



United Nations

United Nations Forum on Forests

**Report on the eighteenth session
(13 May 2022 and 8–12 May 2023)**

**Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 2023
Supplement No. 22**



United Nations Forum on Forests

**Report on the eighteenth session
(13 May 2022 and 8–12 May 2023)**



United Nations • New York, 2023

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention . . .	4
A. Draft decision for adoption by the Council	4
Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its eighteenth session and draft provisional agenda for its nineteenth session	4
B. Decision brought to the attention of the Council	5
Dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests	5
II. Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030	6
III. Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests	14
IV. Emerging issues	15
V. Dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the Forum	16
VI. Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the Forum	17
VII. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its eighteenth session.	18
VIII. Organization of the session	19
A. Opening and duration of the session	19
B. Election of officers	19
C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work	19
D. Attendance	21
E. Documentation.	21
Annex	
Summary by the Chair of the discussions during the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests	22

Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its eighteenth session and draft provisional agenda for its nineteenth session

The Economic and Social Council:

- (a) Takes note of the report of the Forum on its eighteenth session;¹
- (b) Notes that the nineteenth session of the Forum will be held at Headquarters from 6 to 10 May 2024;
- (c) Approves the provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the Forum as set out below:

Draft provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:² activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024:
 - (a) Updates on the activities of members of the Forum, including new announcements of and updates on voluntary national contributions;
 - (b) Update on the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations and progress in the implementation of its workplan;
 - (c) Updates on the activities of regional and subregional organizations and processes;
 - (d) Updates on the activities of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, and progress in major group workplans;
 - (e) 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.

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2023, Supplement No. 22 (E/2023/42).*

² In accordance with the general guidance provided in annex I to Economic and Social Council resolution 2020/14, the proposals contained in the Chair's summary of the discussions of the eighteenth session of the Forum will be submitted for consideration by the Forum at its nineteenth session, in 2024.

4. Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests.
5. Midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in achieving its objectives.
6. High-level segment, including a forest partnership forum with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, non-governmental organizations and private sector chief executive officers.
7. Adoption of the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2025–2028, including consideration of priority actions and resource needs.
8. Dates and venue of the twentieth session.
9. Provisional agenda of the twentieth session.
10. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its nineteenth session.

B. Decision brought to the attention of the Council

2. The following decision adopted by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its eighteenth session is brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council:

Dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution [2021/6](#), decides that the nineteenth session of the Forum will be held at Headquarters from 6 to 10 May 2024.

Chapter II

Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

3. The Forum considered agenda item 3 as a whole and jointly with agenda item 5 at its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 8 May 2023. The Forum considered agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (h) at its 3rd to 8th meetings, from 8 to 11 May 2023. The Forum considered agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (g) jointly with agenda item 5 at its 10th meeting, on 12 May. For its consideration of agenda item 3 and its sub-items, the Forum had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretariat on the technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024 ([E/CN.18/2023/2](#));

(b) Note by the Secretariat on enhanced cooperation with partners and the contributions of such partners to achieving the thematic priorities ([E/CN.18/2023/3](#));

(c) Note by the Secretariat on means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network ([E/CN.18/2023/4](#));

(d) Note by the Secretariat on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress in the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 ([E/CN.18/2023/5](#));

(e) Note by the Secretariat on an update on the preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests ([E/CN.18/2023/6](#)).

4. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat.

General discussion of agenda items 3 and 5

5. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 May, the Forum held a general discussion of agenda item 3 jointly with agenda item 5 and heard statements by the representatives of Ukraine, Mexico, Jamaica, Thailand, Israel, Slovenia, the Republic of Moldova, Argentina, Malawi, Peru, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ève Bazaiba Masudi, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, Brazil, China, Greece, the Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Türkiye, Mali, Armenia, Japan, Guyana and Gabon.

6. At its 3rd meeting, on 8 May, the Forum heard statements by the representatives of the United States of America, Kenya, Morocco, France, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Botswana and Costa Rica.

7. At the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the observer for the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Presentation on the “Vision, priorities and achievements of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat”

9. At the 3rd meeting, on 8 May, the Forum heard a presentation on the “Vision, priorities and achievements of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat” by the Director of the Forum secretariat.

10. At the same meeting, the Director and a representative of the Forum secretariat responded to the comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Switzerland, Guatemala, Canada, Australia, the United States, Malawi, Uganda, Morocco, Brazil, China, the Russian Federation, New Zealand, India and Mexico.

Consideration of the draft Chair's summary*

11. At its 10th meeting, on 12 May, the Forum had before it the draft Chair's summary of the technical discussions under agenda item 3, its sub-items (a) to (g) and agenda item 5 during the eighteenth session, including the Chair's proposals emerging from the discussions for transmission to the nineteenth session. The draft Chair's summary was contained in an informal paper, in English only, which was circulated through the e-deleGATE portal.

12. At the same meeting, the Chair (Burundi) made a statement.

13. Also at the same meeting, the representatives of the European Union (on behalf of its member States), India, Brazil, Ukraine, the United States, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Japan, South Africa, China, Australia and Argentina made statements.

14. Also at the 10th meeting, the observers for the African Forest Forum and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization made statements.

15. At the same meeting, the Director of the United Nations Forest on Forum secretariat and the Chair (Burundi) made statements.

16. Also at the same meeting, the secretary of the United Nations Forum on Forests provided a clarification.

(a) Thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024, in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

17. The Forum considered item 3 (a) (Thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024, in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030) at its 4th and 8th meetings, on 9 and 11 May 2023, jointly with item 3 (d) (Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2023, the work towards the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other international forest-related developments).

18. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.

Presentations of the background papers on the thematic priorities

19. At its 4th meeting, on 9 May, the Forum heard presentations of the background papers on the thematic priorities under item 3 (a) by the following consultants of the Forum secretariat: Leonce Komguem and Mahendra Joshi.

20. During the ensuing interactive discussion, the presenters responded to the comments made and questions posed by the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), India, the United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Israel, Malaysia, Germany, Canada, Mexico, Japan, the Russian Federation, Argentina, Mali, the Philippines and New Zealand.

* For the Chair's summary, see the annex to the present report.

21. The representatives of the major group for children and youth and the Indigenous Peoples major group participated in the interactive discussion.

Panel discussion under items 3 (a) and 3 (d)

22. At its 4th meeting, on 9 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under items 3 (a) and 3 (d), chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Forum, İsmail Belen (Türkiye), and moderated by the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization, Sheam Satkuru.

23. Presentations were given by the following panellists: Senior Environment Specialist at the Global Environment Facility, Ulrich Apel; Manager of the Adaptation Fund, Mikko Ollikainen; Acting Director of the African Natural Resources Management and Investment Centre at the African Development Bank, Vanessa Ushie; and Chief of the Rural Development and Food Security Thematic Group at the Asian Development Bank, Qingfeng Zhang.

24. At the 6th meeting, on 10 May, statements on a point of order were made by the representatives of Canada (on behalf of Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (JUSCANZ)) and Australia.

25. At its 8th meeting, on 11 May, the representatives of China, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), Brazil and the Republic of Korea made statements in relation to the panel discussion held at the 4th meeting, on 9 May.

26. At the same meeting, the representative of the major group for children and youth made a statement.

27. Also at the same meeting, the representative of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

(b) Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

(i) New announcements of voluntary national contributions

(ii) Updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities

28. The Forum considered item 3 (b) and its sub-items (i) and (ii) at its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 8 and 9 May 2023.

29. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.

General discussion of item 3 (b) and its sub-items (i) and (ii)

30. At its 3rd meeting, on 8 May, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (b) and its sub-items (i) and (ii) and heard statements by the representatives of Slovakia, Malawi, Peru, the Republic of Korea, India, Ecuador, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, Thailand, Costa Rica and Malaysia.

