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Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues**Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work, the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fourteenth session should consider enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues. The present note provides background information and highlights the results of the intersessional activities undertaken since the thirteenth session of the Forum. It is intended to serve as the basis for discussion at the fourteenth session on agenda item 7.

* E/CN.18/2019/1.



I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017–2020, the Forum at its fourteenth session will consider enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues.

2. The present note has been prepared to serve as the basis for discussion on the above-mentioned issue under agenda items 7(a) on the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in support of the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017–2020; 7(b) on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the implementation of the Paris Agreement; 7(c) on the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; 7(d) on regional and subregional partners; 7(e) on major groups and other relevant stakeholders; and 7(f) on communication and outreach activities. The note provides an overview of the result of intersessional activities on the subject matter undertaken since the thirteenth session of the Forum and also provides suggestions and proposals for discussion by the Forum at its fourteenth session.

3. Agenda item 7(g) on cross-sectoral engagement is being discussed as a cross-cutting issue under various agenda items and related documents of the fourteenth session. Similarly, information on agenda item 7(h) on intersessional activities is contained in the documents for agenda items 3, 4, 5 and 6.

II. Background

4. The Forum at its thirteenth session welcomed the Collaborative Partnership on Forests workplan 2017–2020 and invited the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Partnership to support implementation of the workplan, consistent with their mandates. The Forum requested the Partnership to report on progress in that regard to the Forum at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions. That information is contained in the note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 under agenda item 3 (E/CN.18/2019/2). To facilitate the discussions of the Forum on agenda item 7(a), the present note contains information on other activities of the Partnership in support of the implementation of the strategic plan for forests and the quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017–2020.

5. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work, the fourteenth session of the Forum will consider the implementation of the Paris Agreement under item 7(b). The present note contains information received from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat on the progress towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the interlinkages between forests and climate change, and enhancing coherence and synergy between the Paris Agreement and the strategic plan for forests, as well as on the ways and means to promote collaboration between the Forum and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, including through their secretariats.

6. In order to highlight the interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized its first-ever Sustainable Development Goals pavilion during the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2018. At the pavilion, the Forum secretariat organized two events with senior officials from Member States and the United Nations Secretariat as well as representatives from several member organizations of the Partnership serving as panellists. Participants in both events

discussed forest-based actions to combat climate change, in addition to the coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the strategic plan for forests.

7. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work, the fourteenth session of the Forum will consider implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets under agenda item 7(c). The present note includes information received from the Convention secretariat on the progress towards the achievement of the Aichi Targets, the interlinkages between forests and biodiversity conservation, and enhancing coherence and synergy between the Convention and the strategic plan for forests, as well as the ways and means to promote collaboration between the Forum and the Convention, including through their secretariats.

8. In its resolution 13/1, the Forum welcomed initiatives taken at the regional and subregional levels to implement the strategic plan for forests and invited regional and subregional organizations and processes to make full use of the regional forums on sustainable development held in preparation for sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. It also invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to provide the Forum at its fourteenth session with an update of the consideration by the Committee on Forestry at its twenty-fourth session of the potential offered by the regional forestry commissions, as appropriate, for enhancing regional and/or subregional involvement. To facilitate the discussions of the Forum on item 7(d) of its agenda, the present note includes information on the activities of the regional and subregional partners, since the thirteenth session of the Forum, in support of the implementation of the strategic plan for forests and the quadrennial programme of work.

9. In its resolution 13/1, the Forum welcomed the joint workplan developed by major groups to accelerate achievement of the global forest goals and the complementary workplan developed by the children and youth major group, invited major groups to inform the Forum at its fourteenth session on progress in implementing the workplans, and invited Member States in a position to do so to support major groups in that regard. The present note provides a basis for the Forum's discussions on the matter under agenda item 7(e) and includes information on the related activities of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders since the thirteenth session of the Forum.

10. At its thirteenth session, the Forum also invited the Partnership and its member organizations, United Nations system partners, and regional, subregional and major group partners to undertake initiatives to accelerate the contributions of forests towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019 and to inform the Forum on Forests at its fourteenth session of progress made.

11. In addition, at its thirteenth session, the Forum adopted the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan for forests and requested the Forum secretariat to report on the progress in implementing the communication and outreach strategy at the fourteenth and subsequent sessions, and to produce a concise publication on the global forest goals and targets to be used in outreach efforts. Further information on the implementation of the strategy is contained in the note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 under agenda item 3 ([E/CN.18/2019/2](#)). Information on the activities related to the International Day of Forests and other communication related activities undertaken since the thirteenth session of the Forum is included in the present note to serve as a basis for the Forum's discussions under agenda item 7(f).

III. Activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in support of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017–2020

A. Meetings of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

12. The Partnership held four meetings in 2018 on the sidelines of major events and discussed activities that could contribute to the implementation of the strategic plan for forests: a meeting during the Partnership Conference, held in February 2018; a meeting during the thirteenth session of the Forum; a meeting during the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Forestry, held in July 2018; and a retreat in December 2018.¹ The Partnership also held several online meetings in preparing for its Conference, held in February 2018, in addition to two meetings with potential donor countries, held at the Conference and at the thirteenth session of the Forum.

B. Joint initiatives

13. Since the conclusion of the thirteenth session of the Forum, the Partnership has continued to work on advancing the joint initiatives described below.

Communicators networks

14. The Communicators Group of the Partnership provided input in the development of the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan for forests and seeks to continue supporting its implementation. The regional forest communicators networks of FAO are also ready to contribute to implementing the strategic plan.

