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United Nations Forum on Forests

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Items 3 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda*

Policy discussions on the implementation of the

United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:

Activities in support of the thematic priorities for the
biennium 2021–2022

Implementation of the communication and outreach
strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests
2017–2030, including activities regarding the
International Day of Forests in 2022

Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its seventeenth session, will hold policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. The present note provides background information to facilitate policy discussions and highlights the result of the intersessional activities conducted since the sixteenth session of the Forum. The present note also serves as the basis for discussion at the seventeenth session of the Forum on agenda items 3 (a) and 3 (b). It also contains proposals on the way forward with regard to other relevant agenda items.

* E/CN.18/2022/1.



I. Introduction

1. In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its seventeenth session, will hold policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

2. The present note serves as the basis for discussion of the Forum under agenda items 3 (a) and 3 (b). The note also provides an overview of the relevant intersessional activities conducted since the sixteenth session of the Forum. It also contains references to relevant proposals contained in the summary by the Chair of the sixteenth session of the Forum for consideration at the seventeenth session.

3. Under agenda item 3 (a) and its sub-items (i)–(v), the Forum will consider activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022, including: update on the activities of members of the Forum, including new announcements of and updates on voluntary national contributions; update on the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations and progress on the implementation of its workplan; update on the activities of regional and subregional organizations and processes; update on the activities of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, and progress on major group workplans; and interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2022 and international forest-related developments. Under agenda item 3 (b), the Forum will consider the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests in 2022.

II. Background

4. The seventeenth session of the Forum will be devoted to discussions on policy, including on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, taking into consideration the discussions held and proposals made at the sixteenth session. In accordance with annex I to Economic and Social Council resolution 2020/14, the thematic priorities of the Forum for each biennium shall be based on the global forest goals and targets, taking into account the post-2020 programme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and relevant international forest-related developments.

5. For the biennium 2021–2022, the Bureau of the Forum decided to focus on global forest goal 1 and global forest goal 2 as the substantive goals, along with global forest goals 4, 5 and 6 as cross-cutting goals. In that respect, the Bureau decided that the thematic priorities for the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum would be: (a) reversing the loss of forest cover; (b) enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits; and (c) mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation, promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence for sustainable forest management.¹

6. At the sixteenth session of the Forum, technical discussions were held on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022 and the contribution of members of the Forum and stakeholders to the thematic priorities. The summary by the Chair

¹ More information is available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>.

of the discussions at the sixteenth session includes her proposals with regard to the items contained in the present note as follows:

(a) Thematic priorities:

(i) Invite members of the Forum to accelerate efforts towards achieving global forest goals 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, including through the mainstreaming and upscaling of forest-related actions in their national development programmes, and developing joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030;

(ii) Encourage the integration of forest-based actions in the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and the outcome of the ongoing consultations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in accordance with the mandates of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(iii) Invite the high-level political forum on sustainable development to recognize the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 as an integrated framework for forest-related actions and international cooperation to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Voluntary national contributions:

(i) Invite those members of the Forum that have not yet done so to announce voluntary national contributions in support of the global forest goals and targets, and further encourage those members that have already announced voluntary national contributions to report to the Forum on the progress made;

(c) Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant stakeholders:

(i) Welcome the development of the workplan of the Partnership for the period 2021–2024 and invite the Partnership to strengthen its support for the implementation of the Forum's quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024 and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 through the workplan;

(ii) Invite members of the Forum and the governing bodies of member organizations of the Partnership to support the integration of the global forest goals in their respective programmes and to scale up support for the implementation of the workplan of the Partnership and the strengthening of its secretariat, as appropriate, in accordance with their respective mandates, objectives and work programmes;

(iii) Welcome the efforts of regional and subregional partners, and major groups and other relevant stakeholders, in contributing to the thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2021–2022, encouraging their continued active engagement in promoting the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of the global forest goals, and emphasizing the need to identify the barriers to the active involvement of philanthropic organizations in the work of the Forum;

(d) Communication and outreach strategy:

(i) Encouraging members of the Forum, members of the Partnership and other relevant partners to share their best practices and success stories, as well as their communication materials in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, so that they can be showcased on the Forum website.

III. Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

A. Activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022

1. Update on the activities of members of the Forum, including new announcements of and updates to voluntary national contributions

7. In accordance with paragraph 30 of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, member States may, on a voluntary basis, determine their contributions towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, taking into account their national circumstances, policies, priorities, capacities, levels of development and forest conditions.