31. At its 4th meeting, on 9 May, the representative of New Zealand made a statement in relation to item 3 (b).

(c) 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, and 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 the philanthropic community, to achieving the thematic priorities, and progress on major group workplans**

32. The Forum considered item 3 (c) and its sub-items (i), (ii) and (iii) at its 5th meeting, on 9 May 2023.

33. At the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made an introductory statement.

34. Also at the same meeting, the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and Director of the Forestry Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations made a statement.

35. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.

General discussion of item 3 (c) and sub items (i) and (ii)

36. At its 5th meeting, on 9 May, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (c) and its sub-items (i) and (ii) and heard statements by the representatives of Mexico, Indonesia, Jamaica, India, South Africa, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), China, Brazil, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Gabon, Ecuador, Kenya, Japan, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States, Switzerland, Türkiye, Costa Rica, Malawi and El Salvador.

37. At the same meeting, the Forum heard statements by the observers for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe) and the International Tropical Timber Organization.

38. Also at the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the representative of the Economic Commission for Europe.

39. Also at the 5th meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the representative of the farmers major group.

Panel discussion on the “Contributions of the private sector and the philanthropic community to achieving the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024” (under item 3 (c) (iii))

40. At its 5th meeting, on 9 May, the Forum held a panel discussion on the “Contributions of the private sector and the philanthropic community to achieving the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024” (under item 3 (c) (iii)), chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Forum, Leticia Zamora Zumbado (Costa Rica), and moderated by the President and Chief Executive Officer of Nature Conservancy Canada, Catherine Grenier.

41. Presentations were given by the following panellists: Global Sustainable Sourcing for Pulp and Paper and Climate Forest Lead at Nestlé, Michèle Zollinger; Chief Executive Officer of HowGood, Alexander Gillett; and Chief Executive Officer of Reforest'Action, Stéphane Hallaire.

42. During the ensuing interactive discussion, the panellists responded to the comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Senegal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Australia, Canada and Botswana.

43. The representative of the farmers major group participated in the interactive discussion.

(d) 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, the work towards the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other international forest-related developments

44. The Forum considered item 3 (d), jointly with item 3 (a), at its 4th meeting, on 9 May 2023.

45. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.

Update on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

46. At its 4th meeting, on 9 May, the Forum heard an update on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by the Director of Science, Society and Sustainable Futures at the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Jihyun Lee.

Panel discussion under items 3 (a) and 3 (d)

47. For the panel discussion, see paragraphs 22 to 27.

(e) 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 2023

48. The Forum considered item 3 (e) at its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 8 and 9 May 2023.

49. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.

General discussion of item 3 (e)

50. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 8 and 9 May, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (e).

51. At its 3rd meeting, the Forum heard statements by the representatives of Mexico, South Africa, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), India, Indonesia, the United States, Canada, Ecuador, China, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Thailand, the Dominican Republic, the Russian Federation, Australia, Switzerland and Mali.

52. At its 4th meeting, the Forum heard statements by the representatives of Kenya, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Japan and Costa Rica.

53. At the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the observer for the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

54. Also at the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the representative of FAO.
55. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.
56. Also at the 4th meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

(f) Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

57. The Forum considered item 3 (f) at its 6th meeting, on 10 May 2023.
58. At the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made an introductory statement.
59. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.

General discussion of item 3 (f)

60. At its 6th meeting, on 10 May, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (f) and heard statements by China, Colombia, Guyana, Mexico, Jamaica, India, Peru, Malawi, Ecuador, Argentina, Japan, Malaysia, Brazil, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), Thailand, South Africa, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the United States, Botswana, Morocco, Switzerland, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany, Kenya and Australia.
61. At the same meeting, the Forum heard statements by the observers for the African Forest Forum and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization.
62. Also at the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the representative of FAO.
63. At the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.
64. Also at the 6th meeting, the representatives of Switzerland, China, the United States, the European Union, South Africa, Japan and the Russian Federation made statements.

Presentation on the "Opportunities and challenges related to the carbon markets"

65. At its 6th meeting, on 10 May, the Forum heard a presentation on the "Opportunities and challenges related to the carbon markets" by the Chief Operating Officer and founder of Xange.com, Steven Witte, who also responded to the questions posed by the Vice-Chair of the Forum, Javad Momeni (Islamic Republic of Iran).
66. During the ensuing interactive discussion, the presenter responded to the comments made and questions posed by the Vice-Chair of the Forum (Islamic Republic of Iran) and the representatives of Saudi Arabia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Mali, Indonesia, Mexico, Costa Rica and El Salvador.

(g) Monitoring, assessment and reporting

- (i) Global core set of forest-related indicators**
- (ii) Preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025**

67. The Forum considered item 3 (g) and its sub-items (i) and (ii) at its 7th meeting, on 10 May 2023.

68. At the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made an introductory statement.

Update on preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025

69. At its 7th meeting, on 10 May, the Forum heard an update on preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 by the Team Leader of the Forestry Division at FAO, Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs.

Report by the Co-Chairs on the outcome of the global workshop on reporting on progress towards the global forest goals and targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2030

70. At its 7th meeting, on 10 May, the Co-Chairs of the global workshop on national voluntary reporting on progress towards global forest goals and targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, Gerfried Gruber (Austria) and Clement Ng'oriareng (Kenya), reported on the outcome of the global workshop that was held from 22 to 23 March 2023 in Rome.

Presentation on the terms of reference of the advisory group on reporting to the Forum

71. At its 7th meeting, on 10 May, the Forum heard a presentation by a representative of the Forum secretariat on the terms of reference of the advisory group on reporting.

General discussion under item 3 (g) and its sub-items (i) and (ii)

72. At its 7th meeting, on 10 May, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (g) and its sub-items (i) and (ii) and heard statements by the representatives of China, the Republic of Korea, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), Malawi, India, the Philippines, Peru, Ecuador, Japan, Malaysia, Brazil, Canada, the Russian Federation, the United States, Australia, Saudi Arabia, the Dominican Republic, New Zealand, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Thailand.

73. At the same meeting, the Forum heard statements by the observers for the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe), the Central African Forests Commission, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the International Tropical Timber Organization.

74. Also at the same meeting, the Forum heard statements by the representatives of the Economic Commission for Europe and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

75. Also at the 7th meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the representative of the children and youth major group.

(h) Update on the preparations for the 2024 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

76. The Forum considered item 3 (h) at its 8th meeting, on 11 May 2023.

77. At the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made an introductory statement.

General discussion of item 3 (h)

78. At its 8th meeting, on 11 May, the Forum held a general discussion of item 3 (h) and heard statements by the representatives of India, the European Union (on behalf of its member States), Jamaica, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the United States, China, Mali, Kenya, Switzerland, Brazil and Australia.

79. At the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the observer for the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization.

80. Also at the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat made a statement.

Chapter III

Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests

81. The Forum considered item 4 at its 8th meeting, on 11 May 2023. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the trust fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests ([E/CN.18/2023/7](#)).

82. At the same meeting, on 11 May, the Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat made an introductory statement.

General discussion of item 4

83. At its 8th meeting, on 11 May, the Forum held a general discussion of item 4 and heard statements by the representatives of the Republic of Korea, the United States, Papua New Guinea, China, Jamaica, Australia, Switzerland and Germany.

84. At the same meeting, the Forum heard a statement by the observer for the Africa Forest Forum.

85. Also at the same meeting, the Director of the Forum secretariat and a representative of the Forum secretariat made statements.

