



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
15 February 2019

Original: English

---

## United Nations Forum on Forests

### Fourteenth session

6–10 May 2019

Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

### Monitoring, assessment and reporting

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

### **Note by the Secretariat**

#### *Summary*

In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period from 2017 to 2020, the Forum at its fourteenth session will consider monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions. The present note provides an overview of intersessional activities related to this matter.

---

\* E/CN.18/2019/1.



## I. Introduction

1. The present note has been prepared as a basis for discussion on item 4 of the provisional agenda. The note provides an overview of the results of intersessional activities relating to monitoring, assessment and reporting undertaken since the thirteenth session of the Forum and suggestions and proposals for discussion by the Forum at its fourteenth session.

## II. Background

2. In accordance with paragraph 69 of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the Forum, at its thirteenth session, adopted the format for voluntary national reporting on progress towards implementation of the strategic plan, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions. At the same session, the Forum also decided that it would consider the results of the first round of voluntary national reporting at its fifteenth session, in 2020, and invited members of the Forum to submit their voluntary national reports to the Forum secretariat by mid-November 2019.

3. Discussions by the Forum at its thirteenth session, in addition to prior feedback from the pilot testing exercise and the expert group meeting on reporting held in Nairobi, highlighted the importance of explanatory notes on reporting to avoid inconsistent interpretation of certain questions and terms. Such explanatory notes could respond to practical questions by countries and help to minimize different understanding or interpretation of questions and terms contained in the adopted format. To address the views expressed by the members of the Forum at the thirteenth session, the secretariat organized an expert group meeting, which was held in Rome in November 2018. The present note contains information on the outcome of that meeting.

4. In its resolution 13/1 on the outcome of the thirteenth session, the Forum welcomed the progress made by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in developing a global core set of forest-related indicators aligned with the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management. It encouraged the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership and other relevant bodies to apply those indicators from the global core set which were ready for use and requested the Partnership to continue to develop the remaining indicators and report on progress in that regard to the Forum at its fourteenth session. Progress on the development of the indicators was discussed at the expert group meeting held in Rome.

## III. Explanatory notes on reporting to the Forum

5. The secretariat of the Forum organized a workshop to clarify the reporting process for the members of the Forum and to develop explanatory notes on reporting, in collaboration with the Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which was held on 13 and 14 November 2018 at FAO headquarters in Rome.<sup>1</sup> Participants included the national Forum focal points of some of the members of the Forum, experts from member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and civil society representatives. During the two-day workshop, participants discussed various elements and issues that might result in different interpretations and agreed on the explanatory notes.

---

<sup>1</sup> The meeting report is available at [www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Report\\_MAR\\_egm\\_Nov2018.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Report_MAR_egm_Nov2018.pdf).

6. The aim of the explanatory notes is to help countries to prepare their voluntary national reports to the fifteenth session of the Forum, in 2020; they are contained in the annex to the present note for the information of the members of the Forum.

#### **IV. Progress towards the development of a global core set of forest-related indicators**

7. At its twenty-fourth session, the FAO Committee on Forestry acknowledged the progress made on the global core set of forest-related indicators and invited the Forum and the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to consider the use of tier 1 and tier 2 indicators in their reporting processes. The Committee requested FAO to support capacity development for relevant country stakeholders to collect and analyse data for the global core set of indicators and to continue working with the Collaborative Partnership on further development of tier 2, tier 3 and “candidate” indicators of the global core set and continue to report on progress in that regard, including at the Forum. The global core set of indicators was subsequently endorsed by the FAO Council in December 2018. The indicators were also discussed at the workshop in Rome. Participants recognized that indicators 13 (number of forest-dependent people in extreme poverty) and 14 (contribution of forests to food security) were closely related to the global forest goals and considered how they might be developed by the Collaborative Partnership to become usable indicators. Participants suggested that a definition of “forest-dependent people” or definitions of sub-groups of “forest-dependent people” should be developed, considering existing national definitions and methodologies for collecting socioeconomic data on forest-dependent people and drawing on, inter alia, information contained in country reports to the Forum, and by reviewing different national approaches through a Collaborative Partnership-led initiative to develop internationally agreed definitions and methodologies for data collection and analysis.

8. Participants also suggested that the Collaborative Partnership for Forests should develop additional indicators that draw on different dimensions of food security and recognize the contributions of forest ecosystem services and also develop methodological guidelines and data collection models that draw on current experience in countries and regional processes, while recognizing that different approaches can be appropriate in different countries. The development of a platform with online tools for the collection and dissemination of socioeconomic data relating to forest-dependent people and the contribution of forests to food security was also suggested. In addition, participants stressed the need for greater coordination with national statistical offices, using the increased understanding of the relationships between forests and poverty eradication and food security to design appropriate national census questions.

