



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 February 2022

Original: English

United Nations Forum on Forests

Seventeenth session

9–13 May 2022

Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda*

Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: monitoring, assessment and reporting

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

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its seventeenth session, will consider monitoring, assessment and reporting, including specifically the proposed refinements to the format for the next round of voluntary national reporting, with regard to progress on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument, and voluntary national contributions. The present note provides the background information and serves to highlight the results of the intersessional activities related to this issue that have been conducted since the sixteenth session of the Forum. The note also serves as the basis for discussions of agenda item 3 (d) and its sub-items (i) and (ii) at the seventeenth session of the Forum. In addition, it contains proposals on the way forward regarding relevant agenda items.

* E/CN.18/2022/1.



I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the programme of work of the Forum for the period 2022–2024, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its seventeenth session, will consider agenda item 3 (d) on monitoring, assessment and reporting with regard to policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.
2. The present note serves as the basis for discussions of the Forum under agenda item 3 (d) and its sub-items (i) and (ii) on the proposed refinements to the format for the voluntary national reporting with regard to progress on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the United Nations forest instrument, and voluntary national contributions, and to progress on the global core set of forest-related indicators. The note contains an overview of the results of the relevant intersessional activities conducted with regard to these items since the sixteenth session of the Forum. It also contains proposals for discussion by the Forum at its seventeenth session. In addition, the note includes references to relevant proposals contained in the summary of the Chair of the sixteenth session of the Forum for consideration by the Forum at its seventeenth session.

II. Background

3. The United Nations Forum on Forests has regularly called upon member States to develop adequate monitoring systems and upon international entities, especially member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to share data and streamline reporting on forests. With the adoption, in 2017, of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the focus of monitoring and reporting to the Forum was placed on the progress made in implementing the plan and its goals and targets. The national reports of member States that are submitted to the Forum are a main source of information used to assess progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals and targets.
4. Through its resolution [2015/33](#) on the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015, the Economic and Social Council requested the secretariat of the Forum to propose a cycle and format for national reporting for consideration by the Forum at its twelfth session. Following that request, the secretariat of the Forum, in a series of consultations with member States and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, developed a draft format and presented it to the Forum at the twelfth session. At that session, the Forum reviewed the draft, provided further feedback and requested its secretariat to pilot the draft with interested members of the Forum. The secretariat received additional feedback during the pilot process and finalized the draft.
5. At its thirteenth session, the Forum adopted the format for voluntary national reporting and decided that it would consider the results of the first round of such reporting at its fifteenth session. In developing the format, due consideration was given to the need to reduce reporting burdens and the fact that the relevance of the goals and targets could vary according to national circumstances. The format was prepared by the secretariat of the Forum in close collaboration with member States and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Recognizing the need to make effective use of information from national reports, the Forum, at its thirteenth session, also requested its secretariat to prepare a flagship publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

6. The first round of national reporting on progress towards the implementation of the strategic plan was conducted in 2019 and 2020. Some 52 member States submitted comprehensive reports on their actions taken to advance the achievement of the global forest goals, including detailed descriptions thereof. The submitted reports, combined with biophysical data from the Global Forest Resources Assessment carried out in 2020, made it possible to conduct a first assessment of progress towards achieving the global forest goals and produce the flagship publication entitled *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*.

7. The report was based upon 52 voluntary national reports and 19 voluntary national contributions, covering 75 per cent of the world's forests. The national information on progress towards the global forest goals was supplemented with quantitative and biophysical data taken primarily from the Global Forest Resources Assessment of 2020. It was the first flagship publication produced by the secretariat of the Forum of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The report contained an overview of progress towards achieving the goals and associated targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. It provided a summary of the actions taken and challenges encountered by member States in their efforts to achieve the goals and highlights the areas in which progress has been made and those in which more action is required. In addition, it served to illustrate the way in which progress towards the global forests goals had contributed to progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and included several success stories to illustrate best practices and innovative ideas.

8. The informal advisory group established to provide advice on the development of the publication was actively involved in its production and provided recommendations on various aspects, including its scope, main objectives and data sources, as well as feedback and suggestions related to communication and outreach.