15. The Communicators Group considers and recommends the annual theme for the International Day of Forests and coordinates related activities by members of the Partnership. The Group also provides support for the organization of activities related to the Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award.

16. Member organizations of the Partnership arranged to link to the International Day of Forests websites from their own sites. For the International Day of Forests, 2018, FAO and the Forum secretariat provided the traditional communication to countries, offering various outreach tools for use. Events were held at United Nations Headquarters and at FAO headquarters.

17. FAO prepared a 60-second video trailer which was aired for one month on major global television channels. Similar arrangements have been made for the International Day of Forests, 2019. In addition, the Communicators Group will work on a coordinated proposal for the theme of the International Day of Forests, 2020, for consideration by the Forum at its fourteenth session.

18. The theme of the International Day of Forests in 2019, “Forests and education”, was selected to increase awareness of the interconnections between forests and education and to strengthen engagement between practitioners and policymakers in those fields. The theme is relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 15.

¹ Summaries of the meetings of the Partnership are available at www.cpfweb.org/en/.

Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

19. The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33, works in close cooperation with Member States and members of the Partnership to implement its priorities, as outlined in the strategic plan for forests. Detailed information on this matter is provided in the note by the Secretariat entitled “Means of implementation: progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and availability of resources” (E/CN/18/2019/4).

Global forest expert panels

20. The global forest expert panels² initiative is coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). The initiative periodically assembles international panels of scientific experts on emerging forest-related issues and topics of high concern. The panels synthesize existing available scientific information on specific topics in an interdisciplinary, comprehensive and transparent manner, and produce reports to support better-informed global decision-making on forest-related issues.

21. Since its launch in April 2007, the initiative has completed six thematic assessments: (a) adaptation of forests and people to climate change; (b) international forest governance; (c) biodiversity, forest management and REDD plus, or reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries; (d) forests and food security; (e) illegal logging and related timber trade; and (f) forests and water. The Global Forest Expert Panels initiative has completed all of its envisaged activities and tasks for 2017 and 2018, as described in the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

22. The activities of the initiative directly support the effective attainment of the global forest goals and targets, as called for in the strategic plan for forests. Outcomes from the global forest expert panels contribute directly to the implementation of global forest goal 4, in particular target 4.5, and global forest goal 6, including target 6.2. The global forest expert panel assessments are most relevant to the achievement of target 4.5 (improving the collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information through, for example, multidisciplinary scientific assessments).

23. Furthermore, scientific assessment reports produced by the panels improve the understanding of synergies and trade-offs between the different global forest goals and targets, and of how the strategic plan for forests and various forest-related policies and programmes can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the global assessment report on forests, trees and landscapes,³ published in 2015, provided scientific input to the global debate on forests (Sustainable Development Goal 15) and food security (Sustainable Development Goal 2). IUFRO was invited to inform the Member States of the results of the assessment at a panel discussion on the theme “Contributions of forests to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2” held during the twelfth session of the Forum. The most recent panel assessment, on forest and water,⁴ explored the interlinkages between climate, forest, water and people, and connected Sustainable

² www.iufro.org/science/gfep/.

³ Bhaskar Vira, Christopher Wildburger and Stephanie Mansourian (eds.), *Forests, Trees and Landscapes for Food Security: A Global Assessment Report*, IUFRO World Series vol. 33 (Vienna, IUFRO, 2015).

⁴ Irena F. Creed and Meine von Noordwijk, *Forests and Water on a Changing Planet: Vulnerability, Adaptation and Governance Opportunities – A Global Assessment Report*, IUFRO World Series vol. 38 (Vienna, IUFRO, 2016).

Development Goal 6 on water and Sustainable Development Goal 15 on forests, thereby contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its review cycle by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2018. In total, 50 scientific experts from more than 20 countries contributed to the assessment. The assessment contributed to the thirteenth session of the Forum, where members of the Global Forest Expert Panel on Forests and Water were invited to a panel discussion on the theme “Contribution of forests to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. Furthermore, the Forum secretariat tasked a coordinating lead author on the Panel with producing a background analytical study on the topic of forests and water based mainly on the Panel’s report. The study was then presented during the thirteenth session of the Forum.

24. The panel assessment report on forest and water⁵ and the accompanying policy brief were officially launched on 10 July 2018 at a side event during the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2018. The event was hosted by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations and co-hosted by IUFRO, in partnership with the Governments of Brazil and Finland. The speakers included high-level representatives from the Permanent Mission of Austria, the Forum secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, the Freshwater Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme and UN-Water.

25. The report and its outcomes gained further visibility through a presentation at the expert group meeting on the theme “Sustainable Development Goal 15: progress and prospects” held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 14 and 15 May 2018; an event entitled “Forest-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies: lessons learned and success stories”, also held at Headquarters, on 8 July 2018, in advance of the high-level political forum; and a high-level meeting at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Forestry and sixth World Forest Week, held in July 2018.

Global Forest Information Service

26. The Global Forest Information Service initiative,⁶ led and coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, was launched in 2002 to enhance access to all forest-related information and ensure its accessibility, through a single gateway, to all stakeholders including policymakers, forest managers, non-governmental organizations, community groups and the public at large.

27. The gateway serves as a mechanism to support the implementation of the strategic plan for forests, in particular by contributing to the mobilization of the best available scientific and traditional forest-related knowledge, and to the enhancement of cooperation and synergies on forest-related communications and outreach to increase the impact of messaging from the United Nations system, the Partnership and its member organizations and other partners. The initiative effectively contributes to achieving all of the global forest goals and is particularly relevant to goal 4 and target 4.5. The gateway can also support the implementation of paragraphs 59, 69, 70 and 71 of the strategic plan for forests.

