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## United Nations Forum on Forests

### Fifteenth session

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Items 3 (a), 3 (c) and 8 of the provisional agenda\*

### Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:

**Policy dialogue on the thematic and operational  
priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the  
period 2019–2020, taking into account the review cycle  
of the high-level political forum on sustainable  
development during the biennium and the theme of the  
International Day of Forests**

**United Nations system-wide contributions to the  
implementation of the global forest goals and targets**

**High-level segment, including a forest partnership forum with  
the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, non-governmental  
organizations and private sector chief executive officers**

## Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

### Information note

#### *Summary*

In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017–2020, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its fifteenth session, will consider the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. The present note provides background information and highlights the intersessional activities conducted by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests since the fourteenth session of the Forum, for consideration by the Forum under items 3 (a), 3 (c) and 8 of the provisional agenda for its fifteenth session.

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\* E/CN.18/2020/1.



## I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2017–2020, the Forum at its fifteenth session will consider the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, with the engagement of, and exchange of experiences among, States members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional organizations, major groups and other relevant stakeholders. In particular, the Forum will hold a policy dialogue on the thematic and operational priorities, taking into account the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development for 2020, “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development” and the theme of the International Day of Forests for 2020, “Forests and biodiversity”, and on the United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets.
2. At its fifteenth session, the Forum will convene a high-level segment, including a forest partnership forum with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Forum will also adopt its quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024, including consideration of its priority actions and resource needs.
3. The present note has been prepared to provide background information for discussions on the above-mentioned issues under items 3 (a), 3 (c) and 8 of the provisional agenda for the fifteenth session. The note provides an overview of the activities conducted by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests since the fourteenth session of the Forum. In addition, the note refers to relevant proposals contained in the summary by the Chair of the fourteenth session of the Forum (see [E/2019/42](#), annex I).

## II. Background

4. The United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/285](#), serves as a reference for the forest-related work of the United Nations system to achieve the global forest goals and targets. In accordance with paragraph 43 of the strategic plan, its use should be promoted within the United Nations system, including through inter-agency coordination mechanisms and, where appropriate, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.
5. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests has an important role in the implementation of the strategic plan and the member organizations of the Partnership were thus encouraged, as set out in the plan, to integrate the relevant global forest goals and targets into the forest-related plans and programmes of their respective organizations, where appropriate and consistent with their mandates.
6. At its thirteenth session, the Forum welcomed the Collaborative Partnership on Forests workplan for 2017–2020 and invited the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Partnership to support the implementation of the workplan, consistent with their mandates. The Forum further requested the Partnership to report on progress in the implementation of the plan to the Forum at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions (see [E/2018/42](#), chap. I.B).
7. In order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic plan, the Forum held technical discussions at its fourteenth session. During that session, the Chair of the Partnership also provided an update on the development of the strategic vision of the

Partnership towards 2030. During the discussions, it was highlighted that the strategic vision of the Partnership towards 2030 and its workplan for the period 2021–2024, revolving around the six global forest goals, offered important opportunities to advance global forest policy coherence within and across the United Nations system and the member organizations of the Partnership.

8. The summary of discussions by the Chair of the fourteenth session contained several proposals regarding the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, which were put forth for further consideration by the Forum at its fifteenth session. These included: (a) enhanced use of the strategic plan as an integrated framework for forest-based national actions and international cooperation to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 15, and the objectives of the Paris Agreement; and (b) alignment of the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the period 2021–2024 with the Forum's quadrennial programme of work for the same period (E/2019/42, annex I, para. 40 (a) (i) and (a) (ii)).

### III. Strategic vision of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests towards 2030

9. In December 2018, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, during a retreat,<sup>1</sup> discussed its future direction beyond 2020, including the development of its strategic vision towards 2030 in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. In this context, members of the Partnership established a working group to develop a draft of its strategic vision, to be considered and decided upon at a meeting of the principals of the Partnership, in advance of the fifteenth session of the Forum.

10. At a meeting of the members of the Partnership held in May 2019,<sup>2</sup> member organizations of the Partnership engaged in an initial discussion on the planning for the development of the strategic vision of the Partnership towards 2030, which included various ways to facilitate the work of the working group. As part of the follow-up to that meeting, the Forum secretariat commissioned the production of an analytical study on the structure, scope, key components and content of the strategic vision of the Partnership towards 2030, taking into account relevant outcomes of the past analyses conducted by the Partnership.<sup>3</sup>

11. The working group of the Partnership met in September 2019 and November 2019 and developed its proposal for the strategic vision of the Partnership towards 2030. The heads and principals of the Partnership's member organizations met in January 2020 and endorsed the vision, as contained in the annex to the present note.