9. In its resolution [2020/14](#), the Council requested the secretariat of the Forum to propose refinements to the format for voluntary national reporting on the basis of lessons learned during the current reporting cycle and in developing the flagship publication for consideration by the Forum at its seventeenth session and invited the Forum to synchronize future voluntary national reporting with the five-year Global Forest Resources Assessment process, beginning with the next Assessment cycle of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

10. As reflected in the summary by the Chair of the sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Chair made the following proposals for consideration by the Forum at its seventeenth session (see [E/2021/42](#)):

(a) Welcoming the launch of the first flagship publication of the Forum, *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*, and encouraging its widespread dissemination to audiences within and outside the forest sector in order to increase the impact of the publication;

(b) Inviting consideration of making *The Global Forest Goals Report* a recurrent flagship publication in conjunction with future voluntary national reporting cycles of the Forum;

(c) Inviting all members of the Forum to submit voluntary national reports to the Forum during the next reporting cycle, in order to provide a broader basis for the assessment of global progress towards the goals, emphasizing the need to reduce the reporting burden and requesting the secretariat of the Forum to continue to organize, jointly with FAO, capacity-building workshops to strengthen the capacity of countries to prepare such reports;

(d) Inviting the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue its work on the global core set of forest-related indicators and to report on progress at future sessions of the Forum;

(e) Inviting the active engagement of all Forum members in testing the global core set of indicators.

III. Lessons learned from the first reporting cycle

11. The reporting cycle for the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests was unique in the sense that it resulted in the first assessment of progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests and provided content for *The Global Forest Goals Report 2021*.

12. The analysis of the national reports submitted at the fifteenth session revealed several challenges, including issues related to assessment methodology, data availability and geographical coverage. The submitted reports varied significantly in length and degree of detail. The review of the reports revealed overlaps among the information on different forest-related goals and targets and also among the actions listed under each. While some overlaps were inevitable owing to the interconnectedness of the goals and targets, they may necessitate the further improvement of the reporting format for the next cycle.

13. The 26 targets contained in the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 are of both quantitative and qualitative nature. While data for quantitative targets, such as targets 1.1, 1.2, 3.1 and 3.2, are widely available and measuring progress towards these targets is relatively easy, the lack of standardized and comparable statistical data remains a challenge for several other targets, specifically those under goals 2 and 4. Indeed, the absence of or difficulty in obtaining information related to the socioeconomic benefits, the role of forests in poverty eradication and income generation, employment, health and food security is compounded by the fact that these forest-driven benefits often accrue in the informal sector, where they are even harder to measure. There is also a lack of reliable data on forest funding owing to a number of issues, including difficulty accessing financial information and private funding, and the complexity and fragmentation of the financial landscape associated with various financial flows. Other issues are related to terminology and definitions; for example, there is no internationally agreed definition of degraded forests, and there is currently no objective and quantifiable way of measuring resilience and adaptive capacity, which are related to target 1.4. Moreover, the quantitative data are directly relevant to the target in some cases (for example, targets 1.1 and 1.3) but not in others (for example, finance and policy instruments), so it is difficult to measure progress on an entirely objective basis.

IV. Intersessional activities since the sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

A. Expert group meeting on the theme “Reporting on progress towards the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030”

14. Following the request of the United Nations Forum on Forests to propose refinements to the format for voluntary national reporting on the basis of lessons learned during the current reporting cycle and in developing the flagship publication, the secretariat of the Forum organized, on 13 and 14 December 2021, an online expert

group meeting on the theme “Reporting on progress towards the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030”. The meeting was attended by 78 experts from 37 countries. The participants shared their observations and lessons learned and provided feedback on reporting to the Forum. Below are the key messages from the discussion:

(a) The plan and its goals and targets covered the entire spectrum of forest-related issues and sustainable forest management. Data and information needed to report on progress on its implementation and the achievement of the goals were spread across various agencies and departments, often beyond the traditional forest institutions. Consequently, the preparation of national reports required good communication among government agencies, and inter-agency cooperation and coordination, which were time-consuming and posed certain challenges for some countries;

