summarizes the submissions received from the entities listed in the annex to the report.

II. Overview

4. The responses to the questionnaire sent out by the Forum secretariat were prepared in a variety of ways. Some were prepared by secretariats following the general guidelines provided by Governments and other partners. Others based on the results of a specific meeting organized by entities to discuss their contributions. Some United Nations economic commissions took advantage of the outcomes of regional meetings on matters related to the Commission on Sustainable Development in order to prepare their inputs. In the Central African region, the various entities coordinated with the Central African Forests Commission. A few entities tried to involve civil society in the preparation of their reports to the Forum.

5. The responses clearly reveal that the forest instrument (see General Assembly resolution 62/98) and the four global objectives contained therein are being taken into account universally in the design and implementation of policies, as well as a basis for new instruments.

6. As far as the social aspect of sustainable forest management goes, the responding regional and subregional entities were convinced that forests should benefit the people who depend on them for their livelihoods, but progress differs among the reporting regions and the integration of livelihoods into sustainable forest

¹ E/2007/42-E/CN.18/2007/B, chap. I, sect. C, resolution 7/1, annex.

² Forest-related mechanisms, institutions, organizations and processes are referred to as "entities" in the present report.

management programmes is affected by economic, social and historical aspects that should be taken into consideration in the global forest policy dialogue.

7. It was also noted that, at the regional level, there is an effort to enhance the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making, awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives. The entities seem to be more and more convinced that the involvement of a multitude of partners is necessary if progress is to be achieved. Further investment in the engagement and empowerment of multiple stakeholders is desired and will change the way business is being done.

8. Regarding means of implementation, in particular financing, the challenge is in making sure that sustainable forest management can be widely implemented in all regions and, consequently, enhance people's livelihoods. However, there is a need to look holistically at forest sustainability, not losing track of the linkages between the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable forest management.

III. Substantive matters to be considered by the Forum

A. Assessment of progress made in the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the achievement of the four global objectives on forests

9. The entities agreed that the forest instrument is an important international accomplishment in the promotion of sustainable forest management and is already having an impact in the field. The instrument addresses all issues related to forests in a coherent manner and the four global objectives on forests are being taken into account for policy decision-making and implementation in the various regions and subregions.

10. The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) framework document states that the Network is intended to support the multi-year work of the United Nations Forum on Forests, as well as the implementation of the forest instrument and the four global objectives on forests. Thus, it can be said that the mission of the Network is to regionally promote sustainable forest management within the framework of the forest instrument.

11. It is interesting to note that three regional entities — the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention), the Central African Forests Commission and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe) — are considering or have recently developed a legally binding instrument on forests. During the elaboration of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Carpathian Convention, the provisions of the forest instrument and the four global objectives on forests were taken into account.

12. Forest Europe is considering the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on forests in the pan-European region. Two working groups are currently exploring the potential added value of and possible options for a legally binding agreement on forests in the pan-European region, and preparing options for a decision on such an agreement. A non-paper on the subject is expected and the issue will be considered at the sixth Ministerial Conference, to be held in Oslo from 14 to 16 June 2011.

Forest Europe also forwarded to the Secretariat an analytical table comparing the main points of the forest instrument with previous commitments of the Ministerial Conference. Since these might serve as the basis for an eventual legally binding instrument, it is possible that the thrust of the forest instrument might be incorporated into a future regional convention.

13. The joint Forestry and Timber Section of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) collects and validates information related to forest resources, as well as policies and institutions to assess progress made and challenges remaining in forest management. The ECE/FAO integrated programme of work, with its activities in the areas of forest product markets, resources, policies and institutions as well as outlook, is directly contributing to the implementation of the forest instrument and the four global objectives on forests, notably as they concern sustainable forest management and forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits.

14. The Economic Community of Central African States stressed the importance of projects currently being developed or implemented by Central African States in collaboration with various bodies, aimed at the achievement of the four global objectives. These include the mobilization of funding by the Economic Community, the Central African Forests Commission and the Global Mechanism for the implementation of the subregional plan of action against desertification and land degradation in Central Africa; the implementation of the Programme in Support of the Conservation of Congo Basin Ecosystems, which contributes to the strengthening of economic, social and environmental aspects of the targeted landscapes; the development of lines of cooperation, particularly with the African Development Bank, the European Union and the International Tropical Timber Organization in order to mobilize new and additional financial resources; and the implementation of the regional project on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation with funding from the World Bank (Global Environment Facility project) in six Congo Basin countries.