Chapter IV

Emerging issues

86. The Forum considered agenda item 5 at its 2nd, 3rd and 10th meetings, on 8 and 12 May 2023, jointly with agenda item 3, and at its 9th meeting, on 11 May 2023. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024 (E/CN.18/2023/2).

87. For the discussion on the consideration of agenda item 5, jointly with agenda item 3, see paragraphs 5 to 8 and paragraphs 11 to 16.

88. For the Chair's summary of the discussions, see annex.

Panel discussion on “Forests, energy and livelihoods”

89. At its 9th meeting, on 11 May, the Forum held a panel discussion on “Forests, energy and livelihoods”, chaired by the Vice-Chairs of the Forum, İsmail Belen (Türkiye) and Javad Momeni (Islamic Republic of Iran), and moderated by the Director of the Forests, Land and Housing Division of the Economic Commission for Europe, Paola Deda.

90. Presentations were given by the following panellists: the President of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, John Parrotta; the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization, Sheam Satkuru; the Director of the Forestry Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Zhimin Wu; the Senior Policy Adviser at the United Nations Development Programme, Tim Scott; and the Head of the Nature for Climate Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mirey Atallah.

91. During the ensuing interactive discussion, the panellists responded to the comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Saudi Arabia, Suriname, Türkiye, India, Indonesia, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Congo, the European Union, Mali, China, Ecuador, the United States, Brazil, Switzerland, Morocco, the Dominican Republic, Australia and El Salvador.

92. The observer for the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan participated in the interactive discussion.

93. The representative of the business and industry major group also participated in the interactive discussion.

Chapter V

Dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the Forum

94. The Forum considered item 11 at its 10th meeting, on 12 May 2023. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a draft decision entitled “Proposed dates and venue of the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” ([E/CN.18/2023/L.2](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

95. At its 10th meeting, on 12 May, the Forum adopted the draft decision (see chap. I, sect. B).

96. Before the adoption of the draft decision, a statement was made by the European Union.

97. At the same meeting, the Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat made a statement.

Chapter VI

Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the Forum

98. The Forum considered item 7 at its 10th meeting, on 12 May 2023. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a document entitled “Draft provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests” ([E/CN.18/2023/L.1](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

99. At its 10th meeting, on 12 May, the Forum adopted the provisional agenda for its nineteenth session, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2023 session (see chap. I, sect. A).

Chapter VII

Adoption of the report of the Forum on its eighteenth session

100. The Forum considered item 13 at its 10th meeting, on 12 May 2023. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the draft report on its eighteenth session ([E/CN.18/2023/L.3](#)).

Action taken by the Forum

101. At the 10th meeting, on 12 May, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur (Türkiye) introduced the draft report. Subsequently, the Forum adopted the draft report and entrusted the Rapporteur with its finalization with the support of the secretariat, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2023 session.

Chapter VIII

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

102. The United Nations Forum on Forests held its eighteenth session at Headquarters on 13 May 2022 and from 8 to 12 May 2023. The Forum held 10 plenary meetings (1st to 10th).

103. At the 1st meeting, on 13 May 2022, the Chair pro tempore and Chair of the seventeenth session of the Forum, Miriam Mac Intosh (Suriname), opened the eighteenth session.

104. At the 2nd meeting, on 8 May 2023, the Chair of the nineteenth session, Zéphyrin Maniratanga (Burundi), resumed the session and made an opening statement.

105. At the same meeting, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Lachezara Stoeva (Bulgaria) addressed the Forum.

106. Also at the same meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs made a statement.

B. Election of officers

107. At its 1st meeting, on 13 May 2022, the Forum elected, by acclamation, Zéphyrin Maniratanga (Burundi), as Chair, and Javad Momeni (Islamic Republic of Iran) and İsmail Belen (Türkiye) as Vice-Chairs of the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions.

108. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 May 2023, the Forum elected, by acclamation, Leticia Zamora Zumbado (Costa Rica) and, by secret ballot, Jaroslav Kubišta (Czechia) as Vice-Chairs of the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions.

109. At the same meeting, the Forum designated İsmail Belen (Türkiye) to serve concurrently as Rapporteur of the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

110. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 May 2023, the Forum adopted its provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document [E/CN.18/2023/1](#). The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:
 - (a) Thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024, in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030;
 - (b) Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030:
 - (i) New announcements of voluntary national contributions;

- (ii) Updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities;
 - (c) 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, and 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 the philanthropic community, to achieving the thematic priorities, and progress on major group workplans;
 - (d) 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, the work towards the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other international forest-related developments;
 - (e) 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 2023;
 - (f) Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network;
 - (g) Monitoring, assessment and reporting:
 - (i) Global core set of forest-related indicators;
 - (ii) Preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025;
 - (h) Update on the preparations for the 2024 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.
4. Trust fund for the United Nations Forum on forests.
 5. Emerging issues.
 6. Date and venue of the nineteenth session of the Forum.
 7. Provisional agenda of the nineteenth session of the Forum.
 8. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its eighteenth session.

111. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 May 2023, the Forum approved the provisional organization of work for the session, as contained in an informal paper circulated in English only, on the understanding that it might be further revised, as warranted.

112. At the same meeting, the Chair recalled that, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2021/6, the eighteenth session was a technical one, and that a Chair's summary of the discussions during the session would be prepared (see annex).

D. Attendance

113. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, the Forum is composed of all States Members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, with full and equal participation. The list of participants will be issued as document [E/CN.18/2023/INF/1](#).

E. Documentation

114. The documentation considered by the Forum at its eighteenth session is available on the website of the Forum (<https://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html>).

Annex

Summary by the Chair of the discussions during the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2021/6, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its eighteenth session, held technical discussions on the thematic priorities in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. The thematic priorities were to be based on the global forest goals and targets, considering the post-2020 programme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and relevant international forest-related developments.

2. The Bureau of the Forum at its eighteenth session decided that the thematic priorities for the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions would be: (a) enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits; (b) increasing significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests; 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

3. The present Chair's summary contains a summary of the discussions at the eighteenth session of the Forum. The Chair's proposals emerging from the technical discussions at the eighteenth session are contained in section B for transmission to the nineteenth session of the Forum. The Chair's summary is not a consensus negotiated outcome of the Forum. Regarding input to the 2023 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Chair would like to recall that the Bureau of the eighteenth session of the Forum, in close consultation with members of the Forum, submitted its input to the President of the Economic and Social Council in March 2023.²

II. Summary by the Chair of discussions at the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

4. In his opening remarks, the Chair of the eighteenth session welcomed the increasing acknowledgement by the international community of the role of forests in achieving global targets and highlighted the importance of promoting forest-related actions to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. He underscored the importance of 2023 for the United Nations Forum on Forests, as its members and partners were engaged in the preparations for the high-level political forum on sustainable development in September 2023³ and the midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests. He made an appeal to all delegations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for a new and stronger commitment to the achievement of the global forest goals and targets.

¹ For further details of the thematic priorities for the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Forum, please see: www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/UNFF18-19-Thematic-Priorities-web.pdf.

² See the input of the Bureau of the Forum at its eighteenth session to the HLPF at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2023/HLPF%202023%20Inputs%20UNFF18.pdf>.

³ <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/SDGSummit2023>.

He also stressed that financing of sustainable forest management activities and projects should also include a focus on the preservation of biodiversity, as well as the fight against climate change and land degradation. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests should take a more active role in supporting members of the Forum, with more impacts on the ground.