(b) The experts reported to the Forum on positive aspects of the process of preparing the national reports. For example, it helped to create new networks among experts and allowed for the streamlining of information on forest-related activities carried out by various government agencies. Other benefits mentioned included the development of new communication products, improved institutional memory, and the highlighting of contributions of the forest sector to sustainable development. The process also helped countries to gauge their own progress towards national as well as international goals and commitments;

(c) In some cases, the preparation of national reports helped to align reporting on the plan with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Rio conventions, namely, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

(d) There were still problems related to the availability of data, in particular when it came to reporting on socioeconomic aspects of forests (global forest goal 2) and financing for forests and sustainable forest management (global forest goal 4).

15. Participants exchanged views on the timing of the next reporting cycle. It was reiterated that the release of the Global Forest Resources Assessment should be considered when deciding on the timing and that, more precisely, the deadline for the submission of national reports should be after the release of the next Assessment, in 2025. That schedule would allow responders to examine a full set of the most recent forest-related biophysical data while submitting mostly qualitative national reports to the Forum.

16. Experts supported and encouraged the secretariat of the Forum in continuing its capacity-building activities related to monitoring and reporting, and supported networking to develop a reporting community. In many countries, various ministries had forests on their agenda but still functioned in their own silos, were often underresourced and had limited capacity to follow up and report to international institutions. For some such ministries, thanks to the capacity-building provided by the Forum, capacities and institutions had been strengthened and links between ministries established. In addition, satisfactory reports had been submitted, which had been the subject of national pride and led to improved understanding of forest-related issues.

17. Several participants expressed concerns about the relatively low number of national reports submitted to the Forum at its fifteenth session and discussed possible ways of remedying that situation. It was interesting to note that the countries that had not responded included some with the resources, data, and both analytical and

institutional capacity to prepare and submit the national reports. One idea, which was supported by several countries, was to disseminate a short, simple survey to determine the reasons for the poor response.

18. The participants made several concrete suggestions and proposals to be taken into consideration when refining the format for the next reporting cycle, including the following:

- (a) Delete the distinction between legislative or policy; institutional; financial; and technical or scientific actions, so that the respondents will have the opportunity to include all such actions, without the imposition of those classifications;
- (b) Add more check boxes, closed yes-or-no questions and drop-down lists for the answers, which will facilitate the aggregation and summarization of the national responses at the global level;
- (c) Wherever possible, minimize overlaps and duplications and insert specific questions while still allowing for narrative responses;
- (d) Keep the goal-based structure while establishing more links to individual targets;
- (e) Consider omitting the question on voluntary national contributions if the progress related to their implementation is reported in another manner or format;
- (f) Delete or amend the question related to the United Nations forest instrument, which is difficult to answer as currently phrased;
- (g) Clarify, or add guiding notes on, the actions taken at the subnational level (but not at the local level), as they should be included;
- (h) Improve the overall functionality and layout of the template;
- (i) Increase the current limit of 250 words because of the difficulty in summarizing the initiatives in a few sentences or paragraphs and to avoid oversimplifying the initiatives.

B. Survey regarding the reporting cycle for the Forum at its fifteenth session

19. Following the suggestions and proposals made during the expert group meeting, the secretariat of the Forum conducted a survey to gather feedback on the opportunities and challenges in the context of the national reports to the Forum and on the possible reasons for not submitting the report. The survey was sent to all member States in January 2022. Countries that had submitted their national report at the fifteenth session of the Forum were asked to indicate the main benefits and challenges of preparing the report and to provide suggestions for the future reporting process. Countries that had not submitted a report were asked about the reasons for not doing so and about possible improvements that might make them more likely to submit the report in future.

20. The secretariat of the Forum received 28 responses:¹ 20 from countries that had submitted a national report to the Forum at its fifteenth session and 8 from countries that had not. A summary of the submitted responses is provided below.