15. The Réseau des parlementaires pour la gestion durable des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique Centrale — Conférence ministérielle sur les écosystèmes des forêts denses humides d'Afrique Centrale (REPAR-CEFDHAC) refers to the legally binding agreement of the Central African Forests Commission, adopted on 26 October 2008 in Brazzaville, which deals with the administrative, legal, technical, economic, social and environmental aspects of conservation and use of forests. The agreement benefited from the strong and comprehensive participation of members of parliaments in its negotiation. It aims at promoting the development, conservation and sustainable management of the forests of Central Africa, as well as the trade in forest products. Those objectives are being pursued mainly through the Central African Forests Commission.

16. The responses demonstrate that all Central African States are strongly committed to the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives in respect of all types of forests through the strengthening of regional cooperation and the promotion of the trade in products from sustainably managed forests.

17. The secretariat of the Central African Forests Commission adds, in this regard, that the Commission's member States have been committed since 1999 to the sustainable management of their forests. On top of existing subregional instruments

and mechanisms, those countries implement the forest instrument and have incorporated its essence, as well as the global objectives on forests, into their national and subregional planning frameworks. The commitment of countries, accompanied by strong action, has already provided visible progress in the sustainable management of Central African forests.

18. As reported by the International Model Forest Network, most model forests are very biologically diverse, and often include landscape areas with significant conservation or preservation values, such as national parks and world heritage forests containing species at risk. By promoting a landscape-level approach, model forests foster a reduction in forest fragmentation, enhanced wildlife habitat and the development of collaborative strategies with local communities for managing biodiversity, contributing to the implementation of global objective 1. Objectives 2 and 3 are dealt with by the implementation of sustainable forest management strategies which enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent populations, as well as by the establishment of successful local enterprises. Those activities, by contributing to both sustainability and the generation of income for forest-based communities throughout the Network, show that the pursuit of economic opportunity is not incompatible with environmental conservation.

19. A non-legally binding entity, the Montreal Process, launched in 1994, predates the forest instrument. Member countries represent about 90 per cent of the world's temperate and boreal forests, which equates to 60 per cent of all of the forests of the world. In 1995, member countries developed 7 criteria and 67 indicators, revised in 2007, as guidelines for assessing forest trends and progress towards sustainable forest management. Member countries continue to work on the implementation of the Montreal Process criteria and indicators and, through this process, support the intent of the forest instrument.

20. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) is developing and implementing at the regional level initiatives and projects which directly contribute to the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives. Similar to APFNet, the entity has the mission of promoting cooperation with and among its Parties and does that by supporting the implementation at the national and regional level of international commitments, in particular the forest instrument.

21. Regarding global objective 1, for instance, a project that aims at monitoring deforestation and land use change in the Amazon forest helps ACTO member States to improve governance through the development of forest-cover national monitoring plans with a common regional methodology. An initiative to harmonize criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management seeks to strengthen the complementarities of the Tarapoto criteria and indicators and those approved by the International Tropical Timber Organization.

22. With reference to global objective 4, ACTO notes that a significant part of the financial support the entity receives for its activities come from Governments of countries which belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. ACTO also promotes a financial initiative which aims at developing and consolidating financial mechanisms composed of investments and payments for environmental services, as well as the development of methodologies and shared tools regarding the role of forests in climate change.

23. Some entities mentioned the importance of properly accounting in national economies for the effective contribution of the economic, social and environmental benefits of forests. This has been identified by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as one of the key issues to be tackled in the near future, and it is important that the forest sector work with national development planning, statistical and other authorities to identify the qualitative and quantitative contributions of forestry to poverty alleviation and thus support enhanced integration of forestry plans into national development plans.

24. The contribution of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives can be seen in the organization of activities raising awareness of international forest activities. From 12 to 15 October 2009 the Secretariat brought together representatives of Governments and major groups in a regional workshop on policy processes for the sustainable management of forest resources in the Pacific, held in Nadi, Fiji. The workshop introduced good practices from other parts of the world, tailored to the specific situations and developments of Pacific island countries.

25. The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) assisted three member States (Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger) in obtaining funding from the European Union for the implementation of a regional park programme, which will be extended to Togo. Moreover, the creation of a foundation aiming at raising funds for the promotion of the sustainable management of savannah ecosystems in the UEMOA area has been proposed. In the framework of its agriculture policy, the Union has established an agriculture development fund which contributes to activities related to the sustainable management of forests.

B. Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication

26. All regional entities emphasized that forests need to be sustainably managed to serve the multiple functions of forests for the good of people's livelihoods. The focus on people is clear, even though it is implemented in different manners. Through its joint expert network on implementing sustainable forest management, for instance, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section addresses a variety of social and cultural aspects including working conditions, contract labour and training standards and networks.

27. APFNet states that the Asia-Pacific region, a dynamic region with rapid development and large forested areas, home to more than half the world population, is a special example of how forests contribute to people. The entity promotes sustainable forest management through various means, including forest rehabilitation, capacity-building, information sharing and regional policy dialogue, as well as pilot projects.

28. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership reports that Congo Basin forest countries have undertaken serious efforts aimed at improving forest-dependent people's livelihoods and investment conditions for forest concession holders. While community-based forest management for production forests is still poorly developed in the region, concessions adjacent to communities and marginalized forest communities are beginning to benefit from forest certification. The Forest Stewardship Council standards and principles require logging companies to respect

traditional land rights and indigenous peoples and take care of the social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities. According to the Council, some 5 million hectares of forests are certified in the region (878,896 hectares in Cameroon, 1,873,505 in Gabon and 1,907,843 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), making up more than 10 per cent of the 41,636,677 hectares of production forests mapped out into concessions and thus making the Congo Basin the largest certified natural forest block in the world. A regional Council standard has been developed through intensive stakeholder consultations throughout 2009, and is about to be validated.

29. According to the secretariat of the Central African Forests Commission, some of its member States have adopted legislation over the past 10 years to strengthen the contribution of forests to the fight against poverty. Community-based forestry initiatives now exist in those countries and, progressively, throughout the subregion. Giving back a portion of royalties or forestry taxes to the local and riparian communities is one way in which Governments of the subregion contribute to the fight against poverty. However, one of the main challenges in the eradication of poverty relates to capacity-building: to ensure the training of stakeholders in local techniques and tools for sustainable forest management, and in the marketing of forest products.

30. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community reports that in the larger Melanesian countries, forests provide significant revenues, employment and livelihoods. In the smaller island States and the atolls, the limited forest and tree resources provide people with food, medicines, construction materials and fuel wood. In spite of all of these benefits, the sustainable management of the resource continues to be a major challenge and significant forest loss and degradation continues. Emerging global issues including the international financial crisis and climate change have created a more complex set of challenges for Pacific islanders to overcome.

31. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, in collaboration with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), has assisted Fiji in revising its 1950 forest policy to ensure that a sound and sustainable forest management system is adopted and that the aspirations of the resource owners regarding the management of their resources are met. Similarly, the Government of Vanuatu is holding provincial and national consultations with assistance and support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and GTZ with a view to reformulating its forest policy to best reflect the interests of the people of Vanuatu.

32. ECA is intensifying its work in the climate change arena in order to ensure that forests are for people. It is working with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank for the full implementation of their joint Climate for Development in Africa Programme. The Programme sets out to scale up the capacities of key institutions and stakeholders with a view to improving climate-related data and observation, information services, policies, investment processes and risk-management practices in climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, water, forests and other natural resources, energy and health.

33. The ECA-based African Climate Policy Centre serves as the knowledge-management, policy and project-facilitation arm of the Climate for Development in Africa Programme. The Centre's work on climate change information, policy analysis and advocacy is expected to enhance awareness and strengthen the capacities of member States and regional and subregional bodies to better integrate

climate concerns into development, hopefully resulting in the elaboration and implementation by member States of national development policies, strategies and programmes, including poverty reduction strategies, that integrate and prioritize climate change concerns. At the same time, development and implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel initiative continues. This initiative is a priority action of the African Union-European Union Partnership on Climate Change and has evolved from tree planting to the promotion of sustainable land management practices focusing on the Saharan and Sahel dryland ecosystems.

34. In Africa there is poor coordination and collaboration among actors, as well as a lack of in-depth understanding and appreciation of sustainable forest and land management issues. Moreover, there is inadequate reform and enforcement of policies and legislation to guarantee clear legal ownership and access rights to land, water and other natural resources. Finally, the lack of financial resources is systemic and is one of the most burdensome constraints on most countries and regional programmes in the implementation of sustainable forest and land management programmes.