8. In 2021, no new voluntary national contributions were announced by members of the Forum. However, Ghana and Indonesia submitted updates to their voluntary national contributions. Given the recent global forest-related developments, including the adoption of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, voluntary national contributions could be considered as an effective means to advancing synergetic implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the Paris Agreement. In this respect, there is a new momentum for States members of the Forum to announce voluntary national contributions more proactively.²

2. Update on the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations and progress on the implementation of its workplan

(a) Workplan

9. The workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the period 2021–2024 was formulated and submitted to the Forum for consideration at its sixteenth session.³ The workplan was developed based on guidance received from the Forum and other governing bodies of the member organizations of the Partnership. It was made available in a summary version – in English, French and Spanish – in an effort to communicate the Partnership's work in a more user-friendly manner.

10. The workplan provides an overview of the planned activities of the Partnership for the period 2021–2024, with a view to facilitating the implementation of those activities and providing information thereon to member States, governing bodies and stakeholders of the Partnership's member organizations.

11. The planned activities are aimed at contributing to the implementation of the guiding frameworks of the workplan, most notably the core functions of the Partnership, the global forest goals and the thematic priorities of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the strategic priorities of the Partnership contained in its Strategic Vision towards 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals, among other forest-related goals, instruments, processes and international developments.

12. Information on the progress achieved in implementing the current workplan since the sixteenth session of the Forum is provided below.

² Information on the voluntary national contributions that have been submitted is available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vnecs/index.html>.

³ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-work-plan-2021-2024/index.html>.

(b) Recurrent activities of the Partnership

13. The Partnership has held three meetings since February 2021 and discussed its activities in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of its global forest goals and targets. The meetings were held in a virtual format on 4 February, 1 July and 13 December 2021. In addition, the Partnership plans to hold a meeting in the first quarter of 2022 prior to the seventeenth session of the Forum.

14. On 27 April 2021, the Partnership released a statement entitled “Challenges and opportunities in turning the tide on deforestation”, on the margins of the sixteenth session of the Forum.⁴ In the statement, scientific findings were presented on the status of deforestation and on the multidimensional services provided by forests, with a view to supporting countries and other key stakeholders to address the issue.

15. On 6 July 2021, a Partnership event on the theme “The role of forests in time of crisis: sustainable production and consumption patterns to turn the tide on deforestation” was held on the margins of the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development.⁵ The event brought together representatives of States members of the Forum, member organizations of the Partnership and other partners and stakeholders to showcase the ways in which consumption and production could contribute to turning the tide on deforestation at a time of crisis. During the event, speakers and other participants discussed possible ways and next steps to transform consumption and production patterns through forests in order to make them more sustainable and deforestation-free, including by halting deforestation and forest degradation; promoting the sustainable sourcing and production of agricultural and forest products, including cocoa; developing policies in consumer countries to raise awareness of sustainable consumption behaviour; and fostering sustainable supply chains of tropical timbers.

16. On 6 November 2021, a high-level dialogue on the theme “Upscaling actions to turn the tide on deforestation” was held by the Partnership on the margins of the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.⁶ The Partnership was encouraged to support member States in the implementation of country pledges. The event brought together the heads and principals of six member organizations of the Partnership and highlighted individual and joint actions by member organizations aimed at accelerating efforts to protect the world’s forests and halt deforestation, in line with the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and the global forest goals. During the event, speakers and other participants discussed issues such as: the need to integrate the true value of forests into economic policies at the landscape level, based on the latest scientific findings, including through the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; the potential of 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) in providing further incentives for sustainable forest management both at the national and local levels; the critical role of indigenous peoples and local communities, as custodians of forests, to steward ecosystems and biodiversity; and the role of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and the Partnership in supporting developing countries to address finance-related challenges.

⁴ See <http://www.cpfweb.org/50449-0941d79c54a6810d4c9eb2f45bbcb25f7.pdf>.

⁵ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=7392&menu=2993>.

⁶ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/events/high-level-dialogue-of-the-collaborative-partnership-on-forests-upscaling-actions-to-turn-the-tide-on-deforestation/index.html>.

17. The multilingual website of the Partnership, hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), was migrated to the Sitefinity content management system. The website is now more secure, user-friendly, modern and compatible with mobile devices.

(c) Joint initiatives of the Partnership

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

Communicators' Network

19. The main tasks of the Communicators' Network of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests include developing and recommending the annual theme for the International Day of Forests celebrations and coordinating its related activities. The Network also provides support to activities relating to the Wangari Maathai Award and the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the regional Forest Communicators' Networks of FAO. The Communicators' Network of the Partnership contributes directly to global forest goal 6 and indirectly to all other global forest goals.

20. At the sixteenth session of the Forum, the Chair presented the proposed themes of the International Day of Forests in 2022, on forests and sustainable production and consumption and, in 2023, on forests and health. Members of the Forum were informed of the themes in a letter from the Chair of the sixteenth session. FAO and the secretariat of the Forum are offering various outreach products for use in communicating with member States. The timely communication of the annual themes of the International Day allows for coordinated and concerted global, regional and national communication on forest-relevant topics with a broad, general audience.