28. The Global Forest Information Service completed its planned activities and tasks for 2017 and 2018 as described in the workplan of the Partnership, and the technical team carried out recurrent activities, updates and further improvements to the system. One of the highlights was the development and upgrading of the

⁵ Available at www.iufro.org/science/gfep/forests-and-water-panel/report/.

⁶ www.gfis.net/.

educational content, in collaboration with the joint task force on forestry education of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the International Forestry Students' Association, resulting in a global database and university directory of forest-related academic programmes. Improvements to the filtering and search functions, and changes to the user interface of the Service yielded a modernized and improved interface in autumn 2018.

29. One of the envisaged activities for 2017 and 2018 was setting priorities for the future and implementing a revised strategy. IUFRO convened a strategic meeting focused on the Global Forest Information Service on the occasion of the meeting of the Partnership, held in Rome in November 2017, with the following main goals: to receive guidance on the further strategic development of the Service; to learn about ways to increase the benefits of the Service and to engage all relevant audiences; to gather ideas for possible further developments with regard to the technology and content of the Service; and to enhance collaboration with other members of the Partnership in respect of the joint initiative. The outcomes of the meeting will be incorporated into the Service's strategic plan for the coming years.

Streamlining global forest-related reporting

30. Detailed information on streamlining global forest-related reporting is contained in the note by the Secretariat on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the United Nations forest instrument, including voluntary national contributions (see [E/CN.18/2019/3](#)).

Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award

31. The Partnership launched the Wangari Maathai Award in 2012 to recognize outstanding contributions to the preservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests and to raise awareness of the key role that forests play in supporting local communities, rural livelihoods, women and the environment. The Award also serves to honour the memory and forest-related contributions of Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmentalist and first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. The award is intended to contribute to all of the global forest goals, particularly goal 6 and target 6.5.

32. The Partnership is considering options for presenting the next award in 2019. At the time of writing of the present note, the International Tropical Timber Organization and IUFRO had offered to host the award ceremony in October and December, respectively. The final decision on the venue will be made in collaboration with the potential hosts. Upon selection of the host, the call for nominations and other preparations will proceed accordingly. The presentation of another award is also planned for the fifteenth World Forestry Congress, in 2021.

Policy learning initiative

33. The main objectives of the policy learning initiative are to build instrumental and practical knowledge on means-oriented policy learning for transformative and lasting change in support of the strategic plan for forests, including the global forest goals, and to identify more effective governance frameworks and policy instruments to implement specific sustainable forest management solutions at all levels and across organizations, sectors and stakeholders.

34. The initiative is aimed at contributing to finding solutions to complex challenges in global forest governance. The initiative's goals are consistent with paragraph 13 of the strategic plan for forests, and the initiative contributes directly to the achievement of global forest goals 2, 5 and 6, and targets 5.2 and 5.3, in particular.

35. Some initiative activities planned for 2017 and 2018 had to be carried over to the next period in the context of ongoing resource mobilization efforts. Planned activities included the implementation of the “Peruvian playbook” (workshops and forward-looking analysis); the application of the policy learning protocol in the context of Peruvian forest policy to address fragmentation in global forest governance (identification of stakeholders, workshops, forward-looking analysis); the training of new researchers to apply the protocol (development of manual, identification of researchers, training workshop); and the application of the protocol in other target countries in Asia and Latin America. A funding proposal for the initiative activities is currently under donor review.

