

**Economic and Social Council**

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Agenda item 18 (k)

**Economic and environmental questions: United Nations
Forum on Forests****Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council
on 17 July 2020**

[on the recommendation of the United Nations Forum on Forests ([E/2020/42](#))]

**2020/14. Outcome of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum
on Forests**

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions [70/199](#) of 29 July 2016 and [71/285](#) and [71/286](#) of 27 April 2017, as well as Economic and Social Council resolutions [2015/33](#) of 22 July 2015 and [2017/4](#) of 20 April 2017 and Council decision 2018/239 of 2 July 2018,

**Quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for
the period 2021–2024**

1. *Adopts* the programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for its sixteenth session, in 2021, as contained in annex I to the present resolution, and requests the Forum at its sixteenth session to decide on its programme of work for the period 2022–2024, taking into account the proposal contained in annex II to the present resolution;¹
2. *Invites* the Bureau of the Forum, in close consultation with members of the Forum, to decide on the thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022, consistent with the guidance contained in annex I;
3. *Requests* the Forum secretariat to organize a high-level round table during the sixteenth session of the Forum to discuss major forest-related developments;

¹ The draft proposal for the programme of work for the period 2022–2024, contained in annex II to the present resolution, is based on the co-chairs' summary of the expert group meeting on the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2021–2024, held in Geneva in November 2019.



Voluntary national contributions

4. *Welcomes* the announcements made to date by members of the Forum regarding their voluntary national contributions in support of the global forest goals and targets, and invites members that have not yet done so to announce their voluntary national contributions in support of the global forest goals and targets at the sixteenth session of the Forum and to communicate them to the Forum secretariat through diplomatic channels using the form contained in annex III to the present resolution;

Monitoring, assessment and reporting

5. *Welcomes* the voluntary national reports submitted by 51 members of the Forum on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030,² the United Nations forest instrument³ and voluntary national contributions, as well as the reports submitted by regional and subregional organizations and processes;

6. *Requests* the Forum secretariat to continue to develop the Forum's concise flagship publication⁴ on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, in close consultation with and taking into account the advice of the informal advisory group, as well as in consultation with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and to launch the publication at the sixteenth session of the Forum and at the World Forestry Congress, to be held in May 2021, and invites the Forum at its sixteenth session to provide guidance on the next steps;

7. *Also requests* the Forum secretariat, within existing resources and in consultation with members 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;

8. *Invites* the Forum to synchronize future voluntary national reporting with the five-year global forest resources assessment process, beginning with the next forest resources assessment cycle, taking into account other forest-related reporting cycles and the need to reduce reporting burdens, promote data collection efficiencies and enhance national reporting capacities;

9. *Invites* the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to advance further its work on the global core set of forest-related indicators and to report to the Forum at its sixteenth session on the progress achieved in that regard;

² See General Assembly resolution [71/285](#).

³ See General Assembly resolutions [62/98](#) and [70/199](#).

⁴ The mandate for the preparation of the "flagship publication" is established in paragraph 11 of resolution 13/1 of the Forum, as follows: "*Emphasizes* the value of making effective use of the information provided by members through their voluntary national reporting, and to that end requests the Forum secretariat to prepare, on the basis of the initial round of reporting and in consultation with members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant stakeholders, a concise 'flagship' publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets for release by the end of 2021, using existing resources, suitable for a range of audiences within and outside the forest sector, and also requests the secretariat to report on planning in that regard to the Forum at its fifteenth session" (see *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 22 (E/2018/42)*, chap. I, sect. B).

Means of implementation

10. *Welcomes* the assistance provided through the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network⁵ in supporting eligible countries in mobilizing financial resources from all sources for sustainable forest management, as well as the support to the Network provided by members of the Forum through their voluntary contributions to the Forum trust fund, and underscores the importance of conducting the work of the Network, consistent with its mandate, and enhancing the effectiveness of its activities;

11. *Notes* the progress achieved in developing the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network clearing house, consistent with the guidelines for the operation of the Network, and requests the Forum secretariat to continue to work closely with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other data providers in designing the initial phase of the clearing house, with a view to avoiding duplication and increasing synergies and efficiencies, and to report to the Forum at its sixteenth session on the progress achieved in that regard, including on the possible budget implications;

12. *Invites* the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to strengthen its joint initiative on forest finance facilitation, in particular in support of the clearing house in the context of the workplans of the Partnership;

13. *Requests* the Forum secretariat to provide regular updates with regard to the proposed United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat office for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in Beijing, and to provide a progress report to the Forum at its sixteenth session;

14. *Also requests* the Forum secretariat, in consultation with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and with input from members of the Forum, to compile an initial assessment of the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on sustainable forest management, the forest sector, forest-dependent people, indigenous peoples and local communities, forest financing and international cooperation, and to present the assessment to the Forum at its sixteenth session;