#### **V. Suggestions and proposals**

**9. The fourteenth session of the Forum is a technical session, and its outcome will take the form of a chair’s summary, which may include proposals to be reported to the Forum at its subsequent session. In that regard, the following suggestions could be used to stimulate discussion by the Forum at the fourteenth session:**

(a) Countries should be encouraged to submit their voluntary national reports to the Forum at its fifteenth session; these reports would also provide the basis for the “flagship” publication;

(b) Member States should be encouraged to share success stories and best practices as part of their national reports. This would be a vital input, resulting in a “flagship” publication that is interesting and informative, inspiring to experts and non-experts alike and inspirational for the next generation;

(c) Voluntary contributions to the Forum Trust Fund could be requested, to support activities relating to monitoring, assessment and reporting, including the preparation of the “flagship” publication.

---

**Annex****Explanatory notes for country reports to the United Nations  
Forum on Forests at its fifteenth session****Contents**

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword .....	6
I. Purpose and use of country reports .....	6
II. Information from other sources .....	9
III. Assessing progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals .....	11
IV. Explanation of terms used in the reporting format .....	20

## Foreword

The notes below are aimed at helping countries to prepare their country reports for submission to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fifteenth session, in 2020. The notes explain the purpose of country reports and how the information contained therein will be used. They should be read in conjunction with the format for reporting on progress towards the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions.

### I. Purpose and use of country reports

*What is the purpose of country reports?*

1. The General Assembly adopted the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 in 2017. The strategic plan provides a global framework for action at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests and halt deforestation and forest degradation. Country reports are a vital source of information for assessing progress towards implementation of the strategic plan and the United Nations forest instrument,<sup>1</sup> which provide countries with a framework for promoting sustainable forest management.

2. The strategic plan contains six global forest goals and 26 associated targets, to be achieved by 2030. The global forest goals and their associated targets are at the heart of the strategic plan and are aimed at contributing to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

3. Country reports will be used in the preparation of a report on progress towards the global forest goals, for consideration by the Forum at its fifteenth session, in May 2020. In addition, the Forum has requested the secretariat to prepare, based on the initial round of reporting and in consultation with countries, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests<sup>2</sup> and relevant stakeholders, a concise “flagship” publication on progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals, for release by the end of 2021.

4. The Forum adopted the reporting format (E/CN.18/2018/4, annex I) for initial voluntary national reporting to the Forum on progress towards implementation of the strategic plan at its thirteenth session, in May 2018.

5. The Forum invited countries to submit their country reports to by mid-November 2019. The present explanatory notes are intended to help national correspondents prepare their country reports in a consistent manner.

*Will country reports themselves be in the public domain?*

6. Yes, country reports will be published on the website of the Forum, in advance of the fifteenth session.

---

<sup>1</sup> See [www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-forest-instrument/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-forest-instrument/index.html).

<sup>2</sup> A full list of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests is available at [www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/members/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/members/index.html).

*What happened to previous country reports submitted to the Forum?*

7. Previous voluntary national reporting took place prior to the eleventh session of the Forum, in 2015. Countries were invited to submit reports on progress towards implementation of the United Nations forest instrument and the contribution of forests towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The 81 country reports submitted provided a wealth of information on action taken by countries to achieve sustainable forest management, related challenges and success stories. The information from the reports was summarized, along with information from other sources, including members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant stakeholders, in the report of the Secretary-General for the eleventh session of the Forum (E/CN.18/2015/3).

*How will information from country reports be analysed?*

8. The country reports will be analysed by the Forum. The reports will provide the main source of information to assess progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals, together with information from members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other sources (see sect. II). Several global forest goals, especially goals 4, 5 and 6, refer to policy developments, some of which cannot be monitored through measurable outcomes; accordingly, it will not be possible to develop numerical indicators for every target. Further details on the proposed method for analysis are contained in section III.

9. The relationship between questions in the reporting format and targets is indicated in the table below:

<i>Reporting format question number</i>	<i>Related targets</i>
1 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e)	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
2 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f)	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5
3 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f)	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
4 (a), (b)	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5
4 (c)	4.1, 4.2
4 (d)	4.3
4 (e)	4.4
5 (a), (b)	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4
5 (c)	5.1
5 (d)	5.2
5 (e)	5.3
5 (f)	5.3
5 (g)	5.4
6 (a), (b)	6.3, 6.4, 6.5
6 (c)	6.4
6 (d)	6.4

<i>Reporting format question number</i>	<i>Related targets</i>
6 (e)	6.5
7 (a)	Relates to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (gender equality)
7 (b)	Relates to International Day of Forests
8	Success stories

10. It is recognized that a single action (e.g., a new forest law) may address several targets. In that case, it will assist analysis if, wherever possible, countries specify the particular targets addressed by such actions. The “tick boxes” contained within questions 4 (c), 4 (d), 4(e), 5 (c), 5 (d), 5 (g), 6 (c), 6 (d), 6 (e), 7 (a) and 7 (b) are designed to facilitate aggregation of country responses.