12. The strategic vision of the Partnership towards 2030 reflects the values and aspirations of its member organizations with respect to collectively advancing sustainable forest management worldwide and supporting relevant action by members States, as well as other stakeholders. The strategic vision also provides the foundation for a coherent and powerful account of what the Partnership aims to accomplish by 2030, in the form of a vision statement and strategic priorities.

<sup>1</sup> The summary report of the retreat held on 10 and 11 December 2018 is available on the website of the Forum: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-meetings/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> The summary report of the meeting held on 5 May 2019 is available on the website of the Forum: [www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-meetings/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-meetings/index.html).

<sup>3</sup> See Forum website at [www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/index.html).

13. In its vision statement, the Partnership envisions that by 2030 all types of forests and forest landscapes are sustainably managed, their multiple values are fully recognized, the potential of forests and their goods and services is fully unlocked, and the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and other global forest-related goals, targets and commitments are achieved. The Partnership further envisions that in order to support countries in achieving these aims, the Partnership will need to effectively enhance coherence and synergy on forest-related issues and values among its member organizations and help move the global trend from deforestation to restoration.

14. In order to ensure the realization of the vision statement, the Partnership identified the following strategic priorities to focus its wide-ranging activities: (a) supporting the achievement of the globally agreed goals and targets on forests; (b) promoting the science-policy interface and science-based decision-making; (c) enhancing communication and outreach activities; (d) enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration, policy coherence, coordination and integrated approaches; (e) unlocking the full potential and values of forests; and (f) identifying emerging issues of significant concerns to forests.

15. The efforts of the Partnership and its member organizations in mobilizing resources for their joint work needs to be supported and complemented substantially by countries, in particular, donor countries, since the sustained and effective support of the members of the Partnership to countries is heavily dependent on the availability of sufficient resources to advance its activities.

#### **IV. Implementation of the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the period 2017–2020, and planning for the workplan of the Partnership for the period 2021–2024**

16. The Partnership formulated its workplan for the period 2017–2020 in accordance with paragraph 22 (e) of Economic and Social Council resolution [2015/33](#) and presented it at the thirteenth session of the Forum. Since its formulation, the workplan has been updated on a periodic basis so as to remain aligned with the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum, taking into account the relevant workplans of members.

17. Pursuant to Council resolution [2015/33](#), the workplan encompasses recurrent activities of the Partnership, joint initiatives of the Partnership and activities to strengthen the Partnership. The workplan for 2017–2020 covers priorities for collective action by all members or subsets of members; joint initiatives of the Partnership, including their objectives, their relevance to the global forest goals, forest-related Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the lead agencies and other partners involved, the time frame for implementation, and the external partners involved, as well as the resource implications of the planned and/or ongoing activities.

18. Several member organizations of the Partnership participated in the expert group meeting on the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2021–2024, held in November 2019. The Partnership confirmed its continued commitment to develop the workplan of the Partnership for the period 2021–2024 in line with the Forum's programme of work for the same period.

19. Further information on key action taken by the Partnership since the fourteenth session of the Forum is provided below.

## A. Meetings of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

20. The Partnership held five meetings since the fourteenth session of the Forum, alongside major forest-related events, and discussed its activities in support of the implementation of the strategic plan for forests. The first meeting was held during the fourteenth session of the Forum; the second, during the fourteenth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in September 2019; the third was held in conjunction with the expert group meeting on the Forum's quadrennial programme of work, in November 2019; the fourth was a meeting of the principals of the Partnership, on 27 January 2020; and the fifth meeting was held in conjunction with the meeting of the principals of the Partnership, on 28 January 2020.<sup>4</sup>

21. The Partnership also held a meeting with potential donor countries on 7 May 2019, on the margins of the fourteenth session of the Forum, and plans to continue to hold such meetings with potential donors on the margins of future sessions of the Forum and other meetings of its member organizations in order to identify and inform the Partnership's resource needs.

22. The Partnership and several of its members participated in an event hosted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Forum secretariat on 11 December 2019 during the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.<sup>5</sup> The event highlighted the essential role of sustainably managed forests in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the objective of the Paris Agreement, as well as the role and contributions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations in protecting and restoring forests through implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the Paris Agreement.

## B. Joint initiatives

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

### Communicators' Network

24. The main task of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Communicators' Network is to consider and recommend the annual theme for the celebrations of the International Day of Forests and coordinate the related activities. The Network also provides support for the organization of activities relating to the Wangari Maathai Award and the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy for the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

25. In the light of the importance of the year 2020 in the global dialogue on biodiversity, it was recommended that the celebrations of the International Day of Forests on 21 March 2020 be focused on forests and biodiversity, offering an opportunity to also highlight the role of the natural environment and in particular of forests in a sustainable future. Shortly after the fourteenth session of the Forum, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Forum secretariat, through joint communication, advised Member States of the chosen theme

<sup>4</sup> The summary reports of the Partnership's meetings are available on the website of the Forum: [www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-meetings/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-meetings/index.html).