¹ Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Benin, Canada, Central African Republic, China, Comoros, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Madagascar, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

Benefits of preparing a national report to the Forum

21. Many of the responses echoed the findings of the aforementioned expert group meeting. Several countries indicated that the process of preparing a national report to the Forum provided an opportunity to meet and communicate with various stakeholders, agencies and organizations across government to share information on different activities, initiatives and accomplishments relevant to forests, sustainable forest management and the attainment of the global forest goals. The preparatory work on the report supported the streamlining of information on forest-related activities carried out by various government agencies and increased the visibility of the Forum and its role, as a global forest policy body, at the national level. Some countries specifically highlighted the promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation, including within and outside the forestry sector. One country indicated that the preparatory process was “a very interesting exercise, since it obliged us to respond in some form of synergy in the implementation of multilateral agreements on the environment”.

22. Another positive secondary effect reported by countries was that of “self-assessment”. Compiling the information needed for the national report enabled countries to assess gaps and progress in sustainable forest management and the state of forests at the national level and to identify areas of weakness as well as of strength. The preparatory process also helped to evaluate the extent to which a country had transposed the international instruments into national forestry strategies, policies and legislation.

23. The responses indicated other benefits of reporting to the Forum, including that it:

(a) Demonstrated a commitment to sustainable forest management, allowed the sharing of progress made by the country with the Forum and the global community and, as a result, allowed the Forum to obtain a global picture of forest-related measures, actions and activities, including the consideration of forest policy and programmes in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Promoted forest monitoring and long-term research, as the answers to some of the questions raised in national reporting format required both. The preparation of the national report facilitated the further improvement of the system for monitoring forest resources and helped to identify key issues to be addressed in forestry development;

(c) Promoted the production of internal communications products, easing the burden of reporting to other international bodies and improving institutional memory;

(d) Enabled the Forum to establish the additional support required for sufficient implementation and future reporting;

(e) Provided an opportunity to present good practices and developments;

(f) Promoted forestry development and highlighted the important role of forestry in social development, especially in poverty alleviation and bolstering economic growth.

Main challenges in preparing the report

24. Data and information needed to report on progress in the implementation and achievement of the goals were scattered across various agencies and departments, often beyond the traditional forestry institutions. Most of the responding countries (16 out of 20) indicated that interministerial communication was the main challenge in preparing the national report. Data availability was also indicated to be significant

problem (11 out of 20), followed by resource capacity (10) and the complexity of the format (9).

25. One country, with substantial forest resources, indicated that the size of the task in terms of the burden of information required was a challenge in itself. That difficulty was amplified by relatively weak coordination and the absence of reporting references to other international environmental agreements. It was also pointed out that communication and coordination with multiple agencies and partners required a significant time investment.

26. Another country reported that a significant portion of the reporting effort was devoted to gathering information, deciding whether to include it and, if so, where to include it in the report, as certain activities could be reported in multiple sections. Moreover, while the narrative approach worked well, it was difficult to be concise.

Suggestions for the future reporting process

27. A summary of suggestions received regarding the future reporting process is provided below:

(a) Provide funding for data collection and coordination and consultative meetings to the various government agencies and institutions whose assistance is needed to prepare the national reports;

(b) Continue to build the capacity of countries and provide assistance to member States in preparing national reports;

(c) Strengthen the technical and financial capacities of member States for the collection and processing of forest-related data;

(d) Increase the visibility of the reporting process by better communicating its purpose, objectives and importance, including through a flagship publication;

(e) Use the additional official channel when transmitting a formal request to the Forum members, and send letters to ministries of foreign affairs to support the focal point;

(f) Undertake case studies to share experiences and lessons for member States, for use as references;

(g) Consider choosing a deadline for the next Forum report that is six months to one year after the publication of the Global Forest Resources Assessment for 2025, to help with synchronizing the reports and provide member States with access to publicly available Assessment data;

(h) Discuss with the members of the Forum ways to increase the number of national reports submitted;

(i) Suggest reverse-engineering the country reporting template by determining the specific elements that must be extracted from country reports to produce the flagship report, building on existing international reporting (in addition to the Global Forest Resources Assessment, such as reporting methods of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sustainable forest management criteria and indicators framework);

(j) Consider every potential option for easing the administrative burdens on countries, such as the possibility of incorporating an online reporting system similar to the Global Forest Resources Assessment platform.

