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**Technical discussions on the implementation of the  
United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:  
monitoring, assessment and reporting**

**Monitoring, assessment and reporting: progress on the  
implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for  
forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest  
instrument, and voluntary national contributions**

**Note by the Secretariat**

*Summary*

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution [2020/14](#), the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its sixteenth session, will consider monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument, and voluntary national contributions. The present note provides a summary of the preparatory process for the Forum's flagship publication and its key findings and includes an update on progress made towards developing a global core set of forest-related indicators. The note will serve as a basis for discussion on sub-item (g) of agenda item 3.

\* [E/CN.18/2021/1](#).



## **I. Introduction**

1. The present note has been prepared to serve as the basis for discussion on monitoring, assessment and reporting under sub-item (g) of agenda item 3. The note provides a summary of the preparatory work undertaken on the flagship publication of the United Nations Forum on Forests, its key findings and an update on the progress made in developing the global core set of forest-related indicators and it includes some proposals for discussion by the Forum at its sixteenth session.

## **II. Background**

2. The General Assembly adopted the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 in its resolution [71/285](#). In accordance with paragraph 69 of the plan, the Forum, at its thirteenth session, adopted the format for voluntary national reporting on progress towards the implementation of the Plan, including the United Nations forest instrument, and voluntary national contributions.

3. In United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 13/1, the Forum decided that it would consider the results of the first round of voluntary national reporting at its fifteenth session. Accordingly, members of the Forum were invited to submit their voluntary national reports to the Forum secretariat by November 2019. In the same resolution, the Forum requested its secretariat to prepare a concise “flagship” publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals for release by the end of 2021. The publication would be prepared on the basis of reports received from the initial round of national reporting and in consultation with members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant stakeholders ([E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9](#), chap. I, sect. B, paras. 9–11).

4. In the light of the discussions during the fourteenth session of the Forum, the Chair’s summary included a proposal to establish an informal advisory group on the flagship publication.

5. In Economic and Social Council resolution [2020/14](#), members of the Forum reiterated the request that the Forum secretariat to continue to develop the Forum’s concise flagship publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, in close consultation with members of the Forum, and to launch the flagship publication at the sixteenth session of the Forum and at the World Forestry Congress, to be held in 2021. In the same resolution, the Council invited the Forum, at its sixteenth session, to provide guidance on the next steps related to the publication.

## **III. Flagship publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets**

### **A. Preparations**

6. Work on the publication commenced following the agreement by the Forum on the omnibus resolution of the fifteenth session of the Forum, on 30 June 2020, which was subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 17 July 2020. The Forum secretariat worked closely with international consultants, who supported the drafting process, as well as with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its Forest Resources Assessment team, in order to ensure that the publication was supplemented with the best available forest-related biophysical data.

7. In the light of the discussions held during the fourteenth session of the Forum, and respective Chair’s proposal, the Secretariat established an informal advisory

group to provide advice on the development of the flagship publication. In order to ensure regional balance, the group has 10 members, with two representatives from each United Nations region.

8. At the time of drafting of the present note, the informal advisory group had held four virtual meetings, on 19 February, 25 August and 21 December 2020 and on 3 February 2021.

9. The informal advisory group was actively involved in the development of the flagship publication. It provided its recommendations on various aspects thereof, including its scope, main objectives and data sources. Group members provided feedback and suggestions related to communication and outreach, including the importance of decision makers as a target audience and creating both general global and tailored regional messages with regard to social media messaging and using the success stories as a vehicle for creating human interest stories.

10. The overall scope of the publication is global. In addition to the full publication, which will contain detailed analyses, graphs and figures, a shorter summary version will be produced.

11. A first consolidated draft of the six chapters on the six global forest goals was produced, on schedule, by the end of December 2020. The goal was to complete the main drafting well in advance to allow sufficient time for the various other steps, including review by the Editorial Board of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, graphic design and layout and other production-related activities.