*What about targets that cannot be achieved by actions at the national level?*

11. Both target 6.1 (on forest-related programmes within the United Nations system) and target 6.2 (on forest-related programmes of members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests) are targets that cannot be achieved at the national level. Accordingly, there are no questions on those targets in the national reporting format, and such information will be requested from relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership.

*How much detail is required in country reports?*

12. There is a 250-word limit for responses to each sub-question. Weblinks may be included to refer readers to more information.

*Is it possible for voluntary national contributions to be included in country reports?*

13. Yes. Where countries have announced voluntary national contributions aimed at making progress towards achieving the targets, this should be reported in the responses to questions 1 (d), 2 (e), 3 (e), 4 (b), 5 (b) and 6 (b).

*Why is there a question on gender equality?*

14. The aim of Sustainable Development Goal 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Target 5.5 is to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life and target 5.a is to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

15. *The State of the World’s Forests 2018: Forest pathways to sustainable development*<sup>3</sup> presents evidence that forests and trees can make significant contributions to the above targets, but also highlights important data gaps. Responses to question 7 (a) will help in developing a more comprehensive understanding of actions taken to promote gender equality in the forest sector.

*Why is there a question on the International Day of Forests?*

16. In 2012, the General Assembly designated 21 March as the International Day of Forests to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests and

<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/I9535EN/i9535en.pdf>.

of trees outside forests (see resolution 67/200). Responses to question 7 (b) will provide information on how the International Day of Forests is celebrated around the world.

*How will the success stories be used?*

17. Responses to question 8 will be used to illustrate how countries have taken actions aimed at addressing particular global forest goals. Examples of success stories will be used to help make the report to the fifteenth session and the “flagship” publication more interesting to readers. In addition, success stories will be available on the webpage containing the country reports.

*Why is 2015 the “baseline” year?*

18. The 2015 baseline is consistent with the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment process, and the previous report to the Forum on progress towards sustainable forest management was also presented in 2015. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015. Country reports should therefore focus on action taken since the beginning of 2015.

## II. Information from other sources

19. Country reports will be the main source of information for assessing progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals. The Forum will supplement information received from countries with quantitative FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment data and information from other Collaborative Partnership Forum members and sources, including:

(a) Forest Europe, Economic Commission for Europe, International Tropical Timber Organization, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Montreal Process and Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa;

(b) Reports on the state of the world’s forests, produced every two years by FAO;

(c) Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat;

(d) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD);

(e) Other data sources, including the Forest Stewardship Council and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification.

20. Country reports do not need to repeat data that have already been supplied to the above sources.

*What is the relationship between country reports and the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020?*

21. Some global forest goal targets are qualitative and the assessment of progress will rely upon qualitative information provided in country reports. The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 will be the main source of quantitative data. It has been designed by FAO in collaboration with the collaborative forest resources

questionnaire partners<sup>4</sup> and other experts to respond to the latest information needs, including those relating to reporting on the global forest goals.<sup>5</sup> All data published in the Global Forest Resources Assessment are endorsed by the authorities responsible for forests in the country to which they refer.

22. The reporting format for country reports requests only information that is not already provided to international databases such as the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020.

23. To achieve consistency between the two reporting processes, it is important that national correspondents preparing country reports coordinate with the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 national correspondent for their country. Contact details for Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 national correspondents can be obtained by emailing the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 secretariat at [fra@fao.org](mailto:fra@fao.org).

*What is the relationship with the Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators?*

24. The global forest goals are aimed at contributing to progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Paris Agreement and other international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals, and the vision, principles and commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide the context for the global forest goals.<sup>6</sup>

25. As explained in *The State of the World's Forests 2018*, sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests is vital to integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Several of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly refer to forests, namely:

(a) Target 6.6: By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes;

(b) Target 15.1: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements;

(c) Target 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally;

(d) Target 15.b: Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation.

26. At present, there are only two Sustainable Development Goal indicators that would be helpful in assessing progress towards the global forest goals, namely, indicator 15.1.1 (increase forest area as a proportion of total land area) and indicator 15.2.1 (progress towards sustainable forest management). As explained in

<sup>4</sup> The collaborative forest resources questionnaire was developed through cooperation among regional criteria and indicator processes and introduced with the *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015: How are the world's forests changing?* to reduce the reporting burden and increase data consistency. The collaborative forest resources questionnaire partners are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Forest Europe, the Economic Commission for Europe, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Montreal Process and the Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.fao.org/3/I8699EN/i8699en.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> While most of these goals and targets are to be achieved by 2030, some are to be achieved by 2020.

section IV, certain other Sustainable Development Goal indicators have the potential to provide information, but only if data relating to forests are disaggregated.