Main reasons for not submitting a report

28. Eight countries that had not submitted a national report at the fifteenth session of the Forum responded to the survey. Six of those countries cited a lack of resources and capacity as the main reason for not doing so. Equally challenging was the availability of data (also cited by six of the countries), followed by interministerial and interagency communication and coordination, as previously mentioned. In addition, one country stated that its latest data were available in the Global Forest Resources Assessment report and that additional aspects were outlined in the country's voluntary national contribution form submitted to the Forum. Another country described its engagements with other reporting processes, such as the Global Forest Resources Assessment and the joint forest sector questionnaire of the Economic Commission for Europe, and stated that it conducted its own national forest inventory on a regular basis.

V. Global core set of forest-related indicators

29. Work on the global core set of forest-related indicators is conducted within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests joint initiative on streamlining global forest-related reporting. The aim of the initiative is to harmonize reporting on forest resources and their management and use criteria and indicators for various processes and in the context of the Rio conventions. The focus of the initiative is also to improve the coverage, quality and transparency of forest-related data and information and to reduce the forest-related reporting burden of countries. Other areas of work addressed in the initiative include improving the methodology for reporting in the context of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025.

30. Most of the 21 forest-related indicators included in the set are already established and, together with data collected and reported by the Global Forest Resources Assessment, they support and are used in assessments of progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets. The indicators have been particularly helpful in the context of global forest goals 1 and 3 and their associated targets. In order for those indicators, most of which are socioeconomic, to become operational, more data and further work on concepts and methodology are needed.

31. Further progress has been made on indicator 13 (Number of forest-dependent people in extreme poverty), including to support measuring progress towards target 2.1 (tier 3)). Key challenges posed by indicator 13 are that its calculation should rely on an agreed definition of forest dependency and then on two sequential analyses. The first analysis estimates the number of forest-dependent people, and the subsequent one computes a subset of forest-dependent people that are in extreme poverty. Given the multidimensional nature of forest dependency, the operationalization and estimation of a single, universal definition of “forest-dependent people” is extremely challenging. The term “forest proximity” for “forest-proximate” people may serve as an operationalizable, although imperfect, proxy for “forest dependency”. The term “forest-proximate people” has been proposed as an estimable proxy for forest dependency that can be operationalized for indicator 13.

32. In 2021, FAO produced a methodology for estimating the number of forest-proximate people, building on a study presented at a workshop on the subject in 2019.² The method relies on spatial overlays that combine global-scale remotely sensed data on tree cover (as a proxy for forest cover) and gridded human population data to identify people who live in or close to forests. The methodology is replicable using

² Peter Newton, Kinzer et al, “The number and spatial distribution of forest-proximate people globally”, *One Earth*, vol. 3, No. 3 (2020), pp. 363–370.

publicly available global datasets and could form part of indicator 13. Plans are under way to consider a measurement methodology that would allow accounting for the extent of poverty, its evolution over time and a comparison among countries.

33. Progress has been also made on indicator 10 (Wood-based energy share of total final energy consumption). In 2021, FAO carried out a systematic data search to identify existing information on wood fuel production and consumption based on peer-reviewed literature, country websites and reports from 145 countries. In addition, FAO is developing a new model for better estimation and verification of wood energy production and consumption in countries that are lacking officially reported data. To further increase data availability on wood-based energy, it is proposed that: (a) a multi-agency task force on wood energy data be established; (b) a desk study be conducted to assess the availability, consistency, coherence and reliability of wood energy data across major international agencies; (c) a rapid assessment tool for data collection be developed to support reporting on indicator 10; (d) capacity-building activities and trial operations be conducted in selected pilot countries; and (e) guidelines for reporting on indicator 10 be formulated on available data and on data collected from the rapid assessment tool.

