



United Nations

United Nations Forum on Forests

**Report on the twentieth session
(10 May 2024 and 5–9 May 2025)**

Economic and Social Council

Official Records, 2025

Supplement No. 22



United Nations Forum on Forests

**Report on the twentieth session
(10 May 2024 and 5–9 May 2025)**



United Nations • New York, 2025

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 . . .	5
Draft decision for adoption by the Council	5
Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its twentieth session and draft provisional agenda and dates and venue of its twenty-first session.	5
II. Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030	6
A. Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030	7
B. Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities	7
C. Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2025 and 2026, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, and other international forest-related developments	8
D. Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests 2025	9
E. Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network	9
F. Monitoring, assessment and reporting: voluntary national reports; capacity-building for reporting; global core set of forest-related indicators; and the next <i>Global Forest Goals Report</i>	10
III. Progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests	11
IV. Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests	12
V. Emerging issues	13
VI. Dates and venue of the twenty-first session of the Forum	14
VII. Provisional agenda of the twenty-first session of the Forum	15
VIII. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its twentieth session	16

IX.	Organization of the session	17
A.	Opening and duration of the session	17
B.	Election of officers	17
C.	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work	17
D.	Attendance	17
E.	Documentation	17
Annex		
	Chair’s summary of the discussions at the twentieth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.	18

Chapter I

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

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 twentieth session and draft provisional agenda and dates and venue of its twenty-first session

The Economic and Social Council:

- (a) Takes note of the report of the Forum on its twentieth session;¹
- (b) Approves the provisional agenda of the twenty-first session of the Forum ([E/CN.18/2025/L.1](#));
- (c) Approves the dates and venue of the twenty-first session of the Forum ([E/CN.18/2025/L.2](#)).

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2025, Supplement No. 22 (E/2025/42).*

Chapter II

Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

2. The Forum considered agenda item 3 as a whole and jointly with items 4 and 6 at its 2nd meeting. The Forum considered item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (f) at its 3rd to 7th meetings. The Forum considered item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (f) jointly with items 4, 5 and 6 at its 10th meeting.
3. At the 2nd meeting, the representative of the Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/2](#).
4. At the same meeting, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the Director of the Forum secretariat, Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo.

General discussion of agenda items 3, 4 and 6

5. At its 2nd meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of agenda items 3, 4 and 6.
6. The record of the Member States, observers, United Nations system entities and non-governmental organizations for which statements were delivered in the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.²

Presentation of the policy brief on the thematic priorities of the twentieth session of the Forum

7. At its 3rd meeting, the Forum heard a presentation of the policy brief on the thematic priorities of the twentieth session of the Forum by the Director of the Forum secretariat.
8. At the same meeting, the representative of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

Panel discussion on valuing forest ecosystems in national policy and strategy: experiences, challenges and way forward

9. At its 5th meeting, the Forum held a panel discussion on valuing forest ecosystems in national policy and strategy: experiences, challenges and way forward, chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Forum, Maria Sokolenko (Russian Federation), and moderated by the Director of the Forum secretariat.
10. At the same meeting, the Forum heard a keynote statement by the Minister of Forest Economy of the Congo, Rosalie Matondo.
11. Also at the same meeting, the Chief of Section in the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Ilaria Di Matteo, made a statement.

Presentations

12. Also at the 5th meeting, presentations were made by the Inspector General of Forests at the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, Raghu Prasad, the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization, Sheam Satkuru, the Professor at Yale School of the Environment, Eli Fenichel, and the Lead Economist at The Nature Conservancy, Priya Shyamsundar.
13. The record of participants who delivered statements during the ensuing interactive discussion is available on the iGov portal.³

² See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%222nd%22>.

³ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%2225th%22>.

14. At the 5th meeting, the Vice-Chair (Russian Federation) made a statement.

Consideration of the Chair's draft summary

15. At its 10th meeting, the Forum had before it the Chair's draft summary of the technical discussions under agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (f) during the twentieth session, including the Chair's proposals emerging from the discussions for transmission to the twenty-first session (see annex). The draft summary was contained in an informal paper, in English only, which was circulated through the e-deleGATE portal.

16. At the same meeting, the Chair (Türkiye) made a statement.

17. The record of participants who delivered statements during the ensuing interactive discussion is available on the iGov portal.⁴

A. Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

18. The Forum considered item 3 (a) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii) at its 3rd meeting.

Presentations of country-led initiatives

19. At its 3rd meeting, the Forum heard presentations on country-led initiatives by the Minister of Forest Economy of the Congo and representatives of Austria, Türkiye and the Republic of Korea.

General discussion of agenda item 3 (a) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii)

20. At the same meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (a) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii).

21. The record of participants who delivered statements during the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.⁵

22. At the 3rd meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

B. Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities

23. The Forum considered agenda item 3 (b) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii) at its 3rd meeting.

24. The representative of the Forum made a statement and introduced the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/3](#).

25. At the 3rd meeting, the Director of the Forestry Division and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) made a statement under item 3 (b) (i).

26. At the same meeting, the Chief of the Forests and Bioeconomy Section at the Economic Commission for Europe made a presentation in relation to agenda item 3 (b) (ii).

⁴ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%2210th%22>.

⁵ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%223rd%22>.

27. Also at the same meeting, the Senior Programme Officer for Natural Resources and Wildlife at the Southern African Development Community, Ndapanda Kanime, made a presentation.

28. Also at the 3rd meeting, the focal point of the farmers and small forest landowners major group, Mia Crawford, made a statement.

General discussion of item 3 (b) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii)

29. At its 3rd meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (b) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii).

30. The record of participants who delivered statements during the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.⁶

31. At the 3rd meeting, the Vice-Chair, Abderrahim Houmy (Morocco), made a statement.

C. Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2025 and 2026, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, and other international forest-related developments

32. The Forum considered item 3 (c) at its 4th meeting.

33. At the 4th meeting, the Vice-Chair, Andrés Napuri Pita (Peru), presented the inputs from the Bureau of the twentieth session of the Forum to the 2025 high-level political declaration on sustainable development.

Presentations

34. At the same meeting, presentations were made by the Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; the President of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, Daniela Kleinschmit; the Forest Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration Officer at the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Senior Director for Programmes Coordination at the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; the Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of Uzbekistan, Aziz Abdukhakimov; the Minister of Forest Economy of the Congo, Rosalie Matondo; and the Director General of the Brazilian Forest Service, Garo Batmanian.

General discussion of item 3 (c)

35. At its 4th meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (c).

⁶ Ibid.

36. The record of participants who delivered statements during the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.⁷

37. At the 4th meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation made a statement in exercise of the right of reply.

38. At the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

D. Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests 2025

39. The Forum considered agenda item 3 (d) at its 5th meeting.

40. The representative and the Director of the Forum secretariat made statements.

General discussion

41. At its 5th meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (d).

42. The record of participants who delivered statements during the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.⁸

E. Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

43. The Forum considered item 3 (e) at its 6th meeting.

44. At the 6th meeting, the representative of the Forum secretariat made a statement and introduced the note by the secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/4](#).

45. At the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat provided updates on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network office in China.