35. The Economic Community of Central African States reports that forest-dependent people have much to gain if forests can generate more economic income and if forest governance is improved. Voluntary partnership agreement negotiations in the context of the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan, as well as the efforts of companies to obtain certification, should be stimulated. Information should be shared and made available to all, and forest laws should be enforced. Capacity should be built and, in this regard, a special need is identified for climate change.

36. ACTO facilitates cooperation among its parties in the Amazon region through pilot projects intended to (a) promote the sustainable development of the region with emphasis on the improvement of the quality of life of local communities; (b) generate inputs for the national and regional political dialogue with emphasis on the practice of cooperation processes; (c) record and disseminate lessons learned, results and impacts; (d) assess the possibility of initiatives' replication; and (e) serve as concrete instruments of action of regional cooperation on forests.

37. The participation of stakeholders in the management of forests is stimulated through several specific projects. Moreover, all of the projects developed and implemented by the entity, especially those of an economic nature, take into account the social and cultural aspects of the different indigenous and local communities who benefit from them. Finally, through its indigenous issues coordination, ACTO provides dialogue opportunities which, in the past, helped in the drafting of the Indigenous Regional Agenda.

1. Community-based forest management

38. Community-based forest management is a priority for regional and subregional entities. While some invest in awareness-raising and capacity-building, others develop specific models and indicators. The objectives, however, are the same and include the promotion of broad stakeholder participation and management coordination. In the case of the Carpathian Convention, the latter is being encouraged by the establishment of private owner associations.

39. According to APFNet, in most countries of the Asia-Pacific region, especially developing countries, farmers account for a large portion of the national population, while forested lands cover larger areas than those used for agriculture. Thus, community-based forests play an indispensable role in supporting farmers' survival and the improvement of their livelihoods. APFNet promotes training workshops on forestry and rural development to enhance capacity in the region and to provide a platform for sharing knowledge and practical experiences to improve community-based forest management, including forest land tenure.

40. APFNet also financially supports pilot projects in the region to showcase good practices in terms of community-based forest management in rural areas. Experiences and lessons learned are included in publications and brochures distributed in the region and beyond. Finally, APFNet is now engaged in a five-year collaboration with the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific to promote community-based forest management.

41. The Montreal Process member countries published in 2007 the third edition of the Montreal Process criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests. That edition contained a number of indicators related to community-based forest management, specifically the resilience of forest-dependent communities (indicator 6.3.c), the area and percentage of forests used for subsistence purposes (indicator 6.3.d) and the distribution of revenues derived from forest management (indicator 6.3.e). Each individual Montreal Process member country, in preparing its Montreal Process country report, has the option of reporting against these indicators.

42. According to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the community-based and participatory approach for sustainable forest management is seen as imperative in the Pacific, where the majority of land is customarily owned. Forests and trees play an important role in the economic, environmental social and cultural well-being of the Pacific community. The Secretariat initiated its "Drawa Model" for community-based natural resource management in 1997 in cooperation with GTZ and the Fiji Forestry Department. The Drawa Model promotes a community-based management system, defining a timber harvesting regime that is not only socially and environmentally appropriate but economically viable. Participatory assessment of community needs and wants, analysis of the socio-economic, gender and customary and environmental status and technical inventories and surveys of forest resources all form the basis for action plans and activities that are relevant, acceptable and truly reflective of the local community's interests.

43. Community-based forest management is a priority for many of the resource-dependent communities located throughout the International Model Forest Network. Model Forest stakeholders prioritize the involvement of local people in decision-making processes, viewing their active participation as key to achieving sustainability, including realization of sustainable and meaningful incomes for forest-based communities. Over 40 Model Forest sites are involved in economic activities including community sustainability/economic development efforts, eco-cultural tourism, education and capacity-building and the cultivation of non-timber forest products that support communities and livelihoods and reduce poverty.

44. For example, the Ngao Model Forest, located in central Thailand's Lampang province, promotes community-based forest management to encourage local

communities' involvement in the conservation of nearby forests and the practice of sustainable forest management to enable livelihood development. The local communities' capacity to support the management and improvement of forest resources. Rules for sustainable utilization and equal benefit-sharing of forest resources have been developed on the basis of mutual agreement. Non-timber forest products such as bamboo shoots, mushrooms and medicinal and edible plants from managed forests will guarantee food security and supplies for sustainable economic development of local communities.

45. In the Central African context, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership reports that countries are encouraged to develop appropriate policy frameworks for community-based forest use and timber transformation. The regional office of the Centre for International Forestry Research is very much engaged on this topic. It is, however, difficult to engage the forest-dependent communities in an organized dialogue. It is hoped that in some countries the voluntary partnership agreement negotiations in the context of the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan will trigger additional stakeholder participation in the forest sector. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has facilitated voluntary partnership agreement negotiation processes in a number of countries.

46. REPAR-CEFDHAC has as its main mission to ensure good governance in the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa. This is a difficult task because the Congo Basin forests are subject to many interventions by a multitude of actors with sometimes conflicting objectives. Throughout the years much has been achieved in the region in terms of policy and mentality change. However, it is very clear from historical observation that successful sustainable management of those forests can only be achieved with the involvement of active and informed stakeholders. No doubt the various national Governments have important roles to play through, for instance, proper taxation and use of economic instruments.

2. Social development and indigenous and other local and forest-dependent communities, including forest land tenure

47. As mentioned above (see para. 35), APFNet gives attention to the issue of forest land tenure. The 2010 training workshop on forestry and rural development focused on forest land tenure reform, as this issue has proven to be an effective means of mobilizing farmers for the protection and good management of forests to improve their livelihoods. Many countries in the region, including China and Viet Nam, are accumulating constructive experiences in land tenure security and reforms. In addition, APFNet and the Research Centre of Forestry Economy of the State Forestry Administration of China are jointly working on a book, to be published soon, entitled *Forest Land Tenure Reform in China*, which showcases the progress achieved and lessons learned in the reform process in China, emphasizing the importance of having farmers and forest workers actively involved at all stages.

48. In the Carpathian countries, the traditional pattern of small- and medium-sized forest properties has been lost during the period of State control of forests, along with knowledge of forest management. Currently the restitution process — the return of the State-owned forests to their original owners is taking place in that region, to various degrees. The “new” owners, lacking proper knowledge and in light of the economic difficulties, are prone to clear their forests for other land uses,

in order to make a rapid economic gain. Thus, education, capacity-building, coordination and financial incentives for the new forest owners are critical to ensuring sustainable forest management practices.

49. In this regard, the Carpathian Convention countries' forest policies include some form of assistance and capacity-building for the forest owners. In addition, most countries' policies incorporate public participation and information in their decision-making processes, through platforms for dialogue among stakeholders and people interested in forest use and conservation. However, in practice no efficient mechanisms for public information and participation are in place. During the elaboration of the Protocol to the Carpathian Convention (see para. 11 above), the need for cooperation between national institutions and regional and local authorities and involving communities and forest owners and managers directly in development and implementation of the forestry policy was highlighted.

50. The secretariat of the Central African Forests Commission reports that the Commission recently elaborated subregional guidelines on the participation of local and indigenous communities in forest management. Those guidelines will be submitted for adoption during the next ministerial council of the Commission. Several issues should be dealt with in order to properly include those communities in the decision-making process and in the management of forests, such as the absence or insufficiency of a legal framework to ensure the rights of indigenous communities and questions regarding land tenure.

51. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership informs the Forum that Congo Basin forest countries have made serious efforts to implement forest sector reforms aimed at improving forest-dependent peoples' livelihoods and investment conditions for forest concession holders. As an example, the review of forest land titles in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was concluded in February 2009. Forest law enforcement can be enhanced by engaging all stakeholders and raising awareness of regional conservation and sustainable management policies among potential buyers. To encourage continued investment in the forestry sector and secure regional and international markets for sustainably produced, legal forest products, and at the same time enhance the credibility of forest certification, several donors are financing extensive forest certification promotion projects in the region.

52. REPAR-CEFDHAC closely follows the governance, taxation and benefits received from the forests by local and indigenous communities in the Central African countries. Generally speaking, the decentralized management of forests has spread rapidly in the region. Owing to the failure of centralized management to improve the welfare of the local and indigenous populations, certain powers were passed to local communities through new policies and legislation. This new trend has certainly contributed to the alleviation of poverty in the local and indigenous communities. However, if those benefits are to be maximized, local governance mechanisms should be improved and more transparency is needed.

53. According to the International Model Forest Network, indigenous partners bring a unique understanding of the forest ecosystem, one developed over centuries of close contact with the land. With both traditional and contemporary forest experiences, indigenous peoples are well positioned to contribute to today's sustainable forest management practices for the benefit of their communities and others. Indeed, model forest stakeholders recognize that without the involvement of indigenous partners the sustainable development of forest-dependent communities is

unlikely to occur. Over 20 model forest sites include active indigenous participation in various forms, including representation on the Board of Directors; the design of forest management plans aimed at reducing deforestation and illegal logging; and the development of the model forest's strategic plan.

54. The International Model Forest Network reports that government representatives from boreal countries have identified climate change, biodiversity and aboriginal issues as policy priorities. Through collaborative research between the Prince Albert model forest (Canada) and Vilhelmina model forest (Sweden), aboriginal perspectives on climate change and caribou/reindeer habitat in the circumboreal forest are being sought and an analysis of knowledge gaps surrounding these three issues and their interactions is providing policy-relevant information required for the development of adaptation strategies for northern communities. This information is of interest to aboriginal people of the circumboreal North whose lifestyles are or may soon be affected by changing climate. Industries such as mining, forestry, tourism and peat extraction will also derive benefits from the information generated in this research, as they are impacted by climate change and biodiversity issues and need to be involved in adaptation strategies

55. The third edition of the Montreal Process criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests contains indicators related to social development and indigenous and other local and forest-dependent communities, including forest land tenure, specifically indicators 6.3.c (resilience of forest-dependent communities) and 7.1.a (property rights, land tenure arrangements, customary and traditional rights of indigenous people and means of resolving property disputes by due process). Each individual Montreal Process member country, in preparing its Montreal Process country report, has the option of reporting against these indicators.

3. Social and cultural aspects

56. Forests serve a multitude of economic and social functions. APFNet aims to promote sustainable forest management as a means of enhancing the role that forests play in social development. It is hoping to help build a platform of cultural exchange in the region that can foster better understanding among stakeholders.

57. The Carpathian countries place great importance on preserving and supporting the cultural and social dimension of forests. Their policies thus tend to maintain and enhance various functions of forests, such as recreational and tourism activities. The unique traditional and cultural heritage of the Carpathians is especially well-preserved in the rural areas, which provides an opportunity for tourism development but also a challenge to ensure its sustainability. On the local level, the non-timber uses of the forest, such as the collection of berries, mushrooms and medicinal plants, contribute to people's livelihoods.

58. In the elaboration of the Protocol to the Carpathian Convention (see para. 11 above), the need for countries to relate forest management policies to other policies, including rural development, tourism, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, as well as biodiversity conservation and spatial planning, was taken into account.

59. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership states that it is often hard to define cultural heritage, to distinguish, for instance, between poaching and traditional hunting. In modern times, indigenous communities tend to lose their traditional

knowledge, but new technologies can help them to preserve and transfer it. Therefore, the exchange of information among stakeholders is important for this aspect of sustainable forest management.

60. According to Forest Europe, after the adoption of the resolution on social and cultural dimensions of sustainable forest management at the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe in Vienna in 2003, a set of scientific guidelines, published by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations in 2007, was developed to facilitate the implementation of social and cultural values in sustainable forest management throughout the pan-European region.

61. Model forests are based on a flexible approach that combines the social, cultural and economic needs of local communities with the long-term sustainability of forest landscapes. According to the International Model Forest Network, model forests, by offering a platform for the free flow of ideas, data and resources for informed decision-making about economic alternatives to current practices, provide the opportunity for those traditionally left out of the decision-making process to have an equal voice around the discussion table. Most sites include indigenous peoples in their stakeholder base and work towards a common vision for sustainability that takes indigenous history, culture and knowledge into account. That allows for the sharing of experiences and lessons learned while promoting initiatives that reconcile economic priorities, social concerns and environmental considerations.

62. The third edition of the Montreal Process criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests contains indicators related to the social and cultural aspects of forests, specifically indicators 6.5.a (area and per cent of forests managed primarily to protect the range of cultural, social and spiritual needs and values), 6.5.b (the importance of forests to people) and 7.1.e (management of forests to conserve special environmental, cultural, social and/or scientific values). Each Montreal Process member country, in preparing its Montreal Process country report, has the option of reporting against these indicators.

63. One of the concerns in modern forestry is the conciliation of conservation aspects with social and cultural development. The member States of the Central African Forests Commission place great importance on the social and cultural aspects of forest management and include local communities in the decision-making process. However, it is challenging to deal with competing uses of the same space by different economic activities (mining, agriculture and forestry) and, in this as well as in other contexts, the capacity of local actors has to be further built.

64. So far, REPAR-CEFDHAC considers that the participation of rural populations in the management and conservation of forest ecosystems is very low and the benefits they accrue from the use of their forest heritage are minimal. The involvement of local people in the drafting of management plans is still not sufficient, economic aspects are favoured to the detriment of social ones; and intellectual property rights related to traditional knowledge are not fully taken into account. In this regard, REPAR-CEFDHAC has encouraged member parliaments to address issues related to the incorporation of social and cultural aspects in sustainable forest management.

C. International Year of Forests, 2011

65. Several regional and subregional entities sent inputs regarding the International Year of Forests, 2011. Those inputs will appear in the Secretary-General's report on the issue to the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

D. Regional cooperation and partnerships

66. Each entity has its own objectives, mandate, composition and procedures. However, there are commonalities, such as the fact that all of them work to some degree with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), which is a part of the international arrangement on forests. CPF member organizations are seen as fundamental in supporting the promotion of sustainable forest management, the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the four global objectives.

67. All the regional and subregional partners of the Forum on Forests reiterated their support for open and transparent decision-making processes including, whenever possible, the participation of civil society. All entities prioritize capacity-building and awareness-raising as tools to achieve the promotion of sustainable forest management and many organize activities involving all stakeholders. ACTO, for instance, aims at building the capacity of national organizations in charge of forest management so that they can properly contribute to the coordinated regional effort.

68. The mission of APFNet to promote regional sustainable forest management is realized through capacity-building, information-sharing and pilot projects, through which efforts are made to enhance regional cooperation to pave the way for sustainable forest management. Drawing on regional and international expertise to contribute to thematic training for long-term development, APFNet has launched a scholarship programme offering opportunities to foresters and researchers for postgraduate education in the Asia-Pacific region.

69. The Carpathian Convention is in the process of developing an education and awareness-raising and information-sharing component, to support and complement already existing transboundary initiatives and promote a regional-level approach, including in regard to scientific exchange.

70. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership supports the Central African Forests Commission and Central African delegates in building capacity for international negotiations. It works towards a coherent regional vision by channelling support to individual countries through the thematic working groups of the Forests Commission and by sharing information with other partners. It also aims to improve knowledge on forests and people by producing and disseminating information about the Congo Basin forest ecosystems and livelihood systems.

71. REPAR-CEFDHAC emphasizes the need to take into account all uses of forests and how they interact with one another, as well as the work and priorities of other regional entities, such as the Central African Forests Commission, in order to build capacity and raise awareness of the various actors. The mining industry in forest areas, for instance, can help to improve the livelihoods of the local and indigenous people, but also brings new social and environmental aspects to the

equation. It may also interact with more traditional activities such as agriculture and cattle-raising.

72. Capacity-building activities by ECE, in cooperation with FAO, have played a catalytic role in addressing countries' efforts to achieve sustainable forest management by addressing topical themes for the different regions, such as wood energy, forest products marketing and corporate social responsibility in South-East Europe; and policy developments and institutional reform in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

73. An important lesson learned is that close cooperation with actors in the European forestry sphere is crucial to ensure the effective outreach and impact of capacity-building activities in countries throughout the ECE region.

74. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), together with other regional partners, has been promoting capacity-building in the area of payment for environmental services. Lessons learned from the experience include the importance of sharing country experiences (see para. 85 below).

75. Communication and capacity-building have been great strengths of the Montreal Process since its inception. Sharing of experiences and knowledge has enabled the development and application of the entity's criteria and indicators framework used by all member countries. For example, through the International Model Forest Network, Argentina, Canada, Chile, China and Russia are collaborating on methods to demonstrate sustainable forest management using the Montreal Process criteria and indicators.

76. As far as financial support is concerned, most entities rely on official donors as well as regional and world development banks for their funding; some are able to obtain funds from private contributors as well. All agree, however, that more funding is needed and many see hope in obtaining new and additional resources through mechanisms such as REDD-plus.

77. For the Carpathian Convention, the majority of transnational projects are funded by the various programmes of the European Union funds for territorial cooperation. National financing is provided by the forest sector itself, through timber export, managed at large by the State forestry enterprises, as well as by the ministries of environment and ministries of agriculture, which are indirectly supporting sustainable forest development through promoting regeneration, biodiversity conservation and afforestation measures.

78. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership offers guidance for effective use and governance of additional finance made available by the international community to the Congo Basin. COMIFAC, as strengthened by CBFP members' support, can help to orient and monitor allocation of new funds provided. However, effective use heavily depends on the concerned countries' political ownership and determination to enforce forest protection through appropriate legal frameworks and the establishment of positive incentives for developing new technologies or alternative revenue sources.

IV. Lessons learned

79. Some regional and subregional entities shared the lessons learned or brought to mind in preparing inputs for the present report and answering the questionnaire. APFNet considers that stronger efforts are needed to realize its objective of expanding forest cover by 20 million hectares by 2020. Moreover, a monitoring system with effective data sharing should be established for regional forests, so that the success of policy implementation and developing management strategies can be measured. Finally, local communities can be major allies for forest protection and sustainable use, and their participation should be encouraged and mobilized.

80. The secretariat of the Carpathian Convention states that the identification and securing of sources of funding for project implementation throughout the Carpathian region will be a challenge. Future European Union transnational programmes should be based on macroregional approaches, allowing for the sustainable development priorities of the Carpathian region to be addressed through better coordination of existing or new European Union programmes, such as a “Carpathian Space” programme similar to the existing “Alpine Space” funding programme. The strategic and programme framework should address the Carpathians as an integral whole.

81. Among the lessons learned by International Model Forest Network participants during the 16 years of the organization’s development is that additional funding — a difficult calculation that should be neither too much nor too little — is almost always necessary but it is typically far from sufficient to create the conditions for lasting progress towards sustainable forest management. Money is one source of capital, but so too is the critical human capital represented by local and indigenous communities, local business and industry, governments and other stakeholders who must be provided with the opportunity to become full and meaningful participants in defining what sustainable forest management means and working together to achieve it. Ultimately it is the combined political will, trust, confidence, and fundamental listening and learning skills of these stakeholders that make an initiative a success or not.

82. ECE regards the questionnaire as a reminder of the need for consistency between actions agreed to at the global and regional levels. It is important to strengthen synergies with other organizations and actors at the regional level and to work jointly towards the implementation of global goals as well as regional commitments. ECE is particularly interested in being kept informed of global-level activities related to financing of sustainable forest management, especially those of relevance to countries with economies in transition.

83. REPAR-CEFDHAC expressed the view that the elaboration of the responses of the questionnaire was difficult, which might indicate that the questions were too many, too complex and not targeted enough. The elaboration of the inputs was slowed by a lack of coordination and communication among the various actors involved, and the necessary data, when they were available, were unreliable or lacked consistency. Despite all the difficulties and gaps, the preparation of the inputs showed that it is possible to unite divergent interests around a common product and to lay the groundwork

for a real diagnostic and monitoring tool. In the end, it was possible not only to prepare the inputs but also to perform a significant exercise of researching forest-related information on Central Africa.

84. The permanent secretariat of ACTO stated that all initiatives and experiences generate important lessons which feed back into the organization's decision-making process. One of the most important lessons is the need to apply significant effort in the consensual planning process of regional action, including the allocation of time for appropriate interaction and consultation. Moreover, all regional processes are specific and, as concerns regional entities which implement global agreements, the lessons learned have been broadly adopted as can be seen from the results of the Australian-Swiss region-led initiative on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held in Geneva from 28 to 30 January 2008 (see E/CN.18/2009/18).

85. From its experience in promoting capacity-building in the area of payment for environmental services, ESCAP learned that while subregional networking is valuable, networking within a country is just as important. Sharing of country experiences is far more effective than other types of capacity-building in terms of providing inspiration and practical solutions. The countries that made the most progress in terms of payment for environmental services policy were those that identified a specific development challenge related to forest ecosystem services as a basis for policy development.

86. Finally, UEMOA stated that answering the questions sent by the Forum on Forests secretariat allowed the Union to list all its initiatives related to the sustainable management of forests and to realize that there was room for improvement. The elaboration and implementation of a regional forest action plan will allow UEMOA to contribute more to the efforts of its member States to promote and achieve the sustainable management of their forests.

Annex

Regional and subregional entities providing inputs to the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization

Central African Forests Commission

Congo Basin Forest Partnership

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Europe

Economic Community of Central African States

Forest Europe

Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention)

International Model Forest Network

Montreal Process

Réseau des parlementaires pour la gestion durable des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique Centrale — Conférence ministérielle sur les écosystèmes des forêts denses humides d'Afrique Centrale

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

West African Economic and Monetary Union