⁵ Paragraph 13 of Economic and Social Council resolution [2015/33](#) and paragraph 62 of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 state that the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network of the United Nations Forum on Forests, in close cooperation with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, contributes to the scaling-up of sustainable forest management by facilitating access by countries to resources to implement the strategic plan and to achieve its global forest goals and targets. To this end, the priorities for the Network are:

(a) To promote and assist members in designing national forest financing strategies to mobilize resources for sustainable forest management, including existing national initiatives, within the framework of national forest programmes or other appropriate national frameworks;

(b) To assist countries in mobilizing, accessing and enhancing the effective use of existing financial resources from all sources for sustainable forest management, taking into account national policies and strategies;

(c) To serve as a clearing house and database on existing, new and emerging financing opportunities and as a tool for sharing lessons learned and best practices from successful projects, building on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests online sourcebook for forest financing;

(d) To contribute to the achievement of the global forest goals and targets, as well as priorities contained in the quadrennial programmes of work.

Paragraph 63 of the United Nations strategic plan for forests further states that special consideration should be given to the special needs and circumstances of Africa, the least developed countries, countries with low forest cover, countries with high forest cover, countries with medium forest cover and low deforestation, and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, in gaining access to funds.

Engagement and contributions of partners

15. *Welcomes* the adoption by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests of its strategic vision towards 2030,⁶ and invites the Partnership to develop its workplan for the period 2021–2024 in line with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2021–2024 and to report to the Forum at its annual sessions on the progress achieved in implementing the workplan;

16. *Invites* members of the Forum and the governing bodies of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support the workplan of the Partnership, in particular its joint initiatives, as appropriate, consistent with their respective mandates, objectives and work programmes;

17. *Emphasizes* the importance of multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral involvement in the activities of the Forum, and requests the Forum secretariat to engage major groups⁷ and other relevant stakeholders actively, including at the sixteenth session of the Forum;

18. *Takes note* of the workshop held in Nairobi from 3 to 5 March 2020, organized by major groups in cooperation with the Forum secretariat, on “Cross-sectoral collaboration for inclusive forest landscapes” in support of the fifteenth session of the Forum;

19. *Emphasizes* the importance of involving relevant regional and subregional organizations and processes in the activities of the Forum, including at its sixteenth session, to share lessons learned and best practices;

High-level political forum on sustainable development and major conferences

20. *Stresses* the significance of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 as a global framework for forest-related actions at all levels to facilitate progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals⁸ and associated targets, and invites the Forum to provide concise targeted inputs to annual sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

21. *Also stresses* that implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 contributes to achieving the goals and objectives of the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,⁹ the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹⁰ the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa¹¹ and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and that the United Nations strategic plan for forests can contribute to

⁶ E/CN.18/2020/3, annex.

⁷ Chapters 23 to 32 of Agenda 21 identify the following as “major groups”: business and industry; children and young people; farmers; indigenous people; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; the scientific and technological community; women; and workers and trade unions. Representatives of several major groups related to forests are regularly engaged in the work of the Forum. In paragraph 49 of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, it is also stated that the effective implementation of sustainable forest management depends on the contributions of all relevant stakeholders, including forest owners, indigenous peoples, local communities, local authorities, the private sector (including small, medium and large forest-based enterprises), non-governmental organizations, women, children, youth, and scientific, academic and philanthropic organizations at all levels.

⁸ See General Assembly resolution 70/1.

⁹ See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to be adopted at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

**Information on reforms of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs
pertaining to the Forum**

22. *Welcomes* the outcome of the consideration of the General Assembly pertaining to the Forum, by which the Assembly retained subprogramme 8, Sustainable forest management, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, and maintained the D-2 classification of the post of Director of the Forum secretariat;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to expedite the recruitment and appointment processes for the post of Director of the Forum secretariat.

17 July 2020

Annex I

Programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for its sixteenth session

Introduction

1. The quadrennial programmes of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests represent its contribution to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and achieving the global forest goals and associated targets and provide a framework for setting the agendas for annual sessions within the quadrennium.
2. The quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2021–2024 includes two thematically linked bienniums: 2021–2022 (sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Forum) and 2023–2024 (eighteenth and nineteenth sessions). Thematic priorities for each biennium will 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. The Bureau will decide the thematic priorities for each biennium in consultation with members of the Forum.

General guidance for the sixteenth session

3. The sixteenth session of the Forum in 2021 will be a technical session that will include an interactive exchange of experiences and lessons learned on thematic priorities among members of the Forum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations, regional and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups and other relevant stakeholders. The interactive exchange will include consideration of the science-policy interface and cross-sectoral and emerging issues and will take into account youth, gender and regions perspectives.
4. The output of the sixteenth session will be a concise Chair's summary that may include proposals for consideration at the Forum's policy session in 2022. The Chair's summary will also include a summary of discussions of the high-level round table. The table below outlines the work programme for the sixteenth session, which includes the consideration and adoption of the programme of work of the Forum for the period 2022–2024 by means of a resolution. In consideration of its programme of work for the period 2022–2024 at its sixteenth session, the Forum will take into account the discussions of the high-level round table.