*What is the relationship with the global core set of forest-related indicators?*

27. Country reports do not need to provide input for the global core set of forest-related indicators being developed by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; this paragraph of the explanatory notes is for information only. The global core set of forest-related indicators is aligned with the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management,<sup>7</sup> and the aim is that the global core set should address topics identified by high-level forums in an efficient manner that avoids duplicate reporting.<sup>8</sup> The Forum has welcomed progress made and has acknowledged the value of the global core set of indicators in assessing progress towards achieving the global forest goals and other internationally agreed forest-related goals and targets.

### III. Assessing progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals

28. This section explains how information from country reports and other sources will be used to assess progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals and their targets.

#### **Global forest goal 1**

**Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change<sup>9</sup>**

*Target 1.1 Forest area is increased by 3 per cent worldwide*

29. FAO will use numerical information (Unit: thousand hectares) from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting tables 1a (Extent of forest and other wooded land), 1b (Forest characteristics) and 1c (Annual forest expansion, deforestation and net change) to provide a global overview in quantitative terms.

30. Country reports will provide information about challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to promote an increase in forest area. For example, countries may explain how changes in forest area have been influenced by actions that have been taken in their response to questions 1(b); they may highlight challenges, such as natural disasters, in response to question 1(c); and they may note the impact of any methodological changes of their figures for forest area in response to question 1(e).

*Target 1.2 The world's forest carbon stocks are maintained or enhanced*

31. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015: How are the world's forests changing?* revealed that the world's forests store an estimated 296 gigatons of carbon

<sup>7</sup> In accordance with the United Nations forest instrument, these elements are: (a) extent of forest resources; (b) forest biological diversity; (c) forest health and vitality; (d) productive functions of forest resources; (e) protective functions of forest resources; (f) socioeconomic functions of forests; and (g) legal, policy and institutional framework.

<sup>8</sup> The most recent list of global core set forest-related indicators is contained in annex II to [E/CN.18/2018/4](#).

<sup>9</sup> Global forest goal 1 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among others, Sustainable Development Goal targets 6.6, 12.2, 13.1, 13.3, 14.2, 15.1- 15.4 and 15.8, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 7, 9, 11, 14 and 15.

in both above- and below-ground biomass, representing almost half of the total carbon stored in forests.<sup>10</sup> The Forum will use numerical information from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 2d (forest carbon stock in tons per hectare) and reporting table 1a to total forest carbon stocks and their changes. For other stocks, such as harvested wood products, the Forum will ask FAO and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for any additional available information.

32. Country reports will provide information on challenges, including methodological issues, and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to maintain or enhance carbon stocks.

*Target 1.3 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally*

33. Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.2.1 will provide an overview on the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests. This indicator measures progress towards sustainable forest management through five sub-indicators<sup>11</sup> and, to aid interpretation, a dashboard of traffic lights is used, with green, yellow and red indicating the direction and rate of change in each of the sub-indicators at the global and regional levels. The sub-indicators are: annual net rate of change in forest area; above-ground biomass stock in forests; proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas; proportion of forest area under a long-term forest management plan; and forest area under an independently verified forest management certification scheme.

34. The Forum will use numerical information (Unit: 1,000 hectares) from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting tables 1a (Extent of forest and other wooded land), 1b (Forest characteristics) and 1c (Annual forest expansion, deforestation and net change) to provide a global overview in quantitative terms for deforestation, afforestation and reforestation. It will not be possible to provide a global overview of progress on the restoration of degraded forests in quantitative terms, as there is no internationally agreed definition of degraded forest and no consensus on measurement methods. (Reporting table 5c (Degraded forest) of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 does not require data input, although it does request information on any national definitions of “degraded forest” and any monitoring processes in place at the national level, including methodology and any results.)

35. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation. Countries may refer to, and provide, national definitions when describing progress in the restoration of degraded forests.

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

36. Country reports will be the main source of information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of all types of forests to natural disasters and the impact of climate change.

<sup>10</sup> Available at [www.fao.org/3/a-i4793e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4793e.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/1521/en/>.

37. Another potential indicator of progress is the number of countries that have developed national disaster risk reduction strategies that include forest-related measures.<sup>12</sup>

## **Global forest goal 2**

### **Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people<sup>13</sup>**

#### *Target 2.1 Extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people is eradicated*

38. There is no internationally agreed definition of “forest-dependent people”. However, *The State of the World’s Forests 2018* contains an analysis to quantify the contribution of forests towards Sustainable Development Goal target 1.1 (By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day). Based on peer-reviewed studies and available rural poverty data published in 2016, the analysis revealed that roughly 820 million rural people in the tropics live in or near forests and savannahs and suggested that around 251 million of them lived on less than \$1.25 a day. A regional breakdown was also provided. Until further data are available, these figures and methodology offer an approach to developing a baseline for assessing progress towards target 2.1 in quantitative terms. However, this may prove challenging, given that there is still considerable academic debate about the meaning of the term “forest-dependent people”.<sup>14</sup>

39. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to eradicate extreme poverty<sup>15</sup> for all forest-dependent people. They may refer to, and provide, relevant national definitions of forest-dependent people and related data on poverty reduction.