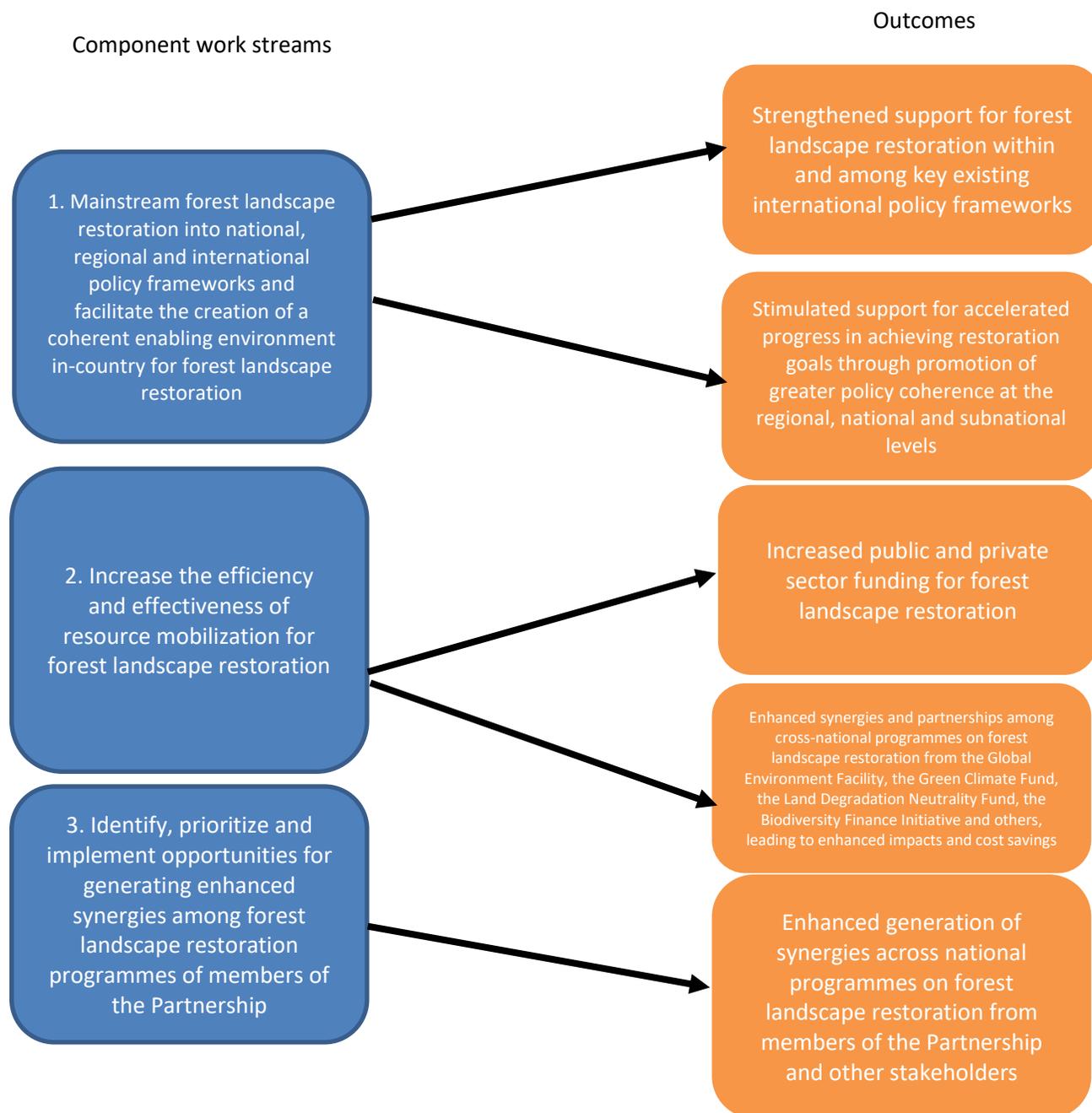
Forest landscape restoration

36. Member organizations of the Partnership approved a joint initiative on forest landscape restoration in April 2017. Through close cooperation among member organizations, the initiative developed into a project entitled “Fostering partnership to build coherence and support for forest landscape restoration” that was approved by the Global Environment Facility in June 2018.

37. The initiative will play a key role in supporting the effective implementation of the strategic plan for forests and its global forest goals and targets, particularly goal 6 (enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Partnership).

38. The overarching goal of the initiative is to enhance synergies in global forest landscape restoration and assist countries and stakeholders to scale up and strengthen the implementation of forest landscape restoration at the national and subnational levels. To that end, the initiative will include a number of constituent activities executed by different member organizations of the Partnership, organized under the three components and related outcomes (see figure).

Figure
Forest landscape restoration component work streams and intended outcomes



39. A virtual inception workshop was held on 17 September 2018 with the participation of implementing partners. A workshop summary report with follow-up action points has been circulated to all partners of the Partnership and will be made available on the Partnership's website in January 2019.

40. Initiative activities include an international knowledge-sharing workshop on the theme "Best practices for implementing forest landscape restoration in South Asia",

led by IUFRO and held in Chilaw, Sri Lanka, in August 2018;⁷ an International Tropical Timber Organization expert meeting for the development of updated guidelines for forest landscape restoration, held in November 2018; support from the Forum secretariat for countries to develop bankable projects on forest landscape restoration; and an International Union for Conservation of Nature awareness campaign on the potential of forest landscape restoration in the achievement of international forest-related commitments (to be launched in 2019).

41. Most of the activities will be implemented in 2019. A portion of project funds will be allocated to emerging opportunities in the course of 2019.

Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World

42. In May 2018, the Partnership adopted the Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World initiative as its joint initiative, building on the outcome of the Global Meeting on that theme, held in Rome in 2017. The initiative is led by FAO with support from its Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries, the Centre for International Forestry Research, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the World Bank and the World Wildlife Fund. Its aim is to strengthen sustainable wood value chains by enhancing their social, economic and environmental benefits, from production to consumption, in support of the global forest goals, relevant Sustainable Development Goals and climate change objectives.

43. The initiative is intended to implement collaborative activities and catalyse efforts to deliver concrete actions at the policy, technical, scientific and political levels to strengthen sustainable wood value chains and to promote positive linkages with poverty reduction, sustainable landscapes and sustainable growth. Through establishing collaborative activities with a broad range of stakeholders along the value chains, from the global level to the local level, the initiative aims to support the formulation of policy frameworks and approaches, generating scientific evidence and good practices as well as market and finance solutions to strengthen the socioeconomic and environmental benefits of sustainable wood production and consumption.

44. At the 2018 Partnership retreat, member organizations welcomed the initiative and emphasized that it represented a good opportunity for further engagement with stakeholders. The initiative functions as a “light-touch umbrella initiative” aimed at attracting like-minded organizations and initiatives. Other member organizations are welcome to join the initiative.

45. The members of the initiative’s steering committee also informed the member organizations that the initiative’s workplan demands support from donors and a fundraising strategy is of the utmost importance. The Partnership recommended that the steering committee organize a joint fundraising exercise and consider criteria for engaging with other organizations outside the Partnership.