General discussion of item 3 (e)

46. At its 6th meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (e).

47. The record of participants who delivered statements during the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.⁹

48. At the 6th meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

Panel discussion on the significance of a global hub on data, information and knowledge on forest financing opportunities and best practices and the role of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network clearing house

49. At its 6th meeting, the Forum held a panel discussion on the significance of a global hub on data, information and knowledge on forest financing opportunities and best practices and the role of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network clearing house, chaired by the Vice-Chair, Javad Momeni (Islamic Republic of Iran), and moderated by the Manager for International Affairs at the Canadian Forest Service, Maureen Whelan.

⁷ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%224th%22>.

⁸ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%225th%22>.

⁹ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%226th%22>.

Keynote statement

50. At the same meeting, the Forum heard a keynote statement by the Senior Forestry Specialist and Acting Practice Manager at the Global Environment Department of the World Bank Group, Tuukka Castern.

Presentations

51. Also at the same meeting, presentations were made by the Senior Adviser on European and International Forest Policy at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany, Katalin Solymosi; the Director General of the Brazilian Forest Service, Garo Batmanian; the Forests and Wildlife Thematic Lead in the Integration and Knowledge Management Division of the Global Environment Facility, Pascal Martinez; the Senior Forestry Officer at FAO, Fritjof Boerstler; and the General Counsel at the Asian Development Bank, Thomas Clark.

52. The record of participants who delivered statements during the interactive discussion is available on the iGov portal.¹⁰

53. At the 6th meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

F. Monitoring, assessment and reporting: voluntary national reports; capacity-building for reporting; global core set of forest-related indicators; and the next *Global Forest Goals Report*

54. The Forum considered item 3 (f) at its 7th meeting.

55. At the 7th meeting, the representative of the Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/5](#).

Presentations

56. At the same meeting, statements were made by the Director of Forestry Policy and Sector Coordination at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa, Avhashoni Madula, and the representative of FAO.

General discussion of item 3 (f)

57. Also at the same meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (f).

58. The record of participants who delivered statements during the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%227th%22>.

Chapter III

Progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests

59. The Forum considered agenda item 4 at its 8th meeting. The documentation before the Forum under item 4 is available on the iGov portal.¹²

60. At its 8th meeting, the Forum heard a presentation of the information paper on the workload, gaps and needs of the Forum secretariat by a consultant, Stephanie Caswell.

General discussion of item 4

61. At the same meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 4.

62. The record of participants who delivered statements during the general discussion is available on the iGov portal.¹³

63. At the 8th meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

¹² See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/documents>.

¹³ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%228th%22>.

Chapter IV

Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests

64. The Forum considered agenda item 5 at its 8th meeting. The documentation before the Forum under item 5 is available on the iGov portal.¹⁴

65. At the 8th meeting, the representative of the Forum secretariat made a statement and introduced the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/6](#).

General discussion of item 5

66. At the same meeting, the Forum held a general discussion of item 5.

67. The record of participants who delivered statements during the ensuing general discussion is available on the iGov portal.¹⁵

68. At the 8th meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

¹⁴ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/documents>.

¹⁵ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%228th%22>.

Chapter V

Emerging issues

69. The Forum considered agenda item 6 at its 9th meeting. The documentation before the Forum under item 5 is available on the iGov portal.¹⁶

Panel discussion on dryland forests

70. At its 9th meeting, the Forum held a panel discussion on dryland forests, chaired by the Vice-Chair (Morocco) and moderated by the Senior Programme Officer for Natural Resources and Wildlife at the Southern African Development Community, Ndapanda Kanime.

71. A keynote statement was delivered by the Chief of Forests and Bioeconomy of the Economic Commission for Europe, Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab.

72. Presentations were given by the following panellists: the Director General of the National Forest Agency of Mongolia, Oyunsanaa Byambasuren; the Director of the Valley Forests Department at the National Centre for Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification of Saudi Arabia, Najeeb Alsubhi; the Director of the Department of Forestry and Range Resources of Botswana, Baitshapi Edith Babusi-Hill; and the Forests and Wildlife Thematic Lead at the Integration and Knowledge Management Division of the Global Environment Facility, Pascal Martinez.

73. The record of participants who delivered statements during the ensuing interactive discussion is available on the iGov portal.¹⁷

74. At the 9th meeting, the Vice-Chair (Morocco) made a statement.

¹⁶ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/documents>.

¹⁷ See <https://igov.un.org/ecosoc/unff/20/meetings?search=%229th%22>.

Chapter VI

Dates and venue of the twenty-first session of the Forum

75. The Forum considered item 7 at its 10th meeting. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a draft decision entitled “Proposed dates and venue of the twenty-first session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” ([E/CN.18/2025/L.2](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

76. At its 10th meeting, the Forum adopted the draft decision (see chap. I).

Chapter VII

Provisional agenda of the twenty-first session of the Forum

77. The Forum considered item 8 at its 10th meeting. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a document entitled “Draft provisional agenda of the twenty-first session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” ([E/CN.18/2025/L.1](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

78. Before action on the draft decision, the representative of New Zealand made a statement.

79. At its 10th meeting, the Forum adopted the provisional agenda of its twenty-first session, for submission to the Council at its 2025 session (see chap. I).

Chapter VIII

Adoption of the report of the Forum on its twentieth session

80. The Forum considered item 9 at its 10th meeting. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the draft report on its twentieth session ([E/CN.18/2025/L.3](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

81. At the 10th meeting, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur (Russian Federation) introduced the draft report. Subsequently, the Forum adopted the draft report and entrusted the Rapporteur with its finalization with the support of the secretariat, for submission to the Council at its 2025 session.

Chapter IX

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

82. The Forum held its twentieth session at United Nations Headquarters on 10 May 2024 and from 5 to 9 May 2025. The Forum held 10 plenary meetings (1st to 10th).

83. At the 1st meeting, the Chair pro tempore and Chair of the nineteenth session of the Forum, Zéphyrin Maniratanga (Burundi), opened the twentieth session.

84. At the 2nd meeting, the Chair of the twentieth session, İsmail Belen (Türkiye), resumed the session and made an opening statement.

85. At the same meeting, the President of the Council, Bob Rae (Canada), addressed the Forum (via a pre-recorded video message).

86. Also at the same meeting, the President of the General Assembly, Philémon Yang, addressed the Forum.

87. At the 1st meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made a statement.

B. Election of officers

88. At its 2nd meeting, the Forum designated Maria Sokolenko (Russian Federation) to serve concurrently as Rapporteur of the twentieth and twenty-first sessions.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

89. At its 2nd meeting, the Forum adopted its provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/1](#).

90. At the same meeting, 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.

91. Also at the same meeting, the Chair recalled that, in accordance with Council resolution [2021/6](#), the twentieth session was a technical one, and that a Chair's summary of the discussions during the session would be prepared (see annex).

D. Attendance

92. In accordance with paragraph 4 of 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 [E/CN.18/2025/INF/1](#).

E. Documentation

93. The documentation considered by the Forum at its twentieth session is available on the website of the Forum (www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html).