#### *Target 2.2 Increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets*

40. At present, it is not possible to assess progress towards this target in quantitative terms, as no credible statistical information is available on access by small-scale forest enterprises to financial services, or their integration into value chains and markets. While Sustainable Development Goal indicators 9.3.1 (Proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added) and 9.3.2 (Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit) are potentially relevant, neither relate specifically to forest enterprises and they are both still tier 3 indicators.<sup>16</sup>

41. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to increase access by small-scale forest enterprises, in

<sup>12</sup> See FAO, *The State of the World’s Forests 2018: Forest pathways to sustainable development*, available at <http://www.fao.org/3/I9535EN/i9535en.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Global forest goal 2 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among others, Sustainable Development Goal targets 1.1, 1.4, 2.4, 4.4, 5.a, 6.6, 8.3, 9.3, 12.2, 12.5, 15.6 and 15.c, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 4, 14 and 18.

<sup>14</sup> See Peter Newton and others, “Who are forest-dependent people? A taxonomy to aid livelihood and land use decision-making in forested regions”, *Land Use Policy*, vol 57 (2016). Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2016.05.032>.

<sup>15</sup> The World Bank Group currently defines “extreme poverty” as people living on less than \$1.90 a day (2011 purchasing parity power prices). See <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/746163-what-is-the-1-90-poverty-line-and-based-on-this>.

<sup>16</sup> Tier 3 means that no internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested. See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>.

particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and the integration of small-scale forest enterprises into value chains and markets.

*Target 2.3 The contribution of forests and trees to food security is significantly increased*

42. In *State of the World's Forests 2016: Forests and agriculture: land-use challenges and opportunities*,<sup>17</sup> the contribution of forests and trees to food security was examined in some detail, but the analysis was based largely on country case studies. The contribution of forests and trees to food security was also considered in *State of the World's Forests 2014: Enhancing the socioeconomic benefits from forests*<sup>18</sup> and *The State of the World's Forests 2018: Forest pathways to sustainable development*. The country case studies also recognized the indirect contribution of forests to agricultural land productivity. However, at present, there are no robust data sources at the global level for metrics that provide quantitative information on the contribution of forests and trees to the various dimensions of food security, namely, food availability, economic and physical access to food, food utilization, stability and nutrition. Although Sustainable Development Goal indicator 2.3.2 (average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status) refers to the average income of small-scale food producers employed in the farming, pastoral and forestry sectors, it is currently a tier 3 indicator and does not provide disaggregated forest-related data.

43. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to increase the contribution of forests and trees to food security. This may include references to data that are available at the national level on the contribution of forests and trees to food security.

*Target 2.4 The contribution of forest industry, other forest-based enterprises and forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development, among other things, is significantly increased*

44. This target has social, economic and environmental dimensions. To assess progress towards target 2.4 in quantitative terms, it is proposed that the following data series be used:

- Social: changes in employment in the forestry and logging sector. Numerical information (1,000 years full-time employment equivalents) from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 7a (Employment in forestry and logging) will provide a global overview. In *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015*, it was reported that employment in forests was around 12.7 million people full-time equivalent in 2010. However, as explained in *The State of the World's Forests 2018*, it must be recognized that this figure takes no account of either indirect employment (e.g., in enterprises that supply goods and services to forest enterprises or add value to forests products) or the informal sector. (*The State of the World's Forests 2018* referred to estimates suggesting that, directly and indirectly, the formal forest sector provides more than 45 million jobs and that, in addition, some 40 to 60 million people are involved in the informal forest sector.)
- Economic: changes in value added by the forest sector and its contribution to the global economy. In *State of the World's Forests 2014*, it is stated that, overall, the value added in the forest sector amounted to just over \$600 billion in 2011 and accounted for about 0.9 per cent of the global economy. This

<sup>17</sup> Available at <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofo/2016/en/>. See chapter 4.

<sup>18</sup> Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3710e.pdf>.

information will need to be updated. Furthermore, as explained in *State of the World's Forests 2014*, consumption benefits relating to energy, shelter, food security and health are recognized as more significant than monetary income from the sector, but it is difficult to obtain the relevant data on these other economic benefits.

- Environmental: Targets 2.5 and 3.1 already relate to biodiversity, climate change and conservation. To avoid overlap, it is proposed that the environmental dimension for target 2.4 be assessed by reference to targets 2.5 and 3.1, together with information from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 3a (Designated management objective) on the proportions of forests managed for soil and water conservation as a designated management objective and as a primary management objective. (Further information on the environmental importance of management for soil and water conservation is summarized in *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015* and *The State of the World's Forests 2018*.)

45. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to increase the contribution of forest industry, other forest-based enterprises and forest ecosystem services to social, economic (including the informal sector) and environmental development, among other things. To consider “other things” that may be relevant in this context, country correspondents may wish to refer to the list of national policies and measures contained in paragraph 6 of the United Nations forest instrument (General Assembly resolution [62/98](#), annex).

*Target 2.5 The contribution of all types of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation is enhanced, taking into account the mandates and ongoing work of relevant conventions and instruments*

46. To assess progress towards the biodiversity conservation element of this target in quantitative terms, the Forum will use the following data series:

- Numerical information (Unit: 1,000 hectares) from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 1e (Specific forest categories) on changes in area of primary forest
- Numerical information from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 3a (Designated management objective) on the proportions of forests managed for conservation of biodiversity as a designated management objective and as a primary management objective.

47. If disaggregated information for forests becomes available, it may be possible to supplement these data series with information relating to Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.1.2 (proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type) and Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.5.1 (Red List Index).

48. It will be more challenging to assess progress towards the climate change mitigation and adaptation element of this target. If sufficient progress is made, it may be possible for the Forum to use global core set indicator 3 (net greenhouse gas emissions (source)/removals (sink) of forests, and carbon balance of harvested wood products) to assess progress in terms of climate change mitigation, or indicators contained in reports to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Another possible approach is to repeat the analysis carried out for *The State of the World's Forests 2018*, which revealed that at least 120 countries had mentioned forests in their submissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (nationally determined contributions, national communications, national adaptation programmes of action and national adaptation plans).

49. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to enhance the contribution of all types of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation. They may also refer to relevant national communications to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Diversification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

### **Global forest goal 3**

**Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests<sup>19</sup>**

*Target 3.1 The area of forests worldwide designated as protected areas or conserved through other effective area-based conservation measures is significantly increased*

50. The Forum will use numerical information (Unit: 1,000 hectares) from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 3a (Designated management objective) on the proportions of forests managed for conservation of biodiversity as a designated management objective and as a primary management objective and from reporting table 3b (Forest area within legally established protected areas and forest area with long-term forest management plan) to provide a global overview.

51. Country reports will provide information about challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to increase the area of forests designated as protected areas or conserved through other effective area-based conservation measures.

*Target 3.2 The area of forests under long-term forest management plans is significantly increased*

52. The Forum will use numerical information (Unit: 1,000 hectares) from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 3b (Forest area within legally established protected areas and forest area with long-term forest management plan) to provide a global overview.

53. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to increase the area of forests under long-term forest management plans.

*Target 3.3 The proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests is significantly increased*

54. Country reports will provide information on challenges and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to increase the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests. While many forests are sustainably managed without certification, country reports may also refer to the proportion of forest products from certified forests (including forests certified under internationally and/or nationally approved schemes).

<sup>19</sup> Global forest goal 3 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among others, Sustainable Development Goal targets 7.2, 12.2, 12.6, 12.7, 14.2, 14.5, 15.2 and 15.4, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 7, 11, 12 and 16.

**Global forest goal 4****Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships<sup>20</sup>**

*Target 4.1 Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation*

55. Analysis carried out for *The State of the World's Forests 2018* revealed that in 2015, the disbursement of official development assistance (ODA) on forestry was about \$800 million, which was less than 1 per cent of total ODA. That information, derived from OECD databases, will be updated by the Forum. It is more difficult to obtain comprehensive information at the global level on other sources of finance for sustainable forest management; however, every effort will be made to draw upon the information that is available. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 4 (c) will provide information on the sources of increased finance for sustainable forest management.

56. Country reports will also provide information on challenges in mobilizing funds and actions taken at the national and subnational levels to mobilize significant resources to finance sustainable forest management. Responses to question 4 (a) can be used for any clarification that is considered necessary.<sup>21</sup> If there is a decrease in financial resources for sustainable forest management, this can be noted in the section on challenges in the response to question 4 (c).<sup>22</sup>

*Target 4.2 Forest-related financing from all sources at all levels, including public (national, bilateral, multilateral and triangular), private and philanthropic financing is significantly increased*

57. The sources of information are the same as for target 4.1.

*Target 4.3 North-South, South-South, North-North and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation in the forest sector are significantly enhanced and increased*

58. This target relates to the second part of the goal, namely, to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 4 (d) will provide information on the numbers of countries engaged in different types of international cooperation to promote sustainable forest management.

59. Country reports will also provide further information on actions taken at the national and subnational levels to enhance and increase North-South, South-South, North-North and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation in the forest sector.

<sup>20</sup> Global forest goal 4 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among others, Sustainable Development Goal targets 12.a, 15.7, 15.a, 15.b, 17.1–17.3, 17.6, 17.7 and 17.16–17.19, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Target 19.