5. In her opening remarks, the President of the Economic and Social Council recalled that, later in 2023, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goal Summit would be held, and the latter would provide an opportunity for Heads of State and Government to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. She also commended the Forum, which is among the first of the Council's functional commissions to align its work with the 2030 Agenda. She emphasized the role of subsidiary body of the Council in the success of the 2030 Agenda and invited Forum members to be actively involved in the deliberations of the eighteenth session of the Forum, as well as the upcoming session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

6. In his opening remarks, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Li Junhua, stated that the complex and interconnected challenges included the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, that worsening food insecurity and malnutrition were still reverberating throughout the world and that these challenges can be addressed only by integrated and well-designed policies that had multiplier effects on advancing goals both within and among countries. He stressed that forests played a fundamental role in addressing these complex challenges. Observing that we stood at the half-way point of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the strategic plan, he stressed the importance of highlighting the critical importance of forests and sustainable forest management for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. Summary of discussions at the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Agenda item 3 (Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests); and item 5 (Emerging issues)

7. The Director of the UNFF Secretariat introduced the Secretariat note on agenda items 3 and 5 (E/CN.18/2023/2).

8. Several members⁴ spoke under these agenda items. The following main points emerged from the discussions:

(a) All speakers emphasized the importance that they attached to forests, the work of the Forum, the achievement of the global forest goals, the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests and the thematic priorities of the eighteenth session of the Forum. In this respect, it was important to assess the impact and visibility of the Forum in the global forest policy landscape, and the interaction

⁴ Ukraine, Mexico, Jamaica, Thailand, Israel, Slovenia, Moldova, Argentina, Malawi, Peru, Democratic Republic of Congo, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden), India, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Iran, Russian Federation, Brazil, China, Japan, Greece, Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Türkiye, Mali, Armenia, Japan, Guyana, Gabon, Kenya, France, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Botswana, Costa Rica, Guatemala, United States, Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

with global policy initiatives and legal instruments. They also reported on their national activities and legislations in support of sustainable management of all types of forests, and trees outside forests, inter alia, through incorporating implementation of the strategic plan into national sustainable development strategies;

(b) The United Nations strategic plan for forests is a global framework for action at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests, and to halt deforestation and forest degradation, and the achievement of the global forest goals directly supports and accelerates the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Forests and sustainable forest management have significant roles in providing livelihoods, supporting the bioeconomy, increasing employment, biodiversity, contributing to food security through non-timber forest products, mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration, adapting to adverse impacts of and increased resilience to climate change, as well as reducing the risk of natural disasters, floods, droughts, sand and dust storms, landslides and other extreme events;

(d) Some delegations indicated that the sustainable use of woods from sustainably managed forests could contribute to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and to circular economies;

(e) There are close interlinkages between forests, biodiversity and climate change. The sustainable management of all types of forests, and the increased forest cover, and protected areas, including at the rural level effectively help to address the global challenges of land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change. In this respect, in accelerating the achievement of the global forest goals would also contribute to the achievement of the global climate and biodiversity related goals and targets under the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework;

(f) Forests are under threat, from deforestation for conversion to agricultural lands, illegal logging, forest degradation, climate change, drought, increased forest pests and diseases and wildfires, which affects biodiversity, climate and local communities whose livelihoods depend on forests;

(g) These threats and the drivers of deforestation must be addressed through a holistic and comprehensive landscape approach, including through sustainable forest management activities such as protection, afforestation, reforestation and forest landscape restoration;

(h) The special needs and condition of countries of small island developing States and low-forest-cover countries in addressing these threats, and in advancing implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests, should be considered;

(i) There is a need to recognize the indispensable role of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth in promoting sustainable forest management, and to couple efforts for sustainable forest management with adequate policies to support and enhance livelihoods of forest-dependent communities, including by tackling persistent levels of poverty and food insecurity;

(j) The severe impacts of war and conflicts, including the war in Ukraine, on forests, sustainable forest management and supply of energy, including on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests and the achievement of the global forest goals was highlighted by several speakers. One delegation also asked to avoid politicizing the discussions;

(k) To accelerate implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests and achievement of the global forest goals, it is important to enhance the effective use of existing resources, address financial, technical and technological resource needs, including through strengthening international cooperation, enhancing coordination,

mobilizing and facilitating the access to new and additional resources from all sources at all levels and enhancing technical and technological assistance to countries;

(l) To achieve the global forest goals by 2030, it is also necessary to ensure that no one is left behind, enhance regional and subregional collaboration and exchange of experiences, promote forest governance and forest law enforcement, increase involvement of local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision-making and implementation of policies and improve communication on forest values.

Vision, priorities and achievements of the United Nation Forum on Forests secretariat

9. The Director of the Forum secretariat gave a presentation on the vision, priorities and achievements of the Forum secretariat. She began by setting the context, describing how the global community was facing multiple crises on multiple fronts. She outlined a vision for influential leadership and making a difference by raising the profile of the work of the Forum in ensuring that forests are sustainably managed. She noted that the Forum secretariat aimed to become “fit for purpose” by increasing its support to member States, working through strategic partnerships and engaging broader audiences. She also emphasized the need for greater high-level representation, including heads of State at the Forum. She identified some of the secretariat’s priorities in the areas of partnerships, resource mobilization, monitoring and assessment, communication and outreach and stakeholder involvement. She highlighted the importance of the strategic partnerships with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional entities and major groups and outlined some of the actions that the Forum secretariat had taken to strengthen this ongoing collaboration. She stressed the need for resource mobilization in the context of forest financing to support national-level implementation, and the work of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, as well as the context of the United Nations Forum on Forests trust fund. Lastly, she identified some of the challenges faced by the secretariat due to staffing gaps and limited financing resources. In this regard, she noted with appreciation the voluntary contributions by current donors and requested donors who had previously supported the Forum secretariat through financial and in-kind staffing contributions to consider once again renewing their support.

10. Several member States spoke⁵ during the interactive discussions regarding her presentation. Member States expressed their appreciation to the Director of the Forum secretariat for clearly outlining the vision and priorities of the secretariat. Several countries asked for more information on the current staffing situation, distribution of tasks and associated gaps. Some countries welcomed the secretariat’s efforts to engage with other multilateral environmental processes and entities, as a way of promoting greater visibility of forests and the Forum, but also the need for the Forum to be ambitious in looking at and addressing emerging issues within its mandate. Several delegations mentioned the need to consider the entire International Arrangement on Forests, its impact, and all support of donor countries within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as the importance of not creating parallel structures. Many member States noted the importance of organizing the Forum’s upcoming intersessional meeting in a hybrid format, to enable broader participation from both developed and developing countries. Some countries emphasized the importance of means of implementation, including the need for mobilizing financing and providing capacity-building and technical support. One country proposed the

⁵ Switzerland, Canada, Australia, United States, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden), Brazil, New Zealand, India, Mexico, Russian Federation, Morocco, Malawi, Uganda.

holding of a high-level conference on mobilizing financing for forests to generate positive momentum to mobilize the financing needed to achieve United Nations strategic plan for forests and global forest goals. Several delegations stressed that it was necessary to make better use of existing resources within different forest-related instruments.