Annex

Chair's summary of the discussions at the twentieth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work for 2025–2028 contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 2024/15, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its twentieth session, held technical discussions on its thematic priorities in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, namely global forest goals 1, 3 and 5,¹ as well as other items on its agenda. The Chair's summary covers the discussions at the twentieth session (sect. A), the Chair's proposals for consideration at the twenty-first session (sect. B) and input for the 2025 and 2026 sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (sects. C and D).^{2,3} The Chair's summary is not an outcome negotiated by consensus by the Forum.

A. Chair's summary of the discussions at the twentieth session of the Forum⁴

2. In their opening remarks, the Chair of the twentieth session of the Forum,⁵ the President of the Council,⁶ the President of the General Assembly⁷ and the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs⁸ addressed the Forum. They highlighted the Forum's major achievements since its existence, the current global challenges and the United Nations liquidity crisis, and emphasized the Forum's critical role in addressing these challenges. The speakers emphasized the need for stronger multilateralism, enhanced financing and accelerated implementation efforts, building on the outcomes of the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests and the Pact for the Future. The Forum members were also encouraged to actively engage in the discussions at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Spain, and the thirtieth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

¹ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Global-Forest-Goals-booklet-Apr-2019.pdf.

² This will complement the input by the Bureau of the twentieth session to the 2025 high-level political forum.

³ Input from the Forum to the 2026 high-level political forum may be reorganized and adjusted to align with the template by President of the Council, upon its receipt.

⁴ Opening statements at the twentieth session, opening remarks by the Director of the Forum secretariat, the concept note for the panels, the presentations by the panellists, and updates presented during the twentieth session and shared with the secretariat are available at www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html.

⁵ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_opening_Remarks_Bureau-Chair-Ismail-Belen.pdf.

⁶ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_opening-remarks_by_PECOSOC.pdf.

⁷ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_opening_remarks_by_PGA.pdf.

⁸ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_opening-remarks_by_DESA_ASG.pdf.

Summary of the discussion of agenda items 3, 4 and 6

3. Following the introduction of the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/2](#) and the policy brief on the thematic priorities of the twentieth session,⁹ the Director of the Forum secretariat¹⁰ made a statement on the secretariat's activities and achievements since the nineteenth session. She highlighted the main activities in advancing implementation of Council resolution [2024/15](#). She indicated some major achievements made during the past year, including the issuance of monthly updates on the Forum, a joint analytical study with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the interlinkages of the global forest goals and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the organization of the first Forest Pavilion at the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the increased number of country-led initiatives by Forum members. Referring to the current United Nations liquidity crisis and its multiplying adverse impacts on the secretariat's already limited resources, she called for sustained and increased support to the secretariat. The secretariat presented the policy brief on the thematic priorities of the twentieth session.¹¹

4. During the general discussion, several members made statements, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Many representatives emphasized the significance of forests for addressing several global challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, poverty, and food and energy insecurity, especially in rural areas, and for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and girls;

(b) Many speakers renewed their commitments to implement the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and indicated that the plan was a key global framework for promoting sustainable forest management, which contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the three Rio conventions and promotes synergy and coherence on forest-related issues;

(c) Many representatives reported on actions taken by their countries at the national and regional levels to advance implementation of the strategic plan and achievement of global forest goals 1, 3 and 5, and called for strengthened international cooperation and collaboration, including in science, technology and finance, to support countries' efforts to halt deforestation and forest degradation by 2030;

(d) One representative emphasized the importance of international cooperation based on respect for national priorities and circumstances, affirming that each State had the sovereign right to implement its own public policies, and noted that the 2030 Agenda was a non-binding framework and that its goals may be interpreted and pursued by each country in line with its national context and sovereignty;

(e) Several representatives welcomed the identification of dryland forests as an emerging issue for discussion at the twentieth session, noting the important services provided by this type of forest to countries and local communities, and stressed the need for increasing the visibility of, and financing for, dryland forests and more concerted global efforts in this respect;

(f) Several speakers also referred to the risks and threats to forests, including wildfires, natural disasters and climate change; called for enhanced collaboration at

⁹ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UNFF20_Policy-Brief-on-UNFF20_Thematic-Priorities.pdf.

¹⁰ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_UNFFS-Director_remarks-on-UNFFS-Achievements.pdf.

¹¹ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UNFF20_Policy-Brief-on-UNFF20_Thematic-Priorities.pdf.

the regional and global levels to address these threats and halt deforestation and forest degradation; and encouraged the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to further support countries in addressing these challenges;

(g) Several countries highlighted the special situation of landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries with low forest cover and called for strengthened support for these groups of countries, including for the development of forest rehabilitation strategies and action plans;

(h) Several speakers referred to the upcoming thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and some related initiatives such as the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (an innovative means to promote blended forest financing) and the United for Our Forests group initiative (aimed at protecting forests in developing countries by promoting South-South cooperation);

(i) Several representatives welcomed the adoption of the General Assembly resolution on the United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management and called for enhanced international cooperation to facilitate observance of the Decade.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 3 (a) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii)

5. The representative of the Congo presented the outcome of the first International Conference on Afforestation and Reforestation,¹² held in July 2024 as a country-led initiative in support of the work of the Forum.

6. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

(a) The representative of Morocco stated that the country would hold a country-led initiative on technology, finance and forest community development in June 2025. The representative of Austria announced that the country would hold a country-led initiative on sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches in Vienna in February 2026. The representative of Türkiye announced that the country would hold a country-led initiative on forest fires and wildfires later in 2025. The representative of the Republic of Korea stated that, together with the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization, the country would hold a country-led initiative on enhancing public-private resource mobilization for forests in October 2025;

(b) The representative of Georgia announced the country's new voluntary national contribution to advance implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030;¹³

(c) Several representatives indicated their countries' willingness to announce voluntary national contributions in support of the strategic plan, and some provided updates on their already announced contributions. Some countries also reported on challenges in the financing of and capacity to implement their contributions;

(d) Many representatives reported on actions taken to align their forest-related national strategies, frameworks and policies in support of the strategic plan and its global forest goals, as well as other international commitments, including through their voluntary national contributions, nationally determined contributions and national biodiversity strategies and action plans, in the areas of forest conservation

¹² See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2024_Country-led-initiative-hosted-by-RoCongo.pdf.

¹³ The announced voluntary national contributions are available at www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vnccs/index.html.

and restoration, advancing sustainable forest management in production forests, strengthening forest governance and law, promoting rights allocation for Indigenous Peoples and the participation of local communities, as well as initiatives such as fire management and community-based forest management;

(e) Many representatives expressed their countries' commitment to advancing the global forest goals and implementing the declaration of the high-level segment of the nineteenth session of the Forum to address deforestation while mitigating climate change and conserving biological diversity and improving livelihoods;

(f) Several representatives indicated the potential of voluntary national contributions as a key tool in helping countries to address the drivers of deforestation, as well as climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation, through large-scale afforestation and reforestation, forest restoration, enhanced sustainable forest management and law enforcement at the national level;

(g) Many representatives called for strengthened international cooperation to enhance the capacity of developing countries to accelerate the implementation of the strategic plan and indicated that promoting sustainable forest management was a key means for their countries to eradicate poverty and improve livelihoods for local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women and girls;

(h) Some representatives shared experiences in revitalizing commercial forestry through improved supply chains and concession systems to certify timber and other forest products and commodities;

(i) Many representatives highlighted the importance of strengthening forest data quality and security and a coherent reporting system;

(j) Many representatives called for increased funding for the implementation of the strategic plan, technological collaboration and capacity-building for developing countries;

(k) Several representatives highlighted the important role of forests in food and energy security and rural development. Developing countries are more dependent on biomass and, if alternative energy sources are not provided, forests will continue to be degraded.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 3 (b) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii)

7. Following the introduction of the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/3](#), the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests¹⁴ reported on the work of the Partnership, presented its workplan for 2025–2028¹⁵ and identified actions for future enhanced effort. The representative of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization reported on the outcome of the expert group meeting of the Forum's regional partners, held in Bangkok in January 2025. The Economic Commission for Europe made a presentation on forests for a sustainable future. The representative of the Southern African Development Community secretariat¹⁶ delivered a presentation on the community's forestry strategy. The representative of the farmers and small forest landowners major group reported on the outcome of the major groups' training workshop.¹⁷

¹⁴ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_CPF-joint-statement_5-May.pdf.

¹⁵ See <https://openknowledge.fao.org/login>.

¹⁶ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/SADC-forestry-strategy-presentation-during-UNFF20.pdf.

¹⁷ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UNFF20_Report-of-the-training-workshop.pdf.

8. During the general discussion, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Many representatives acknowledged the important role of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in supporting countries' efforts to accelerate progress towards the global forest goals through its joint initiatives, and encouraged further work on data on forest finance and forest fire management, including through partnerships with national institutions, regional partners and major groups;

(b) Several representatives expressed support for the Partnership's joint initiatives on sustainable wood for a sustainable world, a communicators' network, biodiversity mainstreaming in forestry and integrated fire management;

(c) Some representatives encouraged the Partnership to enhance its support through increased access to technical training and capacity-building, expanded knowledge-sharing and peer learning platforms, the facilitation of funding opportunities for sustainable forest management, enhanced assistance to tropical forest countries to mobilize investment and develop carbon market instruments, and stronger support for forest monitoring, governance and law enforcement, as well as support for the work of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and its clearing house;

(d) Many representatives called for a further update by the Partnership on its work related to the global core set of forest-related indicators;

(e) Several representatives shared their project and programme experiences in partnership with the Partnership's member organizations, regional and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups in the areas of mangrove conservation and restoration, land use assessment, forest inventory management, enforcement and monitoring in forest conservation, fire management and hazard risk reduction, such as the Global Environment Facility System for Transparent Allocation of Resources 7 programme, the European Union Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management programme, the partnership action fund for nationally determined contributions, the Green Climate Fund REDD+ Readiness programme, the Euroclima programme and the Canada-Caribbean Community Expert Deployment Mechanism programme;

(f) Several representatives emphasized the importance of a coordinated approach involving all stakeholders to promote the efficient use of limited resources and ensure a fair and sustainable future for forests and forest-dependent communities, particularly in promoting equitable access to financial resources for developing countries, Indigenous Peoples, women and girls;

(g) Some representatives underscored the need to support small-scale forestry and agroforestry initiatives for addressing the planetary crisis, enhancing ecosystem restoration and building community resilience to climate change. They also urged the importance of collaboration with private sector and philanthropic entities to achieve the global forest goals;

(h) Some representatives emphasized the important role of the Partnership in advancing stronger interlinkages between science, policy, finance and technical issues in support of Forum members;

(i) Several representatives welcomed the activities of the Partnership and its member organizations in implementing relevant provisions of Council resolution [2024/15](#), including the briefing in April 2025, and invited the Partnership and its members to continue its efforts to implement the provisions of the resolution, take concrete steps to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals by 2030 and report its progress to the Forum at its twenty-first session.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 3 (c)

9. Under this agenda item, several updates regarding major global forest-related developments in the past year were provided. In this respect, a brief presentation was made by the Vice-Chair, Andrés Napuri Pita (Peru), of the Forum at its twentieth session on the Bureau's input to the 2025 high-level political forum. The Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development provided an update on the themes and Sustainable Development Goals under review at the 2025 and 2026 high-level political forums. The representative of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations highlighted the key outcomes of the 2024 International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources-International Union of Forest Research Organizations World Congress. Representatives of the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, also shared the key outcomes of their Conferences of the Parties (sixteenth, twenty-ninth and sixteenth, respectively) that were of significance to forests. The representative of Brazil made a presentation on the objective and scope of the Tropical Forests Forever Facility. Representatives of Uzbekistan and the Congo provided information on the background, objective and process leading to the adoption of General Assembly resolutions [78/320](#) on fostering sustainable forest management, including afforestation and reforestation, in degraded lands, including drylands, as an effective solution to environmental challenges, and [79/283](#) on the United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management (2027–2036).

10. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Many representatives highlighted the pivotal role of forests in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, serving as a carbon sink, sustaining biodiversity, improving water quality and availability, supporting livelihoods and contributing to food security;

(b) Many representatives underscored the urgent need to counter negative trends in forest loss and accelerate the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its global forest goals as a global strategic framework on forests for transformational actions at all levels by 2030, including by taking urgent action against deforestation and forest degradation;

(c) Many speakers stressed the need to work collaboratively to protect, conserve, sustainably manage and restore forests and forest ecosystems in line with the strategic plan and its global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and integrate sustainable forest management-related actions into national sustainable development strategies, the updated nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and the revised and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(d) Many representatives encouraged further coherence, consistency and synergies between the strategic plan, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement, including by enhancing mutual support among the respective organizations, instruments and processes, including in the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(e) Many representatives indicated that sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and foster resource efficiency and circularity, recognizing the multiple values and contributions of forests

to sustainable development, including through the efficient use of resources such as high-value products of woody biomass;

(f) Some representatives welcomed the emergence of and ongoing preparations for innovative financing mechanisms, such as the Tropical Forests Forever Facility, to mobilize financing for sustainable forest management, especially tropical forests;

(g) Some representatives supported the ecosystem-based, community-led restoration underpinned by science, traditional knowledge and inclusive governance backed by strong public and multistakeholder participation;

(h) Many representatives urged further collective action and international cooperation to mobilize financial and technological support and capacity-building for developing countries to sustainably manage forests as a strategic response to mitigate climate change and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, and as building blocks for long-term environmental resilience;

(i) Some representatives underscored the need for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to prioritize high-impact, high-synergy forest ecosystem projects in support of accelerated progress towards the global forest goals while contributing to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(j) Several representatives welcomed the recent adoption of the two General Assembly resolutions related to forests and urged the Forum to focus more on addressing deforestation, sand and dust storms, droughts, soil erosion and desertification, including through joint research and analysis with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

(k) Some representatives recognized the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in achieving the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and the biodiversity goals and targets under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(l) One representative highlighted the issue of forest health and forest-related disturbances and recommended that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 could be considered in future sessions of the Forum, and called for exploring the linkages between the Forum and the Framework. Another representative noted that forest health and ecosystems may be affected by various external stressors, including human-induced disruptions;

(m) One representative opposed references to climate change and the Paris Agreement. The representative also expressed opposition to linking the global forest goals with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda in the Forum's work.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 3 (d)

11. The Forum secretariat provided a brief update on its activities related to communication and outreach, including activities during the 2025 International Day of Forests.

12. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Many representatives welcomed the activities undertaken by the Forum secretariat in advancing communication and outreach work, including the Forum's monthly updates, and encouraged the secretariat to continue its work, raise awareness of forest issues across the United Nations system and related processes, modernize the Forum website and boost its social media presence;

(b) Many representatives referred to their national activities in celebration of International Day of Forests and considered it an opportunity to raise awareness of the significance of forests and strengthen commitment to sustainable forest management. The day brought together national institutions, civil society, traditional leaders and other relevant stakeholders and promoted sustainable forest management outside the forest sector;

(c) Many representatives recognized and welcomed the initiative of the secretariat in organizing the Forest Pavilion during the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as it attracted many stakeholders outside the traditional forestry sector. They encouraged the secretariat to organize similar events during Conferences of the Parties to all Rio conventions, including the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as part of a wider communication strategy of the Forum secretariat to raise awareness of forests and promote synergy on forests, climate change, biodiversity and land;

(d) Many other representatives recognized the important role of the Forum secretariat in raising awareness of forests in various global forums and in promoting synergy and coherence on forest-related issues. Considering the ongoing United Nations liquidity crisis, however, they encouraged the secretariat to take a flexible approach in advancing this task, assess the impacts and cost-efficiency of the Forest Pavilion and make the Forest Pavilion a “case-by-case” initiative during Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Conferences of the Parties to the other Rio conventions. In this respect, these representatives disagreed with the proposal to institutionalize the Forest Pavilion during Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(e) The representative of the host country of the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change clarified that the programme for the session had not yet been finalized and that more clarity on the issue would be given in Bonn, Germany, in May 2025. As of now, there were several thematic pavilions at the thirtieth session, including one on nature;

(f) The representative of FAO, on behalf of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, announced that “Forests and economies” would be the theme of International Day of Forests in 2026.

13. In response to some comments about the Forest Pavilion, the Director of the Forum secretariat explained that the first Forest Pavilion was aimed at enhancing the coherence and contribution of forests to the global fight against climate change, in line with the Forum’s guidance. The resources were provided by stakeholders who were outside the Forum’s traditional donors, including the Asian Development Bank and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

Summary of the panel discussion on valuing forest ecosystems in national policy and strategy: experiences, challenges and way forward

14. This panel was organized under agenda item 3 and consisted of a keynote speech by the Minister of Forest Economy of the Congo, a presentation by the representative of the Statistics Division,¹⁸ as well as four panellists from India,¹⁹ the International

¹⁸ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL-Ecosystems_1_DESA_Ilaria.pdf.

¹⁹ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL-Ecosystems_2_MEC-India_Raghu.pdf.

Tropical Timber Organization,²⁰ Yale University²¹ and The Nature Conservancy.²² The panel was moderated by the Director of the Forum secretariat.

15. During the interactive discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Several representatives indicated that the integration of ecosystem service valuations into policymaking and decision-making processes will enable more informed, evidence-based environmental management. Aligning investments and policies with the economic and ecological value of forests is critical to ensuring their effective management and conservation;

(b) Several representatives indicated their actions at the national level for valuing forests, such as biodiversity valuation banks and conservation payment programmes. Some representatives highlighted market-based mechanisms such as payment for ecosystem services, as well as a forest environment tax to mobilize domestic resources, to distribute benefits to communities for the conservation and management of forests. Some representatives indicated that their countries had developed innovative mechanisms for the buying and selling of ecosystem services;

(c) Several representatives highlighted the challenges they are facing in valuing forest services, including the data gap in valuation, and their organization. Diverse ecosystems also make it difficult to generalize the services and respective valuations. There is no established market for sellers and buyers of services in many countries, and a lack of standards makes it difficult to compare different valuations. In several places, there is underrepresentation of people in vulnerable situations, such as Indigenous Peoples. Values also shift over time, so how to make valuation time dynamic is challenging. Valuation is still at the micro level and needs to be scaled up to lead to macro solutions;

(d) Many representatives shared their lessons learned regarding forest valuation. The efforts should be multidisciplinary. A modular approach should be adopted to advance national accounting. There is not one approach fit for all in an ecosystem, and it is important to apply an inclusive and participatory approach. Private family forests are important – it is important to value them – for the services they provide;

(e) Several representatives pointed out that communicating forest values is important to further promote the integration of forest valuation into national policies and strategies. Consistent methods should be used. Institutionalization and creating a regulatory environment are important. Significant investment and financing are needed, through various innovative mechanisms.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 3 (e)

16. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/4](#). The Director of the secretariat also informed the Forum about the latest developments and progress in consultations on the establishment of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network office in China. She reported that, since the conclusion of the nineteenth session of the Forum, extensive informal consultations had been conducted, leading to the resolution of all pending substantive

²⁰ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL-Ecosystems_3_ITTO_Sheam-Satkuru.pdf.

²¹ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL-Ecosystems_4_Yale_Fenichel.pdf.

²² See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL-Ecosystems_5_TNC_Shyamsundar.pdf.

issues related to the name, nature, scope of activities and organizational and institutional arrangements of the office.

17. Accordingly, the key objectives and function of the office, once established, will be to support and scale up the capacity development activities of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network through knowledge-sharing, exchange of lessons learned and best practices, training, capacity-building, research and multilateral cooperation. The Forum secretariat is the manager of the Network and is the body responsible for carrying out the secretariat functions of the Forum, including the functions and priorities of the Network.

18. The head of the office operates and works under the direct supervision of the Director of the Forum secretariat. The programme of work of the office will be consistent with and complement the programme of work of the Forum secretariat on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network. The secretariat will be the interface with Member States, the Bureau of the Forum and United Nations bodies and entities. All requests by Member States for assistance from the Network will be sent to the Forum secretariat for an appropriate decision and follow-up action, including for execution by the office.

19. The office will regularly submit reports on its activities and the implementation of its programme of work to the Forum secretariat. The secretariat will report to the Forum on the activities of the office. The office will be managed and administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, like all the Department's other offices in different countries, and will operate in accordance with applicable United Nations regulations, rules, policies and procedures. The full administrative and operational costs of the office will be funded from extrabudgetary sources from the host country's voluntary contributions. No office costs will be paid through the United Nations regular budget or the Forum trust fund.

20. The office is expected to be operational for a minimum of six years, from 2025 to 2030, which can be extended subject to mutual agreement. A steering committee consists of representatives from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the host Government and will be established by the Department to provide advice to the head of the office on the operational aspects of the work of the office, including its annual workplan, programme implementation and the use of funds by the office. In addition, to ensure the engagement of Forum members and partners, an international advisory group, consisting of a select number of Forum members and partners, will be established by the Department. The group will advise the steering committee on the substantive thematic focus of the annual programme of work of the office.

21. Furthermore, during the sixth formal round of consultations from 27 March to 1 April 2025, major progress was made by cleaning up three quarters of the pending legal issues in the draft host country agreement. There are a few legal, financial and operational issues in the memorandum of understanding that remain to be discussed. Both sides agreed to hold the next round of consultations soon after the twentieth session of the Forum, with a view to concluding the negotiation on the draft host country agreement and draft memorandum of understanding.

22. During the general discussion, several representatives spoke, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Many representatives emphasized the significance of the provision of international financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing countries to supplement their national efforts in advancing the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its global forest goals;

(b) Many representatives welcomed the support provided by the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to members of the Forum, such as joint work with the Global Environment Facility and the International Union for Conservation of Nature on primary forests, and the support provided to members of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, requested the secretariat to continue to provide such support to members and called for increased financial and human resources to support the work of the Network;

(c) Many representatives supported the establishment of the Network's proposed office in Beijing as an effective means for scaling up capacity-building support for Forum members;

(d) Many representatives emphasized that no resources from the United Nations regular budget and the Forum trust fund should be used for the operation of the Network's proposed office;

(e) Some representatives highlighted the importance of ensuring a clear delineation of tasks between the Forum secretariat and the Network's proposed office in Beijing;

(f) One representative questioned the need for an external Network office when it still requires staff at the Forum secretariat at United Nations Headquarters, creating extra overhead and travel costs, and suggested that limited resources be dedicated to New York operations rather than an external office. The representative also called for reconsideration of the Forum's decision on the establishment of the proposed office at the next session of the Forum;

(g) Many representatives recognized the significance of the provision of and access to forest financing data knowledge and information, and called for improved collaboration among data providers, including within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as the important role of the Network's clearing house in this respect;

(h) Referring to the proposal on developing a global hub as a one-stop shop for forest financing data, some representatives recognized the added value of the provision of access to comprehensive data, information and knowledge on forest financing, but indicated that a prior analysis of the impacts of the work of the Network's clearing house, the possible cost implications of developing the global hub and ensuring the engagement of relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in this exercise are important factors to be considered in the process.

23. In response to some comments, the Director of the Forum secretariat indicated that the full administrative and operational costs of the office will be funded from extrabudgetary sources from the host country's voluntary contributions. No office costs will be paid through the United Nations regular budget or Forum trust fund. Staff of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network are needed at the Forum secretariat in New York to review country requests for assistance from the Network, the preparation of official reports on the Network to the Forum and other related normative work, as well as daily interaction and coordination with the office. With regard to the global hub, she emphasized that the aim is to strengthen partnership among the main global data providers, building on the work of the Network's clearing house, with the objective of serving countries and stakeholders, using existing mechanisms and resources. Developing the global hub is a long-term exercise that must be done through a stepwise approach and at this stage no resources are required. It is just to begin a systematic and strategic partnership among the main data providers.

24. Under agenda item 3 (e), a panel discussion was organized on the significance of a global hub on data, information and knowledge on forest financing opportunities and best practices and the role of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

clearing house. The panel consisted of representatives of Germany, Brazil, FAO and the Global Environment Facility secretariat and was moderated by the representative of Canada. In their presentations, all panel speakers recognized the importance of the provision of and access to data, knowledge and information on forest financing and supported the proposal for developing a global hub, building on the work of the clearing house. Developing a global hub requires closer collaboration among members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. It paves the way for unlocking finance for forests. It is important to collect data related to different types of financing for forests, such as data on blended financing and biodiversity financing, and to address the challenges related to data gaps, the lack of a unified and agreed methodology and indicators to generate new data, and issues related to the harmonization and organization of available data.

25. During the interactive discussion, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Some representatives emphasized the importance of strengthening the capacity of Forum members to be able to develop projects for submission to multilateral funding institutions and requested the Forum secretariat to conduct such training workshops, including through virtual means;

(b) Some countries emphasized the need to ensure that forest financing is accessible and equitably allocated to Indigenous Peoples and local communities as managers of forests;

(c) Some representatives highlighted the importance of forest cooperatives in mobilizing resources and investment in forests and requested more information to be provided on the share of cooperatives in funding and financing forest-related activities.

26. In reacting to the feedback from representatives, panellists supported the organization of virtual training workshops and courses on project development for submission to multilateral institutions. The importance of sharing best practices among countries of the South was also emphasized. With regard to data about the share of forest cooperatives in financing forests, it was indicated that there were no specific data, and more work needed to be done on this matter in the future.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 3 (f)

27. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/5](#). The facilitator of the capacity-building workshop on reporting to the Forum presented the outcome of the workshop.²³ The representative of FAO presented progress on the global core set of forest-related indicators.

28. During the general discussion, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Many speakers emphasized the importance of voluntary national reviews and the next round of reporting to the Forum as key means to monitor and assess the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the United Nations forest instrument. They welcomed the launch of an online reporting platform for the Forum's current reporting cycle and called on Forum members to ensure the timely submission of their voluntary national reviews;

(b) Many representatives expressed support for the work of members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on this topic, including for FAO in the context of the *Global Forest Resources Assessment*, and highlighted the importance of

²³ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UNFF20_Report-of-the-training-workshop.pdf.

streamlining and reducing the reporting burden on countries under different processes such as the *Assessment* and the Forum, and called for further collaboration among Collaborative Partnership members to further reduce the reporting burden;

(c) Many representatives welcomed the organization of the recent capacity-building workshop on reporting and invited the Forum secretariat and FAO to regularly organize such workshops to strengthen the reporting capacity of Forum members;

(d) Many representatives welcomed the ongoing work related to the global core set of forest-related indicators and invited members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, including FAO, to continue its work on this matter. Several representatives referred to the challenges in collecting data on the socioeconomic value of forests;

(e) Many representatives welcomed the progress on the indicators, as well as the establishment of the task force on the definition of forest degradation by FAO, and the importance of the ongoing work under the Montreal Process Sydney Initiative on forest degradation;

(f) Many representatives welcomed the ongoing activities of the Forum's advisory group on reporting and emphasized the need for a concise and focused *Global Forests Goals Report 2026*.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 4

29. The consultant made a presentation on the information paper on the workload, gaps and needs of the Forum secretariat²⁴ in response to paragraphs 2 (a) and 3 of Council resolution 2024/15. She reviewed the secretariat's responsibilities and staffing from 2000 to 2015 and its expanding activities in seven core work areas during the period between the reviews of the international arrangement on forests in 2015 and 2024, as well as its expanding activities as a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and as its secretariat, as a division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and as part of United Nations Headquarters in New York. She concluded that, while the secretariat's regular budget staff complement had remained fixed at 12 posts since 2016, the secretariat's responsibilities, activities and deliverables had significantly expanded over time in several core areas of the Forum's mandate. These expanding activities have created a challenging situation, which the secretariat has met primarily by relying heavily on extrabudgetary resources from the Forum trust fund to supplement its regular budget resources. However, this is not a sustainable situation due to its unpredictable nature and has created uncertainty for the supported staff and the deliverables on which they work. For the secretariat to perform its responsibilities and mandates in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner, she suggested five new regular posts: four focused on communication and outreach (P-3/P-4), finance and administration (P-3), capacity-building (P-4/P-5) and website management, including needed upgrades (General Service), and the post of a full-time secretary of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (P-4). She suggested that the programme and budget implications of these suggestions be considered at the twenty-first session of the Forum in 2026.

30. During the general discussion, several representatives made statements, highlighting the following main points:

(a) Many representatives recognized the detailed useful information provided in the information paper about the work of the Forum secretariat, which helps them

²⁴ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Information-Paper_Workload-Gaps-and-Needs-of-the-UNFFS.pdf.

to have a better understanding of the scope and nature of the activities of the secretariat;

(b) Many representatives indicated that they needed more time to review the paper and its content, and suggested continuing discussion of the paper at the next session of the Forum;

(c) Several representatives opposed the suggestion made in the paper regarding the preparation of a programme budget implication for consideration at the twenty-first session of the Forum on the addition of five new regular budget-funded posts;

(d) Many representatives recognized the current global financial situation, the ongoing United Nations liquidity crisis and the limited resources of the secretariat, and indicated that the secretariat should prioritize and sequence implementation of the Forum's decisions, in close consultation with Member States;

(e) Several representatives recognized the decline in the allocation of resources to the Forum trust fund and the secondment of Collaborative Partnership on Forests staff to the Forum secretariat, and encouraged the secretariat to use its resources more efficiently and focus on the priority tasks related to its core mandates, reduce its number of meetings and associated travel and make further efforts to mobilize funding from donors and various stakeholders to support its work;

(f) Several representatives thanked the Forum secretariat for its activities in support of countries in the areas of monitoring, assessment and reporting, forest financing, data access and communication and outreach, and called for strengthened resources for the secretariat to continue its capacity-building support to Forum members;

(g) One representative indicated that rebalancing regular budget-funded posts to support the Forum would be a more equitable way to address this issue. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has over 400 posts and the representative suggested that, if Forum members believe that additional staff are needed for the Forum secretariat, the Council should consider the secretariat's staffing relative to the Department's other subprogrammes and that members make a recommendation to that effect at the twenty-first session of the Forum;

(h) Some representatives said that they understood the challenges that the Forum secretariat was facing. However, consideration of the secretariat's resource needs and gaps should be made in the broader context of United Nations reform. In addition, this issue is also related to the result of the ongoing consultation on the establishment of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network office in Beijing;

(i) One representative suggested that the Forum explore the possibility of transitioning towards a binding agreement or formal convention, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity or the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and discuss it further in the next policy session in 2026.

31. In response to the comments, the Director of the Forum secretariat indicated that the secretariat's mandates had grown, but its capacity gap had not been addressed. The outcomes of the nineteenth session of the Forum contain over 120 actions, of which 35 are direct requests to the secretariat. As a division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and part of United Nations Headquarters, the volume of the secretariat's work has also expanded in recent years due to the annualization of the United Nations programme and budget process; increased input to sessions of the Council, the high-level political forum and the General Assembly; contributions to new General Assembly forest-related initiatives; and compliance with new United Nations system-wide management initiatives. The ongoing United Nations liquidity crisis is directly and significantly affecting delivery of the mandate, as there is

currently a complete hiring freeze, and the secretariat is unable to fill an existing P-4 vacant post, has lost a P-5 position in support of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and is highly unlikely to be able to replace a G-6 support staff role when the incumbent retires in a few months. The Director stressed that reliance on extrabudgetary resources to support the Forum's long-term core issues is unsustainable, although the secretariat continues its resource mobilization efforts.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 5

32. The Forum secretariat introduced the note by the Secretariat contained in document [E/CN.18/2025/6](#). During the interactive discussion, several representatives made statements. The following main points emerged from the discussion:

(a) Many representatives emphasized the importance of the provision of voluntary contributions to the Forum trust fund to enable the Forum secretariat to fulfil its responsibilities in the areas of monitoring, assessment and reporting, the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, communication and outreach activities;

(b) Some representatives called for other countries beyond the traditional donor countries to contribute to the Forum trust fund and encouraged the secretariat to also reach out to philanthropic organizations to mobilize support;

(c) Several representatives called for increased voluntary contributions to the Forum trust fund to support the continuation of the Forum secretariat's capacity development for members and partners, and expressed concerns over the lack of resources for the participation of representatives of developing countries and Forum partners in Forum meetings and events. Referring to the universal membership of the Forum and its inclusive nature, the representatives expressed concerns that the lack of resources to support the participation of Forum members and partners would lead to imbalanced and non-inclusive policy decision-making at the Forum and have a negative impact on the inclusive and participatory nature of the Forum.

33. The Director of the Forum secretariat thanked all those countries that had contributed to the Forum trust fund and indicated that the absence of resources in the fund would negatively affect the implementation of the outcome of the nineteenth session of the Forum. It is critical to implement the Forum's decisions in the lead-up to the final review of the international arrangement on forests in 2030.

Summary of the discussion of agenda item 6

34. The discussion on emerging issues was facilitated by a panel on dryland forests comprising representatives of Mongolia,²⁵ Saudi Arabia,²⁶ Botswana²⁷ and the Global Environment Facility²⁸ and moderated by the representative of the Southern African Development Community secretariat. The representative of the Economic Commission for Europe made a keynote speech.²⁹

35. During the interactive discussion, several representatives made statements. The following main points emerged from the discussion:

²⁵ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL_Drylands_2_Mongolia.pdf.

²⁶ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL_Drylands_3_Saudi-Arabia.pdf.

²⁷ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL_Drylands_4_Botswana.pdf.

²⁸ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL_Drylands_5_GEF.pdf.

²⁹ See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_PANEL_Drylands_Keynote_UNECE.pdf.

(a) Many representatives highlighted the significance of dryland forests due to the wide range of services and their role in addressing climate change, combating desertification, contributing to food security and eradicating poverty. These vulnerable ecosystems face important challenges and are affected by unsustainable land use policies and activities, droughts and high temperature, among other things. These forests are essential for combating desertification, protecting biodiversity, water regulation, combating dust and sand storms, improving livelihoods and protecting the soil. It is crucial to conserve these forests and enhance their resilience to droughts and wildfires;

(b) Many representatives called for enhanced international cooperation and increased funding to promote the sustainable management of dryland forests. Members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Forum should support countries' efforts in the context of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;

(c) Several representatives reported on their national activities for sustainably managing and conserving dryland forests. Despite these efforts, countries face several challenges, especially in the areas of finance, technology and capacity-building. They emphasized the Forum's mandate and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, as well as technical committees such as the FAO working group on dryland forests and agro-silvopastoral systems, and the need to address issues related to all types of forests in a holistic and integrated manner.

B. Chair's proposals for transmission to the twenty-first session of the Forum

Chair's proposals on agenda items 3, 3 (a) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii), 3 (b) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii), 3 (c), 3 (d), 3 (e), 3 (f), 4, 5 and 6

36. Based on the technical discussions at the twentieth session of the Forum, the following Chair's proposals will be submitted for further consideration at the twenty-first session of the Forum in 2026:

(a) Invite members of the Forum to accelerate efforts towards achieving global forest goals 1, 3 and 5, including through the announcement of voluntary national contributions in support of these goals, and encourage the integration of sustainable forest management-based actions into national sustainable development strategies and actions under other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

(b) Encourage Forum members to promote technical and technological collaboration, including the use of innovative technologies for sustainable forest management, and enhance a participatory approach in sustainable forest management activities;

(c) Request the Forum secretariat to further consider organizing, as appropriate, a forest pavilion at the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on a case-by-case basis, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, in consultation with members of the Forum, and in cooperation with the presidencies of the Conferences of the Parties, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant partners, with a view to raising awareness of the role and significance of forests as an ecosystem-based solution;

(d) Welcome the communication and outreach activities carried out by Forum members and partners, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members, as well as the Forum secretariat, including its monthly newsletter, to raise awareness of the significance of forests, encourage effective engagement in

celebrating International Day of Forests and promoting outreach activities, and invite the Forum to address the related human and financial needs of the secretariat to carry out its communication and outreach mandates in a sustainable manner;

(e) Welcome progress made by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members in implementing relevant provisions of Council resolution [2024/15](#), take note of the Partnership's workplan for 2025–2028 and its joint initiatives, and invite the Partnership and its members to continue its efforts to respond to the provisions of the resolution, take concrete steps to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals by 2030 and report its progress to the Forum at its twenty-first session;

(f) Welcome the support provided by the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to countries in strengthening their capacity to mobilize resources from all sources for sustainable forest management, and invite members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to actively support and engage in the activities of the Network;

(g) Invite members of the Forum and others in a position to do so to provide voluntary financial contributions to the Forum trust fund to enable the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to respond and provide the requested support in an effective and timely manner;

(h) Request the Forum secretariat, building on the experience gained from the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network clearing house, within its existing resources and in collaboration with relevant United Nations and non-United Nations data providers, to undertake further efforts to enhance access to comprehensive and reliable data on forest financing flows, opportunities, knowledge and best practices, including the possible option of a global hub for consideration at the twenty-first session of the Forum;

(i) Request the Forum secretariat to provide a comprehensive written update at the twenty-first session of the Forum, in accordance with paragraph 10 (d) of Council resolution [2024/15](#);

(j) Invite the Forum secretariat and FAO to continue to assist in enhancing reporting of the capacity of Forum members, including through the organization of virtual workshops and online courses, to further reduce the reporting burden on countries;

(k) Invite members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue their work with the aim of further enhancing the global core set of forest-related indicators;

(l) Invite the Forum to continue its consideration of the information paper on the workload, gaps and needs of the Forum secretariat at its twenty-first session;

(m) Request the Forum secretariat, given the current liquidity situation and constraints, to use its resources more efficiently and focus on the priority tasks related to its core mandates and make further efforts to mobilize funding from donors and various stakeholders to support its work;

(n) Invite Forum members in a position to do so to contribute to the Forum trust fund to enable the Forum secretariat to continue to provide its technical and capacity-building support to Forum members and partners, carry out its communication and outreach activities and support the balanced, wider and inclusive participation of representatives from developing countries and Forum partners in Forum sessions and related intersessional activities;

(o) Invite Forum members, the Forum secretariat and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to scale up support to address the needs of

landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries with low forest cover, dryland forest countries and other countries with special needs to rehabilitate, restore and sustainably manage their forests, enhance rural livelihoods and combat desertification;

(p) Invite members of the Forum and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support existing initiatives aimed at addressing the increasing threats of wildfires and forest fires, forest pests and diseases, and enhance collaboration to ensure the sustainable management of existing forest ecosystems.

C. Input from the twentieth session of the Forum to the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development³⁰

37. The contributions of forests and the ecosystem services they provide are often undervalued or unrecorded in both national and international policy and economic frameworks. To address this gap, the Forum, its members and its stakeholders have continuously taken a wide range of sustainable, inclusive and science- and evidence-based actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind, bearing in mind the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and their targets. These include actions at the policy, technical and operational levels to address the root causes, such as drivers of deforestation and degradation of forests, and promote sustainable forest management through a multistakeholder and cross-sectoral approach.

38. In line with global forest goal 1, countries have taken legislative and policy steps to combat forest loss and degradation, using existing laws and strategies as frameworks. Many have updated these tools through stakeholder consultations. Some have enacted laws to ensure deforestation-free markets. Despite coordination challenges, efforts have been made to integrate forest concerns across sectors such as energy and agriculture. In line with global forest goal 3, many countries have taken concrete steps to protect and sustainably manage forests. They introduced laws and policies supporting protected areas, sustainable management and markets for sustainably sourced forest products. As a result, about 18 per cent of global forests are now protected, and more forests are under long-term management plans. However, progress varies across regions. In line with global forest goal 5, many countries have established forest-related laws and policies, but enforcement varies, affecting their effectiveness. To combat illegal logging and trade, countries have introduced monitoring systems and traceability measures and undertaken international cooperation efforts.

39. The following messages are suggested for inclusion in the ministerial declaration of the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development:

(a) Recognize the broad economic, social and environmental benefits of forests, including watershed protection, food and medicine, and human well-being, and integrate forests into national and global responses to sustainable development challenges;

(b) Address rising threats from forest fires and wildfires, pests and diseases exacerbated by climate change through active forest management and silvicultural practices, especially in dry and arid regions;

³⁰ This input accompanies the input by the Bureau of the Forum at its twentieth session for the 2025 high-level political forum, which is available at <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2025/Inputs%202025%20UNFF.pdf>.

(c) Urgently advance implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and halt deforestation and land degradation by 2030;

(d) Encourage participatory decision-making that includes Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women, ensuring that forest management is equitable, inclusive and reflective of diverse perspectives;

(e) Mobilize and increase resources from all sources to mainstream forest management into development strategies, enhance cross-sector collaboration and contribute to sustainable development.

D. Input from the twentieth session of the Forum to the 2026 high-level political forum on sustainable development³¹

40. The Forum, along with its members and stakeholders, has consistently undertaken a wide range of actions to accelerate implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 in support of advancement towards Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17. These actions leverage the role of forests in delivering broad benefits across all three dimensions of sustainable development and reinforcing interlinkages among the Goals and their targets. Some countries and regions reported consistent efforts to promote sustainable and multifunctional forest management to enhance the effective use of forests and address the growing and competing demands for forest products and services. Countries, the private sector and academia have promoted the use of wood in construction and energy, supporting Goals 7, 9 and 11. They have used policies, incentives and investments to boost innovation in forest-based industries. Collaboration is driving technological advances in sustainable wood materials and energy products, aiding industry development. Innovative financing methods are increasingly used to support forest conservation and ecosystem services.

41. The following messages are suggested for inclusion in the ministerial declaration of the 2026 high-level political forum on sustainable development:

(a) Recognize the multiple values and contributions of forests and sustainable forest management to sustainable development in its three dimensions in providing essential ecosystem services, livelihoods and raw materials, as well as enhancing environmental resilience, which serves as a foundation and safeguard for advancing Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17;

(b) Emphasize the need for accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 as an effective means for the achievement of the Goals and to enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels in support of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme;

(c) Mobilize resources from all sources for sustainable forest management and the achievement of the global forest goals as an essential measure to maximize the contribution of forests to the Goals.

³¹ The format of the input to the 2026 high-level political forum may need to be reorganized and adjusted to align with the relevant template to be provided by the President of the Council.