Joint initiatives in the pipeline

46. In addition to its ongoing joint initiatives, the Partnership is preparing a series of new joint initiatives, including the following: (a) green finance, led by the Global Environment Facility with the participation of the Centre for International Forestry Research, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme; (b) pathway for designing a mechanism to incentivize deforestation-free landscapes and value chains for green growth, led by the International Tropical Timber Organization and the World Bank with the participation of the United Nations Development Programme; and (c) voluntary guidelines for the

⁷ The report is available at www.iufro.org/science/special/spdc/netw/flr/kw-ws-sri-lanka/.

design and implementation of successful forest landscape restoration initiatives in the tropics, led by the International Tropical Timber Organization.

IV. Implementation of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

47. The Paris Agreement constituted a new architecture for the global response to tackle the threat of climate change. The land use sector, including forests, is an integrated part of this new approach. Further progress was made in the implementation of the Paris Agreement with the rule book agreed upon at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, Poland, in 2018, which can be described as a five-step process which will be repeated upon completion:

(a) Countries that are parties to the Paris Agreement submit their nationally determined contribution to address the climate threat as described in article 2 of the Paris Agreement. Each Party's successive nationally determined contribution will represent a progression beyond the Party's then current nationally determined contribution and reflect its highest possible level of ambition;

(b) Parties submit biennial transparency reports by 2024, including the necessary information to track progress in implementing and achieving their nationally determined contributions in accordance with the agreed modalities, procedures and guidelines;

(c) Technical experts from the Convention roster of experts will conduct a technical review of the biennial transparency reports submitted for consideration, taking into account the Party's implementation and achievement of its nationally determined contribution, and will produce a review report. The Convention secretariat is requested to produce an annual report on the technical expert reviews and publish the biennial transparency reports, the technical expert review reports and the records of the multilateral consideration of progress mentioned below;

(d) A facilitative, multilateral consideration of progress will take place after the publication of the review report;

(e) A global stocktake will be conducted to periodically take stock of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, in order to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement and its long-term goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and of pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The first global stocktake will be conducted in 2023 and repeated every five years thereafter.

48. In the first round of submissions of nationally determined contributions, approximately 75 per cent of the submissions include a forest component. For example, in some cases, the contribution is expressed in hectares of forests for afforestation, while in other cases it is expressed as a contribution in the form of greenhouse gas emission reduction and/or greenhouse gas removal, or as being implicitly included in an economy-wide emission reduction target. All parties are encouraged to move over time towards economy-wide emission reduction or limitation targets. The Paris Agreement differs from the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with regard to accounting for emission reductions and removals, by leaving it to parties to define the accounting approach. However, the approach needs to be explained in a transparent manner to allow for subsequent technical reviews.

49. The parties at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to develop a common reporting format for electronic reporting, for adoption at the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, scheduled for November 2020. In addition, the Global Environment Facility is requested to support developing countries that are parties to the Paris Agreement in preparing their biennial transparency reports.

Synergies and collaboration between the Paris Agreement and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

50. The global forest goals and the voluntary national contributions can help to ensure that forests will contribute significantly to tackling the climate threat and meeting the long-term temperature goals agreed by parties to the Paris Agreement.

51. To the extent that parties to the Paris Agreement and States members of the United Nations Forum on Forests have a similar forest contribution in their nationally determined contributions and their voluntary national contributions, it should be possible to use the same information for reporting to both the Paris Agreement and the Forum, noting that the common reporting format to be developed for the biennial transparency reports could require information not required by the Forum and vice versa.

52. Synergies could also be considered for subsequent submissions of the nationally determined contributions, noting that a common time frame for subsequent nationally determined contributions will be implemented only beginning in 2031.

53. The 2023 global stocktake of the implementation of the Paris Agreement will assess the adequacy of the global response to the threat of climate change. The information could also be used as an input to inform the 2024 midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015 and the considerations by the Forum on the matter, including considerations on synergies and coherence between the two processes.

54. In the light of the significant synergies between the two processes and their objectives, it will be useful to maintain regular contact between the Convention and the Forum secretariats.

V. Convention on Biological Diversity and Aichi Biodiversity Targets

55. The fourteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity expressed a deep concern that, despite many positive actions taken by parties and others, most of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets were not on track to be achieved by 2020 (see CBD/COP/DEC/14/1), based on the assessments of individual targets including targets 5 (reduce the loss, fragmentation and degradation of natural habitats, including forests), 7 (sustainable management of areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry), 11 (protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures), 14 (ecosystem services) and 15 (ecosystem resilience and restoration) (CBD/SBSTTA/22/INF/10, CBD/COP/14/5 and CBD/COP/14/5/Add.2).

56. The midterm assessment of progress towards the attainment of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets contained in the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook concluded that, with the exception of target 16, no target was on track to be met. Seven targets (1, 7, 11, 17–20) were assessed as having at least one element on which progress was being made, but not at a rate to be reached by the deadline; seven targets (2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 13 and 15) were assessed as having at least one element on which

no significant overall progress was being made; and five targets (5, 8, 10, 12 and 14) had at least one element on which negative progress was being made. There is a good chance to achieve elements of target 11 pertaining to protected area coverage and other effective area-based conservation measures.

57. The assessment of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and national reports concluded that overall, the majority of national targets and/or commitments contained therein were lower than the Aichi Biodiversity Targets or did not address all of the elements of the targets.