Agenda item 3 (b) (Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests) and its sub-items (i) (New announcements of voluntary national contributions) and (ii) (Updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities)

11. Several representatives spoke⁶ under this agenda item,⁷ highlighting the following main points:

(a) Several measures had been undertaken by countries in support of the global forest goals, including promotion of alternative household cooking fuels and sustainable wood production through fast-growing tree species, increase in forest cover, establishment of commercial plantations, increased carbon dioxide sequestration, reduction of gross carbon emissions, achievement of zero net deforestation and restoration of degraded forests/commercial forests within a specific time frame;

(b) Provision of funding for non-timber functions of forests, including regulating climatic conditions, social functions, and biodiversity and water source protection have been undertaken in some countries as voluntary national contributions. Such activities support the achievement of global forest goal 1, target 1.4, global forest goal 2, targets 2.4 and 2.5, and global forest goal 4, target 4, as well as Sustainable Development Goal 15;

(c) Other countries had taken specific measures to decrease uncontrolled wildfires and increase financial support to increase forest cover, implement large-scale tree planting and pasture improvement and improved productive practices in an integrated manner, diversify planted forests from exotic species to native species and strengthen the forest sector's policy and legislative framework;

(d) The importance of regional cooperation to leverage efforts to conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage forest ecosystems and to share good practices was also highlighted as an effective means to scale up North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

Agenda item 3 (e) (Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests communication and outreach strategy, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests in 2023)

12. Several representatives spoke,⁸ highlighting the following main points:

⁶ Malawi, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Peru, Costa Rica, India, Ecuador, Russian Federation, Thailand, Brazil and Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization.

⁷ The announced voluntary national contributions are available at <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vnccs/index.html>.

⁸ Australia, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, United States, Russian Federation, Switzerland, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden), FAO and International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

(a) Representatives welcomed the update by the Forum secretariat on the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy and shared information on their national level outreach activities and 2023 International Day of Forests celebrations on the theme of forests and health;

(b) They recognized the importance of the International Day of Forests as a platform to raise global public awareness and promote action for sustainable forest management;

(c) Many representatives emphasized the need for the sharing of good practices and communication campaigns and material to raise the visibility of forests in the 2030 Agenda, as well as in the context of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement, in line with the mandates and principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In this context, a suggestion was made that a brief communication product could be developed in the context of the upcoming Sustainable Development Goal Summit which would highlight often overlooked, or less-known facts and stories about forests and their contributions to all the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Several representatives emphasized the need to raise awareness on the impact of climate change on forest ecosystems and forest-dependent communities and to take measures in adapting forests to climate change. Others shared their communication activities related to the prevention of wildfires;

(e) The need to strengthen cooperation on communication and outreach activities with major groups and other stakeholders, and the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in raising awareness, was emphasized;

(f) Several representatives emphasized the need to ensure that content on the website was up to date and an urgent need to redesign and modernize the Forum's website to improve accessibility and organizational credibility;

(g) Many countries shared updates about their outreach to promote restoration, reforestation and tree planting campaigns, and the integrated management of rural ecosystems;

(h) Some countries highlighted the importance of "champions" from within (foresters) and well-known persons outside the forestry sector;

(i) Several countries suggested that the Forum secretariat develop additional digital outreach materials, including infographics, factsheets, posters, videos and compilation of good practices;

(j) The importance of diversity, in particular gender balance, in outreach activities for the United Nations strategic plan for forests, such as the composition of panels, was highlighted.

13. The theme of "Forests and innovation", proposed by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the 2024 International Day of Forests was supported.

Agenda items 3 (a) (Thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024, in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030) and (d) (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, the work towards the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other international forest-related developments)

14. The consultant delivered a presentation on the background paper on thematic priority (a): enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits. He underlined the integral role of forests in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the critical

linkages between the global forest goal 2 targets and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the theme of the 2023 high-level political forum, noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had slowed down sustainable forest management activities at a time when we were most reliant on forests to provide essential services and products to support our recovery. In these circumstances, stepping up the achievement of the global forest goal 2 targets was a key component to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Several information gaps and crises had hindered progress towards the achievement of the global forest goal 2 targets, including a lack of clarity in the definition of some indicators, financial and technical difficulties, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation related to food and energy prices, among others. He stated that the achievement of article 5 of the Paris Agreement depended on the realization of global forest goal target 2.5 and our ability to clearly communicate the full economic and financial value of forest-based solutions for adaptation.

15. The consultant delivered a presentation on the background paper on thematic priority (b): increasing significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests. He highlighted that countries had made good progress on all three targets of global forest goal 3. However, progress was uneven across regions and countries. He outlined challenges faced by many developing countries, such as limited means of implementation and technical capacity, weak governance and a lack of political commitment to sustainable forest management. He raised concerns regarding future management modalities for protected areas as a result of climate change, as climate change could induce the adaptation and migration of plant and animal species while protected areas remained unchanged. He also highlighted regional disparities with regard to progress in bringing more forests under long-term forest management plans and in forest certification. He stated that the 2021 Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use⁹ and the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership demonstrated strong political commitment in support of sustainable forest management, and the forest community should be strategic in seizing such opportunities to advance global forest goal 3. Furthermore, countries needed financial and technical support to overcome various challenges to make further progress towards global forest goal 3.

16. Following these presentations, several countries and representatives spoke,¹⁰ highlighting the following main points:

(a) The conservation of forests posed a challenge, especially when countries must use their natural resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It was important to assist these countries in addressing such challenges;

(b) Several countries emphasized that all global forest goals were strongly interlinked, and concrete steps must be taken to enhance coordination among government institutions and different stakeholders, share best practices and enhance synergies to more effectively step up the achievement of the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals;

⁹ See www.gov.uk/government/publications/cop26-world-leaders-summit-on-action-on-forests-and-land-use-2-november-2021/world-leaders-summit-on-action-on-forests-and-land-use.

¹⁰ Democratic Republic of the Congo, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden), India, United States, Brazil, Indonesia, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Germany, children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples major group.

(c) Despite the importance of certification, some delegations indicated that judging the sustainability of forest products solely through private certification might not be sufficient to lead to a right conclusion. These delegations further stressed that private certification schemes had been placing a disproportionate burden on small and medium-sized producers, with detrimental environmental, economic and social effects;

(d) There was a need to improve data and indicators, share collective best practices, promote nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, including in rural areas, build local capacity in the face of climate change and improve access to markets;

(e) Extending law enforcement in forest areas, strengthening sustainable forest management practices, accelerating social forestry programmes to generate income from forest products by using innovative means, and protecting and restoring peatlands could further accelerate the achievement of the global forest goals;

(f) Climate change mitigation and adaptation should be addressed in a comprehensive and balanced manner. The provision of sufficient means of implementation to support developing countries in achieving the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals remained a major challenge to be addressed;

(g) Ensuring the sustainability of native forests held great potential for countries' bioeconomy. Some delegations stated that the concept of bioeconomy had been consistently recognized as an indispensable pathway to support sustainable biodiversity-based products, including non-timber forest products, acknowledge the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and leverage additional efforts towards the conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of forest biodiversity in a balanced and integrated manner;

(h) There were many multilateral funding sources, including within the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and additional efforts had to be made by those organizations to share and disseminate the outcomes of their work, as well as their success stories, with countries;

(i) To achieve the global forest goals, it was imperative to improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and local communities as custodians of forests;

(j) Financial support should be provided to medium-sized organizations that worked closely with groups on the ground. Technical and financial support was needed for interregional activities that focused on specific topics such as watershed management, invasive species, participatory methods and ethics, and agroforestry approaches;

(k) Improved data and indicators, greater focus on nature-based solutions and payments for ecosystems services, or ecosystem-based approaches, as well as the promotion of natural capital accounting, were needed to better recognize the value of nature;

(l) There was an urgent need to effectively manage interactions between humans and wildlife to ensure their coexistence, given the current high rate of biodiversity and ecosystem loss;

(m) Forests were critical to reducing poverty in forest-dependent communities, and in supporting other crucial sectors such as public health, employment and disaster risk reduction, including during pandemics such as COVID-19;

(n) The United Nations Forum on Forests should contribute to the implementation of the forest-related outcomes of the Rio conventions, including the

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and benefit from opportunities offered by the framework, in a manner fully consistent with the mandates and principles of the Rio conventions.