<sup>5</sup> Further information on the event is available at [www.un.org/esa/forests/events/cop25-unff-11-dec-2019/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/events/cop25-unff-11-dec-2019/index.html).

and offered various outreach products for use. Events were held by the Forum secretariat at the United Nations headquarters and by FAO at its headquarters.

26. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations prepared a 60-second video message, which aired for one month on major global television channels, launched a photography contest and created a dedicated website for the International Day of Forests 2020.

27. The Forum secretariat prepared a social media advisory which contained suggestions for conveying the key messages for the International Day, on Twitter and Facebook. Digital cards were created to accompany the key messages, and materials such as posters, gifs, photographs and videos were also made available.

28. With respect to the themes for the celebrations of the International Day of Forests in 2021 and 2022, preparations are under way to present a proposal for consideration by the Forum at its fifteenth session.

29. The Communicators' Network continued to support the implementation of the communication strategy of the strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and contributed to the fourteenth session. The regional forest communicators' networks of FAO also contributed to the implementation of the strategy.

### **Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network**

30. The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, established in accordance with Council resolution [2015/33](#), works in close cooperation with Member States and member organizations of the Partnership to implement its priorities, as outlined in the strategic plan for forests. Detailed information on the work of the Financing Facilitation Network, in its role as clearing house, as well as proposals for further collaboration with the member organizations of the Partnership, are provided in the note by the Secretariat on the means of implementation for sustainable forest management, focusing on the availability of resources for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and its priority actions and resource needs for the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024 ([E/CN.18/2020/5](#)).

### **Global forest expert panels**

31. The global forest expert panels initiative is coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. The initiative periodically assembles international scientific expert panels on forest-related emerging issues and topics of high concern. The expert panels synthesize existing available scientific information on specific topics in an interdisciplinary, comprehensive and transparent manner, and produce reports to support more informed global decision-making on forest-related issues. Since its launch in April 2007, the initiative has completed six thematic assessments, on: (a) adaptation of forests and people to climate change; (b) the international forest regime; (c) biodiversity, forest management and 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 (REDD-plus); (d) forests and food security; (e) illegal logging and the related timber trade; and (f) forests and water.

32. The activities of the global forest expert panels support the effective attainment of the global forest goals and related targets, as called for in target 4.5 of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. Outcomes from the 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.<sup>6</sup>

33. Scientific assessment reports produced by the global forest expert panels improve the understanding of synergies and trade-offs between the different global forest goals and related targets, and how the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and different forest-related policies and programmes can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the expert panel assessment on forests, food security and nutrition (2015)<sup>7</sup> provided scientific input for the global debate on forests (Goal 15) and food security (Goal 2) during the twelfth session of the Forum in 2017. The assessment on forests and water (2018),<sup>8</sup> in which the expert panel explored the interlinkages between Goal 6 on water and Goal 15 on forests was promoted at and contributed to the thirteenth session of the Forum, in 2018, including through the commissioning of a background study on the topic of forests and water, in preparation for the thirteenth session.

34. In 2019, all the activities and tasks that had been envisaged as part of the expert panel initiative, as described in the workplan of the Partnership, had been completed. Early in 2019, the expert panel team initiated the seventh assessment, on the topic of forests and poverty. The expert panel assessment on forests and poverty<sup>9</sup> will provide policymakers, investors and donors with a stronger scientific basis for reaching decisions of relevance to poverty alleviation and forests. It will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by highlighting the nexus between Goal 1 on ending poverty and Goal 15 on life on land, as well as relevant links to Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, and Goal 10 on reduced inequalities. It will also respond to the proposal, made at the twelfth session of the Forum, that independent, credible assessments of the contribution of forests to poverty alleviation be conducted, with a view to assisting in the design of appropriate policy measures for different situations (E/2017/42, annex I, para. 14 (a)).

35. The scoping meeting for the assessment was held on 23 and 24 May 2019 at the headquarters of FAO, in Rome. The terms of reference, including the thematic outline of the assessment, were officially endorsed by the Partnership in June 2019. The expert panel team then invited selected scientists to participate in the expert panel, which at the time of writing has a membership consisting of 22 internationally recognized and leading scientists on the topic. The first meeting of the expert panel was held from 27 to 29 August 2019 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, United States of America. The manuscripts for each chapter will be finalized over the course of two further meetings of the expert panel: the second meeting, held in January 2020 in Nairobi, hosted by the World Agroforestry Centre; and the third meeting, to be held in the second quarter of 2020 in Vienna.