58. Many countries have established targets or made commitments within the framework of other international processes, beyond the Convention on Biological Diversity, and many of these targets and commitments may be relevant to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (see CBD/COP/14/5). Such targets are not always reflected in the updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, signalling an opportunity for parties, when establishing or reviewing their national targets under the Convention, to take into account relevant targets under other processes, including the Forum.⁸

A. Interlinkages between the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030⁹

59. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the programme of work on forests of the Convention on Biological Diversity were adopted prior to the strategic plan for forests and the global forest goals. Current national plans and targets adopted by national Governments to implement the Convention therefore do not reflect the global forest goals. In advance of the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention secretariat will work together with parties to define the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (2020–2030) as a milestone towards achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. The framework should be fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, with regard to forests, should reflect the strategic plan for forests and the global forest goals.

60. Preparations for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework could also examine ways in which the Collaborative Partnership on Forests could support continued actions related to forest and land use with a stronger connection to forest conservation, restoration and sustainable use objectives. Commitment from Partnership member organizations will remain important to maintain and expand forest biodiversity priorities beyond 2020 within the Partnership's workplan.

61. The areas of congruence between international forest commitments such as the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity and the strategic plan for forests include the following:

⁸ See Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decision 14/30, para. 18.

⁹ At the time of preparation of the present note, the Convention secretariat had also provided information on the main outcomes of the fourteenth Conference of the Parties with regard to forest-related matters, including with regard to cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives (decision 14/30). The Conference welcomed the adoption of the strategic plan for forests and the global forest goals and targets as a reference for the forest-related work of the United Nations system and for fostering enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies among United Nations bodies, and recommended the following: (a) alignment among the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans of the parties and their voluntary national contributions under the strategic plan for forests; (b) further engagement of the Convention secretariat with the Partnership on the development of its workplan and joint initiatives; and (c) further guidance on the support that may be available from Partnership members to implement the short-term action plan on ecosystem restoration.

the reduction of the loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural forests, including through REDD-plus; sustainable forest management; forest conservation, including under protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures; benefits from forests; restoration of forest ecosystems; elements of forest biodiversity and traditional and indigenous knowledge in the design of forest policy; and supporting enabling commitments (see CBD/SBI/2/INF/28).

62. In respect of areas of further alignment with a focus on forest restoration and reducing deforestation and forest degradation (see CBD/SBI/2/10/Add.2), global forest goal target 1.1 calls for forest area to increase by 3 per cent worldwide, while target 1.3 calls for halting deforestation by 2020. Both targets relate to target 5 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets with some differences, as target 5 calls for at least halving the rate of deforestation by 2020, rather than halting it. It also focuses on all-natural habitats, including forests as a habitat for species, thereby connecting the benefits of achieving target 5 to the achievement of other Aichi Biodiversity Targets, such as targets 11 and 12.

63. Furthermore, target 5 is aimed at the reduction of gross deforestation and degradation, while global forest goal target 1.1 is aimed at a net increase in forest cover. Thus, a positive net change of forest cover may not necessarily contribute to target 5. Achieving target 1.1 alone would not necessarily support the achievement of target 5 unless significant progress were also achieved on target 1.3, which calls for halting deforestation.

B. Promoting collaboration between the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity, including through their respective secretariats

64. The strategic plan for forests provides a renewed framework for the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The achievement of forest-related biodiversity targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity will require that, in the design and implementation of forest-related national actions to achieve the goals, careful attention be given to options for further action to achieve the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets in a mutually supportive manner until 2020 and to achieve the new forest-related targets in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

65. In that regard, the fourteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity invited parties that were also members of the United Nations Forum on Forests to consider the relevance of their actions to the implementation of the Convention, including actions under their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and to the design of their voluntary national contributions towards achieving one or more of the global forest goals and targets (see CBD/COP/DEC/14/30, para. 18). Parties were further invited to consider submitting their voluntary national contributions in support of biodiversity targets to the Convention as part of the Sharm El-Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People.

66. Another area for further collaboration is the development of baselines and indicators of gross loss of natural and primary forests, and more nuanced indicators of the status of forest biodiversity. The indicators are key to measuring and enhancing the potential contribution that progress on other forest-related goals, including the global forest goals, can make towards the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the preparations for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

67. The current global core set of forest-related indicators proposed by the Partnership may need to be improved, in particular indicator 5 on the change in area of primary forests, which explicitly links to the measurement of progress under target 5 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Convention secretariat could facilitate further exchanges on the type of technical support provided to countries by Partnership members with regard to indicators of loss and degradation of primary forests and forest biodiversity metrics.

VI. Cooperation with regional and subregional partners

68. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat continued to actively engage with regional and subregional partnerships and processes. The secretariat organized an expert group meeting on regional and subregional input to the Forum, held in January 2019, to enhance the contributions of the regional and subregional partners to the implementation of the strategic plan for forests and the quadrennial programme of work, and to prepare for the fourteenth session of the Forum.¹⁰

69. Participants discussed their contributions to the thematic priorities of the fourteenth session of the Forum, including the possibility of a regional panel discussion, in addition to regional and subregional contributions to enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common understanding of sustainable forest management. They exchanged ideas on the Sustainable Development Goals, under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019, as they related to the global forest goals. The meeting agreed on the periodicity, format and content of written input from regional and subregional partners to the Forum about progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals and targets. In addition, the meeting decided that the format of the written input should be based on the national voluntary reporting format approved by the Forum at its thirteenth session. Regional and subregional entities should consider submitting their voluntary written input to the Forum secretariat by mid-November 2019 for analysis and possible inclusion in the future flagship publication planned for 2021.