17. The representative of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity provided an update on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. She outlined that the Framework identified a set of urgent actions required to protect and place ecosystems under restoration as well as ecosystem services and functions for people's needs. It called for a substantial increase in financial resources, as well as strengthening capacity-building and technical and scientific cooperation, to facilitate national implementation. It acknowledged the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity and ensured that their rights over lands, territories, resources and traditional knowledge were respected across all targets of the Framework. It was also highlighted throughout the Framework that its targets would be implemented through a gender-responsive approach. The Framework complemented and amplified all six global forest goals. Therefore, we should work to ensure that these global frameworks reinforced each other, especially at the national level, as the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity would be updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans over the next two years. The following thematic areas of complementarities could be considered for joint implementation: (a) avoiding and reverting the loss of natural forests by enhancing the integrity and connectivity of natural forests; (b) ensuring that protected forest areas were well connected and equitably governed and that the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities were recognized and respected; (c) reconciling biodiversity protection and human needs, eliminating poverty and hunger, securing decent jobs and instituting a just transition; (d) rethinking the role of business in biodiversity conservation; and (e) ensuring adequate resources for implementation, including social and environmental safeguards for innovative financial mechanisms.

18. The discussion on the thematic priorities of the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests was facilitated by a panel comprising representatives of the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the secretariat of the Adaptation Fund, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The panel was moderated by the representative of the secretariat of the International Tropical Timber Organization.¹¹ Panellists presented the activities within their respective organizations, including the areas of their contributions towards achieving the thematic priorities of the Forum.

19. The representative of GEF underscored that GEF was a financial mechanism of several multilateral environmental agreements. Sustainable forest management and forests constituted one of the largest parts of the GEF portfolio. To date, GEF had invested \$3.7 billion in forest projects and programmes. The current replenishment of the GEF trust fund (GEF-8) was on track to become one of its most ambitious forest initiatives to date. GEF support provided many ways to contribute to all the global forest goals. The choice of the global forest goals to be met depended on countries' prioritization of the use of the resources they received from GEF through a country-driven process.

20. The representative of the Adaptation Fund outlined the support the Adaptation Fund was providing to developing countries in the areas of forests and ecosystem resilience. He presented the existing portfolio of investments and introduced the strategic directions of the Fund during the next five years, including measures to be taken to further empower countries in building their climate resilience in the forest sector and in devolving decision-making and leadership to the local level, as well as

¹¹ The concept note for the panel is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html.

the scaling up of projects funded. He also shared specific examples of forest-related projects funded by the Adaptation Fund.

21. The representative of AfDB stated that the Bank recognized that continued deforestation and land degradation in Africa would lead to poverty, hunger and loss of biodiversity and would render it increasingly difficult for farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Bank was committed to looking at forestry from a development lens and had already developed a strategy to industrialize the timber industry in central Africa and promote reforestation in Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda, as well as support value addition to secondary wood products in Liberia and Gabon. The Bank would continue to support African countries in mobilizing additional green finance through conventional and innovative financing mechanisms.

22. The representative of ADB highlighted that the Bank's approach to forestry was synergistic with the global forest goals, as the Bank's sovereign projects in forestry supported sustainable forest management and promoted the reforestation and restoration of forestlands. In the Bank's operations, all forestry activities were integrated into its work on sustainable natural resource use, management, protection and rehabilitation of the environment and efforts to mainstream those things across sectors such as agriculture, energy and transport, including by putting forestry projects into a landscape context that integrated both rural livelihoods and environmental protection. He also highlighted the Bank's \$5 million equity investment in the New Forests Fund, a forestry fund targeting South-East Asia. To further build opportunities through collaboration, the Bank's Innovative Natural Capital Financing Facility, a catalytic green finance facility, was being developed to co-finance and support projects with significant natural capital components, including forests.

Agenda item 3 (c) (Contributions of and enhanced cooperation with partners to achieving the thematic priorities) and its sub-items (i) (Contributions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its member organizations and the United Nations system to achieving the thematic priorities, and progress on the workplan of the Partnership), (ii) (Contributions of regional and subregional organizations and processes to achieving the thematic priorities) and (iii) (Contributions of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and the philanthropic community, to achieving the thematic priorities and progress on major group workplans)

23. The Director of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests introduced the note by the secretariat on agenda item 3 ([E/CN.18/2023/3](#)).

24. The Director of the Forestry Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests presented a report on the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. He reported that the Green Climate Fund had become the sixteenth member of the Partnership. Highlighting the Partnership's vision of sustainably managing all kinds of forests by 2030 and fully unlocking the potential of global forest resources, the Partnership planned to enhance its support to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests, including by using the expertise and scientific and technical advice of its member organizations. The Partnership also focused on global advocacy and communication through multiple communication strategies and by observing the International Day of Forests.

25. Several representatives made statements.¹² The following main points emerged from the discussions:

(a) There was a need to identify challenges and future opportunities for forest conservation and management and forestry as a sustainable enterprise, and to use the annual celebration of the International Day of Forests to increase awareness and participation at all levels;

(b) The Forum should consider structuring its meetings to enhance the effective contribution of regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and partners and enhance their participation and inputs to its work;

(c) Despite improved cooperation and coordination among members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, there was still room for further progress in organizing and advancing its work, including information-sharing on the selection criteria and relevant processes for membership in the Partnership;

(d) There were several initiatives, such as the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogue, the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance Coalition, the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus) process and Partnerships for Forests, which provided opportunities and resources for the conservation and protection of global forests;

(e) The conservation, protection and sustainable use of forests required genuine partnerships between governments and relevant stakeholders. Robust partnerships between developing and developed countries were also needed to implement global forest-related commitments, including increased mobilization of funding for developing countries' forest conservation and restoration;

(f) In improving its work, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests could also consider the example of effective inter-agency networks, intergovernmental organizations and mechanisms within and outside of the United Nations system, and increase its interactions with members of the Forum, including by holding short virtual intersessional briefing meetings on its joint initiatives;

(g) There was a need for stronger support by the governing bodies of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for the work of the Partnership. An assessment of the existing memorandums of understanding between Collaborative Partnership on Forests members, and an analysis of which global forest goals and targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 were currently covered by the workplans of the members of the Partnership, should be done;

(h) There were a range of opportunities to promote the work of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in support of the global forest goals at United Nations system events in 2023, such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(i) The Forum should continue to support the active involvement of regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and partners in the work of the Forum, and engage in a dialogue with them to explore under which conditions those

¹² Australia, United States, China, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden), Gabon, Jamaica, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Ecuador, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization.

organizations would see an added value in the future work of the Forum for their own work;

(j) Private sector and philanthropic organizations could play an important role in engaging civil society and in supporting the ongoing efforts of major groups in capacity-building and resource mobilization, and some non-United Nations members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests had mechanisms to receive private sector and philanthropic contributions that could be utilized to support the Partnership's activities;

(k) Major groups should maintain active links to local and regional stakeholders and/or non-governmental organizations in order to promote transparency and awareness about activities under the international arrangement on forests;

(l) Activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests should be developed and designed on a country-driven basis, drawing upon priorities and needs identified by recipient countries. This would improve the responsiveness of the Partnership and its capacity to address capacity gaps across members.

26. The discussion on item 3 (c) (iii) was further facilitated by a panel comprising representatives of HowGood, Nestlé and Reforest'Action. The panel was moderated by a representative of the Nature Conservancy of Canada.¹³ Panellists presented a detailed description of the activities of their respective organizations/networks towards advancing sustainable forest management, including those activities related to the thematic priorities of the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

27. The representative of HowGood called for bold, transformational change to address climate change through agriculture. While all other routes to mitigate climate change could only reduce harm, or at best reach zero, agriculture had the ability to capture carbon – especially by curbing deforestation and scaling up agroforestry – while also enhancing biodiversity, livelihoods and resilience against climate disasters. For the first time, the industry was leading towards solutions in a meaningful way, using data and collaborating in pre-competitive settings such as the Sustainable Markets Initiative.