34. In a background paper on indicator 12 (Employment related to the forest sector) FAO, the Thünen Institute and the International Labour Organization (ILO) examined the contribution of the forest sector to total employment in national economies, analysed terminologies, definitions, data sources and data gaps related to employment in the forest sector and provided an estimation of current forest-related employment using ILO data and applying a new statistical methodology. Preliminary results from the background paper were discussed in an expert workshop on the significance of the forest sector for employment on global and regional scales, which was held virtually on 29 and 30 September 2021. Based on the progress made, it is proposed that the indicator be upgraded to tier 1. In order to further improve data availability for the indicator, it is suggested that the definition of employment and its corresponding measurement be used in order to be consistent with international guidelines, namely, recommendations of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, that a systematic review of data availability from the ILO data site, ILOSTAT, be conducted for considering comparable sector-level data from alternative sector-specific sources and that further work be carried out on the possibility of using time-series estimations and projections to reduce the data gaps.

35. Further development of tier 3 indicators and making the set of indicators available to as many countries, and global and regional forest-related reporting processes and mechanisms as possible, is necessary. Countries that are interested in undertaking such efforts and in testing and finalizing the work on certain indicators, such as indicators 13 and 14 (contribution of forests and trees to food security and nutrition), are invited to collaborate in the process.

36. The preparatory process for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 is already under way. An expert consultation that will serve to review and revise the scope, terms and definitions for the Assessment and the global core set, in collaboration with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other international experts, will be held in Finland in June 2022.

VI. Conclusions

37. Lessons learned from the reporting process, as indicated in the present note, reflect the challenges posed to monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress made in attaining goals and targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. In order to obtain the relevant and necessary data, respondents need to

reach out to and work with different entities within and outside the forest sector. The process requires good communication among government agencies and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination, which is time consuming. In addition, there are still data gaps related to weak socioeconomic forest-related data and to methodologies and information on demographic trends linked to populations and forests and food security, as well as on the benefits of such data to forest-based livelihoods and other related social dimensions. Analysis of the submitted information is often problematic as it is difficult to produce a meaningful overview and the big picture since measurements and actions reported by countries necessarily address issues related to national legal, administrative and social frameworks.

38. As indicated earlier in the present note, the reporting cycle for the fifteenth session of the Forum was unique in the sense that member States reported for the first time on progress towards implementation of the strategic plan. Despite the challenges, the secretariat of the Forum was able, on the basis of the mostly qualitative information submitted by member States and biophysical data from the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020, to conduct a first assessment of progress towards achieving the global forest goals and to produce its first flagship publication, *Global Forest Goals Report 2021*. The publication reflects a balanced combination of the two major types of sources and provides a realistic assessment of the progress made towards the global forest goals.

39. Many countries that did make the effort and submitted their national reports to the Forum at its fifteenth session also reported several “positive side effects” linked to reporting and clearly demonstrated that the preparation of national reports was also beneficial for the forest sector and forest community at the national level. Such a response is particularly encouraging.

40. The Forum received a substantial amount of feedback and viable suggestions not only on possible refinements to the reporting format but also, in terms of more generic recommendations, on ways to improve future reporting to the Forum.

41. Some progress has been made on the global core set of forest-related indicators that is important not only in the context of reporting but also for establishing reliable statistics and a database on forest socioeconomics, thereby enabling the contribution of forests to society and to sustainable development to be fully measured and valued in quantifiable terms.

42. Capacity-building for data collection, monitoring and reporting remains an important factor since countries need to have adequate monitoring systems in place in order to produce and disseminate accurate information on forests and sustainable forest management.

VII. Proposals

43. **The Forum may wish:**

(a) **To request that the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests amend the format for national reporting, taking into account the suggestions and proposals received from member States, conduct a pilot phase for the use of the refined format with interested countries and report on progress to the Forum at its eighteenth session;**

(b) **To consider the establishment of an informal advisory group on reporting to the Forum, taking into account the positive experience gained from having such a group involved with the flagship publication;**

(c) To request that the secretariat, in the context of preparations for the international arrangement on forests midterm review, prepare a road map and timeline for the next reporting cycle and explore options for establishing an online reporting platform;

(d) To further request that the secretariat of the Forum organize, jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, a global workshop on reporting on progress towards global forest goals and targets, with a focus on data sources, collection and methodologies for which there is a lack of systematic data;

(e) To invite members of the Forum and the governing bodies of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to make use of the global core set of forest-related indicators and support further work on tier 3 indicators, including the improvement of concepts, definitions and testing in the field.