Programme of work for the sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 2021 (technical session)

Priorities in support of implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

1. Thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022: selected global forest goals and associated targets
2. Other technical session items
 - (a) Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: new announcements of voluntary national contributions; updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities

Priorities in support of implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

- (b) Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities
 - (i) Contributions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its member organizations and the United Nations system to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on the workplan of the Partnership
 - (ii) Contributions of regional and subregional organizations and processes to achieving the thematic priorities
 - (iii) Contributions of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and philanthropic community, to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on major group workplans
 - (c) 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 2021, the work towards a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other international forest-related developments
 - (d) 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 2021
 - (e) Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
 - (f) Monitoring, assessment and reporting: Forum flagship publication; global core set of forest-related indicators; Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020
- 3. Forum trust fund
 - 4. Emerging issues: impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on forests and the forest sector
 - 5. Adoption of the programme of work of the Forum for the period 2022–2024
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Annex II

Proposed draft programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for its seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth sessions

Table 1

Seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 2022 (policy session)

Priorities in support of implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

1. Thematic priorities for the biennium 2021–2022: selected global forest goals and associated targets in accordance with the sixteenth session of the Forum and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the Chair's summary from the sixteenth session
 2. Other policy session items and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the Chair's summary from the sixteenth session
 - (a) New announcements of voluntary national contributions
 - (b) Updates by stakeholders and partners on activities in support of the thematic priorities
 - (i) Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its workplan
 - (ii) Regional and subregional organizations and processes
 - (iii) Major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and philanthropic community
 - (c) 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
 - (d) 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 2022
 - (e) Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
 - (f) Monitoring, assessment and reporting: consideration of the proposed refinements to the format for the next round of voluntary national reporting on progress in implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions
 - (g) Preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in achieving its objectives, including the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030
 3. Forum trust fund
 4. Emerging issues
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Table 2

Eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 2023 (technical session)*Priorities in support of implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030*

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1. Thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024: selected global forest goals and associated targets
 2. Other technical session items
 - (a) Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: new announcements of voluntary national contributions; updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities
 - (b) Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities
 - (i) Contributions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its member organizations and the United Nations system to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on the workplan of the Partnership
 - (ii) Contributions of regional and subregional organizations and processes to achieving the thematic priorities
 - (iii) Contributions of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and philanthropic community, to achieving the thematic priorities; progress on major group workplans
 - (c) 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 2023 and international forest-related developments
 - (d) 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 2023
 - (e) Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
 - (f) Monitoring, assessment and reporting: voluntary national reporting; global core set of forest-related indicators; preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025
 - (g) Preparations for the midterm review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, including the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030
 3. Forum trust fund
 4. Emerging issues
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Table 3

Nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 2024 (policy session)*Priorities in support of implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030*

1. Thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024: selected global forest goals and associated targets in accordance with the eighteenth session of the Forum and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the Chair's summary from the eighteenth session
2. Other policy session items and consideration of relevant proposals contained in the Chair's summary from the eighteenth session
 - (a) New announcements of voluntary national contributions
 - (b) 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 2024 and international forest-related developments
 - (c) Midterm review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests¹²
3. High-level segment
4. Adoption of the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2025–2028

¹² In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution [2015/33](#), the components of the international arrangement on forests are the Forum, the secretariat, the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Forum trust fund. Accordingly, the midterm review of the arrangement will encompass a review of the work of all the components, including the secretariat, the Facilitation Network, monitoring, assessment and reporting, the trust fund, the communication and outreach strategy and stakeholders' involvement.

Annex III

Simple format for members of the Forum to communicate voluntary national contributions to the secretariat

Member State:

Date/Forum session that voluntary national contributions were announced:

Date voluntary national contributions transmitted to secretariat through Permanent Mission to the United Nations:

List of voluntary national contributions¹³

<i>Time frame¹⁴</i>	<i>Concise description of each contribution and any associated activities</i>	<i>Supports the global forest goals and targets</i>	<i>Contribution included in nationally determined contributions¹⁵</i>	<i>Contribution also contributes to:</i>		
				<i>Sustainable Development Goals targets (list)</i>	<i>Post-2020 biodiversity framework (list)¹⁶</i>	<i>Other</i>
By 2030	Contribution 1: plant 500,000 hectares of trees on degraded land	1.1	Yes	15.1	5 7 14	Land degradation neutrality
				15.2		Bonn Challenge
				15.3		National forest programme
By 20__	Contribution 2					
By 20__	Contribution 3					

¹³ Information listed is illustrative only.

¹⁴ 2030 or earlier.

¹⁵ Under the Paris Agreement.

¹⁶ Placeholder for the outcome of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.