Forest education

21. The Joint Initiative on Forest Education is led by FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the World Agroforestry Centre, with the secretariats of the Forum and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change serving as collaborating partners.

22. The work of the Initiative is aimed at supporting effective, holistic and inclusive forest-related education and knowledge-sharing systems for the benefit of all forest stakeholders. The members of the Partnership recognize that improvements in forest education are essential to maximize the contributions of forests and trees to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and other forest-related goals at global and national levels.

23. Since the launch of the Initiative, work that has been completed or is in progress includes the following: the publication and promotion of six regional assessment and expert consultation reports on forest education;⁷ the implementation of a free online course on legal and sustainable supply chains;⁸ the development of a prototype of the forestra online platform for information-sharing and networking on forest education; the finalization of two publications on the application of farmer field school approaches.

⁷ See <https://www.fao.org/forestry/forest-education/99204/en/> and <https://www.fao.org/forestry/forest-education/98164/en>.

⁸ See <https://lsscource.com>.

24. Next steps include conducting donor outreach to advance resource mobilization, working on the completion and promotion of various outputs of the Initiative to target audiences, preparing for the fifteenth World Forestry Congress, scheduled to be held in May 2022 in Seoul, and carrying out further outreach to potential partners and allies, including at upcoming events and forums, particularly the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development. Resource mobilization of at least \$5 million is required for the full implementation of the Initiative to the year 2024 and across all five of its planned work areas.

Forest finance facilitation

25. The joint initiative on forest finance facilitation is implemented through the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33, and is led and coordinated by the secretariat of the Forum. The Network works in close cooperation with member States and members of the Partnership to implement its priorities, as outlined in the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. Detailed information on the activities of the Network, including some activities carried out in the context of the joint initiative on forest finance and facilitation, is provided in the note by the Secretariat on means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (E/CN.18/2022/3).

Forest landscape restoration

26. The joint initiative on forest landscape restoration is led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with the participation of 10 members, and has been supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). 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.

27. Through the initiative, the development of a range of knowledge products, workshops and proposals has been supported. The following key activities were completed in 2021 with support from GEF: a digital Global Landscapes Forum was held on the theme “Nature-based solutions: how restoration can support a healthy climate, economy and planet”;⁹ a package of social media support was developed for the Global Partnership on Forests and Landscape Restoration; a study on the economics of ecosystem restoration¹⁰ was implemented and a template was developed for collecting data on the benefits of ecosystem restoration initiatives and piloted in the Sahel and other regions. In addition, a peer-reviewed study was published in the journal *Restoration Ecology*;¹¹ a learning guide was developed for forest producers and their organizations on developing bankable business plans to assist associations and small producers in turning ideas into business plans; a policy brief entitled “The ‘missing middle’: landscape restoration’s greatest challenge” was produced; a working paper on tackling global challenges by integrating protected areas and forest landscape restoration approaches was drafted; four learning modules on forest landscape restoration were devised;¹² a presentation was given over 12 sessions regarding an online course on forest landscape restoration; a framework was developed and a report issued providing methodological guidelines for designing and deploying private land-use finance; support was provided to the Government of Thailand to develop and adopt a national forest financing strategy in order to fund more sustainable management of the country’s forests; and support was provided to

⁹ See <https://events.globallandscapesforum.org/digital-forum-on-forest-landscape-restoration>.

¹⁰ See <https://www.fao.org/in-action/forest-landscape-restoration-mechanism/our-work/gl/teer/en/>.

¹¹ Available at <https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/8176>.

¹² Available at <https://www.iufro.org/science/special/spdc/netw/flr/lmflr>.

Guinea-Bissau and Thailand in developing two project proposals for the Green Climate Fund focused on forest landscape restoration.

Global Forest Expert Panel

28. The Global Forest Expert Panel initiative is coordinated by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. Under the Expert Panel initiative, international scientific expert panels on forest-related topics of high global concern are periodically assembled and assessment reports are produced to support more informed decision-making on forest-related issues. Since its launch in 2007, the initiative has completed seven thematic assessments.

29. The Expert Panel initiative effectively contributes to achieving all global forest goals and is particularly relevant to target 4.5 of global forest goal 4 and to global forest goal 6. In the reports of the Expert Panel initiative, the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (global forest goal 5) is also addressed.

30. In 2021, the Expert Panel initiative started a new assessment on forests and human health.¹³ The assessment will provide the reliable scientific information that is crucial to be able to utilize synergies efficiently and achieve optimal trade-offs between human health and the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forest ecosystems and trees in other land uses. The global assessment report will contribute to global forest goals 2 and 4, as well as to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by highlighting the interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 15, as well as relevant links to other Sustainable Development Goals.