28. The representative of Reforest'Action highlighted that, while 75 per cent of the world's land was degraded and conventional agriculture was fuelling deforestation, climate change and biodiversity loss, regenerative agriculture was helping to address these challenges. Drawing on more than 10 years of experience in 42 countries around the world, the representative of Nestlé explained how a designer and implementer of regenerative agriculture and agroforestry projects was helping multinationals make their business models and value chains more regenerative and circular through quality carbon projects, in a context where public authorities were increasingly interested in these nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches. She emphasized the importance of the carbon market as a source of revenue to promote sustainable forest management, support regenerative agriculture and improve farmers' and forest-dependent people's livelihood.

29. The representative of Nestlé also outlined how companies could drive and support the enhancement of forest-based economic activities with social and environmental benefits through their own corporate commitments and targets. Such mobilization of private sector finance created further opportunities for cooperation and collaboration towards sustainable forest management with local communities, governments and other relevant stakeholders.

¹³ The concept note for the panel is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html.

30. During the interactive discussions, several representatives made statements or asked questions of the panellists.¹⁴ The following main points emerged from the discussions:

(a) Representatives expressed their appreciation for a panel fully composed of non-State actors, since it brought different perspectives to issues under the United Nations Forum on Forests;

(b) In balancing regenerative agriculture within the context of rising population growth, it was important to review carbon prices and ways to ensure a redistribution of benefits for those who did not have forests;

(c) Agroforestry was one of the low-hanging fruits contributing towards the achievement of the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Agroforestry opened the door to sustainable and regenerative agriculture, as well as to a vibrant bioeconomy;

(d) Carbon market initiatives could help promote sustainable forest management and improve the livelihoods of farmers and forest-dependent people;

(e) The sharing of information and lessons learned among stakeholders, including investors and local communities, was fundamental to building confidence and increasing the chances of success of projects. Private and public sectors should work together if projects were to succeed and provide the envisaged benefits to all stakeholders;

(f) There was a need for increased funding and resources to support resilient and regenerative agriculture. It was also important to change mindsets, in particular among the agricultural companies. Instead of operating from the perspective of risk, agricultural companies needed to consider how best to take proactive action to address the conservation of forests and land degradation. Focusing on sourcing was not sufficient, and it was also necessary to contribute to the empowerment of farmers;

(g) Some representatives also recognized the wide range of approaches to support more sustainable agriculture, including but not limited to agroforestry and integrated crop-livestock-forest arrangements;

(h) It was important to disseminate more information, including to landowners, about carbon trading and carbon markets and their potential income-generation benefits for landowners.

Agenda item 3 (f) (Means of implementation, including operations and resources of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network)

31. The Director of the Forum secretariat introduced the note by the secretariat on agenda item 3 (f) (E/CN.18/2023/4).

32. Several representatives made statements.¹⁵ The following main points emerged from the discussions on agenda item 3 (f) on the means of implementation:

(a) Several countries emphasized the significance of means of implementation, including the provision of new and additional resources, capacity-building and

¹⁴ Senegal, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Australia, Canada, Botswana.

¹⁵ China, Columbia, Mexico, Guyana, India, Peru, Malawi, Ecuador, Argentina, Japan, Malaysia, Brazil, United States, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden), Thailand, South Africa, Botswana, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Switzerland, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Australia, African Forest Forum, Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, FAO.

technology transfer to developing countries for the timely and successful achievement of the global forest goals. Several representatives also highlighted that resources for developing countries needed to be provided on a predictable basis and be easily accessible. Several other delegations stressed that it was necessary to make better use of use of existing resources within different forest-related instruments;

(b) Many countries called for the mobilization of funding for forests from all sources, and from innovative sources of funding, including carbon markets and payments for ecosystem services, among others. Some representatives emphasized that the development of carbon markets should be based on the principles of fair trade, and respect human rights;

(c) Many representatives welcomed the support provided by the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to countries in building their capacity to access resources from all sources for forests, and emphasized that there was further potential to optimize the efficient and effective use of existing resources and newly emerged funding to scale up the activities of the Network to facilitate access to these resources, including the mobilization of resources for forests under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(d) Some representatives mentioned the important support provided by the Network to countries and regional and subregional organizations in building their capacity to access resources from all sources for forests and in providing important support for the development of forest financing strategies;

(e) Several representatives called for additional contributions to the United Nations Forum on Forests trust fund to enable the Network to continue its capacity-building support to countries to facilitate their access to funding for forests;

(f) Regarding the suggestion to expand the work of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to support countries in advancing technological cooperation on forests, several representatives opposed this suggestion, and argued that such a function went beyond the mandate of the Network, and noted that the United Nations Forum on Forests was a policy forum and that member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests could identify the possible gaps in the technical, technological and scientific support related to sustainable forest management and report to the next session of the Forum. Several other countries supported that idea and were of the view that it was an area in which many developing countries needed support. Several representatives stated that the Network had been established as part of the international arrangement on forests as a negotiated compromise to respond to the call by some members of the Forum for the establishment of a Global Forest Fund. The Forum should note this very important landmark and should therefore ensure that the efficiency and prominence of the Network was not diluted.

Updates by the Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat on the proposed office for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in Beijing, and summary of the interactive discussion of the eighteenth session of the Forum on this matter

33. The Director provided an update on the latest developments regarding the proposed office for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in China. In her update, she indicated that, at its thirteenth session, the Forum had noted with appreciation the offer of the Government of China to establish and make operational a secretariat office for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in Beijing and requested the Forum secretariat to regularly report on the possible arrangements for and operation of the proposed office. At its fourteenth through seventeenth sessions, the Forum secretariat provided updates, informing the Forum that a draft

host country agreement and a draft memorandum of understanding had been prepared by the United Nations and shared with China. The secretariat also indicated that four rounds of consultations between the United Nations and China had been held before the sixteenth session of the Forum to discuss the draft host country agreement and draft memorandum of understanding. Since the seventeenth session, no formal meetings had been organized between the two sides to continue discussions on the drafts. However, informal discussions had been organized between the two sides since the seventeenth session of the Forum, during which some suggestions were proposed to address the different views of both sides on the nature, name and scope of the activities of the proposed office. During those informal consultations between the United Nations and China, it was agreed that:

(a) Either “UN Office for the GFFFN”, or “UNFF Secretariat Office for the GFFFN”, would be considered as the name for the proposed office, subject to the final agreement between the two parties on the scope and nature of the proposed office;

(b) The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network was managed by the Forum secretariat in New York, and the head of the proposed office would operate and work under the direct supervision of the Director of the Forum secretariat;

(c) With regard to the scope of its activities, the proposed office, under the direct supervision of the Forum secretariat in New York, would carry out activities for the specific purpose of supporting and scaling up capacity-development activities in support of the Network, and further promote the implementation of sustainable forest management, the United Nations forest instrument and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 through knowledge-sharing, the exchange of lessons learned and best practices, training, capacity-building, research and multilateral cooperation;

(d) With regard to the nature of the office, both parties agreed that the proposed Network office in Beijing, once established, would be managed and administered by the Department of Social and Economic Affairs of the Secretariat, as were all other offices of the Department of Social and Economic Affairs in different countries, and would operate in accordance with the applicable United Nations rules. These offices were time-bound and were funded by voluntary contributions from the host country;

(e) The full administrative and operational costs of these offices were funded through extrabudgetary sources consisting of voluntary contributions provided by the host country. No costs of the proposed office would be paid from the regular budget of the United Nations or the Forum’s trust fund.