36. The launch of the expert panel assessment report and the policy brief on forests and poverty is planned during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, in September 2020, at United Nations Headquarters. Outreach activities and promotion of the assessment in 2020 may include contributions to the fifteenth session of the Forum, the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on Forestry of FAO, the Global Landscapes Forum

<sup>6</sup> Collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information is improved through, for example, multi-disciplinary scientific assessments.

<sup>7</sup> Bhaskar Vira, Christopher Wildburger and Stephanie Mansourian, eds., “Forests, trees and landscapes for food security and nutrition: a global assessment report”, IUFRO World Series, vol. 33 (Vienna, International Union of Forest Research Organizations, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Irena F. Creed and Meine van Noordwijk, eds., *Forests and Water on a Changing Planet: Vulnerability, Adaptation and Governance Opportunities – A Global Assessment Report*, IUFRO World Series, vol. 38 (Vienna, International Union of Forest Research Organizations, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> See [www.iufro.org/science/gfep/forests-and-poverty-panel/](http://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/forests-and-poverty-panel/).



2020, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant events.

### **Global Forest Information Service**

37. The Global Forest Information Service initiative, led and coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, was launched in 2002 to enhance access to all forest-related information, ensuring that it is accessible to all stakeholders including policymakers, forest managers, non-governmental organizations, community groups and the public at large.

38. The gateway provided by the Service is a mechanism that supports the implementation of the strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, in particular through contributing to the mobilization of the best available scientific and traditional forest-related knowledge, as well as to the enhancement of cooperation and synergies on forest-related communications and outreach to increase the impact of the messaging from the United Nations system, the Partnership and its member organizations and other partners. The Service effectively contributes to achieving all global forest goals and is of particular relevance for global forest goal 4 and target 4.5. The Service can also support the implementation of paragraphs 59, 69, 70 and 71 of the strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

39. The Service completed its planned activities and tasks for 2019 as described in the workplan of the Partnership. The Service gateway continued to be renewed in terms of layout, functionality and security. The global database of forest-related university programmes, an initiative launched by the Service and the Joint Task Force on Forest Education by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the International Forestry Students' Association, was maintained and enhanced. The database currently includes information on over 1,275 programmes from more than 315 institutions. In addition to information on the university programmes, approximately 150 online resources were added to the education database. The education section of the Service<sup>10</sup> will also serve as a basis for the online platform for forest education in the frame of a joint project of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization on a global forest education platform.

40. An external review of the Service is planned for early 2020, in order to assess the relevance of the Service, identify suitable niches in the context of global forest information dissemination and to formulate guidance on the future of the Service.

### **Streamlining global forest-related reporting**

41. Detailed information on streamlining global forest-related reporting, including progress regarding the global core set of forest-related indicators, 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.18/2020/4](#)).

### **Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award**

42. Launched by the Partnership in 2012, the Wangari Maathai Award seeks to honour the legacy of the Kenyan environmentalist and first female African Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Wangari Maathai, and to recognize outstanding contributions to the preservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests. It also seeks

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<sup>10</sup> See [www.gfis.net/content/education](http://www.gfis.net/content/education).



to raise awareness of the key role that forests play in supporting local communities, rural livelihoods, women and the environment.

43. The award is based on open voluntary nominations, which are reviewed and evaluated by an international jury, composed of eminent personalities and convened solely for the purpose of selecting the winner of the award on a single occasion, with appropriate geographical and gender balance.

44. On the basis of the jury's recommendation, the Wangari Maathai Award for 2019 was presented to Leonidas Nzigiyimpa of Burundi for his remarkable achievements and his passionate commitment and outstanding contribution to improving forests and the lives of indigenous peoples, women and youth in his country. The ceremony took place on 30 September 2019, following the opening of the twenty-fifth World Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, held in Curitiba, Brazil.

45. In addition to generating global recognition, the Wangari Maathai Award also includes a \$20,000 grant and covers the travel and other logistical arrangements for the awardee, sponsored by several member organizations of the Partnership.

### **Forest landscape restoration**

46. The joint initiative on forest landscape restoration is intended to enhance coordination and collaboration among the member organizations of the Partnership, with a view to enhancing support to countries for advancing forest landscape restoration activities. The initiative supports the effective implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its six global forest goals and associated targets, in particular goal 6.

47. The joint initiative on forest landscape restoration was launched in June 2018, following its approval as a joint initiative by member organizations of the Partnership in April 2017.<sup>11</sup> The initiative is led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).<sup>12</sup>

48. The joint initiative on forest landscape restoration seeks to enhance synergies on forest landscape restoration across policy frameworks and to better assist countries and stakeholders to scale up and strengthen the implementation of forest landscape restoration at the national and subnational levels through improved coordination among member organizations of the Partnership. Such objectives are to be achieved through a number of constituent activities led by member organizations of the Partnership and executed in collaboration with other member organizations of the Partnership under three components: (a) mainstream forest landscape restoration into national, regional and international policy frameworks and facilitate the creation of a coherent in-country enabling environment for forest landscape restoration; (b) increase the efficiency and effectiveness of resource mobilization for forest landscape restoration; and (c) identify, prioritize and implement opportunities for generating enhanced synergies among forest landscape restoration programmes of the member organizations of the Partnership.

49. As part of the joint initiative, 10 member organizations of the Partnership are implementing 21 activities, some of which have been completed, and for several of which implementation is ongoing and scheduled to be completed in the second quarter of 2020. Key activities completed in 2019 include:

<sup>11</sup> See [www.cpfweb.org/95464/en/](http://www.cpfweb.org/95464/en/).

<sup>12</sup> Project documents are available at [www.thegef.org/project/fostering-partnerships-build-coherence-and-support-forest-landscape-restoration](http://www.thegef.org/project/fostering-partnerships-build-coherence-and-support-forest-landscape-restoration).

(a) Publication and dissemination by the International Union for Conservation of Nature of a brief on links between forest landscape restoration and the Sustainable Development Goals, produced for the fourteenth session of the Forum and available online;<sup>13</sup>

(b) Production and adoption by the International Tropical Timber Council of the International Tropical Timber Organization, in December 2019, of updated guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics, which, at the time of writing the present note, are being revised and are expected to be published in a final version in 2020.<sup>14</sup> This was achieved through convening two expert group meetings on forest landscape restoration in close cooperation with member organizations of the Partnership, including the co-chairing of the second meeting by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. During the meetings, participants reviewed the guidelines, which had been formulated to address the six forest landscape restoration principles globally recognized in 2018.<sup>15</sup>

50. Key ongoing joint initiative activities include:

(a) Forum-led work to develop bankable proposals on forest landscape restoration in Thailand and Guinea-Bissau. The efforts to mobilize funding for forest landscape restoration will be further supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature through the coordination of two private sector round tables, focused on strengthening dialogue and the understanding of private sector barriers to investment in forest landscape restoration;

(b) An Asia-Pacific regional workshop, to be organized by the International Tropical Timber Organization in mid-March 2020, in order to promote the new guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics;

(c) A study by FAO on forest landscape restoration programmes conducted by the member organizations of the Partnership in 10 countries in Africa, in which opportunities to improve synergies in forest landscape restoration were identified.

51. Three additional high-priority activities were identified and approved by the steering committee of the joint initiative in May 2019, as follows:

(a) Preparing and promoting the guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics, co-led by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the International Tropical Timber Organization;

(b) Developing a study on the economics of ecosystem restoration, to be co-led by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, FAO and Center for International Forestry Research;

(c) Developing a study on optimizing landscape-scale restoration through the filling of knowledge gaps on restoration and protected areas, to be co-led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and GEF.

52. Results and recommendations of the implementation of the joint initiative on forest landscape restoration will be captured in a final consolidated report to be published in the third or fourth quarter of 2020.

<sup>13</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature, "Forest landscape restoration pathways to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals", 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Available at [www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics\\_pdf\\_download/topics\\_id=6219&no=1&disp=inline](http://www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics_pdf_download/topics_id=6219&no=1&disp=inline); see also [www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics\\_pdf\\_download/topics\\_id=6303&no=1&disp=inline](http://www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics_pdf_download/topics_id=6303&no=1&disp=inline).

<sup>15</sup> P. Besseau, S. Graham and T. Christophersen, eds., "Restoring forests and landscapes: the key to a sustainable future" (Vienna, Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration, 2018).

### **Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World**

53. The “Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World” initiative advanced activities towards achieving all four of its outcomes and strengthened its expertise and outreach capacity when a new partner organization, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, joined in November 2019.

54. Through the initiative’s dialogues and the global green supply chains initiative, all partners of the Sustainable Wood initiative engaged in promoting the importance of sustainable wood value chains to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change objectives.

55. Two regional dialogues delivered by FAO and the World Wide Fund for Nature gathered 28 African countries and contributed to build capacity on value chains, explore the most important contributions from wood to the Sustainable Development Goals in the region and subregions, and produced initial road maps for action as part of the initiative. Cameroon and South Africa benefited from national dialogues. The initiative also targeted the impact of trade on sustainable forestry and worked with China, the largest producer and consumer of wood products in the world, and some of its main trade partners, to explore concrete measures to improve the sustainability of the wood trade and enhance the generation of socioeconomic benefits. The International Tropical Timber Organization and FAO led two global meetings in China, bringing together representatives of the Government of China, Chinese producers and trade associations with countries from Africa and Asia-Pacific, along with international organizations. The results of such meetings are expected to be available in 2020, drawing upon discussions of agreements and concrete steps to increase the legality of the timber trade, as well as cooperation for investments in technical and institutional capacities to increase value addition across wood value chains.

56. All partners in the initiative continued to work on capacity-building for sustainable forest management and the value chain approach. Such work has also strengthened the contributions to other initiatives and projects, such as forest land restoration and the Forest and Farm Facility. FAO launched the timber legality database project and an expert group formed by international organizations, including all the partners in the initiative, has contributed to the scope and design of the new database. Governmental and non-governmental representatives provided feedback on the database proposal through the initiative’s dialogues. The International Tropical Timber Organization has added new activities on legality and education to the initiative workplan, including its legal and sustainable supply chains programme. The Center for International Forestry Research has advanced work on value chains in Africa and, with the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, has worked to discourage the trade in species generally known as rosewood, such as Mukula wood from Zambia.

57. With respect to finance, substantive work continued on approaching private investors, in particular producer associations, to finance forest projects. FAO, the Center for International Forestry Research and the World Wide Fund for Nature have worked on raising the awareness of private investors through global and regional dialogues. FAO has invested in building capacity for business development, in particular of producer associations and in the context of forest restoration efforts, promoting a value chain approach to forest restoration finance. Regarding the bioeconomy, an expert meeting in December 2019 gathered representatives from the private sector, governments and academia to discuss the agenda of the initiative with respect to the bioeconomy, with a focus on inclusiveness, sustainability and strengthening the role of wood in the bioeconomy.

58. The Sustainable Wood initiative is now a reality, with a very strong mobilization capacity and at least 200 engaged professionals exchanging and disseminating knowledge to strengthen the sustainability of wood value chains. The work on wood value chains was well represented at the Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, in 2019, with work presented by all participating organizations and strong positive feedback. Despite such results, the initiative is under threat owing to the lack of direct financial support. Initial progress was made possible through windfall funds, which are not likely to be available in future. New funds are urgently needed to move towards effective implementation of the concrete measures identified, and seize the opportunities created, in 2019.

### **Green finance for sustainable landscapes**

59. An initiative on green finance for sustainable landscapes, co-led by GEF, the Center for International Forestry Research and the United Nations Environment Programme, with the participation of the United Nations Development Programme, was approved by the member organizations of the Partnership at its meeting held on 5 May 2019. In accordance with the project cycle policy of GEF, a project identification form is being finalized, to be submitted to the Facility as part of the request for funding.

60. The initiative is aimed at increasing the finance flows in the agribusiness sector that are directed towards sustainable agricultural commodity production. The objective is to create an enabling environment for promoting sustainable land use, so as to develop the building blocks of a standard for sustainable, deforestation-free land use, to be created by capturing lessons learned and best practices, and so as to engage with, provide training to and empower communities to better leverage their rights to forest and other natural resources in order to secure private investment in socially and environmentally sustainable projects.

61. In addition to providing global environmental benefits aligned with the replenishment programming directions for the seventh replenishment of GEF, the project will contribute to developing innovative financing instruments (Sustainable Development Goal target 15.b and global forest goal 4), creating greater readiness for private sector investment in sustainable land use projects (including sustainable forest management) as a new asset class, and reflect deforestation-related risks in financial decisions, which are among the key actions needed to halt deforestation and increase forest area (Sustainable Development Goal target 15.2 and global forest goal target 1.1).

## **C. Collaborative Partnership on Forests dialogue**

62. In response to the guidance provided by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution [2015/33](#), the Partnership considered ways to enhance its working modalities and formulated a new policy document, which was presented at the twelfth session of the Forum. The new policy document defines the Collaborative Partnership on Forests dialogue as its delivery mechanism to seek collaboration with a wide range of partners and stakeholders in furthering sustainable management of all types of forests.

63. At its meeting held in September 2019, the Partnership decided to develop its proposal for the organization of the Partnership dialogue to facilitate collaboration and communication between the Partnership and interested parties, including major groups and other stakeholders.

64. To that end, the Partnership explored the possibility of organizing such a dialogue during the forthcoming meetings of the governing bodies of its member

organizations, and decided, at the meeting of the Partnership held on 28 January 2020, to take a lead role in organizing a forest partnership forum, to be held during the high-level segment of the fifteenth session of the Forum and serve as an initial Partnership dialogue with non-governmental organizations and private sector chief executive officers.

65. The Partnership also decided to consider organizing a Partnership dialogue in conjunction with the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on Forestry of FAO, to be convened in June 2020.

## **V. Conclusion**

66. The present note serves to reaffirm the important role of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations in supporting and advancing the implementation of the strategic plan, through their joint activities.

67. The wide-ranging scope and outcome of the joint activities conducted by the Partnership illustrate how enhanced cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies among member organizations of the Partnership could accelerate progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals, in particular goal 6 and its targets, and the forest-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, among other forest-related international goals and objectives.

68. It is imperative for the Partnership to capitalize on the momentum generated by the agreement on its strategic vision, as well as on joint activities, so as to ensure and maximize complementarities, synergies and coherence among the policies, programmes and projects of its member organizations in advancing the implementation of the strategic plan.

## **VI. Proposals**

69. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Welcome the strategic vision of the Partnership towards 2030, and invite member organizations of the Partnership to take necessary steps to report to the Forum, on a regular basis, on the status of its implementation, including through the submission of a stand-alone document on the work of the Partnership to the sessions of the Forum;

(b) Invite the Partnership to develop its workplan for the period 2021–2024 in alignment with the Forum's quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024, and take necessary steps to report on the status of its implementation at the sessions of the Forum, on a regular basis;

(c) Encourage its members and the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Partnership to scale up support for the work of the Partnership, including through contributing to the provision of adequate funding for the Partnership's joint initiatives and strengthening the secretariat of the Partnership.

## Annex

### **Strategic vision of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests towards 2030**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests is an innovative, voluntary, inter-agency partnership, established in 2001<sup>1</sup> to support the United Nations Forum on Forests and its member countries and to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues. Through its resolution [2015/33](#), the Economic and Social Council defined the core functions of the Partnership as a component of the international arrangement on forests. The Partnership comprises 15 international organizations, institutions and secretariats, all of which have substantial programmes on forests.<sup>2</sup>

#### **II. Rationale**

2. At this very moment, the world is facing severe challenges that jeopardize the sustainable future of the planet and all people, regardless of political and geographical boundaries. Climate change and extreme weather events, floods, water scarcity, droughts, forest fires, forest and land degradation, deforestation and the loss of biodiversity are hurting the lives, health and wealth of nations more frequently and with more intensity. Although they are heavily affected by these challenges, forests offer a vital nature-based solution by providing essential social, environmental and economic services and benefits. In order to preserve, maintain and enhance the ability of forests to function as productive and resilient ecosystems and fulfil their role in addressing global challenges, the international community has set up several global frameworks for action, the most recently adopted frameworks being the agreement on the global forest goals and targets under the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/285](#) of 27 April 2017. In order to support these efforts, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests decided to devise the strategic vision towards 2030, so as to provide strategic direction to the work of the Partnership, as well as a solid framework for its future workplans and activities until 2030. The strategic vision provides an effective platform for using the aggregated potential and skills of the member organizations of the Partnership and for enhancing the mutual supportiveness of their respective programmes towards a common and noble vision. The Partnership comprises independent entities, which act in accordance with the mandates and decisions of their respective governing bodies. In that context, the strategic vision reflects the values and aspirations of member organizations of a voluntary partnership to collectively advance sustainable forest management worldwide and to support relevant action by Member States, as well as by other stakeholders. It is also the

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<sup>1</sup> In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35.

<sup>2</sup> The Collaborative Partnership on Forests comprises the Center for International Forestry Research, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Global Environment Facility, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Forum on Forests, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the World Agroforestry Centre and the World Bank.

foundation for a coherent and powerful account of what the Partnership aims to accomplish by 2030.

### **III. Vision statement**

3. By 2030, all types of forests and forest landscapes are sustainably managed, their multiple values are fully recognized, the potential of forests and their goods and services is fully unlocked, and the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and other global forest-related goals, targets and commitments are achieved. In order to support countries in their efforts to achieve these aims, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests will effectively enhance coherence and synergy on forest-related issues and values among its member organizations and help countries move from deforestation to restoration.

### **IV. Strategic priorities**

4. In order to ensure the realization of the vision statement of the strategic vision towards 2030 and address the above-mentioned global challenges, the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests collectively will advance the strategic priorities outlined below.

#### **A. Supporting the achievement of the globally-agreed goals and targets on forests**

5. The primary strategic priority of the Partnership during the period until 2030 is to provide solutions so as to enable countries to achieve the global forest goals and associated targets, the Sustainable Development Goals, the objectives of the Paris Agreement and its nationally determined contributions, the aims of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other globally-agreed commitments on forests. The Partnership will continue to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests, in particular, through assisting countries in the implementation of the Forum's quadrennial programme of work, integrating the six global forest goals and targets into the relevant programmes and activities of the Partnership and its member organizations, developing further the global core set of forest-related indicators and supporting the work of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in its role as clearing house. Specific topics to be prioritized by the Partnership will be determined each year, in its workplan.