31. The assessment on forests and human health is expected to be published in March 2023. The assessment will provide input to the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and other international forums considering forest-related issues, such as the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Green finance for sustainable landscapes

32. An initiative on green finance for sustainable landscapes was launched in May 2021. It is being jointly executed by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Centre for International Forestry Research and is co-funded by GEF for the period 2021–2023. The objective of the initiative is to increase financial flows towards deforestation-free commodity production and sustainable land use. Under component 1 of the initiative, support is provided for private financial institutions to increase commitments on deforestation-free financing for the agribusiness sector and forestry companies, as part of the transition towards sustainable commodity production systems. The Good Food Finance Network – a partnership between five institutions including the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Food Systems for the Future, and Farm Animal Investment Risk and Return – was officially launched on 20 September 2021 at the United Nations Food Systems Summit.

33. A “high-ambition group” of 12 financial institutions and corporates is currently working on target setting, with commitments expected in 2022, and additional institutions are expected to join the group in the coming months. Through component 2 of the initiative, a standardized framework is being developed to frame, measure and monitor the financing of sustainable and deforestation-free loans and investments for forestry and agribusiness entities adopted by investors, banks, institutional investors

¹³ See: <https://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/gfep-initiative/panel-on-forests-and-human-health>.

and public-private sector initiatives. Work on that component will commence in 2022. Component 3 is aimed at enhancing business knowledge and access to finance for community-based forestry and agribusiness enterprises. The Centre for International Forestry Research established cooperation with the Forest and Farm Facility of FAO and its network of forest and farm producer organizations, cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises across Africa and Asia. A landscape finance learning hub was designed; the prototype was presented at the Global Landscapes Forum, held in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in 2021, and field-tested at the Facility's enterprises in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia.

Streamlining global forest-related reporting

34. The joint initiative on streamlining global forest-related reporting focuses on harmonizing reporting on forest resources and their management, and using reports for various processes and conventions. The initiative is aimed at improving the coverage, quality and transparency of forest-related data and information and reducing the forest-related reporting burden of countries. The focus of work lies in improving the methodology for reporting on primary forests, revising the terms and definitions, improving reporting for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 and advancing the global core set of forest-related indicators.

35. Detailed information on the streamlining of global forest-related reporting is contained in the note by the Secretariat entitled "Monitoring, assessment and reporting: progress on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument, and voluntary national contributions" ([E/CN.18/2022/4](#)).

Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World

36. The "Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World" initiative is led by FAO with support from the secretariats of the International Tropical Timber Organization and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Centre for International Forestry Research and the World Bank. It supports national and international policy dialogues on sustainable wood value chains, as well as institutional arrangements and the promotion of innovation, with a focus on sustainable investments; sustainable trade; measures to increase value added and material efficiency; the inclusion of small and medium-size enterprises, smallholders and forest communities; and the inclusion of wood in the bioeconomy.

37. Under the initiative, FAO is supporting activities to restructure a centre for the promotion of wood in Cameroon and to develop national and regional road maps to strengthen wood value chains directed at African internal markets in Cameroon, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon. Through the initiative, support is also being provided to Kenya regarding its strategy to attract investment in wood value chains, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises and in line with the country's restoration commitments, and to Uganda with regard to a decision-making tool for optimizing the environmental and socioeconomic benefits derived from restoration investments. In addition, an important step forward in respect of forest finance has been an agreement to formulate a forest finance strategy for Suriname as part of the country's activities under the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

38. Through the initiative, efforts are being made to engage with the private sector through dialogues on wood in the bioeconomy and to work with partners to produce indicators associated with wood value chains, such as employment, income, labour income, outlook scenarios and the carbon content of wood products.

39. A joint outreach "#ReplaceWithWood" campaign aimed at promoting sustainable wood is under development. To build momentum towards the campaign's launch at

the fifteenth World Forestry Congress, social media videos will be released ahead of the International Day of Forests in 2022.

Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award

40. The Partnership periodically selects and seeks to recognize an individual who has made extraordinary efforts to improve the world's forests and the lives of the people who depend on them, through the Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award.

41. The winner for the 2022 edition of the award will be announced at the fifteenth World Forestry Congress. Along with international recognition and prestige, the winner receives a cash prize of \$20,000 and travel support to be able to participate in the award ceremony.