34. The Director indicated that both sides were happy with the common understanding that had emerged on several outstanding issues, which would pave the way to resolve other issues, and would further ensure that the operation of the proposed office served the interests and needs of member States and stakeholders.

35. Several representatives made statements.¹⁶ The following main points emerged from the discussions:

(a) Several representatives expressed thanks to China for its offer to host an office for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in Beijing, and some

¹⁶ China, Malawi, Argentina, Japan, Brazil, United States, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden), South Africa, Switzerland, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Australia, Russian Federation, African Forest Forum.

called for the expeditious establishment of this office to provide capacity-building support to countries. Some delegations considered the establishment of this office to be an important means of increasing support for the Network and thereby for members of the Forum;

(b) Several representatives asked for clarification about the delineation of tasks between the proposed office and the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests as the manager of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, and the funding sources for the operation of the proposed office. Some representatives referred to the Chair's summary of the fourteenth session of the Forum (see [E/2019/42-E/CN.18/2019/9](#)), which described the nature and naming convention of the proposed office. They also emphasized that no funding from the regular budget of the United Nations or the Forum's trust fund should be used for the operation of this office. Referring to the update provided by the Director of the Forum secretariat on the possible names and scope of activities of the proposed office, these representatives indicated that the name of the proposed office should not include a reference to "UNFF Secretariat Office", and the activities of the proposed office should not go beyond the existing mandate of the Network. These representatives emphasized that the proposed office should operate according to United Nations administrative and financial rules and procedures. They further asked for continued updates to be provided by the Forum secretariat. One delegation questioned the necessity of separating the Network office from the Forum secretariat;

(c) With regard the explanations of the Director of the Forum secretariat on the scope of activities of the proposed office, several delegations stated that the activities of the proposed office should not go beyond the mandate of the Network and should not include sustainable forest management or multilateral cooperation;

(d) Several representatives asked the Forum secretariat to clarify whether the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had similar offices in other countries, and provide examples of those offices, the legal implications of the establishment of such offices and the administrative and financial arrangements for those offices, and whether the draft memorandum of understanding and draft host country agreement for the proposed office in Beijing could be shared with the members of the Forum for comments.

36. In response to the comments and questions, the Director of the Forum secretariat clarified that all offices of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in different countries, including the proposed Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network office in Beijing, were managed and administered by the Department as project offices. Those offices were part of the Department and shared some basic features, for example, all of them were time-bound and not permanent, and the full costs of their operation came from voluntary contributions by the host country. No funding from the regular budget of the United Nations was allocated to those offices. The offices complemented the Department's work by focusing on capacity development, often with a thematic or regional focus.

37. The offices were not extensions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as the Department was a programme funded by the regular budget of the United Nations and was based at Headquarters in New York. The Head of the proposed office in Beijing would operate and work under the direct supervision of the Director of the Forum secretariat. The draft host country agreements and memorandums of understanding of these offices were reviewed and approved by the Office of Legal Affairs and must comply with United Nations standards and regulations. As these documents were bilateral agreements between the United Nations Secretariat and the host countries, they could not be publicly shared. At regular intervals, the operation of these offices was evaluated by both the Office of

Internal Oversight Services and external evaluators. The selection and appointment of staff followed the human resources policies of the United Nations Secretariat and were reviewed by the central review bodies at Headquarters. Overall, the track records of the past decades pointed to the successes and unique contributions of these offices – hence the growing demand for their services. The offices were considered important additional resources that helped maximize the impact of the offices and divisions of the Department. The services provided by these offices were for all Member States of the United Nations.

38. The Director reported that there were several similar offices of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in different countries, and that the most recent one, the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre, had been established in China. Another example was the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development, which was a Department project office located in the Republic of Korea that had been established in 2011. There was also a similar Department office in Nagoya, Japan, called the United Nations Centre for Regional Development.

39. The secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests at Headquarters remained the manager of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and was responsible for carrying out its functions. The proposed office would carry out activities for the specific purpose of supporting and scaling up capacity development activities to support the Network's assistance to members of the Forum.

40. The Director said that there would be no change to the current mechanisms for channelling funding support to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network. The budget of the office would be provided entirely by voluntary contributions from China to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and would cover the full administrative and operational costs of the office, including staff and personnel, consultants, travel and capacity-building activities. No costs for the proposed office would be paid through the regular budget of the United Nations or the Forum's trust fund. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs would establish a separate funding agreement with China for the operation of the proposed office, with funding provided by the Government of China, and administer activities financed therefrom, including the recruitment of personnel and the purchasing of equipment, supplies and services, and would enter into contracts in accordance with the regulations, rules, policies and procedures of the United Nations applicable to the Department. This funding agreement would be separate from the Forum's trust fund.

41. Following the conclusion of the general discussions on item 3 (f), a guest speaker delivered a presentation on the opportunities and challenges related to the carbon market. The speaker stated that carbon markets consisted of a compliance market operated under a regulatory authority and a self-regulated voluntary market. There was currently a lack of standardization in the methodologies for approving projects across the different standards, which had led to concerns about the quality and environmental integrity of carbon credits. One way to accelerate the achievement of the global forest goals was to issue carbon credits in accordance with jurisdictional REDD-plus programmes. These programmes operated at the subnational or national level and aimed at addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and promoting sustainable forest management. To address concerns about greenwashing, as well as concerns about carbon credits and green bonds, there was a need to enhance the transparency, objectivity and environmental integrity of the voluntary carbon market and green bond market. The solution for forest financing initiatives could be a green bond that was accompanied by verified carbon credits recognized by international, national or other recognized verification mechanisms in line with the Paris Agreement. Members of the Forum could therefore collaborate with private sector partners to establish a robust digital measurement, reporting and verification system that offered investors real-time transparency on the environmental impact of

the use of proceeds from carbon credits and green bonds, as well as potential solutions to concerns of double counting in carbon credits in the context of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes in relation to the article 6 (2) of the Paris Agreement.

42. Several representatives spoke.¹⁷ The following main points emerged from the discussions:

(a) Clarifications were requested on green bonds, on the ways that these bonds would benefit forest projects and on how the requirements of article 6 of the Paris Agreement would affect the buyer and project verifiers;

(b) Some representatives indicated that their respective countries were already engaged in carbon sales, but the process and the obligation for results posed problems, and that there was a need to improve and ensure benefit-sharing. There were also challenges related to raising the price of carbon, simplifying the process of carbon market transactions, involving actors at all levels, and preventing double counting;

(c) Some representatives also indicated that there was a need to use non-market-based measures instead of using carbon markets. They highlighted social, economic and environmental integrity risks associated with the carbon trade and carbon projects for local communities. Some delegations indicated that it was critical to conduct an evaluation on the status of the trade to understand how country commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change could be fulfilled and how these risks could be overcome using the principles of an ethical market and climate justice. They also highlighted the need to promote sustainable forest management through non-market approaches;

(d) Some representatives considered carbon markets to be an important source of financing for forests, especially for small producers. A unified standard would reduce the transaction costs and improve the accountability of the market.

43. In response to comments and questions, the guest speaker indicated that the existence of various standards and platforms such as the Core Carbon Principles of the Integrity Council for Voluntary Carbon Markets enabled tracking of the use of proceeds. Third-party verification bodies could track various steps for carbon markets, with clear guidelines, a credible verification system and digital data that were transferable. The use of these mechanisms and technologies would be the solution and enable more financing through carbon markets. