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**Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme
coordination, including the provision of further guidance
to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests**

Enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The purpose of the present report is threefold: first, to provide a brief non-exhaustive overview on some of the activities undertaken since the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests related to enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; secondly, to highlight further possibilities for cooperation especially in light of the multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007-2015, the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and its global objectives; and finally, to facilitate the deliberations of Member States in the eighth session of the Forum by proposing some points for consideration.

* E/CN.18/2009/1.



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I. Introduction

1. As stated in Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, one of the main functions of the international arrangement on forests and the United Nations Forum on Forests is to enhance cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, as well as to contribute to synergies among them, including coordination among donors (see paras. 2 (c) and 3 (a) of the resolution).

2. The Economic and Social Council further elaborated the issue of enhancing cooperation and policy and programme coordination in paragraphs 7 to 9 of its resolution 2006/49. The guidance for countries included: facilitation of implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests by clustering and simplifying the language and promoting greater stakeholder understanding of the intent of the proposals; strengthening of forest education and research and development; strengthening of cooperation and partnerships at the regional level; and establishing or strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships and programmes. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) was invited to promote the exchange of experiences and good practices related to sustainable forest management and consider the feasibility of serving as a clearing house to facilitate access by developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, to better technology for sustainable forest management. The relevant multilateral environmental agreements, instruments, processes and United Nations bodies were invited to improve collaboration and cooperation with the international arrangement on forests.

3. At its seventh session, the Forum agreed to the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (hereinafter “the forest instrument”)¹ and the General Assembly adopted the instrument on 17 December 2007 (resolution 62/98, annex). While recommending the adoption of the forest instrument to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, in paragraph 5 of its resolution 2007/40, invited the Forum to establish and maintain cooperation with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, instruments, processes and United Nations bodies, relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and major groups in order to facilitate enhanced cooperation to achieve the purpose of the instrument.

4. One of the purposes of the forest instrument is to provide a framework for international cooperation and it includes a section on measures for Member States on achieving this purpose. These measures include enhancing bilateral, regional and international cooperation with a view to promoting international trade in forest products from sustainably managed forests and enhancing cooperation to address illicit international trafficking in forest products through the promotion of forest law enforcement and good governance at all levels (*ibid.*, paras. 1 (c) and 7 (g)-(i)). Promotion of international technical and scientific cooperation, including South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, and strengthening of cooperation and partnerships at the regional and subregional levels were called for in order to promote sustainable forest management. Member States were also requested, as members of the governing bodies of the organizations that form CPF, to ensure that the forest-related priorities and programmes of the CPF members are integrated and mutually supportive, taking into account relevant policy recommendations of the

¹ See E/2007/42, chap. I, sect. A.

Forum. Members States should also support CPF to develop and implement joint activities (*ibid.*, paras. 7 (n) and 7 (q)-(s)).

5. In relation to national policies and measures Member States should also identify and implement measures to enhance cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination among sectors affecting and affected by forest policies and management, with a view to integrating the forest sector into national decision-making processes and promoting sustainable forest management, including by addressing the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and by promoting forest conservation (*ibid.*, para. 6 (k)).

6. At its seventh session, the Forum also adopted the multi-year programme of work of the Forum for the period 2007-2015.² In the programme, one of the common agenda items for the Forum sessions during those years is enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, including activities and inputs of CPF.

7. The purpose of the present report is threefold: first, to provide a brief non-exhaustive overview on some of the activities undertaken since the seventh session of the Forum relevant to enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments; secondly, to highlight further possibilities for cooperation especially in light of the forest instrument, its global objectives and the multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests; and finally, to propose some points for consideration by the Forum.

II. Cooperation and coordination with the main United Nations intergovernmental bodies, and within the United Nations Secretariat

A. Functional commissions, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly

8. The Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council, which was mandated by Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit, assesses the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and other goals and targets agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits. The secretariat of the Forum contributed substantively to the preparation of the 2008 report of the Secretary-General entitled “Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development”. In addition, the Chairman of the Bureau of the eighth session of the Forum participated at the meeting between the chairpersons of the functional commissions and the Economic and Social Council Bureau, which took place in New York in January 2008. The meeting discussed ways and modalities for strengthening policy coherence between the Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as practical ways to enhance the commissions’ contribution to the work of the Council. In the next meeting, held in January 2009, each of the commissions is to

² *Ibid.*, chap. I, sect. C, resolution 7/1.

highlight any measures it has taken to increase the synergy of its work with that of the Council.

9. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council adopted, at its sixteenth session, resolution 16/1 entitled “International cooperation in preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other biological resources”,³ which calls for a closer cooperation with the Forum. The role of the Forum is essential in discussing and combating forest-related illicit activities, hence strengthened collaboration between the Forum and the Commission would significantly assist in meeting the challenges brought by illicit forest activities, as well as illegal harvesting of forest products and associated trade and support further work on forest law enforcement and governance. A meeting of the open-ended Expert Group on International cooperation in Preventing and Combating Illicit International Trafficking in Forest Products, including Timber, Wildlife and Other Biological Resources took place in Jakarta in March 2008. The report of the Expert Group (E/CN.15/2008/20) was later presented to the Commission at its seventeenth session, in April 2008. The secretariat of the Forum was invited by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to attend the Expert Group meeting.

10. The United Nations Millennium Declaration continues to provide a framework for the work of the United Nations and its Member States in the development field. The importance of forests is highlighted in the Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. In 2008, the United Nations published *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*,⁴ a comprehensive global assessment of progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and challenges ahead. The publication is based on work carried out by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, in which the secretariat of the Forum has also participated. The report provides evidence for the eight Millennium Development Goals, showing what has been accomplished and also outlines what still needs to be done by 2015. It includes detailed information on how deforestation has slowed down and more forests are designated to biodiversity conservation.⁴ A High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals was convened in New York on 25 September 2008, in the context of the general debate of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. The main objectives were also to review progress and identify existing gaps to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Initiatives and commitments related to forests included considerable financing of the initial phase of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (United Nations REDD Programme) by Norway (with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)). Norway also committed to contribute significantly to the Amazon Fund for reducing deforestation in the Amazon, and Finland is increasing its financing in sustainable forestry.⁵

³ See E/2007/30/Rev.1, chap. I, sect. D.

⁴ See United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report* (New York, 2008).

⁵ See <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/>, accessed 8 January 2009.

B. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

General

11. To increase coordination within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and to address more efficiently key issues relevant to economic and social affairs, several task forces have been created within the Department, in order to identify the main challenges and propose solutions and strategies. The secretariat of the Forum had an active role in the departmental discussions in these task forces, which include especially the Task Force on Climate Change, the Task Force on Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Development, in particular its discussions concerning natural resources management and forests in conflict and peacebuilding, and the Task Force on Indigenous Issues.

12. The Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) is an inter-agency process which aims at sharpening the contribution that each United Nations entity in the economic and social field makes to the overall objectives of the Organization by reducing duplication of effort and facilitating greater complementarity and coherence regarding economic and social affairs. Through its thematic clusters, ECESA identifies and exploits ways of pooling resources and services in order to facilitate joint strategic planning and decision-making, maximize programme impact and minimize administrative costs. The secretariat of the Forum continued to actively participate in the work of ECESA and, together with the Division on Sustainable Development, the secretariat serves as focal point, within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to the ECESA cluster on sustainable development, human settlements and energy.

13. The secretariat of the Forum and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa hosted an Economic and Social Council Ministerial Round-table Breakfast entitled “Promoting pro-poor generation of wealth, food security and peace through sustainable forest management: global realities and regional innovations” in Geneva in July 2007. The event was organized to highlight the critical role of forests in rural development and pro-poor growth, and to foster dialogue on priority issues related to sustainable forest management.

14. In July 2007, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs issued *The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All* on the goals, commitments and strategies agreed at the United Nations conferences and summits since 1990.⁶ The publication has a section in chapter 5 dealing with forest issues such as sustainable forest management, the role and activities of the Forum, as well as the forest instrument.

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

15. The secretariats of the two Forums have been working in close collaboration on a number of issues and activities. The secretariat of the Forum on forests participates in the Inter-Agency Support Group on indigenous peoples as well as the Task Force already mentioned in paragraph 11 above. The secretariat of the Forum sent a message to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, on 9 August 2008, highlighting the close links between forests and the indigenous communities

⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.1.17.

that live in and near forests. The secretariat of the Forum participated in the international expert group meeting on the role of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the implementation of article 42 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, held in New York from 14 to 16 January 2009, and will also be contributing to the Department's input to the in-depth dialogue of United Nations system agencies and funds at the upcoming eighth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, taking place from 18 to 29 May 2009.

16. The adoption of both the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the forest instrument presents new opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between the secretariats of the two Forums. The Declaration recognizes the role of indigenous peoples in the sustainable and equitable development of their land and other resources. The forest instrument includes substantial recognition for the rights and needs of local and indigenous communities and addresses the protection and use of traditional forest-related knowledge and practices in sustainable forest management, and the need for enhanced access to forest resources and relevant markets to support livelihoods of forest-dependent indigenous communities, living in and outside forest areas. Indigenous peoples' groups were active in major group consultations held throughout 2007 and 2008, and are expected to contribute actively to the upcoming eighth session of the Forum, including through the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Commission on Sustainable Development

17. The secretariats of the Forum and the Commission on Sustainable Development have been working closely on issues of common interest. The secretariat of the Forum collaborated with the Commission's secretariat in supporting the preparation of the International Conference on Combating Desertification. The Conference took place in Beijing, from 22 to 24 January 2008 and was organized by the State Forestry Administration of China and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Beijing Statement on Combating Desertification and Promoting Sustainable Development (see E/CN.17/2008/15, annex I) recognizes the importance of forests in both preventing desertification and land degradation as well as in rehabilitating degraded lands; it also states that the implementation of the forest instrument provides a framework for advancing sustainable forest management and its contribution to combating desertification, mitigating climate change and preserving forest biological diversity.

18. In the context of the discussion on the thematic cluster of issues of the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa, some of the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation were reviewed extensively. During this session, it was stressed that poverty eradication as an overarching objective of sustainable development will not be achieved unless sustainable agriculture and rural development are implemented and the efforts to combat drought and desertification are scaled up through changing production and consumption patterns and reducing deforestation and forest degradation. In addition, it was highlighted

that activities such as environmentally sound small-scale mining and forest conservation and management offer the potential for diversifying rural economy.⁷

III. Cooperation and coordination with international organizations, instruments, institutions and programmes, within and outside the United Nations system, relevant to the forest sector

A. Collaborative Partnership on Forests

19. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests provides vital support to the work of the Forum by enhancing cooperation and coordination among its member organizations including through joint initiatives and collaborative activities. In 2007-2008, the Partnership not only continued working on its joint initiatives but launched new ones; some of the activities are highlighted below.

20. In December 2007, the secretariat of the Forum invited members of CPF with extensive experience in forest finance to contribute their technical expertise to the preparations for the discussion on forest finance at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group, held in Vienna in November 2008, and at the eighth session of the Forum. The Advisory Group on Finance, consisting of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the World Bank and the secretariats of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Forum commissioned an analytical study which mapped financing needs, available sources and mechanisms for financing sustainable forest management. The study entitled "Financing flows and needs to implement the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests" was presented to the Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting, and will be presented to the Forum at its eighth session.⁸ Based on this input, the Ad Hoc Expert Group developed useful recommendations that are also presented for the consideration of the Forum in the Chair summary report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group (see E/CN.18/2009/11).

21. The Joint Initiative CPF Global Forest Expert Panels (formally known as the Joint Initiative on Science and Technology), which was launched at the seventh session of the Forum, focused its first project on the issue of climate change. The Initiative established an Expert Panel on Adaptation of Forests to Climate Change to carry out a comprehensive assessment of available scientific information on adaptation strategies, policies and measures on forests and the forest sector to climate change. The assessment report will be presented to the Forum at its eighth session.

22. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests held a strategic dialogue in Bonn, Germany, on 14 and 15 February 2008, which discussed new and emerging priorities after the adoption of the forest instrument. The meeting agreed that CPF would work to advance forest finance and recognition of forests as a multivalue, multifunctional

⁷ See E/2008/29, chap. I, sect. D, Chairman's summary, part one.

⁸ http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/aheg/finance/UNFF_AGF_Background_doc_E.pdf, accessed 12 January 2009.

resource; further cooperation and coordination on forests and climate change; revitalize the work of the CPF Joint Initiative on streamlining reporting; strengthen CPF support to forest law enforcement and governance and promote effective use of science and technology in international forest-related processes.

23. In 2008, all 14 CPF members actively engaged in developing a proposal for a coordinated forest-sector response to climate change. The document entitled “Strategic framework for forests and climate change”, highlights the importance of sustainable forest management in climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as the need to better integrate the sector into broader development strategies. It was launched at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Poznań, Poland, 5 December 2008), was introduced to participants at the nineteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (Rome, 16-20 March 2009) and will also be presented to the Forum at its eighth session.⁹

24. The information document on the CPF Framework 2008 and 2009 (see E/CN.18/2009/12) provides a more comprehensive overview of the Partnership’s activities, including joint initiatives and other collaborative activities undertaken to promote sustainable forest management.

25. As reflected in paragraph 12 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of other relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments are encouraged to support the secretariat of the Forum by seconding staff. This has proved as very useful means of enhancing cooperation and coordination. Further possibilities in this regard could therefore be explored.

B. Cooperation with international organizations, institutions and programmes

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

26. There is a close and continued cooperation and coordination between the secretariat of the Forum and FAO, especially with its Forestry Department. Of particular relevance for the preparations for the eighth session of the Forum is that in 2008 all of the Regional Forestry Commissions held meetings and several of them specifically addressed issues relevant to the Forum. The secretariat attended all of these meetings and made presentations. In addition, it also participated in the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome in June 2008 (for more details on the work in this context, see paras. 37-45 below).

International Tropical Timber Organization

27. The secretariat of the Forum continues to be actively engaged in the work of ITTO and, among others, participated in the forty-third and forty-fourth sessions of the Council, held in Yokohama, Japan, in November 2007 and November 2008, respectively, and made presentations on developments relevant to the work of the Council. Arrangements are under way for the secondment of a senior ITTO staff

⁹ Available from <http://www.fao.org/forestry/media/16639/1/0/>, accessed 12 January 2009.

member to the Forum secretariat to facilitate concrete cooperation between the Forum and ITTO.

United Nations Environment Programme

28. In 2008, the secretariat of the Forum partnered with UNEP and FAO to develop the first edition of Vital Forest Graphics. Vital Forest Graphics presents a visual overview of the current state of the world's forests, through graphics, maps and other illustrations. The publication is based on case studies on topical forest issues by a diverse group of authors and is slated for print in 2009.

C. Cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

29. The thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held in Bali from 3 to 15 December 2007 and the fourteenth session was held in Poznań, Poland, from 1 to 12 December 2008. The secretariat of the Forum attended both meetings. At the fourteenth session, progress was made on a number of important ongoing issues, including reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.¹⁰ This may present new opportunities to consider possible means and/or areas of closer cooperation between the Forum and the Framework Convention.

30. The first and second "Forest Day" events were organized by CPF members, the Centre for International Forestry Research in particular, in parallel with the two sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention. The events provided an international, multi-stakeholder forum on forest and climate change policies at the global, national and local levels. Experts also presented outcomes of scientific studies, shared experiences of ongoing forest projects, technical and technology developments. More than 800 people participated in the first Forest Day, including scientists, members of national delegations, and representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The second "Forest Day" gathered again approximately 900 people to discuss the opportunities and challenges of bringing forests into global and national strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

31. The report of the Secretary-General on forests and climate change (E/CN.18/2009/4) provides further details on issues relating to activities of the Framework Convention.

Convention on Biological Diversity

32. The Forum secretariat participated at the thirteenth Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in Rome in February 2008. Together with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and FAO, the Forum secretariat co-hosted a side event on Regional Forest Cooperation: Reaching the 2010 Biodiversity Target and the Global Objectives on Forests by 2015. The event highlighted regional cooperation towards the conservation and

¹⁰ FCCC/SBSTA/2008/L.23, available from http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php, accessed 29 January 2009; see also decision 2/CP.13 and decision 1/CP.13.

sustainable use of forest biodiversity. Other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and several representatives of regional processes and initiatives participated in the panel discussion.

33. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Bonn, Germany, in May 2008. Decision IX/5 on forest biodiversity includes several references to cooperation in general and the Forum and its secretariat in particular. In this context, the Conference of the Parties urged the parties to increase cross-sectoral cooperation to carry out coordinated implementation of the work programme on forest biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the decisions set by the Forum, including the forest instrument (see UNEP/CBO/COP/9/29, decision IX/5, para. 1 (i)). Furthermore, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity was requested to facilitate, in close cooperation with the secretariat of the Forum and other CPF members, regional, subregional and/or thematic workshops to support parties in implementing the programme of work on forest biodiversity. The need for enhancing dissemination, exchange of information and collaboration between the secretariats of the Convention, the Forum and other members of CPF was also noted (*ibid.*, paras. 3 (a) and (c)). In addition, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity was requested to explore, together with the Director of the secretariat of the Forum, possibilities for developing a work plan with targeted joint activities between secretariats and submit the results for the consideration of the Subsidiary Body (*ibid.*, para. 3 (d)). The secretariat of the Forum participated in a number of events and contributed to the discussions on forest biodiversity and on strengthening cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives, highlighting the forest instrument and the multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests.

34. Decision IX/5 of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties provides new possibilities for enhanced cooperation and coordination that would help boost efforts in achieving the Global Objectives on Forests in 2015 and the 2010 biodiversity target. The International Year of Biodiversity (2010) and the International Year of Forests (2011) may also be a beneficial time to explore joint activities between secretariats, in collaboration with other members of CPF. To this end, improving public awareness of the social, environmental and economic services and benefits that forests and related biodiversity provides would be relevant.

35. Communication and collaboration among the secretariats have been active and opportunities to jointly facilitate and gear efforts towards sustainable forest management have also been explored. In July 2008, the first staff exchange between the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Forum put forward meaningful considerations which could further enhance future collaboration. The report of the Secretary-General on forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas (E/CN.18/2009/6), provides further details on opportunities to address biodiversity related matters.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

36. The secretariat of the Forum participated at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Madrid from 3 to 14 September 2007, and contributed to the discussion on the agenda item on promotion and strengthening of relationships with

other conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies, highlighting the role of the forest instrument and the multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests in this context. The Conference of the Parties also adopted a decision whereby it invited the parties to strengthen sustainable forest management and integrated water management in critical watershed areas in order to maintain ecosystem services in affected mountain areas, prevent soil erosion and flooding, to increase the size of atmospheric carbon sinks, and to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity (see ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, decision 4/COP.8, para. 4).

IV. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations

37. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations has been active for several years. Various meetings and workshops have taken place in all regions since the seventh session of the Forum, in 2007. The meetings largely focused on regional specificities of sustainable forest management, but in many cases they also addressed major global issues linked to the agenda of the eighth session of the Forum. The secretariat of the Forum actively participated in several of these meetings and informed regional and subregional forest-related entities on recent developments of the Forum, in particular those regarding the forest instrument and the multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests. Some of these meetings are highlighted below.

38. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and the Near East Forestry Commission held their first ever joint session in February 2008, in Khartoum. Among other issues, the Commissions requested that FAO and other members of CPF continue and increase their collaboration and cooperation in their forest and climate change programmes.¹¹

39. A seminar on current international issues relevant to forests and forest products was organized by the secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in preparation of the tenth ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry meeting, held back-to-back with the seminar in Laos on 12 and 13 July 2007. The secretariat commended ASEAN for playing an important role in enhancing regional collaboration including building new partnerships to implement the forest instrument and in providing focused input to the Forum sessions according to the new multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests.

40. The twenty-second session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission and the first Asia-Pacific Forestry Week were held in Hanoi from 21 to 26 April 2008. The secretariat of the Forum co-facilitated a special meeting on strengthening linkages between the Forum and regional processes. Among others, the Commission also recommended strengthening partnerships with other relevant organizations and continuing to participate in and inform international forestry processes, as well as using opportunities presented by the Forum and CPF to convey the forestry

¹¹ FAO, report of the eighteenth session of the Near East Forestry Commission (FAO, Cairo, 2008), para. xi.

community's perspectives on forests and climate change to the Framework Convention.¹²

41. The twenty-fifth session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission held in Quito from 29 September to 3 October 2008, addressed several topics common on the agenda of the eighth session of the Forum, such as forest and climate change and the means of implementation.

42. The twenty-fourth session of the North American Forest Commission of FAO, took place in San Juan, Puerto Rico, from 9 to 13 June 2008. Among others, the discussions related to forests and energy and the Commission identified some regional matters for the attention of the FAO Committee on Forestry such as, the role of forests and trees in mitigating climate change, as well as the need for forest ecosystems to adapt to climate change.

43. The sixty-fifth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Timber Committee was held in Geneva from 8 to 11 October 2007. The Committee, for the first time, also had a joint meeting with the International Softwood Conference. The session included a UNECE/FAO Policy Forum on bioenergy policies and their impacts on the forest sector. The Forum enjoyed broad participation and a large number of panel presentations, including a side event by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

44. The secretariat of the Forum also attended the thirty-fourth session of the FAO European Forestry Commission and the sixty-sixth session of the UNECE Timber Committee, held in conjunction with the European Forest Week in Rome from 21 to 24 October 2008. The event was jointly organized with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission. Beside the formal meetings of the Commission/Committee, the week included several thematic sessions. The topical focuses of the week were forests and climate change; forests and energy; forests and water; and international/regional cooperation on forests. These sessions drew a comprehensive picture of the interlinkages, stressed the need for cooperation between relevant actors and emphasized that the forest sector should reach out to other sectors to ensure balanced development of integrated multisectoral strategies.

45. For further information on the activities of regional and subregional organizations, please refer to the report of the Secretary-General on regional and subregional inputs (E/CN.18/2009/3).

V. Stakeholder involvement

46. The participation of stakeholders continues to be an important element of cooperation and coordination by the Forum. Regular multi-stakeholder consultations were organized with the major groups' focal points throughout 2007 and 2008 to share information on preparations for the eighth session of the Forum. Organizations of the major groups were represented in the Ad Hoc Expert Group in Vienna in November 2008 and the country-led initiatives held in Durban in April 2008 and in

¹² Report of the twenty-second session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission, Hanoi, 21-26 April 2008 (RAP Publication: 2008/06 FAO: APFC/2008/REP), summary of recommendations.

Paramaribo in September 2008. Major groups are also submitting discussion papers reflecting their views and concerns for the current session of the Forum.

47. At the departmental level, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs developed and launched a new integrated Civil Society Organizations System, which will facilitate interactions between stakeholders and the Department. The system provides online general profiles of civil society organizations, including contact details, activities and meeting participation. It also assists accredited NGOs in submitting quadrennial reports and in designating representatives to the United Nations.¹³

VI. Country-led initiatives

48. Important country-led initiatives have been organized successfully since the seventh session of the Forum. The secretariat of the Forum has participated in and closely cooperated with these initiatives. The first Region-Led Initiative on regional input in support of the work of the Forum took place in Geneva from 28 to 30 January 2008, and was co-hosted by the Governments of Switzerland and Australia. A total of 49 participants from 31 organizations and countries attended the Region-Led Initiative, which explored and highlighted several benefits to enhance regional interaction. Participants also voiced their interest in working together to make progress on sustainable forest management globally.¹⁴

49. An international Workshop on Forest Governance and Decentralization in Africa, a South African-Swiss country-led initiative in support of the Forum was organized in Durban, South Africa, from 8 to 11 April 2008 by the Swiss Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Republic of South Africa and Federal Office for the Environment, Swiss Confederation and co-sponsored by Germany, Finland, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and ITTO. Technical support was provided by the Centre for International Forestry Research and Intercooperation, the Swiss Foundation for Development and International Cooperation. The Workshop enhanced cooperation and coordination by bringing together different stakeholders, policymakers and international experts from all over Africa and other regions. Participants shared experiences and explored opportunities to generate concrete gains from governance reforms and decentralized forest management. Discussions were organized around three central themes: decentralized forest management and livelihoods, and conservation; sustainable forest management and forest governance; and international trade, finance and forest sector governance reform. The Workshop identified several issues needing attention and developed recommendations for the consideration of countries and the Forum.¹⁵

50. Over 200 forest and finance experts attended a Country-Led Initiative on Financing for Sustainable Forest Management held in support of the Forum, in

¹³ See <http://esango.un.org/civilsociety/login.do>, accessed 19 January 2009.

¹⁴ Report of the Australian-Swiss Region-Led Initiative on Regional Input in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 28-30 January 2008, http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/cli/AUS_CH_RLI_report.pdf, accessed on 8 January 2009.

¹⁵ Forest governance and decentralization in Africa: report of a workshop co-organized by the Governments of South Africa and Switzerland, http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/cli/cli_durban_report.pdf, accessed on 7 January 2009.

Paramaribo, from 8 to 12 September 2008. The meeting was co-organized by Suriname, the Netherlands and the United States, and was supported by the Government of the United Kingdom, ITTO, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, Conservation International and World Wide Fund for Nature Guianas. Conclusions and recommendations from the meeting included the urgent need for financing from all sources, with official development assistance playing a catalytic role and the need for more coherence and streamlining of mechanisms, procedures and processes.¹⁶

VII. Partnerships and processes

51. Cooperation and coordination with several partnerships and processes have also been intense. The secretariat of the Forum has participated in several meetings and events since the last Forum session.