12. The secretariat is currently exploring various options for the online presentation of the flagship publication, including through the development of multimedia products, including short videos.

## B. Data sources

13. The 52 national reports<sup>1</sup> submitted to the fifteenth session of the Forum provided the main source of information to assess progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals and their associated targets. The flagship publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets contains information from voluntary national contributions, and efforts have been made to ensure that the best available biophysical data have been used, mostly from the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020. The tables below show the indicators used and the data source for each global forest goal and/or target.

Table 1

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Global forest goal 1: reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change

- Target 1.1: forest area is increased by 3 per cent worldwide
- Target 1.2: the world's forest carbon stocks are maintained or enhanced
- Target 1.3: by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/unff15/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/unff15/index.html).

- Target 1.4: the resilience and adaptive capacity of all types of forests to natural disasters and the impact of climate change is significantly strengthened worldwide

<i>Target</i>	<i>Global core set indicator</i>	<i>Data source</i>
1.1	Global core set indicator 2 (forest area annual net change rate) and indicator 7 (area of degraded forest)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports
1.2	Global core set indicator 3 (net greenhouse gas emissions (source)/removals (sink) of forests and carbon balance of harvested wood products) and indicator 8 (above ground biomass stock in forests)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports
1.3	Combination of global core set indicators 2, 4, 8, 19 and 20	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports
1.4	Global core set indicator 6 (proportion of forest area disturbed)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports

Table 2

Global forest goal 2: enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people

- Target 2.1: extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people is eradicated
- Target 2.2: increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
- Target 2.3: the contribution of forests and trees to food security is significantly increased
- Target 2.4: the contribution of forest industry, other forest-based enterprises and forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development, among other things, is significantly increased
- Target 2.5: the contribution of all types of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation is enhanced, taking into account the mandates and ongoing work of relevant conventions and instruments

<i>Target</i>	<i>Global core set indicator</i>	<i>Data source</i>
2.1	Global core set indicator 13 (number of forest-dependent people in extreme poverty)	No country currently routinely reports on the matter. Data provided in national reports
	<i>Note:</i> Tier 3 indicator, for which data are generally lacking, and both methods and data collection pose significant challenges.	
2.2	—	National reports

2.3	Global core set indicator 14 (contributions of forests to food security)	No country currently routinely reports on the matter. Data provided in national reports
	<i>Note:</i> Tier 3 indicator, for which data are generally lacking, and both methods and data collection pose significant challenges.	
2.4	Global core set indicator 9 (volume of wood removals)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports
2.5	Global core set indicator 4 (proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports

Table 3

Global forest goal 3: increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

- Target 3.1: the area of forests worldwide designated as protected areas or conserved through other effective area-based conservation measures is significantly increased
- Target 3.2: the area of forests under long-term forest management plans is significantly increased
- Target 3.3: the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests is significantly increased

Target	Global core set indicator	Data source
3.1	Global core set indicator 4 (proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports
3.2	Global core set indicator 19 (proportion of forest area under a long-term forest management plan)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports
3.3	Global core set indicators 20 (forest area under an independently verified forest management certification scheme) and 21 (existence of traceability systems for wood products)	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and national reports

Table 4

Global forest goal 4: mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships

- Target 4.1: mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation
- Target 4.2: forest-related financing from all sources at all levels, including public (national, bilateral, multilateral and triangular), private and philanthropic financing, is significantly increased
- Target 4.3: North-South, South-South, North-North and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation in the forest sector are significantly enhanced and increased
- Target 4.4: the number of countries that have developed and implemented forest financing strategies and have access to financing from all sources is significantly increased
- Target 4.5: the collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information is improved through, for example, multidisciplinary scientific assessments

Target	Global core set indicator	Data source
4.1 and 4.2	Global core set indicator 15 (financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management)	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and national reports
	<i>Note:</i> Tier 3 indicator, for which data are generally lacking, and both methods and data collection pose significant challenges.	
4.3–4.5	–	National reports

Table 5

Global forest goal 5: promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- Target 5.1: the number of countries that have integrated forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies is significantly increased
- Target 5.2: forest law enforcement and governance are enhanced, including through significantly strengthening national and subnational forest authorities, and illegal logging and associated trade are significantly reduced worldwide

- Target 5.3: national and subnational forest-related policies and programmes are coherent, coordinated and complementary across ministries, departments and authorities, consistent with national laws, and engage relevant stakeholders, local communities and indigenous peoples, fully recognizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Target 5.4: forest-related issues and the forest sector are fully integrated into decision-making processes concerning land use planning and development

<i>Target</i>	<i>Global core set indicator</i>	<i>Data source</i>
5.1–5.4	–	National reports

Table 6

Global forest goal 6: enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders

- Target 6.1: 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: 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 6.3: cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation and forest degradation are significantly enhanced at all levels
- Target 6.4: a greater common understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management is achieved and an associated set of indicators is identified
- Target 6.5: the input and involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan and in the work of the Forum, including intersessional work, is strengthened

<i>Target</i>	<i>Global core set indicator</i>	<i>Data source</i>
6.1–6.2	–	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
6.3–6.5	–	National reports

## C. Key findings

### Global forest goal 1: overview of progress

14. Existing national forest laws and codes, as well as national forest programmes or strategies, provide the framework for the implementation of global forest goal 1. These instruments have been reviewed or revised recently in many countries. International commitments in sectors other than forestry also play a large role, notably with regard to climate change, biodiversity, trade in wildlife and desertification. In particular, the forest component of their Nationally Determined Contributions in the

context of the Paris Agreement on climate change is playing an important part in reversing the loss of forest cover worldwide.

15. According to FAO and the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020, some regions, namely Asia, Europe and Oceania, are on track to increase their forest area by 3 per cent between 2015 and 2030. Others, however, such as Africa and South America, are still losing forest area, although at a slower rate than in the past. With regard to sustainable forest management, in most of the subregions, and with regard to most of the five subindicators used to monitor Sustainable Development Goal target 15.2.1, positive change occurred in 2020, with only a few regions and subindicators showing little change or negative change. On the whole, the world is on track to maintain its forest carbon stocks. However, in some regions where deforestation is significant, such as Africa and South America, carbon stocks have been decreasing.

Table 7

**Global forest goal 1: summary of progress by target**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Progress</i>
1.1	Three out of five regions on track to achieve target
1.2	Three out of five regions on track to achieve target
1.3	Positive change for almost all subregions and subindicators
1.4	Significant impact of disturbances. Adaptive management under consideration. Too early to say whether resilience is improving

**Global forest goal 2: overview of progress**

16. Actions reported by countries to attain global forest goal 2 include programmes, projects and other activities benefiting forest communities and/or the creation of jobs in small forest-based enterprises. Many Governments have come up with programmes, schemes and plans promoting rural empowerment and poverty eradication, and forests are part of that portfolio.

17. Reporting countries registered a significantly greater amount of progress, in particular on issues such as employment and increased forest productivity. For many countries, sustainable forest management plays a critical role in poverty reduction, in particular in rural areas. Many countries provided various examples of how they have promoted and strengthened mechanisms and programmes for facilitating financing for small producers and enterprises.

18. There is a general agreement that forests, trees and agroforestry contribute to food security; countries reported many actions, supported by examples, of such contributions. However, the contributions, while well known and described at the local level, are not covered by forest inventories or even national statistics, thus coherent data at the national level are missing. Data to measure global forest goal 2 are generally lacking, and both methods and data collection pose significant challenges.



Table 8  
Global forest goal 2: summary of progress by target

<i>Target</i>	<i>Progress</i>
2.1	Most reporting countries took steps towards improving social and economic development, reducing poverty and improving livelihoods. A wide range of measures and actions was reported; however, work remains to be done to measure progress effectively
2.2	Countries have developed and listed many actions and measures; however, the information is mainly anecdotal, there is no specific indicator to measure the target and, owing to its nature, it is difficult to assess the degree of progress made
2.3	Countries reported many actions; however, contributions of forests to food security, while being well known, are not covered by forest inventories or national statistics. Coherent data at the national level are missing, thus progress is difficult to measure
2.4	Countries reported many actions; however, the information mainly is anecdotal and the extent of contribution of forest industry, other forest-based enterprises and forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development is difficult to measure
2.5	Positive trends reported; all regions of the world have steadily increased their forests managed for biodiversity conservation

### Global forest goal 3: overview of progress

19. Many countries referred to their general forest legislation, forest codes and forest policies, which all have specific provisions addressing protected areas, sustainable forest management and the promotion of markets for products from sustainably managed forests. National and subnational institutional structures have been adapted, with revised definitions of the roles of forest services. New protected areas have been created. These actions are in accordance with international commitments, notably the Aichi targets. Legal and institutional measures have been put in place to identify protected areas and take the necessary measures to protect them. In most countries, these were focused on native forests and habitat.

20. Long-term forest management plans are encouraged or legally required in very many countries. Furthermore, certification in most cases requires the creation and use of long-term forest management plans. Several countries are implementing significant plantation programmes to increase the supply of sustainably managed wood. The consumption of sustainably produced wood is being promoted.

21. In 2020, nearly 18 per cent of the world's forests were in legally established protected areas. The area of protected forests grew worldwide at nearly 3 million ha every year between 2010 and 2020, with increases in every region. As of 2020, Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 (to protect at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas by 2020) was exceeded for forest ecosystems at the global level, as well as for most regions. In 2020, 49 per cent of the world's forests were under long-term management plans, a 7 per cent increase since 2010. The area of certified forest increased rapidly between 2000 and 2010, comparatively, it has been expanding more slowly in more recent years. The supply of wood from sustainably managed forests is increasing. The volume of wood harvested from certified forests is estimated at nearly 700 million m<sup>3</sup>, 38 per cent of global industrial roundwood production. Ninety-seven

countries and territories (84 per cent of world forest area) have traceability systems for wood products at the national or subnational level.

Table 9

**Global forest goal 3: summary of progress by target**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Progress</i>
3.1	Most regions on track to achieve target
3.2	Most regions on track to significantly increase area under long-term management plans or maintain present high level
3.3	All regions on track to achieve target

**Global forest goal 4: overview of progress**

22. Reporting countries mobilized increased financial resources for sustainable forest management. Most indicated that they had mobilized more public funds from national and international sources than from private sources, which perhaps needed stronger incentives to invest in sustainable forest management. Most countries have developed and implemented financial strategies to achieve such management. Greater emphasis is being placed on research and science in support of sustainable forest management, although much more needs to be undertaken in developing countries.

23. Actions taken by countries in advancing global forest goal 4 included establishing and reviewing legislation and policies on investment and financing; developing financial strategies and plans regarding forests; providing technical assistance; developing partnerships in science, technology and innovation; sharing information with the public through digital platforms; and strengthening forest governance. The actions taken show a growing commitment to increasing, obtaining access to and mobilizing forest financing at the national and international levels.

24. Notwithstanding efforts and progress made, financing persists as a significant challenge to achieving the global forest goals, in particular in developing countries. Almost all developing countries identified a lack of resources, in particular financial resources, as a major challenge to achieving Goal 1. More than 13 countries, more than 25 per cent, reported that progress towards achieving global forest goal 2 was affected by inadequate funding.

Table 10

**Global forest goal 4: summary of progress by target**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Progress</i>
4.1	Achieved by most reporting countries
4.2	Achieved by most reporting countries
4.3	All reporting countries are engaged in international cooperation and partnerships for sustainable forest management
4.4	33 countries reported having forest financing strategies for sustainable forest management
4.5	Wide range of initiatives for generating and disseminating information on sustainable forest management reported

### Global forest goal 5: overview of progress

25. Forest issues have been integrated into broader development or poverty reduction plans and strategies, and the contribution of forests to national sustainable development strategies is recognized. The authority of forest agencies has been strengthened, notably by increasing their law enforcement capacity. Donors reported strong support of the actions to improve forest law enforcement and governance. Technical measures, such as monitoring and tracing wood flows, using modern techniques for tracing, verification and wood identification are being put in place. Many importing countries are now committed to preventing access to their markets by unsustainable/illegal timber.

26. All reporting countries now have in place mechanisms for cross-sectoral coordination among government agencies. Where there is a national forest programme, or an equivalent instrument, it plays a strong role in articulating cross-sectoral coordination. Notwithstanding such mechanisms, coordination is not always successful. Mechanisms are in place in all countries to involve stakeholders in policy formulation, planning and implementation. Community forest management is promoted in many countries. Indigenous peoples are being engaged in sustainable forest management. National land use planning processes now usually integrate forest management issues, alongside other land uses.

27. Countries reported that forests have already been integrated into national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies, that forest law enforcement and governance had been enhanced, that policies and legal frameworks were in place to promote sustainable forest management, and that a wide range of measures was in place to improve policy coherence and involve stakeholders, communities and indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, to ascertain the effectiveness of the systems in place to achieve this Goal would necessitate a more detailed analysis than is possible in this report.

Table 11

### Global forest goal 5: summary of progress by target

Target	Progress
5.1	Achieved by nearly all reporting countries
5.2	Measures in place: not yet possible to assess results
5.3	Policies in place in almost all reporting countries. Assessment of their effectiveness requires further analysis
5.4	Systems integrated in most reporting countries. Assessment of their effectiveness requires further analysis

### Global forest goal 6: overview of progress

28. Many steps have been taken in recent years towards improving coordination, coherence and collaboration on forest-related issues within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests in 2017 provided the foundation for advancing coordinated and collaborative actions at all levels on forest issues. Further studies are needed to explore additional areas for improving coordination and collaboration. Achieving forest policy coherence and complementarity at the international level largely depends on the guidance and resources provided by the governing bodies of the United Nations entities and

Partnership member organizations, many of which are comprised of largely the same Member States.

29. While there is no formal United Nations system-wide mechanism to enhance cooperation, coordination and coherence on forest-related issues, there are several formal and informal initiatives that are aimed primarily at improving forest-based actions. The most notable network for enhancing coordination and coherence on forest-related issues is the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

30. At the national level, forests have been integrated into national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies, including programmes implemented through the United Nations system. Countries reported various actions taken at the national and international levels to enhance cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation and to promote forests and sustainable forest management. Many cited institutions, organizations and agencies involved in collaborative work on forests and provided examples of best practices and existing cross-sectoral mechanisms for forest-related issues. In nearly all the reports, it was mentioned that activities related to forests were planned and implemented by Governments, in close collaboration with, and with the involvement of, civil society, the private sector and local authorities.

Table 12

**Global forest goal 6: summary of progress by target**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Progress</i>
6.1	Measures in place, yet impossible to assess the degree of progress
6.2	Measures in place, yet impossible to assess the degree of progress
6.3	Adequate mechanisms and measures in place in nearly all reporting countries
6.4	Wide range of measures and actions reported; vast majority of countries use criteria and indicators to measure progress towards sustainable forest management
6.5	Various actions reported; measures and mechanisms to engage major groups and other stakeholders in place in most countries

#### IV. Global core set of forest-related indicators

31. The global core set of forest-related indicators consists of 21 indicators that address the topics identified in high-level political commitments regarding forests and help to focus data collection efforts on the questions of the highest policy importance. The global core set, inter alia, supports measuring progress towards achieving the global forest goals and their associated targets. It is also aimed at reducing the burden of countries associated with reporting on other indicators, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Rio conventions.

32. The purpose of developing the global core set of forest-related indicators is not to generate yet another set of indicators to compete with the existing sets, each of which has its own objectives, institutional framework and geographic scope. Rather, elements of the set of indicators are derived from those reporting processes, which in turn will benefit from the existence of information on a common platform or in a common pool. The aim is to articulate a core set with a limited number of indicators

that efficiently address the topics identified by the various high-level forums and to thus focus data collection efforts on the questions of the highest policy importance and avoid duplicate reporting.

33. Most of the core set of indicators are already established, and data are provided by the Forest Resources Assessment of FAO. The indicators support the assessment of progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, as reflected in the flagship publication. In particular, global forest goals 1 and 3 and all their associated targets have benefited from the global core set, and the supplementary data provided by FRA.

34. Four of the indicators are still classified as tier 3. For those indicators, most of which are socioeconomic, to become operational, further work on concepts and methodology is needed. Data sets, which are currently missing, are needed as well.

35. Indicators that are well defined with robust methodologies cannot be of much use without relevant data. To make full use of such indicators, the capacities of countries need to be built to improve information systems on forests and trees and to provide countries with operationally feasible options to produce and disseminate solid information on forests and forest products.

36. An expert workshop in support of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests joint initiative on streamlining forest-related reporting, entitled “Strengthening the global core set of forest indicators to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030”, was held at FAO headquarters, in Rome, in October 2019. At the workshop, various recommendations for, and possible steps towards, advancing work needed to finalize the entire global core set of forest-related indicators were provided.

37. At the meeting, it was suggested that countries with suitable socioeconomic data sets be invited to collaborate on testing and finalizing work on certain indicators, in particular indicators 13 (number of forest dependant people in extreme poverty) and 14 (contribution of forests and trees to food security and nutrition).

38. More collaboration among Collaborative Partnership on Forests members, international forest organizations and relevant non-forestry agencies is needed to further enhance methodologies for the tier 3 indicators. Equally important is to support countries in building systems for data collection capacities so that they may have better information systems on forests and trees.

## V. Conclusions

39. Fifty-two Member States submitted comprehensive reports on their actions to advance the global forest goals and provided detailed descriptions thereof. The submitted information, combined with biophysical data from the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020, made it possible to conduct a first assessment of progress towards achieving the global forest goals.

40. Analysis of the data revealed a number of challenges ranging from assessment methodology to data availability, such as in the assessment of forest degradation and the measurement of the socioeconomic benefits of forests with regard to food security and poverty among forest-dependent people. Without relevant data and assessment methodologies, it is difficult to gauge the exact extent of the progress made towards certain goals and targets.

41. Finalizing the work on the global core set of forest relevant indicators is important not only for the purpose of assessing progress but also to demonstrate the full contribution of forests across the entire framework of the Sustainable

Development Goals, including with regard to issues such as livelihoods, poverty, food security and employment. Building capacity and supporting countries in collecting and compiling data are critical in this regard, in particular in relation to data related to socioeconomic aspects of forests and forestry.

42. The present report and the first flagship publication draw largely on the information supplied by the 52 Member States in their voluntary national reports. While the countries represent a significant portion of the world's forests, gaps undoubtedly exist in the data, given that not all countries provided reports. Increasing the number of voluntary reports in future reporting cycles would enable a broader overall assessment of progress made towards achieving the global forest goals and their targets in 2030.

## **VI. Suggestions for follow-up actions**

43. The following points are suggested for discussion during the sixteenth session of the Forum:

(a) Recognize the value of national reporting by members of the Forum, as well as the importance of tracking progress towards the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the global forest goals;

(b) Welcome the preparation of the first flagship publication and consider making it a recurrent publication in conjunction with future cycles of national reporting;

(c) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue its work on the global core set of forest-related indicators and to report to the seventeenth session of the Forum on progress made towards the finalization of the indicators;

(d) Invite the active engagement of all Forum members in testing and finalizing the work on the global core set of forest-related indicators;

(e) Request the secretariat of the Forum to continue to organize, jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, capacity-building workshops on a global core set of forest-related indicators and on national reporting to the Forum.

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