70. The expert group meeting was also briefed on the guidelines for the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, established by the Forum at its thirteenth session. In developing collaborative arrangements and partnerships with organizations at various levels to facilitate and enhance Network operations, including regional and subregional organizations and processes, participants stressed that it would be useful for regional and subregional entities to be able to seek Network support for promoting capacity-building activities for Member States in their regions and subregions.

Update on the outcome of the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Forestry

71. At its thirteenth session, the Forum invited FAO to provide at its fourteenth session an update on the consideration by the Committee on Forestry, at its twenty-fourth session, of the potential offered by the regional forestry commissions, as appropriate, for enhancing regional and subregional involvement. In that regard, the Secretary of the Committee informed the Forum secretariat that the twenty-fourth session of the Committee was held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 16 to 20 July 2018. The Committee considered the Forum's invitation, recommended deeper

¹⁰ The report on the meeting is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Summary-EGM-Reg-Bangkok-Jan-19.pdf.

collaboration between the regional forestry commissions and the Forum through its regional dimension, and suggested that the collaboration be flexible and fit for various regional circumstances.¹¹ The Secretary further informed the secretariat that the Committee recommendation was subsequently endorsed by the FAO Council at its meeting in December 2018, and indicated that FAO would also provide an update on the matter to the fourteenth session of the Forum.

VII. Major groups and other stakeholders

72. The United Nations Forum on Forests at its thirteenth session reaffirmed that the effective implementation of sustainable forest management depends on the contribution of all relevant stakeholders, including forest owners, indigenous peoples and local communities, local authorities, the private sector including small, medium and large forest-based enterprises, non-governmental organizations, women, children and youth, and scientific, academic and philanthropic organizations at all levels. In addition, the Forum reiterated the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to the implementation of the strategic plan for forests, with a view to accelerating sustainable development.

73. In January 2019, the Forum secretariat convened an expert group meeting to review progress in the implementation of the major groups workplans and input to the fourteenth session of the Forum.¹² Participating experts reviewed progress on the major groups workplans, including acceleration in achieving the global forest goals, in addition to identifying emerging issues, obstacles to implementation and priorities for future action. The representative of the children and youth major group informed the meeting that the main objective of the children and youth workplan was to strengthen the capacity and resource base for effective application. Major group experts also informed participants of the main activities carried out during the intersessional period, including pre-conference training workshops focused on the roles of women and indigenous and local communities in sustainable forest and landscape management; training university students and young professionals to become forest ambassadors; teaching primary school students about the benefits of forests; carrying out social media campaigns focused on children and youth as key facilitators of outreach on the global forest goals; and youth participation in regional and international policy dialogues.

74. In addition, the major groups on science and technology, women, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples also presented their workplans. The workplans were developed using the format adopted in the umbrella joint major group workplan. The science and technology workplan focused on building upon the ongoing activities of the various science and technology member organizations, including the Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa, the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions. Activities included gathering sustainable forest management success stories; developing a communication strategy for the science and technology major group; engaging in localizing the strategic plan for forests and Forum decisions; promoting mutual accountability for commitments made and statements of intent in the strategic plan for forests and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and strengthening the capacities and resource base of the major groups for effective action. The women major group plan focused on data gathering to increase gender-disaggregated information, advocacy and capacity-

¹¹ www.fao.org/3/MX698EN/mx698en.pdf.

¹² The report on the meeting is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DraftSummary-EGM-MGs-Bangkok-Jan-19.pdf.

building. The non-governmental organizations major group focused on the localization of the strategic plan for forests and Forum decisions, in particular on awareness-raising, secure tenure and local community consultation. The indigenous peoples major group workplan focused on developing information and knowledge networks, advocacy for traditional forest-related knowledge, and secure land tenure and capacity-building for indigenous peoples and communities, among other issues.

75. In discussing the workplans, participants agreed that making the workplan formats compatible with the joint workplan was beneficial in allowing the groups to easily identify areas of shared interest and to facilitate possible multi-group intervention and joint funding mobilization.

76. Participants at the expert group meeting also discussed major groups initiatives to accelerate the contributions of forests to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019; the contributions of civil society to technical discussions on the three thematic priorities of the fourteenth session of the Forum; and enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common understanding of sustainable forest management.¹³ Participants recognized the importance of the Partnership and stressed the need to seek regular engagement with members of the Partnership with a view to coherence in policy and programme implementation. Participants noted, however, that many major groups lacked the financial capacity to engage with the Partnership.

77. With regard to institutionalizing participation in sustainable forest management, participating experts observed that the major groups workplans offered a point of departure for civil society actors to translate the strategic plan for forests and the global forest goals and targets through the section in the various workplans on engaging in the localization of the strategic plan and translating the decisions of the Forum to the people on the ground. As a next step, major groups should further strengthen the connection of their workplans to the global forest goals and targets and the relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals in order to gain a better understanding of the big picture while focusing on the niche attributes that allow them to implement international agreements at the national and local levels.

VIII. Communication and outreach activities including the International Day of Forests

78. At its thirteenth session, the Forum emphasized the importance of communication efforts related to the strategic plan for forests, including highlighting and sharing best practices and success stories on its implementation and that of the United Nations forest instrument, and creating synergies with other multilateral communication platforms and strategies. The Forum adopted the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan for forests and requested its secretariat to report on progress in that regard to the Forum at its fourteenth and subsequent sessions. Information on activities undertaken by the secretariat in implementing the communication and outreach strategy are contained in the note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 ([E/CN.18/2019/2](#)).