#### **B. Promoting the science-policy interface and science-based decision-making**

6. The member organizations of the Partnership are the most competent, global, forest-related bodies, with significant expertise, resources, research and scientific knowledge on forests and their interlinkages with a wide variety of issues. Those resources will be used to assist in sound decision-making at all levels, in particular, within the global decision-making bodies on forests. The Partnership will actively advance science-based discussion and decision-making processes in the work of the Forum and member organizations of the Partnership, utilizing its vast analytical and technical resources, as well as the member organizations' respective networks of scientific communities. The Forum and other governing bodies of Partnership member organizations will also prioritize promoting the science-policy interface at their respective sessions.



### **C. Enhancing communication and outreach activities**

7. Communication and outreach are essential components for the success of the strategic vision towards 2030. Through the Communicators' Network of the Partnership and as part of its workplan, the Partnership will develop its communication and outreach plans to raise awareness of the vital contribution of all types of forests and trees to life on earth and human well-being and advocate change, within and outside the forest sector. The Partnership's communication and outreach strategy will draw on the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the strategic vision towards 2030, taking into account the relevant themes of the quadrennial programmes of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the themes of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, among others. The communication and outreach plans should identify, inter alia, target audiences, messages, methods, activities and success criteria.

### **D. Enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration, policy coherence, coordination and integrated approaches**

8. Many drivers of deforestation and threats to forests lie outside the forest sector. In order to provide effective support to countries to make progress and achieve the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and other globally agreed goals and targets on forests, the Partnership seeks to substantially advance cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination at all levels, including among its member organizations. The Partnership will work to enhance policy coherence and synergy among its members, including the secretariats of the Rio Conventions. The Partnership will adopt an integrated approach, as a means of promoting transformational change, in its joint initiatives. Enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration, policy coherence and integrated approaches are crucial for the success of the work of the Partnership and therefore, those aspects should be central, standing components of the current and future workplans of the Partnership.

### **E. Unlocking the full potential and values of forests**

9. Forests provide multiple social, environmental and economic values and benefits for countries, communities and stakeholders. The Partnership and its members will enhance their actions to support the assessment, promotion and realization of the full values of forests, forest landscapes and forest goods and services.

### **F. Identifying emerging issues of significant concern to forests**

10. Member organizations of the Partnership conduct a wide range of activities at the national, regional and international levels. They have the means and tools to monitor global trends and emerging issues of major concern to forests. The Partnership and its members will actively bring the emerging issues of concerns to forests to the attention of the Forum and other relevant governing bodies, including by producing policy briefs and proposing solutions to address such issues.

## **V. Delivery mechanisms**

11. The realization of the strategic vision towards 2030 will be ensured, including through the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the key delivery mechanisms, as set out in the Partnership policy document, namely: joint initiatives,

Partnership dialogue and focal agencies. The member organizations may use additional delivery mechanisms, consistent with their mandates. The Partnership will work with relevant global initiatives and may leverage other opportunities, such as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the initiative of the Secretary-General on deforestation to advance the strategic priorities of its strategic vision towards 2030. Member organizations of the Partnership will also work to contribute collectively to major global forest-related events and initiatives.

## **VI. Resources required for implementation**

12. The provision of sustained and effective support to countries by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as a voluntary partnership, is a complex issue. The Partnership consists of independent entities whose mandates and resources are decided upon by the respective governing bodies of its members. Within their existing mandates, however, there are opportunities for improved collaboration among member organizations of the Partnership, as reflected in the workplan of the Partnership or the strategic vision towards 2030. The implementation of those activities is heavily dependent on the provision of resources by donor countries. The collective efforts of the member organizations of the Partnership to achieve their joint workplan need to be supported and complemented substantially by countries, in particular, donor countries. The Partnership will also use joint fundraising to increase efficiency and benefits from the unique skills of its members, and to reduce competition for donor funding sources. As part of its workplans, the Partnership will periodically inform the Forum and the governing bodies of its member organizations, as appropriate, of the resource requirements and resources available for the implementation of the workplan. The Partnership will proactively liaise with the donor community, including through special meetings with donors to make them aware of Partnership activities and of ways to support those activities.

## **VII. Review of the strategic vision towards 2030**

13. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests will assess the progress in advancing the strategic vision towards 2030, in conjunction with the midterm and final reviews of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, in 2024 and 2030. On the basis of that review and considering the outcome of the reviews of the international arrangement, the Partnership will revise or adjust the existing strategic vision, or develop a new document, if needed.

## **VIII. Action by the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Partnership**

14. The governing bodies of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are invited to take note of the strategic vision towards 2030 and support the realization thereof.