Turning the tide on deforestation

42. A joint initiative is being developed with the aim of supporting ongoing efforts within the United Nations system to turn the tide on deforestation, taking into consideration new forest-related developments, including the outcome of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The objective of the initiative is to scale up global ambitions to address deforestation, map out the work and partnerships of the United Nations system and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests with regard to deforestation, and identify gaps and propose solutions. To support the initiative, the Partnership released a statement, entitled "Challenges and opportunities in turning the tide on deforestation" (see para. 14 above), and a brochure¹⁴ containing information on flagship programmes and initiatives on the topic. The initiative will further focus on specific emerging issues and on strengthening common data-based advocacy. It is also aimed at supporting the efforts of countries to halt deforestation.

3. Update on the activities of regional and subregional organizations and processes

43. In order to contribute to discussions at the seventeenth session of the Forum on the preparations for the midterm review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, a questionnaire was prepared by the secretariat of the Forum. Stakeholders, including regional and subregional entities, were invited to provide their input into the process. Those partners also participated in the expert group meeting convened on the matter in November 2021.¹⁵

44. Since the sixteenth session of the Forum, representatives of the secretariat have attended events held by several regional and subregional entities, and have addressed the thirty-second session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission of FAO, held from 6 to 10 September 2021, and the thirty-first session of the North American Forestry Commission, held from 17 to 19 November 2021. The secretariat also took part in a webinar organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, on the organization's regional forest programme for the basin and Amazon region, held on 7 December 2021.¹⁶ Lastly, representatives of the secretariat addressed the expert-level meeting of the Forest Europe Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, held on 1 and 2 September 2021, and were invited by the secretariat of the International Network for Bamboo and

¹⁴ Available at <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb7451en>.

¹⁵ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>.

¹⁶ Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, "Programa Regional de Bosques de la OTCA para la Cuenca y la Región Amazónica", video, 7 December 2021. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd_Ph4sprlk.

Rattan to send a recorded video message to the high-level plenary, ministerial dialogue, of the Africa Bamboo and Rattan Congress, held from 23 to 25 February 2022.

45. Cooperation with the Forum's regional and subregional partners also occurred in the context of the study of the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on forests and the forest sector, as well as with regard to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network. Relevant information can be found in the respective notes by the Secretariat (E/CN.18/2022/7 and E/CN.18/2022/3).

4. Update on the activities of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, and progress on major group workplans

46. The activities of major groups to support and contribute to the thematic priorities of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum are reflected in their joint report on progress in the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the contributions of the major groups to the thematic priorities of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum.¹⁷ The report provides an account of the lessons learned from the joint activities carried out with States members of the Forum, the secretariat, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional entities, and members of the business community to accelerate progress in the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the 2030 Agenda. As reflected in the report, the major groups are convinced that they can add value to the efforts of partners and that any support extended to them will yield high dividends for the intergovernmental process. In the report, it is emphasized that major groups can play an important role in increasing the effectiveness and boosting the engagement of the broader society in order to advance implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, especially by those actors whose participation has so far been inadequate or, in some cases, even elusive. Through the report, the major groups continue to appeal to donor organizations, development partners and the United Nations system to support their ongoing efforts in respect of capacity-building and resource mobilization to that end.

47. The secretariat of the Forum continued to strengthen engagement with the business and industry major group through its collaboration with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the FAO Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries, as well as with other forest-related business and industry entities. Although the secretariat was not able to secure input from philanthropic partners, it continues its efforts to engage them in the Forum's work.

48. During the Forum's expert group meeting on preparations for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests, held in November 2021, the major groups provided their views on the main elements for inclusion in the preparatory process for the midterm review. They also contributed to the global assessment of the challenges faced by countries, and to the strategies, recovery measures and best practices implemented with a view to reducing the impact of the pandemic on forests and the forest sector. The major groups also participated in and contributed to the discussions of the Forum's expert group meeting convened in February 2022.¹⁸

¹⁷ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MGs-UNSPF-Implementation-rpt2020.pdf>.

¹⁸ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>.

Expert group meeting on strengthening the engagement of the United Nations Forum on Forests with regional partners, major groups and other stakeholders

49. On 16 and 17 December, the secretariat of the Forum organized a virtual expert group meeting on the theme “Strengthening the engagement of the United Nations Forum on Forests with regional partners, major groups and other stakeholders”.¹⁹ The meeting was held in preparation for the seventeenth session of the Forum and was aimed at mobilizing and strengthening engagement with major groups, regional and subregional partners and other stakeholders in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. Participants in the event discussed the linkages between the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development, preparations for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests and the status of the study coordinated by the secretariat on the effects of the pandemic on forests and the forest sector.

50. Representatives from the following regional and subregional entities participated in the meeting: the African Forest Forum, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation secretariat, the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization, the Caribbean Community Secretariat, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Cooperation Organization secretariat, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, FAO, Forest Europe, the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre and the Tehran Process for Low Forest Cover Countries secretariat. Representatives of business and industry; children and youth; farmers and forest owners; indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; women; workers and trade unions also participated in the expert group meeting, representing different major groups.