<sup>21</sup> For example, clarifications on the scale of any increase in financial resources; whether the country is a donor or recipient of official development assistance; the nature of any REDD+ benefits; funding for sustainable forest management that is subsumed within more general funding for conservation measures.

<sup>22</sup> Other challenges may include, for example, a need for additional funding for capacity-building.

*Target 4.4 The number of countries that have developed and implemented forest financing strategies and have access to financing from all sources is significantly increased*

60. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 4 (e) will provide information on the number of countries that have developed or implemented forest financing strategies and their time frames.

61. Country reports will also provide further information on challenges in mobilizing funds and on other actions taken at the national and subnational levels to increase access to financing from all sources.

*Target 4.5 The collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information is improved through, for example, multi-disciplinary scientific assessments*

62. This target also relates to the second part of the goal, namely, strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships. Country reports will provide information on the actions taken at the national and subnational levels to improve the collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information. This information will be provided in the responses to question 4 (a).

### **Global forest goal 5**

**Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>23</sup>**

*Target 5.1 The number of countries that have integrated forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies is significantly increased*

63. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 5 (c) will provide information on the number of countries that have integrated forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies.

64. Country reports will also provide further information in response to question 5 (a) about action aimed at integrating forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies. Responses to question 5 (a) can be used for any comment on the effectiveness of such action and any necessary clarifications regarding question 5 (d).<sup>24</sup>

*Target 5.2 Forest law enforcement and governance are enhanced, including through significantly strengthening national and subnational forest authorities, and illegal logging and associated trade are significantly reduced worldwide*

65. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 5 (d) will provide information on the number of countries that have taken steps to prevent and reduce illegal international trafficking in forest products, wildlife and other biological resources and on the type of action taken. (This may include steps that are being taken to continue action that was initiated before 2015.) In addition, information from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 6a (Policies, legislation and national platform for stakeholder participation in forest policy) may provide

<sup>23</sup> Global forest goal 5 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among others, Sustainable Development Goal targets 1.4, 2.4, 5.a, 15.c, 15.9, 16.3, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10 and 17.14, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2 and 3.

<sup>24</sup> For example, explaining if the country uses another name for its national sustainable development plan/poverty reduction strategy; commenting, if necessary, on the extent to which forests are integrated into the national sustainable development plan/poverty reduction strategy; or making a note if there is no national sustainable development plan/poverty reduction strategy.

information on the existence of a traceability system for wood products. Data from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna will also be used to assess progress towards this target.

66. Country reports will also use responses to question 5 (a) to provide further information about action aimed at making progress towards this target and the effectiveness thereof. Given that the target relates to enhancing forest law enforcement and governance and reducing illegal logging and associated trade, this is broader than question 5 (d). For some countries, the actions they report may be part of a wider regional initiative.<sup>25</sup>

*Target 5.3 National and subnational forest-related policies and programmes are coherent, coordinated and complementary across ministries, departments and authorities, consistent with national laws, and engage relevant stakeholders, local communities and indigenous peoples, fully recognizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

67. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 5 (e) will provide information on the number of countries that have mechanisms in place to ensure cross-sectoral coordination among government agencies. (In this context, “mechanisms to ensure cross-sectoral coordination” are mechanisms that contribute towards this target: these would include, for example, mechanisms to achieve coherence between national and subnational policies and programmes as well across ministries, departments and authorities at the national level.)

68. The second part of this target relates to stakeholder engagement. Information from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 reporting table 6a (Policies, legislation and national platform for stakeholder participation in forest policy) will provide a global overview of the number of countries with a national platform for stakeholder participation in forest policy.

69. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 5 (f) will provide information on the types of mechanisms that countries have in place to involve stakeholders, including local communities and indigenous peoples, in sustainable forest management policy formulation, planning and implementation.

*Target 5.4 Forest-related issues and the forest sector are fully integrated into decision-making processes concerning land use planning and development*

70. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 5 (g) will provide information on the number of countries that have mechanisms in place to involve the forest sector in cross-sectoral coordination among government agencies in charge of land use planning and development and on the types of mechanism that are in place. If necessary, the box in 5 (g) may be used to comment on the extent to which forest-related issues are integrated into land use planning and development. (It may be appropriate to make a cross-reference to question 5.1 if land use plans are a component of national sustainable development plans.)

<sup>25</sup> This would include, for example, action by European Union member States in relation to the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan.

**Global forest goal 6<sup>26</sup>**

**Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders<sup>27</sup>**

*Target 6.3 Cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation and forest degradation are significantly enhanced at all levels*

71. Country reports will provide information in response to question 6 (a) about actions taken at the national and subnational levels to enhance cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation and forest degradation.

*Target 6.4 A greater common understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management is achieved and an associated set of indicators is identified*

72. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 6 (c) will provide information on the number of countries in which there are criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, the types of indicators and the purposes for which they are used.

73. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 6 (d) will provide information on the number of countries in which action has been taken to promote a greater understanding and awareness of sustainable forest management and on the nature of such action, which could include, for example, publications, media campaigns, educational programmes or motivational events.

*Target 6.5 The input and involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan and in the work of the Forum, including intersessional work, is strengthened*

74. Analysis of responses in country reports to question 6 (e) will provide information on the number of countries in which the Government has taken action to involve major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan and on the nature of such action, which may include, for example, strengthening of stakeholder engagement, capacity-building, partnerships and devolving public forest management rights.

## **IV. Explanation of terms used in the reporting format**

*What is meant by legislative, policy, financial and institutional actions?*

75. The reporting format adopted by the Forum at its thirteenth session requests information from countries on legislative and policy actions, institutional actions, financial actions and technical and scientific actions taken to support the implementation of the strategic plan. It is proposed that, for the purposes of country reports, responses to questions should focus on the following types of action:

<sup>26</sup> Targets 6.1 and 6.2 are not included under global forest goal 6 in the reporting format, as they address actions taken by the international community, not those taken at the national level. Information on progress towards these targets will be requested from members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

<sup>27</sup> Global forest goal 6 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among others, Sustainable Development Goal target 17.14.

- *Legislative actions.* These may include improvements to national or subnational legislation and regulations that govern and guide sustainable forest management; and the strengthening of forest law enforcement.
- *Policy actions.* These may include national or subnational policies, programmes or strategies that explicitly encourage sustainable forest management and are contained in formal statements or documents produced by Governments or other public sector bodies setting out goals, proposals for action and underlying principles.
- *Institutional actions.* These may include actions to strengthen institutions, including public sector bodies and/or bodies that promote the interests of the private sector, communities or civil society; and actions to establish or strengthen partnerships, including public-private sector partnerships and joint programmes with stakeholders, to advance the implementation of sustainable forest management.
- *Financial actions.* Responses to questions 1 (a) (iii), 2 (a) (iii) and 3 (a) (iii) may include actions aimed at mobilizing increased financial resources for achieving particular targets. Responses to question 4 (a) may include details of broader actions, including, for example, the creation of enabling environments to encourage investment in sustainable forest management and the development of national forest financing strategies.
- *Technical and scientific actions.* These may include actions to promote capacity-building for science and technology, develop and apply scientific and technological innovations, facilitate access to and transfer of technology, analyse threats to forest health and vitality and incorporate scientific expertise into forest policies and programmes.

*What are “major groups”?*

76. Agenda 21, adopted at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, formalized nine sectors of society as the main channels through which broad participation would be facilitated in United Nations activities related to sustainable development. These are called “major groups” and are: women; children and youth; indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological community; and farmers.

*Terms and definitions used in the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020*

77. To provide continuity and consistency of data over time, several forest-related terms have been carefully defined for the purposes of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020. These are contained in FAO working paper No. 188, entitled “Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Terms and Definitions”.<sup>28</sup> These definitions should also be used for the purposes of country reports.

*What does “significantly” mean in the context of the global forest goals and targets?*

78. Several of the global forest goals and targets use the word “significantly” (e.g., “significantly increase” or “significantly enhance”). The relevant Oxford Dictionary definition of “significantly” in this context is “in a sufficiently great or important way as to be worthy of attention”.

<sup>28</sup> Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/I8661EN/i8661en.pdf>.

*What is the “informal economy”?*

79. The informal economy can be broadly defined as economic activity not subject to government regulation, monitoring or taxation.

*What does “mobilize” mean, as used in global forest goal 4?*

80. In this context, “mobilize” means securing financial resources and using them to finance sustainable forest management.

*What is meant by North-South, South-South, North-North and triangular cooperation?*

81. The “North” means developed countries and the “South” means developing countries. For example, North-South cooperation refers to the exchange of expertise between one or more developed countries and one or more developing countries, and South-South cooperation means cooperation between two or more developing countries. Triangular cooperation involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country or countries or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programmes and projects.<sup>29</sup>

*What is a public-private partnership?*

82. This term can be used in different ways, but one definition of a public-private partnership is “a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance”. Public-private partnerships typically do not include service contracts or turnkey construction contracts, which are categorized as public procurement projects, or the privatization of utilities where there is a limited ongoing role for the public sector.<sup>30</sup>

*What about other terms?*

83. As explained above, there are some terms, such as “forest degradation” and “forest-dependent people”, that do not have an internationally accepted definition. In such cases, country reports may refer to, and provide, relevant national definitions.

### **Importance of reporting in the assessment of progress**

84. The efforts of all those involved in preparing country reports are greatly appreciated. The reports will have an invaluable role in the assessment of the progress that is being made towards the sustainable management of the world’s forests.

---

<sup>29</sup> For more detail, see the framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation contained in the note by the Secretary-General SSC/17/3.

<sup>30</sup> Based on information at <https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/overview/what-are-public-private-partnerships>.