79. The Forum secretariat continues to work closely with the Strategic Planning and Communications Service of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which provides outreach, web and social media services for the Department and facilitates the use of information technology and knowledge-sharing. During the intersessional period, the secretariat worked with the Service on articles for the Department

¹³ More detailed information is contained in the note by the Secretariat ([E/CN.18/2019/5](#)).

newsletter and on social media and multimedia outreach efforts in support of Forum meetings and activities to mark the International Day of Forests. The secretariat also continued to work closely with the Department of Global Communications on showcasing the contributions of forests to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

80. The International Day of Forests, 2018 focused on the interlinkages between sustainable forest management and sustainable cities. The theme provided an opportunity to highlight the benefits that forests and trees provide to urban communities, from cooling the environment and saving energy to providing health benefits, mitigating climate change and building resilience against floods and storms. The theme was of particular relevance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to Sustainable Development Goals 15 and 11, in particular. In addition, a major component of the communication and outreach campaign led by the Forum secretariat was the preparation of a “social media advisory”¹⁴ which featured digital cards and suggested messaging for utilization on Facebook and Twitter. Some of the key messages in preparing for the International Day of Forests included the following:

(a) Forests and communities: 1.6 billion people need forests for food, water, fuel and jobs. By 2050, the proportion of people living in urban areas is expected to rise to two thirds, creating an unprecedented demand for water, food and energy. Forests are part of the solution;

(b) Forests and water: it is estimated that by 2050, over half of the world’s population will face water stress. Given that forested catchments provide three quarters of all fresh water used worldwide, safeguarding the capacity of forests to provide water is even more urgent;

(c) Forests and climate change: trees in cities help regulate climate, store carbon, and reduce flooding and storm water runoff. Sustainable forest management and products offer some of the most effective and cost-competitive natural carbon capture and storage options available;

(d) Forests and biodiversity: forests are home to over 80 per cent of biodiversity on land, and urban forests and city parks can provide important habitats for migratory birds and other fauna and flora.

81. Statements on the occasion of the International Day included those by Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, Chair of the Bureau of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations; Koki Muli Grignon, Vice-Chair of the Bureau and Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya; Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; and Manoel Sobral Filho, Director of the Forum secretariat. The Forum secretariat also worked with the Strategic Planning and Communications Service to organize a Facebook Live interview with Jennifer Greenfield, Assistant Commissioner for Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

IX. Conclusion

82. Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues among relevant stakeholders plays an important role in advancing the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, and the achievement of the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals. Since the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Forum secretariat,

¹⁴ www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IDF2018-Social-Media-Advisory_FINAL_16March2018.pdf.

member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional organizations, institutions and processes, as well as major groups and a wide range of stakeholders, have increasingly advanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues. Their efforts have culminated in the wide range of activities outlined in the present note and have increased understanding of the importance of sustainable forest management, the implementation of the strategic plan for forests and the achievement of the global forest goals, and the role of forests in contributing to the forest-related Sustainable Development Goals.

83. However, further opportunities exist to advance greater cooperation and collaboration among the many actors contributing to the achievement of sustainable forest management. In advancing cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues, it is also important to address persistent challenges, which include differing working mandates and modalities of participating organizations, overlap and competing interests, and lack of resources for coordinated or joint efforts.

84. The Partnership has demonstrated its capacity and potential for enhanced cooperation and coordination on forest issues and for providing support to the work of the Forum, including through the development of a workplan and joint initiatives. Regional and subregional organizations and processes also have great potential to further contribute to the implementation of the strategic plan for forests and the achievement of the global forest goals. There is a need to further facilitate their engagement in the various areas of work of the Forum. In addition, the major groups have demonstrated their commitment to the international forest policy dialogue through the development of joint and complementary workplans to implement the strategic plan for forests and to accelerate the achievement of the global forest goals and forest-related Sustainable Development Goals.

X. Suggestions and proposals

85. The fourteenth session of the Forum is a technical session and, as such, is not expected to adopt any decision or resolution. However, in accordance with the provisions of the quadrennial programme of work, the outcome of the technical session is a summary of the discussions by the Chair, which may include possible proposals to be reported on at the fifteenth session for further consideration and recommendations, as well as suggestions for intersessional work leading up to the fifteenth session. In that regard, the following suggestions are intended to stimulate discussions by the Forum at its fourteenth session:

(a) Noting the ongoing work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the progress made towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement, as well as the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(b) Emphasizing the importance of enhancing synergies and collaboration in advancing the coherent implementation and achievement of the strategic plan for forests, the Paris Agreement, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including in their respective reporting arrangements, and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, voluntary national contributions and nationally determined contributions;

(c) Stressing that the Forum should continue to address the interlinkages between forests and the Sustainable Development Goals and provide its input to the new cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(d) Recognizing the potential of the regional and subregional organizations and processes in advancing the implementation of the strategic plan for forests and

the achievement of the global forest goals and targets, and the need to consider updating the guidelines for the operation of the Network, at an appropriate time, to enable these entities to seek Network support in promoting capacity-building activities for States in their regions and subregions;

(e) Inviting Member States and relevant stakeholders to support activities related to the observance of the International Day of Forests and to inform the Forum regularly on the activities;

(f) Strengthening stakeholder engagement in policy coherence at all levels, including through the joint and complementary workplans;

(g) Encouraging members of the Forum to support major group activities in support of the Forum and to participate effectively in the policy and technical sessions of the Forum;

(h) Encouraging members of the Forum that have not yet done so, to consider establishing mechanisms for multi-stakeholder engagement, and to promote actions to advance the implementation of the internationally agreed forest-related goals and commitments and their incorporation into national programmes and plans.