Asia Forest Partnership

52. The seventh meeting of the Asia Forest Partnership was held in Yokohama, Japan, from 12 to 15 November 2007, back-to-back with the forty-third session of the International Tropical Timber Council. The Partnership evaluated its first five years and concluded that the activities should continue in the future. The Steering Committee of the Partnership prepared an announcement highlighting the new focuses and agenda for the second phase of the Partnership for the period 2008-2015. The key themes included reducing forest loss and degradation and enhancing forest cover to maintain the provision of forest products and ecosystem services, including mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, watershed and land resource protection, and conserving biological diversity and combating illegal logging and associated trade.¹⁷

Asia-Pacific Forest Network

53. The Asia-Pacific Forest Network (AFPNET) was launched in Beijing in September 2008 at an international Symposium on Sustainable Forest Management. The Network was created in response to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Sydney, Australia, in 2007, and endorsement by the Sydney APEC Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development. The particular relevance of AFPNET lies especially in its objectives which fall very close to the Global Objectives on Forests. The closest link in this regard is APFNET Objective one which aims at increasing forest cover in the APEC region by at least 20 million hectares by 2020, which could be understood as a quantified target contributing directly to Global Objective one targeting reversing the loss of forests by 2015. In the discussions participants specifically called for the Network to find its unique place among the existing regional initiatives and processes and identify areas with highest potential for success without overlapping with existing works.

¹⁶ Country-Led Initiative on Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 8-12 September 2008, Co-Chairs' summary report.

¹⁷ Announcement on Renewal and Revision of the Mandate, Focus and Operational Modalities of the Asia Forest Partnership for 2008-2015, available online, e.g., from: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/environment/afp/announce0711.pdf>, accessed on 8 January 2009.

African Forest Forum

54. The secretariat of the Forum is a partner to the African Forest Forum, an international non-governmental organization, whose members share the commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for socio-economic well-being of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment.¹⁸ The African Forest Forum is hosted at the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (World Agroforestry Centre) in Nairobi. One of the notable outcomes of the partnership with the African Forest Forum, is the facilitation of African participation in sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Through the Technical Support Team, the African Forest Forum has supported preparatory sessions for the Forum, coordinated African dialogue during the sessions, and provided technical analysis and backup.

Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

55. The Fifth Ministerial Conference, in Warsaw held from 5 to 7 November 2007, adopted the Warsaw Declaration,¹⁹ and two resolutions that relate to climate change, the growing demand for energy from renewable sources and threats to the availability and quality of water resources. The Declaration made specific references to sustainable forest management and its contribution to environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainable development and to the achievement of internationally agreed goals, including the Forum's Global Objectives on Forests. The section of the Declaration on global-regional cooperation and partnerships also highlighted several Forum matters, including the commitment to contribute to the achievement of the Four Global Objectives as well as to the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the Forum's multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests, along with agreement to develop consistent inputs, in cooperation with other regional bodies, processes and agreements, from the Pan-European region to the work of the Forum.

56. The Ministerial Conference Expert Level Meeting was held in Oslo in May 2008. Discussions focused on the work programme, programme elements and the strategic direction of the Ministerial Conference. The secretariat of the Forum made a statement depicting the opportunities ahead to demonstrate lessons learned of regional forest cooperation and to enhance the regional contribution to the achievements of the Four Global Objectives on Forests and other relevant global commitments. As part of the work programme of the Ministerial Conference, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of the Environment, organized a Pan-European workshop on the topic "Forests in the changing environment" in Koli, Finland, in September 2008. The workshop provided a forum for discussion and elaboration of the contribution from Europe to the eighth session of the Forum. As a result of the workshop, priority issues were identified and proposals for concrete actions for further consideration were identified and clustered (see E/CN.18/2009/14).

¹⁸ See <http://www.afforum.org/index.php/About-AFF/About-The-African-Forest-Forum.html>, accessed 2 February 2009, and the constitution of the African Forest Forum.

¹⁹ Warsaw Declaration 2007, especially paras. 29-31 and 37.

VIII. Conclusions

57. Enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination plays a crucial role in achieving sustainable forest management, especially due to the great number of instruments, institutions, programmes and processes relevant for forests.

58. In accordance with the mandate provided in Economic and Social Council resolutions 2000/35 and 2006/49, the Forum and its secretariat have undertaken several measures to facilitate cooperation and coordination at the international, regional and national levels. Many significant developments regarding enhanced cooperation and collaboration may be highlighted. To mention a few, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests has had a number of highly significant initiatives in support of the Forum. The cooperation and coordination with multilateral agreements have been fruitful. Decision IX/5 of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, is a considerable development in relation to the enhanced cooperation and collaboration with the Forum and its secretariat. Decision 2/CP.13 of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change entitled “Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action” also provided, in paragraph 8 of the annex, that demonstration activities should be consistent with sustainable forest management, noting, *inter alia* the relevant provisions of the Forum. The work on enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination with regional and subregional organizations has been intense. Certain areas, however, may still require strengthening the cooperation and coordination.

59. Since the seventh session of the Forum, the forest instrument and multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests play a key role in enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination. The Economic and Social Council, while recommending the adoption of the forest instrument to the General Assembly, also invited the Forum to establish and maintain cooperation with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, instruments, processes and United Nations bodies, relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and major groups in order to facilitate enhanced cooperation to achieve the purpose of the instrument. One of the purposes of the forest instrument is to provide a framework for this international cooperation.

60. As explained in the present report, several measures on enhanced cooperation and coordination have taken place. This cooperation and coordination should continue and be even further strengthened. Closer cooperation between the Forum and other relevant organizations, agreements and institutions, especially in relation to promoting international trade in forest products from sustainably managed forests and addressing illicit international trafficking in forest products, could take place as well as strengthening technical and scientific cooperation among countries.

61. In the light of the overall theme of the eighth session of the Forum — forests in a changing environment — the discussions and developments in relation to enhanced cooperation and collaboration in the environmental field

could also be examined. These take place in the broader environmental context²⁰ and among certain multilateral environmental agreements in the chemical and hazardous wastes sector in particular.²¹ The Forum, according to its mandate, has a significant overarching role in relation to the discussions on global forest issues and forests could serve as a linking factor between several environmental and development-related multilateral conventions.

62. Enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination in the forest sector has gained considerable new potential since the seventh session of the Forum. As mentioned, the forest instrument and the multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests provide solid ground and guidance for enhanced cooperation and coordination. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests continues to provide effective means for enhanced cooperation and coordination among international bodies on issues and activities related to forests. Cooperation at the regional and national levels should also be fully maximized.

IX. Points for consideration

63. The Forum may wish to:

- (a) Call for strengthening cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination to effectively implement the forest instrument, and in the areas of the multi-year programme of work of the Forum on Forests;
- (b) Identify new opportunities for enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination in prioritized areas;
- (c) Encourage the heads of international organizations to continue their active involvement in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, including to facilitate the implementation of Forum decisions and to carry out joint programmes, within their respective mandates;
- (d) Request the Forum secretariat to continue actively participating in and supporting the Collaborative Partnership on Forests as well as enhancing cooperation with relevant international and regional partnerships, processes and bodies;
- (e) Consider ways to enhance and strengthen cooperation and coordination between the work of the Forum and multilateral environmental agreements, especially the Rio Conventions;

²⁰ See online, e.g., <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/environmentalgovernance.shtml>, accessed 20 January 2009.

²¹ By decision SC-2/15 of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, decision RC-3/8 of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention and decision VIII/8 of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, an Ad Hoc Joint Working Group was established to prepare joint recommendations on enhanced cooperation and coordination among the three conventions for submission to the Conference of the Parties of all three conventions. According to its mandate, the Working Group submitted the recommendation so far to the Conference of the Parties of the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions, which have decided to adopt the recommendation; see http://ahjwg.chem.unep.ch/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1, accessed 9 January 2009.

(f) Identify additional opportunities to facilitate regional and subregional cooperation on forestry issues, including by developing guidelines to assist the preparation of regional inputs to the ninth session of the Forum, fostering active dialogues and convening workshops on specific themes of regional concerns;

(g) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests²² to:

(i) Continue its vital support to the work of the Forum, through joint initiatives and collaborative activities such as the CPF Advisory Group on Finance and the strategic framework for forests and climate change;

(ii) Encourage its member organizations to incorporate relevant decisions taken by the Forum into their activities;

(iii) Develop indicators for assessing and monitoring progress towards the Global Objectives on Forests and the implementation of the forest instrument. In this respect, the Forum may wish to express its support to the recent initiative to address the concept of forest degradation;

(iv) Continue supporting the Joint Initiative CPF Global Forest Expert Panels, bearing in mind the key issues of the ninth session of the Forum.

²² Specific recommendations addressed to CPF can be found in the report of the Secretary-General on recommendations for addressing key challenges of forests in a changing environment (E/CN.18/2009/8).