51. In discussing the interlinkages between the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2022, participants stressed that the focus on interlinkages should consider the outcomes of the Rio conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. It was noted that efforts to accelerate progress in the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 required a broad alliance of all stakeholders including the major groups. Participants stressed that success could only be achieved if all stakeholders were committed and determined to work together, including by taking an intersectoral approach to achieving sustainable forest management. There is a need to identify, collate and share best practices for mitigating the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to strengthen institutional capacity at the local level in order to support national plans to combat the pandemic.

52. Regional and subregional entities emphasized their willingness to continue to collaborate with the secretariat of the Forum and to contribute to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, as well as to achieving the global forest goals. The current activities of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network were discussed during the meeting, with regional and subregional entities expressing interest in learning more about the Network and enhancing their relationships therewith, while the major groups requested that the Network’s

¹⁹ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EGM-Regional-MGs-Dec2021-Summary-final.pdf>.

guidelines be revised to include the possibility of enabling non-governmental actors to benefit from its assistance.

5. Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2022 and international forest-related developments

53. The paragraphs below provide a short description of the theme and the set of Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2022, the theme of the International Day of Forests and the major global forest-related developments that have occurred since the sixteenth session of the Forum. Explanations provided in the paragraphs below are necessary to have a better understanding of the interlinkages between the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and major forest-related developments.

Theme of the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals under its review

54. To enhance the visibility of the contribution of forests to the global sustainable agenda, promote synergy between the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the 2030 Agenda, and increase awareness of the vital role of forests in enhancing people's socioeconomic and environmental conditions and the health of the planet, the Forum has consistently provided its inputs into the annual meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

55. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/290 B](#), the thematic focus of the Economic and Social Council for its 2022 session and of the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development is “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. It was further decided that the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development would review in-depth Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17. In this context, the President of the Council, in his letter dated 23 November 2021 addressed to the Chair of the seventeenth session of the Forum, invited the Forum to provide its substantive inputs to the 2022 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development with regard to its review of the Sustainable Development Goals and the theme.

Theme of the International Day of Forests in 2022

56. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests selected the theme of forests and sustainable production and consumption for the International Day of Forests in 2022. Information on the theme of the International Day of Forests is provided in paragraph 20 of the present note.

Major global forest-related developments since the sixteenth session of the Forum

57. In response to General Assembly resolution [73/284](#), the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 was launched in June 2021 with the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and to raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration.²⁰ The Decade is expected to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in addition to the goals of the Paris Agreement, the land-degradation neutrality targets, the goals of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the Bonn Challenge target of restoring 350 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, and other international agreements relevant to the conservation and

²⁰ See <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31813/ERDStrat.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

restoration of ecosystems, including the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

58. The first part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was held virtually from 11 to 15 October 2021, with the second part of the meeting scheduled to be reconvened from 25 April to 8 May 2022 in Kunming, China. Parties are expected to finalize and adopt the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the second part of the meeting.

59. The draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework contains four long-term goals for 2050 related to the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, as follows:²¹ (a) increase the area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems by at least [] per cent, thereby supporting healthy and resilient populations of all species, while reducing the number of species that are threatened by [] per cent and maintaining genetic diversity; (b) value, maintain or enhance nature's contributions to people through conservation and sustainable use, supporting the global development agenda for the benefit of all people; (c) share fairly and equitably the benefits derived from the utilization of genetic resources; and (d) ensure that means of implementation are available to achieve all goals and targets in the framework.

Twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

60. The twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held from 31 October to 13 November 2021 in Glasgow. At the Conference, the Parties adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact addressing issues related to science and urgency; adaptation; adaptation finance; mitigation; finance, technology transfer and capacity-building for mitigation and adaptation; loss and damage; implementation; and collaboration.

61. In the Glasgow Climate Pact, several references to forests are made and the importance is recognized of protecting, conserving and restoring forests and other ecosystems so as to deliver benefits with regard to climate adaptation and mitigation, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards.

62. During the Conference, the President of the Conference held a World Leaders Summit on 1 and 2 November. The Summit featured a series of high-level meetings and events and generated several pledges and commitments by Heads of State and Government, civil society, international organizations, businesses and youth.²² Over 141 countries, accounting for more than 90 per cent of the world's forests, have committed to working together to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 through the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, which was adopted during the World Leaders Summit.²³

63. The secretariat of the Forum organized three events in partnership with a number of members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other partners and stakeholders during the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties.

