



United Nations

United Nations Forum on Forests

**Report on the fourteenth session
(11 May 2018 and 6–10 May 2019)**

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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.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention . . .	4
A. Draft decision for adoption by the Council	4
Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its fourteenth session and provisional agenda for its fifteenth session	4
B. Decision brought to the attention of the Council	5
Dates and venue of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests	5
II. Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030	6
III. Monitoring, assessment and reporting	9
IV. Means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources	10
V. Enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of sustainable forest management	11
VI. Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues	12
VII. Emerging issues and challenges	14
VIII. Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests	15
IX. Information on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the Forum	16
X. Dates and venue of the fifteenth session of the Forum	17
XI. Provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the Forum	18
XII. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fourteenth session	19
XIII. Organization of the session	20
A. Opening and duration of the session	20
B. Election of officers	20
C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work	20
D. Attendance	21
E. Documentation	22
 Annexes	
I. Summary by the Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests	23
II. List of documents	52
 Appendices	
I. Proposed scoping document for the development of the flagship publication	53
II. Requests for further updates on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs from the United Nations Forum on Forests	56

Chapter I

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

A. Draft decision 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 decision:

Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its fourteenth session

The Economic and Social Council:

- (a) Takes note of the report of the Forum on its fourteenth session;¹
- (b) Notes that the fifteenth session of the Forum will be held at Headquarters from 4 to 8 May 2020;
- (c) Approves the provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the Forum as set out below:

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

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:
 - (a) Policy dialogue on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2019–2020, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests;
 - (b) Voluntary announcement of voluntary national contributions;
 - (c) United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets.
4. Monitoring, assessment and reporting: progress on the implementation of the strategic plan, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions.
5. Means of implementation: availability of resources for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and its priority actions and resource needs for the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024.
6. Emerging issues and challenges.
7. Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests.
8. High-level segment, including a forest partnership forum with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, non-governmental organizations and private sector chief executive officers.
9. Adoption of the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024, including consideration of its priority actions and resource needs.

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 22 (E/2019/42).*

10. Information on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the Forum.
11. Dates and venue of the sixteenth session of the Forum.
12. Provisional agenda for the sixteenth session of the Forum.
13. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fifteenth session.

B. Decision brought to the attention of the Council

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

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

- The United Nations Forum on Forests, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution [2015/33](#) of 22 July 2015, decides that the fifteenth session of the Forum will be held at Headquarters from 4 to 8 May 2020.

Chapter II

Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

- (a) **Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2019–2020, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests**
- (b) **Voluntary announcement of voluntary national contributions**
- (c) **United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets**

3. The Forum considered item 3 jointly with item 8 at its 2nd meeting, on 6 May 2019, as well as at its 3rd to 5th and 10th meetings, on 6 and 7 May and on 10 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 (E/CN.18/2019/2).

4. At its 2nd meeting, on 6 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the representative of the Forum secretariat.

General statements under the item

5. At its 2nd meeting, on 6 May, the Forum heard general statements by the representatives of the State of Palestine (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Saudi Arabia, Senegal (on behalf of the African States), Ghana, China, Australia, the Holy See, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Romania, Israel, Canada, Germany, India, Thailand, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Morocco and Uzbekistan, as well as by the observer for the European Union.

6. At its 3rd meeting, on 6 May, the Forum heard statements by the representatives of South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zambia.

7. At its 4th meeting, on 7 May, the Forum resumed its general discussion under the item and heard statements by the representatives of Costa Rica, Bangladesh, the United States of America and Malaysia.

8. At its 5th meeting, on 7 May, the Forum heard statements by the representatives of Paraguay, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Brazil, Turkey and Colombia.

Panel discussions on the themes “Forests and climate change” and “Forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment”

9. At its 3rd meeting, on 6 May, the Forum held two panel discussions under item 3 (a), chaired and moderated by the Chair (Slovakia).

10. Presentations during the first panel discussion were given by the following: Senior Research Fellow, Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House, Duncan Brack; Chair, Scientific Advisory Board, European Forest Institute, Elena Paoletti; and Communication Expert, Forest Europe, Igor Vizslai.

11. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representatives of Costa Rica, China, India, Brazil, Canada, Ukraine, New Zealand, Finland, Ecuador, the United States of America, Norway, Nigeria, Slovakia and Bangladesh, as well as of the observer for the European Union.

12. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: farmers and small forest landowners; and the scientific and technological communities.

13. Also at the same meeting, presentations during the second panel discussion were given by the following: Senior Forester and Co-Chair, Board of Trustees, Centre for International Forestry Research – World Agroforestry Centre Merger, José Joaquín Campos Arce; Coordinator, Special Project on World Forests, Society and Environment, International Union of Forest Research Organizations, Pia Katila; and Visiting Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, Gill Shepherd.

14. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representatives of Nigeria, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Algeria, Switzerland, the United States of America and Finland, as well as of the observer for the European Union.

Panel discussion on the theme “Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education and inclusive institutions at all levels”

15. At its 4th meeting, on 7 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under item 3 (a), chaired and moderated by the Vice-Chair (Islamic Republic of Iran), who made a statement.

16. Presentations were given by the following: Independent Researcher, School of Politics and Government, National University of San Martín, Argentina, Monica Gabay; Lecturer, Department of Forest Sciences, University of Helsinki, Mika Rekola; and Manager, International Affairs, Canadian Forest Services, Natural Resources Canada, Maureen Whelan.

17. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representatives of India, the Republic of Korea, Costa Rica, Colombia, Switzerland, Germany, Indonesia, Lesotho, Bangladesh, the United States of America, the Russian Federation and Finland, as well as of the observer for the European Union.

18. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the children and youth major group.

19. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the observer for the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

Panel discussions on the theme “Mobilizing private sector action in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the 2030 Agenda” and “Communication and outreach and the International Day of Forests 2019”

20. At its 5th meeting, on 7 May, the Forum held two panel discussions under item 3 (a), chaired and moderated by the Vice-Chair (Netherlands).

21. Presentations during the first panel discussion were given by the following: Director, Institutional Relations, Brazilian Tree Industry, José Carlos da Fonseca, Jr.; Secretary-General, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Spain, Ana Noriega; and Chief Executive Officer, Ghana Timber Millers Organisation, Kwame Asamoah Adam.

22. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representatives of Ecuador, India, Switzerland, Australia and Nigeria.

23. At the same meeting, statements were made by representatives of the following major groups: non-governmental organizations; and women.

24. Also at the same meeting, presentations during the second panel discussion were given by the following: Programme Management Officer, secretariat, United Nations Forum on Forests, Mita Sen; Senior Forestry Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Peter Csoka; and Forum focal point for the children and youth major group, International Forestry Students' Association, Steffen Dehn.

25. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representatives of India, China, Switzerland, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the United States of America, New Zealand, the Philippines, Australia, Ecuador, Indonesia and Japan.

26. Also at the 5th meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the indigenous people major group.

Panel discussion on the theme “United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets”

27. At its 4th meeting, on 7 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under item 3 (c), chaired by the Vice-Chair (Islamic Republic of Iran) and moderated by the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and FAO Assistant Director General, Hiroto Mitsugi, who made a statement on behalf of the members of the Partnership.

28. At the same meeting, presentations were given by the following: Permanent Representative of Armenia and Chair, Commission on the Status of Women, Mher Margaryan; Lead Environment Specialist and Programme Manager, Programme on Forests, World Bank, Garo Batmanian; Director of Operations, International Tropical Timber Organization, Sheam Satkuru; Technical Specialist, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries, United Nations Development Programme, Kimberly Todd; and Forest Policy Officer, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Adriana Vidal.

29. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representatives of Japan and the United States of America.

30. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Consideration of the draft Chair's summary

31. At its 10th meeting, on 10 May, the Chair (Slovakia) introduced the draft summary of the discussions. The draft was contained in an informal paper circulated in English only, under item 3 (Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030), item 4 (Monitoring, assessment and reporting), item 5 (Means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources), item 6 (Enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of sustainable forest management), item 7 (Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues), item 8 (Emerging issues and challenges) and item 10 (Information on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the Forum).

32. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Algeria, Canada (on behalf of Japan, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), Ukraine, India, Australia, Norway and Nigeria, as well as by the observer for the European Union.

33. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the FAO representative.

34. For the Chair's summary, see annex I.

Chapter III

Monitoring, assessment and reporting

- (a) **Progress on the implementation of the strategic plan, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions**
- (b) **Progress on the development of global forest indicators**

35. The Forum considered item 4 at its 6th and 7th meetings, on 8 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions (E/CN.18/2019/3).

36. At its 6th meeting, on 8 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the representative of the Forum secretariat.

37. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex I.

Panel discussion on the theme “Monitoring, assessment and reporting”

38. At its 6th meeting, on 8 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under item 4, chaired by the Vice-Chair (Morocco) and moderated by the following: Programme Manager, Forestry and Timber Section, Economic Commission for Europe and FAO, Roman Michalak, who made a statement.

39. Presentations were given by the following: FAO Senior Forestry Officer, Peter Csoka; Strategic Planner and Analyst, Forestry Department, Jamaica, Davia Carty; Production Manager, Forestry Commission, Ghana, Kofi Affum-Baffoe; and Deputy Conservator of Forest and Forum alternate focal point, Kenya Forest Service, Patrick Kariuki.

40. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Ukraine, the Republic of Korea, Fiji, Argentina, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, as well as by the observer for the European Union.

Chapter IV

Means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources

41. The Forum considered item 5 at its 7th meeting, on 8 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources (E/CN.18/2019/4) and the letter dated 20 March 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Suriname to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Krutu of Paramaribo Joint Declaration on high forest cover and low deforestation climate finance mobilization (E/CN.18/2019/8).

42. At its 7th meeting, on 8 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the representative of the Forum secretariat.

43. At the same meeting, the Co-Chairs of the Expert Group Meeting on the Clearing House of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, Thomas Baldauf, of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany, and John Leigh, of the National Forest and Wildlife Service, Peru, presented the summary of the meeting.

44. Also at the same meeting, the representative of the Forum secretariat made a statement and responded to comments and questions regarding the project office of the Network.

45. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex I.

Panel discussion on the theme "Means of implementation for Sustainable Forest Management"

46. At the 7th meeting, on 8 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under item 5, chaired by the Vice-Chair (Islamic Republic of Iran), who made a statement, and moderated by the Senior Scientific Officer at the Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland, Sibylle Vermont.

47. Presentations were given by the representative of the Forestry Department of Jamaica, Marilyn Headley; and the representative of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa, Avhashoni Renny Madula.

48. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the Moderator and the representative of the Philippines.

49. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the scientific and technological communities major group.

Chapter V

Enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of sustainable forest management

50. In Economic and Social Council resolution [2015/33](#) on the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015, the Council decided to improve and strengthen the functioning of the Forum beyond 2015 by requesting the Forum, inter alia, to assess the progress in, and make possible proposals on, enhancing policy coherence, dialogue and cooperation on forests, fostering synergies in global forest-related processes and strengthening the common international understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management as set out in the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. In the resolution, the Council also requested the Forum to operationalize the strategic plan through quadrennial programmes of work for the period 2017–2020.
51. The Forum considered item 6 at its 8th meeting, on 9 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of sustainable forest management ([E/CN.18/2019/5](#)).
52. At the same meeting, on 9 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the representative of the Forum secretariat.
53. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex I.

Chapter VI

Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues

- (a) **Activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in support of the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017–2020**
- (b) **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: implementation of the Paris Agreement**
- (c) **Convention on Biological Diversity: Aichi Biodiversity Targets**
- (d) **Regional and subregional partners**
- (e) **Major groups and other relevant stakeholders**
- (f) **Communication and outreach activities**
- (g) **Cross-sectoral engagement**
- (h) **Information on intersessional activities**

54. The Forum considered item 7 at its 8th and 9th meetings, on 9 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues ([E/CN.18/2019/6](#)).

55. At its 8th meeting, on 9 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the representative of the Forum secretariat.

56. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex I.

Panel discussion on the theme “Enhancing cooperation, coordination and cross-sectoral engagement in support of implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and other forest-related international agreements”

57. At its 8th meeting, on 9 May 2019, the Forum held a panel discussion under sub-items (a), (b) and (c) of item 7, chaired and moderated by the Vice-Chair (Netherlands), who made an opening statement.

58. Presentations were given by the following: Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and Assistant Director-General of FAO, Hiroto Mitsugi; Director, Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division, secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Alexander Shestakov; Programme Officer, Mitigation, Data and Analysis, secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Peter Iversen; Policy Officer, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, Sasha Alexander; Senior Environmental Specialist, secretariat of the Global Environment Facility, Ulrich Apel; and Director, International Forestry Programme, Faculty of Forestry, University of British Columbia, Canada, Hosny El-Lakany.

59. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representatives of Switzerland, New Zealand, Jamaica, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Germany.

60. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the non-governmental organizations major group.

Panel discussion on the theme “Actions by regional and subregional partners in support of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030”

61. At the 9th meeting, on 9 May 2019, the Forum held a panel discussion under item 7 (d), chaired by the Vice-Chair (Morocco) and moderated by, the Officer-in-Charge of the Forests, Land and Housing Division of the Economic Commission for Europe and Chief of the Joint Forestry and Timber Section of the Commission and FAO, Paola Deda.

62. Presentations were given by the following: Senior Policy Officer, Forestry and Land Management, African Union Commission, Almami Dampha; Executive Secretary, African Forest Forum, Godwin Kowero; Senior Programme Officer, Center for People and Forests, David Gritten; Programme Coordinator, Global Assessment of Bamboo and Rattan for green development, International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation, Thang Long Trinh; and FAO Senior Forestry Officer, Peter Csoka.

63. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the Moderator and the representative of Finland.

Panel discussion on the theme “Actions by major group partners in support of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030”

64. At its 9th meeting, the Forum held a panel discussion under item 7 (e), chaired by the Vice-Chair (Morocco). The discussion was moderated by the Forum focal point for the scientific and technological communities major group, Joseph Cobbinah, who gave a presentation.

65. Presentations were also given by the following: Forum focal point, women major group, Cécile Ndjebet; Forum focal point, children and youth major group, Steffen Dehn; Forum focal point, indigenous people major group, Lucy Mulenkei; Forum focal point, non-governmental organizations major group, Martha Cecilia Nunez Canizares; alternate focal point, scientific and technological communities major group, Sim Hoek-Cho; and alternate focal point women major group, Fernanda Rodrigues.

66. Panellists responded to the comments and questions of the representative of Ecuador.

67. At the same meeting, statements were made by representatives of the following major groups: non-governmental organizations; and farmers and small forest landowners.

Chapter VII

Emerging issues and challenges

68. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2017–2020, the Forum may decide to include in the agenda of any of its sessions an item on emerging issues and challenges of global significance that are related to and/or have an impact on forests and sustainable forest management and that are urgent, unexpected and not already addressed in the agenda of the respective session.

69. The Forum considered item 8 jointly with item 3 at its 2nd meeting, on 6 May 2019, and heard an introductory statement by the representative of the Forum secretariat.

70. The Forum also considered item 8 at its 10th meeting, on 10 May 2019, when it recalled that a discussion on emerging issues and challenges of global significance had been held as part of the technical discussion and exchange of experiences under item 3 at its 2nd meeting, on 6 May (see chap. II, paras. 3–5).

71. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 ([E/CN.18/2019/2](#)).

72. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex I.

Chapter VIII

Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests

73. The Forum considered item 9 at its 10th meeting, on 10 May 2019. 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.18/2019/7](#)).

74. At the same meeting, on 10 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the representative of the Forum secretariat.

Chapter IX

Information on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the Forum

75. The Forum considered item 10 at its 2nd and 6th meetings, on 6 and 8 May 2019.
76. At its 2nd meeting, on 6 May, the Forum heard an oral report by the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs.
77. At the 6th meeting, on 8 May, the Officer-in-Charge of the Forum secretariat responded to the questions raised by the representatives of Canada, Australia, Germany and Argentina, as well as by the observer for the European Union.
78. At the same meeting, the Chair (Slovakia) responded to the question raised by the representative of Algeria.
79. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex I.

Chapter X

Dates and venue of the fifteenth session of the Forum

80. The Forum considered item 11 at its 10th meeting, on 10 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a draft decision entitled “Dates and venue of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” ([E/CN.18/2019/L.2](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

81. At the same meeting, on 10 May, the Forum adopted the draft decision (see chap. I, sect. B).

Chapter XI

Provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the Forum

82. The Forum considered item 12 at its 10th meeting, on 10 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a document entitled “Provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” ([E/CN.18/2019/L.1](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

83. At its 10th meeting, on 10 May, the Forum adopted the provisional agenda for its fifteenth session, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2019 session (see chap. I, sect. A).

Chapter XII

Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fourteenth session

84. The Forum considered item 13 at its 10th meeting, on 10 May 2019. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the draft report on its fourteenth session ([E/CN.18/2019/L.3](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

85. At the 10th meeting, on 10 May, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur (Morocco) introduced the draft report. Subsequently, the Forum adopted the draft report and entrusted the Rapporteur with its finalization in collaboration with the secretariat, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2019 session.

Chapter XIII

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

86. The United Nations Forum on Forests held its fourteenth session at Headquarters on 11 May 2018 and from 6 to 10 May 2019. The Forum held 10 plenary meetings (1st to 10th).

87. At the 1st meeting, on 11 May 2018, the Chair pro tempore and Chair of the thirteenth session of the Forum, Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob (Malaysia), opened the fourteenth session.

88. At the 2nd meeting, on 6 May 2019, the Chair of the fourteenth session, Boris Greguška (Slovakia), resumed the session and made an opening statement.

89. At the same meeting, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Inga Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), addressed the Forum.

90. Also at the same meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs made a statement.

B. Election of officers

91. At its 1st meeting, on 11 May 2018, the Forum elected by acclamation Boris Greguška (Slovakia) as Chair and Javad Momeni (Islamic Republic of Iran) as Vice-Chair of the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions.

92. At its 2nd meeting, on 6 May 2019, the Forum elected by acclamation Khalid Cherki (Morocco), Kitty Sweeb (Suriname) and Rob Busink (Netherlands) as Vice-Chairs of the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions.

93. At the same meeting, the Forum appointed Khalid Cherki (Morocco) to serve concurrently as Rapporteur of the fourteenth session.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

94. At its 2nd meeting, on 6 May 2019, following statements by the representatives of Switzerland, Australia and Japan, the Forum adopted its provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document [E/CN.18/2019/1](#). The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:
 - (a) Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2019–2020, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests;
 - (b) Voluntary announcement of voluntary national contributions;
 - (c) United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets.

4. Monitoring, assessment and reporting:
 - (a) Progress on the implementation of the strategic plan, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions;
 - (b) Progress on the development of global forest indicators.
 5. Means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources.
 6. Enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of sustainable forest management.
 7. Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues:
 - (a) Activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in support of the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017–2020;
 - (b) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: implementation of the Paris Agreement;
 - (c) Convention on Biological Diversity: Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
 - (d) Regional and subregional partners;
 - (e) Major groups and other relevant stakeholders;
 - (f) Communication and outreach activities;
 - (g) Cross-sectoral engagement;
 - (h) Information on intersessional activities.
 8. Emerging issues and challenges.
 9. Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests.
 10. Information on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the Forum.
 11. Dates and venue of the fifteenth session of the Forum.
 12. Provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the Forum.
 13. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fourteenth session.
95. At its 2nd meeting, on 6 May 2019, the Forum approved the provisional organization of work for the session, as contained in an informal paper circulated in English only, on the understanding that it might be further revised, as warranted.
96. At the same meeting, the Chair recalled that the session was a technical one for implementation and technical advice, and that a Chair's summary of the discussions during the session would be transmitted as an input of the Forum to the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (see annex I).

D. Attendance

97. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, the Forum is composed of all States Members of the United Nations and of

the specialized agencies, with full and equal participation. The list of participants will be issued as document [E/CN.18/2019/INF/1](#).

E. Documentation

98. The documentation considered by the Forum at its fourteenth session is set out in annex II to the present report. Other relevant documentation is also available at the website of the Forum (www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/current-session/official-documents/index.html).

Annex I

Summary by the Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests

I. Introduction

1. The present summary is organized as follows:

(a) In section II, the Chair summarizes the technical discussions at the fourteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests by agenda item (sect. II.A), with the exception of agenda item 10, and offers a set of key proposals emerging from the discussions (sect. II.B). Section II is for transmittal to the fifteenth session of the Forum;

(b) Section III contains the input of the fourteenth session of the Forum to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019, which was drafted using the template provided by the Economic and Social Council. Section III is for transmittal to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019;

(c) In section IV, the Chair summarizes the discussions at the fourteenth session of the Forum on agenda item 10 (Information on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the Forum). Appendix II to the present report contains the questions submitted by the European Union and Canada to the Forum secretariat on the reform of the Department and the full response provided by the Officer-in-Charge of the secretariat on behalf of the Department. Section IV is for transmittal by the Department to appropriate United Nations bodies that are reviewing, considering and deciding on the reform of the Department, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, as well as for transmittal to the fifteenth session of the Forum;

(d) Section V provides an indicative list of the intersessional activities suggested during the discussions at the fourteenth session of the Forum to facilitate and inform policy deliberations at its fifteenth session.

II. Summary by the Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests for transmittal to the fifteenth session of the Forum

2. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2017–2020,¹ the fourteenth session of the Forum was the technical session for the 2019–2020 biennium. Discussions were focused on the implementation of and technical advice on several thematic and operational priorities and included the exchange of experiences among members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional organizations, major groups and other stakeholders. To facilitate a productive interactive dialogue among Forum participants, 11 panel sessions were included in the organization of work.

3. The present summary by the Chair is not a consensus negotiated outcome of the Forum.

¹ See Economic and Social Council resolution [2017/4](#), annex II.

A. Summary of technical discussions by agenda item

Agenda items 3 (a) (Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2019–2020, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests) and 8 (Emerging issues and challenges)

4. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat under agenda items 3 and 8 (E/CN.18/2019/2) and noted, inter alia, the recent publication by the Forum secretariat of a booklet on the global forest goals of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and a brochure on voluntary national contributions towards achieving the global forest goals.

Thematic priorities

5. On the basis of the decision of the Bureau of the fourteenth session of the Forum, the Forum considered the following thematic priorities for technical discussion at its fourteenth session:

- (a) Forests and climate change;
- (b) Forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment;
- (c) Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education and inclusive institutions at all levels.

6. Consistent with the provisions of the quadrennial programme of work regarding the selection of thematic priorities, the Bureau was cognizant of the fact that the global forest goals and targets of the strategic plan² relate directly to one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019,³ as well as to the theme of the International Day of Forests 2019, “Forests and education” (see table below).

Interlinkages of the thematic priorities with the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019

<i>Thematic priority</i>	<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Most relevant targets of the global forest goals</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Goals under review</i>
Forests and climate change ^a	1–4, 6	1.1–1.4, 2.5, 3.1, 4.1–4.4, 6.4	13, 17
Forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment	2, 4, 6	2.1–2.4, 4.3, 6.3	8, 17

² Ibid., annex I.

³ Goals 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries), 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts), 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) and 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development), reviewed annually.

<i>Thematic priority</i>	<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Most relevant targets of the global forest goals</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Goals under review</i>
Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education and inclusive institutions at all levels ^b	3, 5, 6	3.3, 5.1–5.4, 6.1–6.5	4, 10, 16, 17

^a This thematic priority relates also to the objectives of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which, as acknowledged in Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals, is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

^b This thematic priority relates also to the theme of the International Day of Forests 2019, “Forests and education”.

7. The discussions on the thematic priorities were facilitated by three panels, which considered, inter alia, the links between the Sustainable Development Goals under review and the global forest goals and targets and the ways in which meeting the global forest goals and targets can accelerate progress on those Goals.⁴

Summary of the discussion on forests and climate change

8. Participants welcomed the introduction of the background analytical paper on this theme and the other panel presentations. Representatives of several countries and partners shared efforts and challenges in promoting and safeguarding forest-based climate benefits, including the representatives of Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Finland, India, Slovakia, the European Union and the farmers and small forest landowners and the scientific and technological communities major groups. The representatives of China and New Zealand noted the role of their countries in co-hosting the “nature-based solutions” component of the Climate Action Summit to be convened by the Secretary-General on 23 September 2019. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) Participants stressed the vital role of forests in meeting the urgent global challenge of combating climate change and emphasized the pressing need for further action. They noted, for example, that all the pathways to limit warming identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its recent special report entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C* rely on forests for the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere;

(b) In the Declaration on Forests for the Climate of the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, this crucial role of forests and forest products in climate change mitigation and adaptation is highlighted, and the Forum should bring the Declaration to the attention of the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(c) The Forum and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests should give increased focus to the need for international policy coherence, coordination and collaboration on the nexus between forests and climate. In that regard, work will be required to address the broader issues of land use change, energy, sustainable production and consumption, means of implementation and governance issues in an integrated manner;

(d) At the national level, there is a need to integrate climate mitigation and adaptation policies and actions more fully into national forest policies and practices.

⁴ The information note on the thematic panels is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/UNFF14-CNs-Thematic-Panels-6-7May19.pdf.

The voluntary national contributions put forward by countries in relation to the strategic plan should include forest-related climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, which should be consistent with nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement;

(e) There is a need to mobilize adequate levels of finance in order to implement forest-related climate change actions. The concern of tropical countries with high forest cover in this regard was highlighted during the high-level conference on high forest cover and low deforestation climate finance mobilization, held in Suriname from 12 to 15 February 2019. In addition to finance, effective standards of forest governance, law enforcement and awareness-raising through capacity-building of all relevant stakeholders are prerequisites for the successful implementation of forest-related climate change actions;

(f) The emphasis placed on different forest-related climate change actions, such as reducing deforestation and forest degradation, promoting sustainable forest management techniques designed to maximize carbon storage in forests and supporting afforestation, reforestation, agroforestry and forest landscape restoration initiatives, should be adapted to meet local circumstances. For example, the net contribution of plantation forests to reducing carbon dioxide emissions depends on such details as species choice, previous land use and soil cultivation techniques;

(g) In its submission to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Forum should note that harvested wood products can contribute to climate change mitigation through increasing the carbon stock fixed in those products and replacing products manufactured from greenhouse gas-intensive materials, such as concrete or brick, metals or plastics;

(h) Forest products can be used as a source of renewable energy, including for fuel, heat and electricity generation;

(i) Forests contribute to climate change adaptation, and there is an urgent need to identify and scale up forest-based adaptation strategies. The fact that climate change-related threats to forests may include increased drought, fire, wind, flooding, erosion and pests and diseases should be taken into consideration in such strategies. The Forum should encourage countries to develop appropriate forest adaptation strategies;

(j) Sound scientific knowledge is required as a basis for a better understanding of the role of forest ecosystems in climate change adaptation and mitigation and for science-based decisions. Examples include silvicultural practices, interactions with air pollution and impacts on soil carbon. It is important that scientific results then be effectively communicated through technology transfer to support effective action;

(k) There is a need to strengthen the implementation of the strategic plan as an integrated framework for forest-based national actions and international cooperation. The member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have a key role in this regard.

Summary of the discussion on forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment

9. Participants welcomed the introduction of the background analytical paper on this theme and the other panel presentations. Representatives of several countries and partners shared their experience and insights, including the representatives of Algeria, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Finland, Nigeria, Switzerland, the United States of America and the European Union. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) The potential contribution of forests to inclusive and sustainable economic growth should be explicitly recognized in international and national policies. Such policies should take into account the particular circumstances of different countries and regions within countries. For example, there may be significant opportunities for forests to contribute to the bioeconomy in some countries, while the priority may be to enhance the role of forests in poverty reduction strategies in others. At all levels, it will be necessary to build cross-sectoral coordination and policy coherence. In this regard, careful analysis will likely be required to identify synergies and help to address trade-offs between different sectors;

(b) It is important to improve understanding of the full value of the ecosystem services provided by forests. Such services are currently often undervalued because they do not have a market price. As a consequence, the costs of forest resource depletion caused by deforestation and forest degradation are not properly taken into account when decisions are made about land use changes, such as the conversion of forest land to agricultural land;

(c) Successful policy development and implementation is critically dependent on the involvement, expertise and entrepreneurship of local people. For example, many trade-offs are best addressed at the local level. Devolving forest management rights to local communities and smallholders can help to secure inclusive and sustainable economic activity. However, there is concern about the fact that, in practice, State forests are increasingly being assigned to private companies rather than local communities;

(d) Secure forest tenure and rights to use forest resources are a prerequisite for the sustainable management of forests and the sustainable harvesting of forest products, including non-wood forest products such as food and medicinal plants. There is also potential for improving livelihoods by making forest tenure more gender equitable. Women play a key role in many countries with their vital knowledge and experience of sustainably managing forest resources;

(e) In order to generate sustainable and inclusive growth from forests, local people also require fair access to markets and access to support, including, for example, financial services, extension services and forest producer organizations that can help them to develop small-scale value-added marketing chains;

(f) More attention should be paid to the informal forest sector. In many countries, the informal forest sector is several times larger than the formal forest sector, but this is seldom reflected in official statistics. As data on forest employment are often used as a measure of the economic contribution of forests, a lack of information about the informal forest sector can lead to serious underestimation of the economic value of forests. Furthermore, people working in the informal sector, such as vulnerable groups and women, are less likely to have decent working conditions and more likely to face unsafe working practices and uncertainty with regard to working hours and other conditions of service.

Summary of the discussion on forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education and inclusive institutions at all levels

10. Participants welcomed the introduction of the background analytical paper on this theme and the other panel presentations. Representatives of several countries and partners shared their experiences and insights, including the representatives of Bangladesh, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, Germany, India, Indonesia, Lesotho, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the United States, the European Union, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the children and youth major group. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) The importance of effective governance has been highlighted in country-led initiatives of the Forum on decentralization and governance (see [E/CN.18/2015/12](#)). Key messages from this work include the importance of secure tenure, more equitable participation of marginalized groups and inclusive and transparent forest institutions;

(b) There can be particular challenges in post-conflict areas. Illegal activities or disputes over access to forest resources can have a negative impact on sustainable forest management. However, inclusive governance, together with equitable access to forest resources, can contribute to peacebuilding efforts;

(c) Legal frameworks should provide certainty with regard to land tenure. Reforms should be undertaken where necessary, for example when customary tenure arrangements prevent women from owning land. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security⁵ are a tool to promote responsible governance of tenure;

(d) Support for small-scale landholders and indigenous peoples can enhance the contribution of forests to social inclusion and equality. In many countries, small-scale landholders are farmers as well as forest managers. Appropriate policy measures may include simplified regulatory frameworks, technical support, capacity-building, finance and credit and improved market access. To help to strengthen forest and farm producer organizations, consideration should be given to the development of a global facilitation network;

(e) Another aspect of social inclusion is the importance of taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities when designing forest recreation facilities;

(f) More effort is needed to mainstream the perspectives of young people in decision-making processes, in recognition of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#), in which the Council encouraged Member States to consider ways to give young people a bigger voice in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels. The workplan of the children and youth major group for the period 2018–2022 has been developed to support the implementation of the strategic plan;

(g) In part as a result of urbanization, increasing numbers of people are unaware of the vital functions of forests, including their environmental, economic and social benefits. Forest education has a valuable role to play in developing wider public understanding of the importance of forests;

(h) There are already many good examples of forest-related education, both in and outside the classroom. To accelerate progress, it would be beneficial to improve forest education by exchanging experiences. Country reports to the fifteenth session of the Forum provide an opportunity to share success stories;

(i) Access to forest-related education needs to be improved for people who are responsible for the management of forests or for decision-making and professions relevant to forests and forest products. Different approaches, appropriate to different circumstances, should include providing technical training and university courses and meeting the needs of those who have no access to formal learning;

(j) An initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on forest education would provide a valuable opportunity to facilitate international discussion, exchange ideas and identify research needs. It could build on the work of existing initiatives, such as the joint task force on forest education of the International Union

⁵ Available at www.fao.org/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en/.

of Forest Research Organizations and the International Forestry Students Association⁶ and the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;⁷

(k) Forest education should be underpinned by relevant scientific knowledge and traditional forest-related knowledge.

11. Discussions under agenda item 3 (a) on the implementation of the strategic plan continued with two panels, on mobilizing private sector action in support of the implementation of the strategic plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁸ and on communication and outreach and the International Day of Forests 2019.⁹

Summary of the discussion on mobilizing private sector action

12. Panellists representing the Brazilian tree industry, the Ghanaian forest sector and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification highlighted the contribution of their initiatives and programmes to the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals and identified conditions for and challenges in successful investment and ways the Forum might attract the participation of the private sector in its work. Participants welcomed the presentations. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) The private sector has a crucial role in sustainable forest management and in advocating the successful implementation of the strategic plan;

(b) The private forest sector is not a monolith. It includes small, medium, large and multinational forest enterprises that may rely on natural, semi-natural or planted forests, or a combination thereof, for source material and may be involved in primary, secondary and/or high value added processing;

(c) Planted forests, which can have as short a rotation as six years in some countries, currently meet 50 per cent of global demand for pulp, paper and packaging and contribute significantly to job creation in many countries. With the world population projected to reach 9 billion by 2050, an estimated 250 million hectares of additional planted forests and their sound management will be needed to meet this demand;

(d) Strong public policies at the national and subnational levels can help to ensure that planted forests contribute to the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals by stipulating biodiversity protection, forest preservation and restoration and local involvement and benefit-sharing as conditions of plantation operations;

(e) Small and family forest owners are major investors in forests and producers of forest products and services in many countries. Achieving the global forest goals depends on collaboration with local producers;

(f) Consumer/market demand is a main driver of forest management approaches and chain of custody certification. Opportunities for certification can be found in a variety of markets, including, for example, the fashion, hospitality and building and construction industries;

⁶ See www.iufro.org/science/task-forces/forest-education/.

⁷ See <https://en.unesco.org/gap>.

⁸ The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNFF14-CN-Panel-PrivateSector-7May19.pdf.

⁹ The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNFF14-CN-Panel-Comm-IDF-7May19.pdf.

(g) The rate of increase in forest land certified by internationally recognized schemes is decreasing. Governments can encourage certification through various public policy fiscal tools, including taxation and economic incentives;

(h) Countries interested in developing national certification programmes that meet international criteria could begin by looking at existing national mechanisms and processes and identifying those responsible for forest management at various levels within the country;

(i) The need to mainstream gender in the private sector was highlighted. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are important components of internationally recognized certification schemes;

(j) Private sector investment in the forest sector is and will continue to be the main source of forest financing. Barriers to investment include a lack of clarity or stability in national policies, a lack of cross-sectoral policies and business incentives to support the long-term nature of investments in natural forests and negative perceptions of the private sector;

(k) Strong national and subnational environmental and social safeguards are needed to ensure that investments are sustainable and socially beneficial;

(l) In countries and regions where natural forests are declining owing to decades of harvesting, companies can remain viable by forming partnerships with communities (e.g. for tree planting) and investing in forest-based material for chemicals and medicines, ecotourism and/or value added processing. Government support is often needed to underwrite such investments;

(m) The Forum could attract the participation of forest companies and enterprises by addressing issues of interest, including those related to targets 8.2, 8.3 and 8.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and recognizing the potential of the complementary nature of fast-growing planted forests and natural or semi-natural forests in meeting demand for forest goods and services, as well as the positive role of the private sector in sustainable forest management;

(n) The Forum should explore mechanisms for effective and ongoing dialogue with the private sector by capitalizing on existing mechanisms such as the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as well as through new and additional mechanisms that would help the Forum to communicate with the private sector;

(o) Only a minimal amount of public finance for climate change mitigation is available for reducing deforestation and for adaptation. There is an opportunity to use the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to draw attention to the importance of financing for forest-based adaptation to climate change. The Network and its clearing house could help to link the private sector and innovative private sector tools to mobilize and harness new kinds of investors and investments for forests.

Summary of the discussion on communication and outreach and the International Day of Forests 2019

13. Panellists from the Forum secretariat, FAO and the children and youth major group described their activities in support of the communication and outreach strategy adopted by the Forum at its thirteenth session, including in the context of the International Day of Forests 2019, as well as success stories, success criteria and challenges and the value of complementary messages. Participants welcomed the presentations. The theme proposed by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the International Day of Forests 2020 of “Forests and biodiversity” was supported and endorsed. Representatives of a number of countries and partners shared their

communication experiences and their activities for the International Day of Forests 2019, including the representatives of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and the United States. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) Collaboration with partners, including Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, civil society and regional communicators networks, is crucial for amplifying key messages and implementing the communication and outreach strategy;

(b) Different communication channels and products are needed to engage different audiences at the local, national and international levels and in urban and rural settings, with and without access to Internet-based communication, such as social media. Products in different languages, including products of the Forum secretariat and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, are important in this regard;

(c) Communication and outreach should target audiences and non-traditional partners to extend beyond the forestry community to reach other sectors, consumers and the general public. Education and outreach activities should target different actors who can inspire change, from school-age children to political leaders who develop policies and practices;

(d) In addition to fact-based communication, human interest stories that are relatable are vital for engagement and impact;

(e) Visually appealing design products with simple, user-friendly messages are needed;

(f) Positive images and advocates are needed to counter negative public perceptions that persist on issues such as the sustainable use of wood;

(g) Social media offers a new outlet for communication and outreach with a huge public reach. Contests, videos, television spots, editorials and world café sessions are also some tried and tested communication activities;

(h) Every International Day of Forests is an important opportunity to educate people about forests;

(i) The continuity of engagement and the scaling-up of communications are key and require consistent resources;

(j) The secretariat was requested to update its website to make its navigation more user-friendly and its content, such as Forum-related documents, more easily accessible. The secretariat was also requested to make its publications and communication and outreach materials available in all official languages of the United Nations. It was suggested that a lapel pin with the global forest goals logo could be an attractive and simple product that would serve as a fine communication tool.

Agenda item 3 (b) (Voluntary announcement of voluntary national contributions)

14. Six countries (Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Indonesia and Israel) announced their voluntary national contributions to achieving the global forest goals and targets during the fourteenth session of the Forum, bringing the total number of announcements of voluntary national contributions by members of the Forum to 16.¹⁰ The representatives of Ecuador, Ghana and Morocco reported progress on their voluntary national contributions announced at the thirteenth session of the Forum. The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo informed the Forum that

¹⁰ Voluntary national contributions were previously announced by Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Jamaica, Liberia, Madagascar, Morocco, New Zealand, Slovakia and Ukraine. These announcements are available at www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vnccs/index.html.

member States of the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa were considering moving forward on developing voluntary national contributions.

Summary of the discussion on agenda item 3 (b)

15. The Chair welcomed the new announcements of voluntary national contributions and encouraged members of the Forum that had not yet done so to communicate their voluntary national contributions to the secretariat at the earliest opportunity. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) A synthesis of the voluntary national contributions communicated to the secretariat should be streamlined and not duplicate the expected content of the “flagship” publication to be released by the end of 2021;

(b) It would be helpful to develop a concise and simple template for voluntary national contributions towards the achievement of the global forest goals and targets for consideration at the fifteenth session of the Forum;

(c) Consideration should be given to intersessional activity aimed at preparing the next quadrennial programme of work for the period beyond 2020.

Agenda item 3 (c) (United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets)

Summary of the discussion on agenda item 3 (c)

16. The discussion, which complemented the discussion on agenda items 7 (a) to (c), was facilitated by a panel comprising the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, who highlighted the links between accelerated progress on Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and achieving the global forest goals, and representatives of five member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.¹¹ Following an update by FAO on the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, including updates for 2019–2020 and work on a strategic vision of the Partnership towards 2030, panellists from the Partnership described their organizations’ strategies, plans and programmes that contribute to and/or are aligned with the global forest goals. Participants welcomed the presentations and the progress made. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) The achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (Goal 5) will accelerate the achievement of all global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Collecting and analysing gender disaggregated data is essential in this regard;

(b) The Forum and the Commission on the Status of Women should explore areas of mutual interest given the links between gender quality and sustainable forest management and, conversely, between the lack of gender equality and of the empowerment of women and girls and deforestation. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests is also well positioned to champion gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(c) The strategic plan provides a comprehensive framework for improved coherence, cooperation and coordination among member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Further efforts are needed in this regard;

(d) There is a need to enhance synergies at the national level in approaches to achieving the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Aichi

¹¹ The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNFF14-CN-Panel-CPF-7May19.pdf.

Biodiversity Targets and other internationally agreed goals, as well as to explore synergies and complementarities across voluntary national contributions, nationally determined contributions and national biodiversity strategies and actions plans, as well as the land degradation neutrality targets;

(e) Collaboration between Governments and civil society is vital to addressing deforestation and achieving the global forest goals;

(f) There is a need for member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as members of and parties to those organizations, to intensify work on governance and financing at the jurisdictional level with a view to scaling up good practices and creating an attractive legal environment to unlock private investment;

(g) The Collaborative Partnership on Forests could benefit from reaching out to bodies that are not member organizations of the Partnership, including the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which, in its recently released global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services, revealed unprecedented species loss in recent years.

Agenda item 8 (Emerging issues and challenges)

17. A representative of a member State said that Europe had faced extreme events in 2018, namely, fire, bark beetle attacks and storms. He recognized that many other countries, including developing countries, also face challenges from extreme events and suggested that experiences could be shared by having an item on the agenda of the fifteenth session of the Forum on the impact of extreme events.

Agenda item 4 (Monitoring, assessment and reporting) and its sub-items

(a) (Progress on the implementation of the strategic plan, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions) and (b) (Progress on the development of global forest indicators)

18. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat under agenda item 4 ([E/CN.18/2019/3](#)), the annex to which contains the set of explanatory notes developed at a workshop organized in collaboration with FAO and held in Rome in November 2018 to assist countries in submitting their first round of voluntary national reports using the format adopted by the Forum at its thirteenth session.

Summary of the discussion on agenda items 4 (a) and (b)

19. Discussions were facilitated by a panel comprising representatives of FAO, the Economic Commission for Europe and three countries involved in the pilot of the draft template for voluntary national reporting (Ghana, Kenya and the Philippines). Panellists addressed progress and challenges in reporting,¹² notably reporting on targets 2.1, 2.3, 4.1 and 4.2 of the global forest goals, and related challenges in collecting data on the third tier of the global core set of forest-related indicators.¹³ Participants welcomed the presentations. Several representatives shared the experiences of their countries in national reporting, including the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Ecuador, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, the United States and the

¹² The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNFF14-CN-Panel-MAR-8May19.pdf.

¹³ The global core set has been developed primarily to reduce national forest-related burdens by eliminating parallel or multiple reporting by countries. The current set includes 21 indicators, of which 7 are designated first tier (information is readily available), 5 are designated second tier (information is available but not consistently) and 4 are designated third tier (significant challenges in data collection remain).

European Union. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) The explanatory notes for country reports were welcomed, and it was suggested that it would be helpful to hold an additional expert workshop before the submission deadline of mid-November 2019;

(b) Further information was requested on the proposed methodology for analysing country reports, given the likely volume and qualitative nature of the responses. It was suggested that consideration be given to the use of formal content analysis techniques for this work, drawing upon the expertise of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(c) Progress on the global core set of forest-related indicators was welcomed. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests should continue its work to develop the second and third tier indicators, including the elaboration of definitions, and consider the use of pilot studies in this context. Care should be taken not to increase the reporting burden on countries.

Summary of the discussion on the flagship publication

20. The secretariat noted the proposed intersessional work, including the establishment of an advisory committee, to take forward the flagship publication to be released by the end of 2021. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) It is important to consider the scope, content and style of the flagship publication, its target audiences, the possible use of creative multimedia products and resource implications;

(b) It might be useful to launch the flagship publication at the World Forestry Congress in 2021 to reach a wider audience and capitalize on visibility;

(c) Members of the Forum should be given an opportunity to review the draft flagship document before publication;

(d) It was suggested that consideration should be given to inviting the children and youth major group to join the advisory committee.

21. The representative of Australia requested that the proposal on the way forward on the flagship publication, which was the result of the brainstorming meeting hosted by his country during the fourteenth session of the Forum, be annexed to the Chair's summary.¹⁴ The representative of Australia also offered to provide 50,000 Australian dollars to procure expertise and skills for the development of the flagship publication.

Agenda item 5 (Means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources)

22. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat under agenda item 5 (E/CN.18/2019/4) and provided an update on intersessional activities related to the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network. Such activities included organizing validation and capacity-building workshops in client countries and assembling teams of national and international consultants to assist in the development of financing strategies and project concepts under the first and second priorities of the Network's four priorities, as well as organizing an expert meeting, held in New York in January 2019, to discuss the development of the clearing house mechanism (third priority) on the basis of the guidance contained in section 7 of the

¹⁴ The proposal is contained in appendix I to the present report.

guidelines for the operation of the Network adopted by the Forum at its thirteenth session.

23. The co-chairs of the expert meeting summarized the discussions and the outcome of the meeting,¹⁵ which were facilitated by two background analytical papers. Participants in the meeting identified four core elements of the clearing house (search engine criteria, database, interface and management), outlined a two-phased approach with timelines for developing and making operational the clearing house and suggested that intersessional work be carried out following the fourteenth session of the Forum to develop a solid proposal for the first phase for consideration by the Forum at its fifteenth session, with a view to making the first phase operational by the end of 2020.

24. Discussions under agenda item 5 were also facilitated by a panel moderated by the representative of Switzerland and comprising the representatives of Jamaica and South Africa, who considered the ways in which the Network could further support countries in advancing the global forest goals in accordance with the Network's purpose and priorities, as well as ways to take forward the fourth priority of the Network¹⁶ in the light of the Network's other priorities and the Forum's other work in support of the global forest goals and targets.¹⁷

Summary of the discussion on agenda item 5: the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and the clearing house

25. Participants welcomed the progress made in making the Network operational and the secretariat's initiative to secure funding from the United Nations Secretariat regular programme of technical cooperation, as well as the generous voluntary contributions provided in 2019 by China, Finland and Switzerland in support of the Network. Participants also welcomed the panel presentations. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

- (a) A number of countries expressed appreciation for the support that they had received from the Network;
- (b) There is a need to continue to raise awareness of the Network, including at the regional and subregional levels;
- (c) There is a need for enhanced funding and staff capacity for the Network to meet all requests for assistance;
- (d) It would be useful to clarify the link between national forest financing strategies and national forest programmes, action plans and priorities;
- (e) It would be useful to undertake an assessment of the success to date of the Network in leveraging financing from other sources and facilitating access to global funds;
- (f) It would be useful to engage relevant stakeholders and potential funding organizations in discussions related to the Network at the country level;
- (g) Consideration should be given to extending the support of the Network to capacity-building to foster enabling environments for investment and integrated

¹⁵ The summary by the co-chairs is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/EGM-CH-2019-CH-CoChairs-Summary.pdf.

¹⁶ The fourth priority is to contribute to the achievement of the global forest goals and targets and the priorities set out in the Forum's quadrennial programmes of work.

¹⁷ The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/UNFF14-CN-Panel-MoI-8May19.pdf.

national forest action plans that incorporate priorities for achieving global forest goals, nationally determined contributions and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

(h) Challenges remain in access to funds and in meeting the required procedures in this regard;

(i) It would be useful for the Network to provide information about the eligibility of countries, including economies in transition, for particular funds and to suggest the possible implementing agencies for those funds;

(j) The clearing house should be developed and made operational in a phased stepwise approach. The end product should be user-friendly;

(k) The clearing house should utilize, interact with and build on existing databases and mechanisms, wherever possible, and avoid duplication and additional reporting requirements;

(l) A cost-benefit analysis of various options, including building partnerships with existing databases such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative of the Development Assistance Committee, should be conducted to explore the most efficient and effective ways of developing and running the clearing house;

(m) The operation of the Network and the development of its clearing house must be fully transparent, in line with the guidelines for the Network.

26. The representative of Suriname informed participants about the conference hosted in Paramaribo in February 2019 to consider the special situation and needs of developing countries with high forest cover and low deforestation rates, a number of which have made commitments in the context of the Paris Agreement to maintain and conserve their forests as part of their nationally determined contributions. The representative of Suriname noted that high forest low deforestation developing countries cannot meet these commitments without the support of the international community and appealed to the Forum to recognize this in the context of the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network. Two representatives of other high forest low deforestation countries said that they supported Suriname.

Update on the possible establishment of a Forum secretariat project office for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in China

27. The secretariat provided an update on the possible establishment of a Forum secretariat project office for the Network in Beijing. The secretariat informed participants that, in follow up to Forum resolution 13/1, the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations had transmitted a note verbale to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in September 2018, in which it confirmed the offer made by the delegation of China at the thirteenth session of the Forum and requested the Department to begin to prepare the draft documents needed to initiate bilateral consultations. In November 2018, the following draft documents prepared by the Department, in coordination with the Office of Legal Affairs, were transmitted to the Permanent Mission of China for its consideration: (a) a draft host country agreement; and (b) a draft memorandum of understanding.

28. Two rounds of bilateral consultations were subsequently held on 14 and 15 January 2019 in New York and on 24 and 25 April 2019 in Beijing to discuss the draft documents. While some progress was made on the documents, further consultations will be needed over the coming months, and it is expected that the agreement will be signed before the end of the year.

29. The proposed office would aim to scale up capacity-building activities under the Network, in line with the guidelines for the operation of the Network adopted by the Forum. The office would have no normative mandate or policy-setting role.

30. The Head of the project office would report to and be supervised by the Director of the Forum secretariat in New York. The Forum secretariat would remain the interface with members for Network support and would continue to report to the Forum on the operation of the Network, including the activities of the proposed office. These arrangements will remain regardless of the outcome of the reforms of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs concerning the level of the Director post. The proposed office would operate in accordance with the financial and administrative rules and regulations of the United Nations.

Summary of the discussion on the proposed Forum secretariat office for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in Beijing

31. A number of members of the Forum welcomed the generous offer by China to host an office of the Network in Beijing and expressed their full support for the establishment of the proposed office, stressing the importance of enhanced financial resources for developing countries to achieve the global forest goals and targets. Other members of the Forum expressed concern about the lack of information since the thirteenth session of the Forum on the progress of discussions on the proposed office in Beijing and were concerned about having a secretariat office away from headquarters. They requested regular reporting and full transparency going forward, including with regard to the delineation of the functions, roles and responsibilities of the proposed office, the applicability of United Nations rules on the recruitment of staff for the office and the accessibility of the office by all members of the Forum, as well as reporting lines, budgetary information for the Forum secretariat and the proposed office and staffing levels. Clarification was sought on the impact of the potential change in the level of post of Director of the Forum secretariat (in the context of the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs) on the running and management of the proposed office and as to whether the core function of the Network can be carried out in a place other than the Forum secretariat. Concern was also expressed with regard to the possible loss in efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the Network from having its operation in two locations. The representative of one member State asked for clarification on the specific inadequacies in the present system that necessitated the establishment of an office in Beijing. A number of members requested the Forum secretariat to provide in writing the update, as well as the current host country agreement and memorandum of understanding and the cost-benefit analysis for the establishment of the office. A request was also made to analyse this option against alternative arrangement options, taking into account their respective cost-benefit analyses. In response, the secretariat clarified that:

- (a) The proposed office for the Network is a “project office”;
- (b) No administrative or operational costs of the proposed office would be paid through the regular budget of the United Nations or the trust fund for the Forum. All such costs would be paid entirely from an extrabudgetary fund to be provided by China for this purpose. There would be no programme budget implications for the United Nations regular budget or the trust fund for the Forum. The Government of China would cover the full cost of the running and activities of the proposed office;
- (c) The financial management of the trust fund for the office would be carried out in New York. Voluntary contributions to the trust fund earmarked to support the Network would continue to be disbursed at the direction of the Director of the Forum secretariat;
- (d) The recruitment of staff would be handled in New York in accordance with established United Nations rules and be based on competency, with due regard given to geographical balance in this context. The staffing table is still under discussion;

(e) Not all Network-related activities would be transferred to the office. The Forum secretariat remains the manager of the core functions of the Network, including the development and management of the clearing house. The proposed office would assist the secretariat mainly with regard to the capacity development activities of the Network. It would operate under the direct supervision of the Director of the Forum secretariat, who would ensure the efficiency of the work and coordination between the Forum secretariat and the office;

(f) The Forum secretariat would seek advice from the Office of Legal Affairs on the possibility of sharing of the draft host country agreement and memorandum of understanding with members of the Forum.

32. The representative of China reiterated and clarified that the proposed office was intended to enhance the capacity of the secretariat with regard to the activities of the Network and assistance to countries. China would bear all costs associated with the office, and there would therefore be no impact on the regular budget of the United Nations, the Forum secretariat or the trust fund for the Forum. China would endeavour to maintain high transparency on this matter. All details were contained in the note by the Secretariat and the update, and there were no hidden aspects or surprises.

Agenda item 6 (Enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of sustainable forest management)

33. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat under agenda item 6 (E/CN.18/2019/5), which relates directly to targets 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4 of the global forest goals,¹⁸ and summarized the general conclusions and proposals that emerged from responses to the informal survey circulated by the secretariat in September 2018 to member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional bodies active in the Forum and major group focal points in order to gather preliminary information and views on agenda item 6.

Summary of the discussion on agenda item 6

34. Representatives of several countries and partners shared their experiences and insights, including the representatives of Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Ukraine, the United States, Uruguay and the European Union. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) Members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional organizations and major groups should use the strategic plan as the overarching framework for advancing global forest policy coherence and a common understanding of sustainable forest management, recognizing the need to be sensitive to diverse approaches to sustainable forest management, to acknowledge different organizational mandates and to respect national sovereignty;

(b) Member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests should integrate the global forest goals and targets, wherever relevant, into their post-2020 strategies, plans and programmes, which should be aligned with a 2030 horizon;

¹⁸ Target 6.1 reads as follows: Forest-related programmes within the United Nations system are coherent and complementary and integrate the global forest goals and targets, where appropriate. Target 6.2 reads: Forest-related programmes across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are coherent and complementary and together encompass the multiple contributions of forests and the forest sector to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Target 6.4 reads: A greater common understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management is achieved and an associated set of indicators is identified.

(c) The strategic vision of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests beyond 2030 and its workplan for the period 2021–2024, revolving around the six global forest goals, offer important opportunities to advance global forest policy coherence within and across the United Nations system and the member organizations of the Partnership;

(d) The integration of the global forest goals and targets into regional and subregional forest-related programmes, plans and policies will enhance forest policy coherence at the regional and subregional levels;

(e) Major groups, including the forest products industry major group, should be more engaged in promoting forest policy coherence at all levels, including through their joint and complementary workplans;

(f) Major groups, in partnership with members of the Forum, should consider strengthening multi-stakeholder dialogues on global forest goal 6, building on existing mechanisms and platforms, and be engaged in developing the next quadrennial programme of work;

(g) Members of the Forum, as members of the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, should consider allocating budgetary resources for joint activities of the Partnership in support of the strategic plan.

Agenda item 7 (Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues) and its sub-items (a) (Activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in support of the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017–2020), (b) (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change implementation of the Paris Agreement), (c) (Convention on Biological Diversity: Aichi Biodiversity Targets), (d) (Regional and subregional partners) and (e) (Major groups and other relevant stakeholders)

35. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat under agenda item 7 (E/CN.18/2019/6).

Summary of the discussion on agenda items 7 (a) to (c)

36. The discussions were facilitated by a panel, which provided updates on joint initiatives of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and their links and contributions to the global forest goals and targets, on the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including nationally determined contributions, on the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and on progress on target 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on land degradation neutrality.¹⁹ Participants welcomed the progress made. Representatives of several countries asked questions or made statements, including the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Fiji, Germany, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and the United States. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussions:

(a) There is a need to enhance coordination and communication in the implementation of the strategic plan, the Paris Agreement, the post-2020 biodiversity framework and land degradation neutrality initiatives, including in relation to reporting, recognizing that forest-related matters will be discussed in different forums and the continuing need for effective communication;

¹⁹ The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNFF14-CN-Panel-EnhancedCoop-9May19.pdf.

(b) The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity would welcome the Forum's inputs to the development of its post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including through written submissions and participation in thematic and working group meetings, and a request was made for the Forum secretariat to engage in these opportunities;

(c) There is a need for greater collaboration, synergies and communication among the Forum, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, including through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and their respective secretariats. There is also a need for topical or "results-based" collaboration. The Forum should continue to receive an overview of these matters, and it may be helpful to underpin this with further theoretical policy and normative analysis;

(d) To ensure global forest policy coherence across the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the differences in the mandates and focus of organizations and the resources available to the Partnership need to be taken into account;

(e) The workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests enhances cooperation and has the potential to be a tool for fundraising and collaboration with donors, as illustrated by the contributions announced by Germany in its voluntary national contribution;

(f) Coherence could be strengthened through collective technical and scientific work to demonstrate the way in which sustainable forest management supports international and national agendas, greater emphasis on cross-sectoral issues, the involvement of major groups in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the establishment of dedicated Partnership funding to support joint implementation strategies;

(g) Higher priority should be given to developing strategic relationships between and across processes in the forest and other sectors, including through contact between national focal points at the country level;

(h) Member States, as members of the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, should foster joint programming.

Summary of the discussion on agenda item 7 (d)

37. The discussions were a follow-up to the expert meeting on regional and subregional inputs to the Forum, held in Bangkok in January 2019,²⁰ and were facilitated by a panel representing entities that had attended the expert meeting. Panellists described their programmes and priorities in support of the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2019, together with efforts to integrate the global forest goals and targets into their policies and programmes and to raise awareness of the contributions of forests and the global forest goals to the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2019.²¹ Participants welcomed the presentations and the discussion that followed. The following main points emerged from the discussion:

²⁰ The summary of the expert meeting is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Summary-EGM-Reg-Bangkok-Jan-19.pdf.

²¹ The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNFF14-CN-Panel-Regional-9May19.pdf.

(a) Regional and subregional bodies are advancing the implementation of the strategic plan and the achievement of the global forest goals and targets, incorporating them, as appropriate, into their respective work programmes;

(b) The successful implementation of the strategic plan and the achievement of the global forest goals require awareness-raising and capacity-building activities involving all stakeholders, in particular farmers, academics and stakeholders in the private sector and local communities;

(c) The sustainable management of natural resources is fundamental for successful regional integration, as well as for the achievement of peace and prosperity;

(d) Bamboo and rattan can help in mitigating climate change and reducing the pressure on forests;

(e) Community forestry includes customary and indigenous processes and Government-led initiatives addressing social, economic and environmental dimensions. It is essential in achieving the global forest goals and many of the Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

(f) Challenges in raising awareness of the contributions of forests and the global forest goals to the Sustainable Development Goals include the lack of adequate funding, difficulties in translating what is discussed in political forums into something meaningful for the local people and in making it clear that the global forest goals promote sustainable forest management principles that have been known for generations;

(g) The global forest goals are relatively new and are slowly being integrated into the work of forest-related entities, but in time they will be more widely known.

38. In response to an invitation made by the Forum at its thirteenth session, the FAO representative provided an update to participants on the consideration by the Committee on Forestry, at its twenty-fourth session, of the potential offered by the regional forestry commissions, as appropriate, for enhancing regional and subregional involvement. Participants were informed that the Committee had considered this invitation, recommended deeper collaboration between the regional forestry commissions and the Forum through its regional dimension and suggested that the collaboration be flexible and fit for various regional circumstances.

Summary of the discussion on agenda item 7 (e)

39. The session was a follow-up to the expert meeting on reviewing progress in the implementation of the workplans of the major groups and input to the fourteenth session of the Forum, held in Bangkok in January 2019,²² and was facilitated by a panel of representatives of major groups, who reviewed provisions in the strategic plan relevant to major groups and related Forum support, progress in implementing the joint workplan developed by major groups for the period 2018–2020 in support of the strategic plan and the complementary workplans developed by the children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, the scientific and technological communities and women major groups, as well as steps taken to integrate the global forest goals and targets into their policies and programmes and raise awareness of the contributions of forests and the global forest goals to the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2019.²³ Participants welcomed the

²² The draft summary of the meeting is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DraftSummary-EGM-MGs-Bangkok-Jan-19.pdf.

²³ The panel concept note is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNFF14-CN-Panel-MGs-9May19.pdf.

presentations and the progress made. The following main points and proposals emerged from the discussion:

(a) Civil society activities in support of the Forum and the effective participation of major groups in the Forum's policy and technical sessions should be supported by Governments;

(b) International, regional, subregional and national organizations should support efforts to implement the workplan developed by major groups and the complementary workplans of major groups;

(c) Land, forest and tree tenure security is a foundation for sustainable forest management;

(d) It is important to adapt the global forest goals and targets to local contexts and to align them with community planning processes. Forest owners and farmers announced their intention to pilot the application of the global forest goals and targets to small landholders in selected countries;

(e) There is a need to strengthen knowledge-sharing platforms at the local level and to further develop a roster of experts from indigenous peoples and local communities, investments in science and technology and data collection, including data disaggregated by gender;

(f) The representative of Germany said that the voluntary national contribution of his country would include funding to strengthen the activities of major groups in support of the strategic plan. The funding agreement between Germany and the Forum secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is being finalized;

(g) Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (Goal 5) is essential to achieving all global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, including the Goals under review in 2019. The collection of data disaggregated by gender, capacity-building, education, networking and enhanced advocacy are essential in this regard.

B. Key proposals

40. On the basis of the technical discussions at the fourteenth session of the Forum, the following areas of work, aligned with the provisional agenda of the fifteenth session of the Forum, are proposed for further consideration by the Forum in 2020:

(a) Under agenda item 3 (Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030):

(i) Enhanced use of the strategic plan as an integrated framework for forest-based national actions and international cooperation to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 15, and the objectives of the Paris Agreement;

(ii) Further recognition by the high-level political forum on sustainable development of the value of the strategic plan as an integrated framework for forest-related actions to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(iii) Exploration of opportunities for enhanced synergies between voluntary national contributions under the strategic plan and forest-related nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement;

- (iv) Strengthened multi-stakeholder engagement and dialogues at the national and local levels, including on global forest goal 6;
 - (v) Active involvement of the private sector (small, medium and large forest enterprises) and philanthropic organizations in the work of the Forum;
 - (vi) Alignment of the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the period 2021–2024 with the Forum’s quadrennial programme of work for the same period;
 - (vii) Exploration by the secretariats of the Forum and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of forest-related interlinkages between nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement and voluntary national contributions under the strategic plan;
- (b) Under agenda item 4 (Monitoring, assessment and reporting): scope, content, presentation and target audiences of the flagship publication and the process going forward;
- (c) Under agenda item 5 (Means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources):
- (i) Stocktaking of the effectiveness of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to date in assisting countries in developing and taking forward forest financing strategies and in facilitating access to forest funding;
 - (ii) Status of the first phase of the clearing house and next steps;
 - (iii) Critical importance of additional voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Forum to support the implementation of the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024.

III. Input of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019

41. The present input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019 is based on the technical discussions of the Forum on its thematic priorities at its fourteenth session on 6 and 7 May 2019. It complements the input provided by the Bureau of the fourteenth session on 15 March 2019. The present input is based on the summary by the Chair of the fourteenth session and is not a consensus negotiated outcome of the Forum.

A. Identification of progress, gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges in relation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and in relation to the issues and areas of work of the Forum

Urgent need to scale up the implementation of forest-based solutions to climate change

42. Forests can and should make a very significant contribution to combating climate change. The successful implementation of a full range of policy options for forests could reduce greenhouse gas by an estimated 15 gigatons of equivalent carbon dioxide a year by 2050, potentially closing the current “emissions gap”. Effective action will be required to halt deforestation and forest degradation, to promote

sustainable forest management and to increase the forest area. In addition, harvested wood products can contribute to climate change mitigation through carbon storage and by replacing products manufactured from more greenhouse gas-intensive materials such as concrete or brick, metals or plastics.

43. Some progress has been made, for example through the development of the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD-plus) process. However, deforestation is continuing, mainly as a result of pressures from agriculture, and intensified efforts must be made to address deforestation from agricultural production, such as the production of palm oil, soy and beef.

44. In its recent special report entitled *Global Warming of 1.5 °C*,²⁴ the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlighted the key role of forests as a proven method of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Furthermore, in the Declaration on Forests for the Climate of the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,²⁵ the crucial role of forests and forest products in climate change mitigation and adaptation is stressed.

45. To achieve the necessary change, there is a pressing need to take the following measures:

(a) Integrate climate mitigation and adaptation policies more fully into forest and land use policies at all levels;

(b) Mobilize adequate levels of finance from all sources. Only minimal funds for climate change mitigation are currently available for reducing deforestation, and even less is available for adaptation;

(c) Promote more effective forest governance and law enforcement;

(d) Improve scientific understanding of the interactions between forest ecosystems, including soils, with climate change.

B. Successful experiences and lessons learned in empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Secure tenure is essential to empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

46. Many of the world's poorest people live in or near forests and their livelihoods are improved where they have secure and equitable access to, and control over, forest resources. Secure forest tenure and rights to use forest resources are a prerequisite for the sustainable management of forests and the sustainable harvesting of forest products, including non-wood forest products such as food and medicinal plants.

47. Women play a key role in many countries with their vital knowledge and experience of forests and their sustainable management and use. One way to empower women is to make forest tenure more gender equitable. Reforms should be undertaken where necessary, for example when customary tenure arrangements prevent women from owning land. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of

²⁴ Available at www.ipcc.ch/sr15/.

²⁵ Available at https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/Ministerial_Katowice_Declaration_on_Forests_for_Climate_OFFICIAL_ENG.pdf.

Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security²⁶ are a tool for promoting the responsible governance of tenure.

Extending forest education

48. In part as a result of urbanization, increasing numbers of people are unaware of the vital functions of forests, including their environmental, economic and social benefits. Forest education, especially for young people and younger generations, has a valuable role to play in developing wider public understanding of the importance of forests. There is also a need to provide appropriate access to forest-related education for people who are responsible for the management of forests or for decision-making and professions relevant to forests and forest products.

49. Forest education should be underpinned by relevant scientific knowledge as well as traditional forest-related knowledge.

50. There are already many good examples of forest-related education, and there is a need to replicate and scale up best practice. In order to stimulate action, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests is considering an initiative on forest education aimed at facilitating international discussion, exchanging ideas and identifying key research needs.

C. Emerging issues likely to affect inclusiveness and equality at various levels

Increasing the visibility of the contributions of forests to inclusiveness and equality

51. The contribution of forests to many of the Sustainable Development Goals, including those relating to Goals 8 and 10, are systematically underestimated and not sufficiently recognized. For instance, more attention should be paid to the informal forest sector. In many countries, the informal forest sector is several times larger than the formal forest sector, but this is seldom reflected in official statistics. As data on forest employment are often used to characterize the economic contribution of a sector, a lack of information about the informal forest sector can lead to serious underestimation of the economic value of forests. Furthermore, people working in the informal sector, such as vulnerable groups and women, are less likely to have decent working conditions and more likely to face unsafe working practices and uncertainty regarding working hours and other conditions of service.

52. It is also important to improve understanding of the full value of the ecosystem services provided by forests. Such services are currently often undervalued because they do not have a market price. As a consequence, the costs of forest resource depletion caused by deforestation and forest degradation are not properly taken into account when decisions are made about land use changes, such as the conversion of forest land to agricultural land.

D. Assessment of the situation with regard to the principle of ensuring that no one is left behind at the global, regional and national levels

Enhancing benefits for local communities from forests

53. Forests play an especially important role in the economies of many poorer countries and rural communities, especially poorer ones. Support for small-scale

²⁶ Available at www.fao.org/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en/.

landholders and indigenous peoples can enhance the contribution of forests to social inclusion and equality. In addition to timber and wood fuel, non-wood forest products, such as food, fodder and medicinal plants, are important to the livelihoods of many rural dwellers. Although value-added activities can help to improve local livelihoods, local communities may not be well integrated into value chains.

54. In many countries, small-scale landholders are farmers as well as forest managers. Sustainable and inclusive growth can often be enhanced through appropriate policy interventions. These may include extension services, financial services, infrastructure and access to markets, for example through initiatives such as forest and farm producer organizations. Devolving forest management rights to local communities and smallholders can help to secure inclusive and sustainable economic activity.

E. Areas in which political guidance from the high-level political forum is required

Promote the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 as a framework for forest-related action to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

55. Political guidance from the high-level political forum on sustainable development would help to underpin efforts to ensure that the world's forests are managed sustainably, for the benefit of current and future generations, by encouraging policymakers at all levels to recognize the potential contribution of forests, the importance of cross-sectoral coordination and the role of the strategic plan as a framework for forest-related contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Such efforts can be taken forward by promoting the strategic plan and its six global forest goals more widely as the internationally agreed framework for forest-related action.

F. Policy recommendations to accelerate progress in empowering people, ensuring inclusiveness and equality and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

Promote comprehensive and inclusive partnerships for sustainable forest management

56. Transparent forest institutions and inclusive approaches that promote the equitable participation of all stakeholders, including marginalized groups, women and young people, are needed to accelerate progress in empowering people and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recognize that adequate means of implementation and effective governance are essential for progress

57. Sustainable forest management has a major role to play in achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, progress is critically dependent on adequate resources, including finance. The implementation of sustainable forest management is also critically dependent on good governance at all levels. These prerequisites for sustainable forest management are reflected in goals 4 and 5 of the global forest goals, which must be realized in order to accelerate progress towards empowering people and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through forest-related measures.

IV. Agenda item 10 (Information on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the Forum)

58. On 6 May 2019, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs provided the Forum with an update on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, launched in response to General Assembly resolution 70/299 to improve, inter alia, the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the Department and to improve the alignment of its work with the 2030 Agenda.

59. The Assistant Secretary-General noted that, as an initial step, the Department had established a new position of Chief Economist. She also noted that the General Assembly would be considering the following reform measures as proposed by the Secretary-General in his letter to Member States dated 28 December 2018:

(a) Strengthening thought leadership to respond to the new demands of the 2030 Agenda;

(b) Enhancing intergovernmental support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Improving data, statistics and analysis to inform decision-making and enhance collective accountability for results;

(d) Stepping up capacities to leverage financing for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Contributing to the provision of strategic and substantive support to the reinvigorated resident coordinator system and the new generation of United Nations country teams;

(f) Strengthening the strategies and mechanisms of the Department to enhance external communications and strategic partnerships, including with the private sector and academia.

60. The Assistant Secretary-General emphasized that the Department had been providing the highest level of support to the work of the Forum and its secretariat and was committed to continue to provide such support in the future. It was the Department's firm commitment that the result of the reform process would lead to a more efficient and effective secretariat, reflected through the leadership of its work programme and the management of both its regular budget and extrabudgetary resources.

61. On 7 May, the European Union, on behalf of its member States, and Canada, on behalf of a cross-regional group of member States, each submitted a set of questions to the secretariat, requesting further information from the Department during the Forum's consideration of agenda item 10 on 8 May.

62. On 8 May, the Officer-in-Charge of the Forum read a statement to the Forum on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General, who, together with the Assistant Secretary-General, was attending a meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in Geneva and could not be present in person. The statement constituted the Department's response to the questions submitted by the European Union and Canada. The Officer-in-Charge noted that, in line with the mission and the vision of the strategic plan, it was critical to the Department's overall strengthening to enhance the interlinkages of forests and other sustainable development issues, including water, oceans, energy and climate change, within the Department's work on the 2030 Agenda. In this context, the Department would continue to provide the

highest level of support to the work of the Forum and its secretariat in fulfilling the intergovernmentally agreed mandates, in particular Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 and the strategic plan.

63. The Officer-in-Charge reaffirmed that it was the Department's firm commitment that the result of the reform process would lead to a more efficient and effective Forum secretariat and that the operation and functions of the secretariat would not be affected. The secretariat would continue to provide full support and services to the Forum, as it was currently doing, and to be responsible to the Under-Secretary-General for the delivery of its programme of work under the subprogramme entitled "Sustainable forest management".

64. The subprogramme would remain independent and continue to be implemented by the Department through the Forum secretariat. The level of representation of the secretariat in different meetings would not change and would continue to reflect the established practice of prioritization. There would be no impact on the level of activities, outputs or delivery of the Forum secretariat in the future.

65. Regarding the vacant post of the Director of the Forum secretariat, the Officer-in-Charge reiterated that the functions of the post were being reviewed – a process that was normally undertaken when senior posts were vacated. Member States would be requested to examine these functions in the context of budget proposal of the Department for 2020, as part of the finalization of the Department's reform process. Member States would have an opportunity to examine the Director's proposed functions in the context of the 2020 budget proposal.

66. The questions submitted by the European Union and Canada and the full responses by the Officer-in-Charge are contained in appendix II to the present report.

67. Following the statement by the Officer-in-Charge, interventions were made by representatives of the following members of the Forum: Algeria, New Zealand, Senegal, on behalf of the Group of African States, the European Union, on behalf of its member States, Australia, Nigeria, Norway, China, the United States, the Russian Federation, the Niger, Japan, Switzerland, Canada, Germany and Argentina. The representative of Algeria also requested that the questions and responses be shared with the participants in the fourteenth session of the Forum. Interventions were also made by the representative of the children and youth major group on behalf of all major groups and the representative of the scientific and technological communities major group.

68. A number of speakers thanked the Officer-in-Charge for his statement on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General. While expressing broad support for the reforms of the United Nations and the Department, several members of the Forum expressed concern about the functionality of the Forum secretariat, reaffirmed Forum resolution 13/1 and emphasized the importance of the Forum secretariat and that strengthening transparency around the reform of the Department should be a priority. The highlights of the discussions were as follows:

(a) The Forum, an intergovernmental body with universal membership, occupies a unique space as the only body within the United Nations system focusing on and giving a voice to global forest policy and taking a holistic approach to the multidimensional contribution of forests to sustainable development;

(b) The Forum is the intergovernmental body responsible for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the strategic plan, which includes providing guidance and services to the 15-member Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in which all United Nations bodies as well as international organizations beyond the United Nations with significant forest-related mandates and/or programmes are represented;

(c) The adoption by the General Assembly in 2017 of the first ever United Nations strategic plan for forests underscores the global recognition of the tremendous contribution of forests to some of the most pressing issues of the day, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, food security, energy security, water resources and poverty eradication;

(d) The strategic plan is a powerful framework for realizing the contribution of forests and the forest sector to accelerating the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals. The vision, principles and commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda provide the context for the six global forest goals and the 26 associated targets;

(e) The strategic plan also reaches beyond the Sustainable Development Goals to the contribution of forests and the forest sector to other internationally agreed goals, such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the objectives of the Paris Agreement;

(f) The Forum established the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, the first and only initiative dedicated to assisting countries in developing effective and efficient financing strategies involving all financing sources, domestic and international, public and private, and to facilitating access by countries to global forest funding opportunities;

(g) The Forum, at its thirteenth session, adopted a communication and outreach strategy for the strategic plan that includes and builds on the core platform of the annual International Day of Forests and aims to catalyse the use of innovative and far-reaching social media mechanisms as well as tried-and-true products and avenues;

(h) In 2019, the Forum will see the first round of voluntary national reporting on the implementation of the strategic plan. This reporting will form the basis of a first-ever flagship publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets and the many forest-related Sustainable Development Goals;

(i) Given these landmark achievements and the long-term commitments by the Forum, there has never been a better time or a greater need for a fully functional, effective and independent secretariat that has sufficient human capacity and strong leadership and is appropriately resourced to deliver on its mandated functions;

(j) In view of the fact that the secretariat's mandate is to support the Forum in all matters related to the strategic plan, including all matters related to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, if the secretariat's functions or profile are diminished, the effectiveness of the Forum could be diminished as a consequence;

(k) It is therefore essential that the secretariat maintain its ability to fully deliver on its many and diverse functions, as set out in Economic and Social Council resolutions in 2000, 2006 and 2015 and in the strategic plan. It is also essential that the secretariat maintain its ability to fully and effectively represent the interests of the Forum in intergovernmental forums and with Governments and Collaborative Partnership on Forests counterparts and that the subprogramme entitled "Sustainable forest management" remain intact and independent. The current direct reporting lines between the Director of the Forum secretariat and the Under-Secretary-General should also be maintained;

(l) It was stressed that the secretariat should maintain the ability to fully manage its own budget;

(m) Filling the post of Director of the secretariat as soon as possible is essential to ensuring consistent leadership, representation and communication and would send a clear signal of commitment by the United Nations and the Department to the continued functioning and visibility and of the Forum as a unique functional commission and subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council with universal membership;

(n) Considering the concerns expressed by many member States about the lack of transparency and information to date, the timely provision of information will be paramount going forward. The Under-Secretary-General is requested to keep member States fully and regularly informed of all aspects of the reform of the Department pertaining to the Forum;

(o) The Chair of the fourteenth session of the Forum is requested to fully reflect the points and views expressed in the discussion in the Chair's summary. The Department is also requested to convey the present section of the summary and appendix II to the present report to appropriate bodies in the United Nations that are reviewing, considering and deciding on the reform of the Department, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

69. The Officer-in-Charge confirmed that the reporting lines between the Director of the secretariat and the Under-Secretary-General would remain unchanged. One speaker asked whether the Under-Secretary-General would fill in if the Director were unavailable for an event. The Officer-in-Charge responded that it would depend on the level of the event and the prioritization of events. The representative of another delegation asked for clarity on this matter, given the differences in the D-1 and D-2 levels. The Officer-in-Charge said that he would take the question to the Under-Secretary-General.

70. Some speakers expressed the view that downgrading the Director from a post at the D-2 level to a post at the D-1 level would negatively affect the functioning of both the secretariat and the Forum, including in terms of fundraising, private sector engagement and the implementation of the strategic plan. The representatives of four member States specifically requested that the Director of the Forum secretariat remain at the D-2 level. A request was also made to the Under-Secretary-General, through the Officer-in-Charge, to provide a cost-benefit analysis of the options under consideration for the reform of the Department pertaining to the Forum.

V. Indicative list of potential intersessional activities of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests between the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the Forum

71. The present section provides an indicative list of the intersessional activities suggested during the discussions at the fourteenth session of the Forum to facilitate and inform policy deliberations at its fifteenth session.

Thematic priorities

- Contribute to inputs by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members to the “nature-based solutions” component of the Climate Action Summit to be convened by the Secretary General on 23 September 2019
- Contribute to the preparatory work of the summit on biodiversity to be convened by the General Assembly in 2020 and to the Forum's input to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Communication and outreach strategy

- Closely collaborate with the Strategic Planning and Communication Services of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to incorporate forest-related messaging into the social media outreach conducted by the Department for the

high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019 and the Climate Action Summit

- Collaborate with partners of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity, to prepare communication materials in celebration of the International Day of Forests 2020 (with the theme “Forests and biodiversity”) and share these materials with national focal points, stakeholders and regional partners, including communicators networks

Voluntary national contributions

- Prepare a streamlined synthesis of voluntary national contributions communicated to date aligned with specific global forest goals and targets
- Develop, in consultation with members of the Forum, a simple format for use by countries on a voluntary basis to communicate their voluntary national contributions

Monitoring, assessment and reporting and the flagship publication

- Organize with FAO an expert meeting in the near future to further consider data issues related to third tier indicators of the global core set of forest-related indicators
- In consultation with interested members of the Forum, establish an informal advisory committee to take forward the flagship publication, taking into account the outcome of the brainstorming meeting hosted by Australia during the fourteenth session of the Forum

Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

- Conduct a stocktaking of accomplishments of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network since 2015, including with regard to the development of national forest financing strategies and access to global funds and to finances leveraged
- Organize a follow-up expert panel to develop a more extensive plan towards a stepwise and simple approach to the establishment of the clearing house
- Support a cost-benefit analysis of different options for making the clearing house operational, including potential partnerships with other entities

Global forest policy coherence

- Provided it would add value to previous work, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests should consider preparing a study to further examine the coherence, complementarity and coverage of forest-related programmes within and across the United Nations system and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, building on the capacity mapping exercise and other relevant work by the Partnership

Quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024

- Elaborate draft elements for the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024 in consultation with members of the Forum, taking into account the post-2020 cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

Annex II

List of documents

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title</i>
E/CN.18/2019/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/CN.18/2019/2	3 (a), (b), (c) and 8	Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030
E/CN.18/2019/3	4	Note by the Secretariat on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions
E/CN.18/2019/4	5	Note by the Secretariat on means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources
E/CN.18/2019/5	6	Note by the Secretariat on enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common international understanding of sustainable forest management
E/CN.18/2019/6	7	Note by the Secretariat on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues
E/CN.18/2019/7	9	Note by the Secretariat on the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2019/8	5	Letter dated 20 March 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Suriname to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General
E/CN.18/2019/L.1	12	Provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2019/L.2	11	Dates and venue of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2019/L.3	13	Draft report on the organization of the session
E/CN.18/2019/INF/1		List of participants

Other relevant documentation is also available at the Forum website (www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/current-session/official-documents/index.html).