64. An event on the theme "Advancing implementation of the Paris Agreement through making progress towards the global forest goals" was held on 5 November 2021. It was aimed at showcasing the importance of promoting synergies in

²¹ An updated version of the zero-draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is available in the annex to document CBD/POST2020/PREP/2/1.

²² The President's summary of the World Leaders Summit is available at <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-world-leaders-summit-presidency-summary>.

²³ For information on the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, see <https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use>.

sustainably managing the world's forests, while at the same time supporting efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It was emphasized that there was a strong need for greater coherence in order to advance implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change through forest-based actions.

65. An event on the theme “Addressing the risk of wildfires to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation” was held on 8 November 2021. At the event, the key findings of a background study and policy brief on wildfires were presented, and it provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences of and suggestions on ways to address wildfires and advance collaboration.

Interlinkages between the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and international forest-related developments

66. The interlinkages between the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and international forest-related developments are shown in the table below.

Interlinkages between the thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2021–2022, the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and international forest-related developments

<i>Thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2021–2022</i>	<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in-depth by the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to other Sustainable Development Goals</i>	<i>International forest-related developments</i>
Reversing the loss of forest cover	1	14, 15	6, 10, 12, 13	Theme for the International Day of Forests in 2022
Enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits	2	4, 5, 15	1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12	United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030
Mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence for sustainable forest management	4, 5, 6	5, 15, 17	1, 2, 10, 12, 16	Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity Twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

67. The global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and international forest-related developments have important interlinkages. Forests are the main reservoir of terrestrial biological diversity and have the greatest capacity for carbon sequestration. Sustainably managed forests play a vital role in contributing to food security and sustaining livelihoods for many people worldwide. Forests and trees in urban and peri-urban areas contribute significantly to a healthier environment and to more resilient cities. In this respect, forests and forest-based actions play a key role in addressing the multiple challenges that the international community currently faces. Addressing those challenges and accelerating progress towards meeting the global forest-related goals and commitments would require the advancement of an integrated, sustainable approach to land-use planning and management and the promotion of intersectoral collaboration.

68. In addition, other important means of enabling countries to make progress towards meeting the global forest-related goals and commitments include enhancing governance, transparency and gender equality; empowering indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth; addressing illegal logging; applying science, scientific research and new technological tools, including digital technology; and enhancing international cooperation to support developing countries in the areas of finance, capacity-building and technology.

69. The United Nations strategic plan for forests 2021–2030 and its global forest goals represent a central framework for forest-related action to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Accelerated efforts should be made to implement the strategic plan and make progress towards the global forest goals, the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its present and future targets, and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, among others.

70. Forest-related issues must be addressed in a holistic, coherent, consistent and mutually supportive manner at the national and international levels in order to promote the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

B. Implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests in 2022

71. In accordance with the communications and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, raising awareness of the vital contributions of forests and their sustainable management to life on Earth and human well-being is a key component of the work of the secretariat of the Forum. The interlinkages between forests and all other aspects of sustainable development, including in the synergistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Rio conventions and other major intergovernmental processes and commitments, is another continuing thread.

72. The key communication methods employed by the secretariat include statements and presentations at key international events, eye-catching content for social media and information materials such as issue and policy briefs. Inspiring action through the sharing of best practices and success stories on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2021–2030 and the global forest goals is an integral part of the work on capacity development, including as part of activities related to monitoring, assessment, reporting and forest financing. The successful launch of the Forum's first flagship publication *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*, which was the first review of progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, and the launch of the online clearing house of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network were two key achievements in that regard.

73. Working in collaboration with partners within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests has been crucial for the success of communication and outreach efforts, especially when operating with limited human and financial resources. The Department's Strategic Planning and Communications Service has been an active partner with regard to website maintenance and the production of publications and materials, including through the Department's newsletter *UN DESA Voice*, press releases, news stories and messaging for social media outreach. The Department of Global Communications has continued to provide guidance on how best to showcase the role of forests within the broader

messaging of the United Nations on sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as on a broad range of issues from climate action to biodiversity protection, to name but a few. The communication focal points at the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the FAO regional communications networks remain a key resource for amplifying reach and enhancing synergies on messages and outreach, including through the annual celebration of the International Day of Forests on 21 March.

74. In 2021, the theme for the International Day of Forests was “Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being”. Activities on the Day were aimed at raising awareness of how forests play a vital role in the health and well-being of people and the planet and how restoring the health of forests and sustainably managing them was crucial to supporting livelihoods, mitigating climate change, safeguarding biodiversity and reducing the risk of future pandemics.

75. As in previous years, social media messaging was a key component of the communication and outreach campaign for the International Day. Multimedia products created for the campaign included digital posters and social media cards for Twitter and Facebook (in all six official languages of the United Nations), suggested messages, and images for Instagram and animated GIFs, all of which were made available on the Trello board for the International Day of Forests of 2021.²⁴

76. The Facebook and Twitter social media accounts of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were the primary channels for disseminating the social media content of the secretariat of the Forum. The 2021 International Day of Forests social media advisory and Trello board were also shared with United Nations system social media focal points, the Forum’s national focal points, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional entities, and major groups organizations. The campaign hashtag “#IntlForestDay” was widely used and was included in over 22,000 tweets by over 14,000 contributors during the International Day itself, with over 250 million timeline deliveries and over 145 million accounts reached, according to estimates.

77. In 2021, the International Day of Forests attracted high-level participation across the board. The Secretary-General issued a message to mark the occasion.²⁵ A virtual International Day of Forests event, organized by the secretariat of the Forum, featured opening remarks by the President of the General Assembly, Volkan Bozkir; the President of the Economic and Social Council, Munir Akram; the Chair of the Forum, Kitty Sweeb; the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Liu Zhenmin; and the Director General of FAO, Qu Dongyu.

78. The event also featured experts, practitioners and representatives of local governments, NGOs, the private sector and youth, who shared their perspectives on the importance of managing and restoring forests. Representatives of States Members of the United Nations, accredited intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities and major groups also joined the event in a general discussion on the theme “Restoring forests restores the health of people and planet”.

79. In 2022, the theme of the International Day of Forests is on forests and sustainable production and consumption. The communication products planned for the International Day will follow a similar approach as for previous Days, with a focus on social media-friendly products. In the light of the ongoing pandemic, the

²⁴ See <https://trello.com/b/bwZM6eO5/international-day-of-forests-2021>.

²⁵ The text of the statement by the Secretary-General is available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20635.doc.htm>.

customary event at United Nations Headquarters in celebration of the International Day of Forests will likely be held in a hybrid or virtual format on 21 March 2022.

IV. Conclusion

80. Recent global developments have served to reaffirm the important role that forests can play in improving the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of people and the planet. The global community is increasingly recognizing and promoting the application of forest-based actions as a solution for addressing major global challenges. This has been demonstrated through intergovernmental agreements related to forests and, most recently, in the outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

81. Those developments have created unique opportunities to advance the implementation of the globally agreed forest-related commitments, as enshrined in various instruments. They have also provided an ideal opportunity for the Forum and its members, the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional partners, as well as major groups and other stakeholders, to play a more active role in advancing a coherent and synergetic agenda on forests, climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies among partners and stakeholders is key to the achievement of the global forest goals and other forest-related international goals and objectives. Additional efforts should be made to further enhance such collaboration, especially between the secretariats of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

82. The 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development also presents a critical opportunity to highlight forest-related contributions to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, building on the momentum generated through recent major forest-related developments. Accelerating progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 15, among others, by 2030, is crucial, as the progress made towards many of that Goal's associated targets, including those with a 2020 timeline, have stalled. Additional avenues should be explored with a view to contributing to the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, especially during those meetings in which it considers forest-related Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, it is also critical that the high-level political forum on sustainable development seize the opportunity and tap the potential of the Forum – the only universal expert body on forests within the United Nations system – to contribute to its deliberations on the forest-related Sustainable Development Goals.

V. Proposals

83. Taking into consideration the information provided in the present note, the Forum may wish:

(a) To accelerate efforts towards achieving global forest goals 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, including through the mainstreaming and upscaling of forest-related actions in their national development programmes, and developing joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030;

(b) To invite those members of the Forum that have not yet done so to announce voluntary national contributions in support of the global forest goals and targets;

(c) To invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, through its workplan, to strengthen its support to the work of the Forum and for the implementation of the Forum's quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024 and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, and to submit progress reports in that regard to the annual sessions of the Forum;

(d) To invite members of the Forum and the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support the integration of the global forest goals of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 in their respective programmes and to scale up support for the implementation of the workplan of the Partnership and the strengthening of its secretariat, as appropriate, in accordance with their respective mandates, objectives and work programmes;

(e) To invite the high-level political forum on sustainable development to recognize the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 as an integrated framework for forest-related actions to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(f) To encourage members of the Forum to implement the forest-related outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use by accelerating the attainment of the global forest goals;

(g) To invite the States parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity to integrate forest-based actions in the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and the outcome of the ongoing consultations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in accordance with the mandates of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(h) To encourage regional and subregional partners, and major groups and other relevant stakeholders, to continue to advance the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of the global forest goals and targets, and to keep the Forum informed of their progress in that regard;

(i) To encourage members of the Forum to share best practices and success stories related to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 in general, as well as regarding forest financing, so that such information could be featured on the Forum website and the clearing house of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network.