Appendix I

Proposed scoping document for the development of the flagship publication

Background

With the adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the United Nations Forum on Forests has been given a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of the role of forests in addressing some of the world’s most pressing challenges. As the strategic plan spans the entire United Nations system, the Forum has the opportunity, and the responsibility, to be the leading global voice for forests and sustainable forest management. Central to the Forum’s success is the ability to reach new audiences and to add novel insights and information to the global conversation on forests, moving beyond internally focused means of communicating to a more accessible, targeted approach that will contribute to achieving the ambitious goals and objectives set in May 2017.

At the thirteenth session of the Forum, member States agreed on a new format for voluntary national reports focused on demonstrating the critical role of forests in achieving sustainable development. The Forum also agreed to produce a “flagship” publication for release in 2021 that would be credible, representative, concise and compelling and demonstrate the ways in which Forum members contribute to the achievement of the global forest goals and, by extension, the Sustainable Development Goals.

A well-designed flagship publication will be an effective tool for communicating the policy relevance, policy drivers and, more importantly, the policy gaps related to the sustainability of the world’s forests. It will also help to demonstrate the Forum’s relevance with respect to other forest-related forums, while helping to engage with and communicate to others in the land use spectrum and the donor community, including the private sector and foundations.

The present paper provides guidance from member States on the potential content of the flagship publication.

Decisions of the thirteenth session of the Forum

In the omnibus resolution adopted at its thirteenth session, the Forum emphasized the value of making effective use of the information provided by members through their voluntary national reporting, and to that end requested the Forum secretariat to prepare, on the basis of the initial round of reporting and in consultation with members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant stakeholders, a concise “flagship” publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets for release by the end of 2021, using existing resources, suitable for a range of audiences within and outside the forest sector, and also requested the secretariat to report on planning in that regard to the Forum at its fifteenth session.

In this regard, the flagship publication should be ambitious and visible and address the core issues for which the Forum is responsible. It should have substance as well as symbolic importance and be well presented and addressed to an audience wider than those who constitute the Forum’s core community. Such a study by the Forum would generate a clear story based on facts and demonstrate the ability of the United Nations to speak with a single voice on major forest issues, highlighting the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the central position of the Forum.

Important considerations

With the reporting template focused on the global forest goals that was approved in 2018, the next major consideration is the intent and audience of the flagship publication. Reflecting the reporting template, the flagship publication needs to focus specifically on the global forest goals.

The main audience should be an interested and informed public and include, at a minimum, the following:

- (a) Policymakers and heads of land use sectors;
- (b) All United Nations bodies and agencies concerned with sustainable development matters;
- (c) Academics;
- (d) Philanthropic decision makers and influencers;
- (e) Member organizations and supporters of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;
- (f) Specialized media;
- (g) Major groups and other stakeholders.

These audiences all have direct links to forests and can benefit from increased and coordinated engagement with the global forest goals. The flagship publication must engage these audiences to increase their awareness of relevant actions, stimulate their support and ideas and encourage accelerated progress.

The publication must be limited to a maximum of 20 pages, written in plain language and of a high quality to capture a broader audience. Links to other publications or resources can be embedded in the digital report to allow readers to access further information.

How to realize the opportunity

To be a truly different and forward-looking publication, it should answer the following basic questions in an attractive, succinct and impactful way:

- (a) Why do forests, and thus sustainable forest management, matter for sustainable development (economic, social, environmental and cultural)?
- (b) What are the six global forest goals and the role of the Forum and its strategic plan?
- (c) What is the world's progress in achieving the goals, and what are the policy challenges or gaps (perhaps one challenge or gap per goal) that must be overcome in order to achieve the goals?

Coverage of these three basic questions will give readers and the Forum a strong foundation to take stock of progress and re-energize activities to deliver success for the global forest goals by 2030.

The structure could include the following aspects:

- (a) A foreword from an influential figure (non-United Nations/Government);
- (b) An executive summary for the public (not just policymakers);
- (c) Eye-catching and easy-to-understand sets of statistics and facts on the importance of forests for sustainable development;

(d) Synergies with other international efforts towards sustainable forest management, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Rio conventions, including brief background information on the Forum and the strategic plan;

(e) A section on each global forest goal (perhaps two pages per goal), including a synthesis of the progress made, key challenges and gaps;

(f) Six key policy challenges or gaps, which can deal with emerging issues and/or observed trends from all the inputs;

(g) A conclusion.

The suggested structure is not rigid or intended to limit the creative process necessary to ensure that a fit-for-purpose document is delivered.

Process moving forward

To move forward, the following considerations were identified:

(a) An advisory committee should be established (through the Bureau) in the near future to provide advice on the development of the flagship publication, with the use of virtual tools to convene meetings and facilitate inputs;

(b) Opportunities should be provided for all member States, including through the use of virtual tools, to provide input to the development of the flagship publication periodically throughout the process, possibly through the representatives on the advisory committee and through the mandated update of the secretariat to the fifteenth session of the Forum;

(c) A road map should be developed that identifies key dates, including the establishment of the advisory committee (mid-2019), the submission of voluntary national reports (November 2019) and the drafting of the flagship publication, the consultations thereon and its launch at the World Forestry Congress in 2021.

Additional considerations

- The publication and any resulting social media outputs must be linked to the broader communications strategy of the Forum, which utilizes partner organizations and influencers to improve audience reach and engagement
- While the flagship publication can be launched at the World Forestry Congress 2021, there will be opportunities to promote it at subsequent meetings and conferences to inform forestry-related and cross-sectoral dialogues and share the progress on the global forest goals
- The report should make effective use of visual representations such as infographics
- Additional social media products should be developed on the basis of the report (i.e. infographics used on Twitter and Instagram) to provide novel communications and deliver supporting products to provide more detailed information or snapshots
- While it is a Forum publication, consideration should be given to the way in which the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Forest Communicators' Network of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations can engage in this process
- There is a need to consider how case studies can be used and whether they should be integrated into the report or delivered through other mediums

Appendix II

Requests for further updates on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs from the United Nations Forum on Forests

- 1. What are the options considered in the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs pertaining to the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests? (European Union)**

What are the actions and/or options being undertaken with the Forum secretariat in the context of the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs? (Canada)¹

What are the results of the cost-benefit analysis of each of these options? (Canada)

As noted by the Assistant Secretary-General in her update on the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs under agenda item 10 earlier this week, the General Assembly will be considering the following reform measures, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his letter to Member States dated 28 December 2018:

- (a) Strengthening thought leadership to respond to the new demands of the 2030 Agenda;
- (b) Enhancing intergovernmental support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
- (c) Improving data, statistics and analysis to inform decision-making and enhance collective accountability for results;
- (d) Stepping up capacities to leverage financing for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (e) Contributing to the provision of strategic and substantive support to the reinvigorated resident coordinator system and the new generation of United Nations country teams;
- (f) Strengthening the strategies and mechanisms of the Department to enhance external communications and strategic partnerships, including with the private sector and academia.

Such options are being considered at the departmental level to improve the alignment of the Department's substantive expertise with the 2030 Agenda, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/299](#), taking into full account all its other important existing intergovernmental mandates.

In this regard, and in line with the mission and the vision of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, it is critical to the Department's overall strengthening to enhance the interlinkages of forests and other sustainable development issues, including water, oceans, energy and climate change, within the Department's work on the 2030 Agenda. The Department will continue to provide the highest level of support to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and its secretariat in fulfilling the intergovernmentally agreed mandates, in particular Economic and Social Council resolution [2015/33](#) and the strategic plan.

¹ On behalf of a cross-regional network of member States.

2. **What are the potential implications of each of these options on the budget and human resources and on the reporting lines of the Forum secretariat? How would these affect the operations and functions of the Forum secretariat? (European Union)**

If the subprogramme of forests is merged into another division, what would the lines of reporting be? Would the current direct reporting lines to the Secretary-General/Assistant Secretary-General be maintained? (Canada)

It is the Department's firm commitment that the result of the reform process will lead to a more efficient and effective secretariat, reflected through the leadership of its work programme and the management of both its regular budget and extrabudgetary resources. The operation and functions of the Forum secretariat will not be affected, and the secretariat will continue to provide full support and services to the Forum, as it is currently doing.

The Forum secretariat will continue to be responsible to the Under-Secretary-General for the delivery of its programme of work under the subprogramme entitled "Sustainable forest management".

3. **What are the potential implications regarding the representation of the Forum in different meetings if the level of the Director of the Forum secretariat changes vis-à-vis Governments and other international organizations? (European Union)**

According to the update by the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, the Department has been providing the highest level of support to the work of the Forum and its secretariat and is committed to continue to provide this support in the future. The level of representation of the secretariat in different meetings will not change and will continue to reflect the established practice of prioritization.

It is important to note that, since the conclusion of the thirteenth session, the work programme of the secretariat has continued to be delivered in a responsive and dedicated manner. The Under-Secretary-General fulfilled a commitment to support the work of the secretariat by personally participating in the substantive activities of the Forum and its secretariat. He remains fully committed to this level of support of the work of the Forum and its secretariat in the future.

4. **Can you confirm that the capacity of the Forum secretariat to fulfil its functions (in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33) will not be weakened regardless of the outcome of the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs? (European Union)**

Will the subprogramme on forests remain intact as a separate division under the Department or be fully merged into another division of the Department? Which division? (Canada)

The Department attaches great importance to the work of the Forum and its secretariat. In this regard, the Department remains fully committed to strengthening its subprogramme entitled "Sustainable forest management" and to deliver on all its mandates.

The subprogramme will remain independent and will continue to be implemented by the Department, through the Forum secretariat. As noted in the update by the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, all the secretariat's programmed outputs for the current biennium are on track

to be delivered. There will be no impact on the level of activities, outputs or delivery of the Forum secretariat in the future.

Furthermore, the Department remains firmly committed to upholding the provisions of resolution 13/1 adopted by the Forum at its thirteenth session, including “the importance of maintaining the current and future ability of the Forum and the subprogramme entitled ‘Sustainable forest management’ of the programme entitled ‘Economic and social affairs’ to fulfil the Forum’s important mandate and role, and ... their intergovernmentally agreed mandates”.

5. For what reasons has the post of Director of the Forum secretariat not been advertised yet? When do you plan to fill the post? (European Union)

At this time, and as per the update by the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, the post of Director of the Forum secretariat remains vacant. In accordance with standard procedure, the functions of the vacant post are being reviewed – a process that is normally undertaken when senior posts are vacated. Member States will also be requested to examine these functions in the context of Department’s budget proposal for 2020, as part of the finalization of the Department’s reform process.

6. In a scenario of a merging into another division, how would the person leading the Forum matters ensure the allocation of resources (core budget and human resources) and the maintenance of accountability to carry out the Economic and Social Council resolutions pertaining to the Forum? (Canada)

The Under-Secretary-General, as Head of the Department, has been delegated the authority to manage the resources of the entire Department. The Director responsible for the Forum secretariat will continue to be responsible to the Under-Secretary-General for the management of the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources and the delivery of its programme of work and Economic and Social Council resolutions pertaining to the Forum. In addition, the allocation of the Forum secretariat’s resources will continue to be presented to member States separately in the Department’s annual programme budget.
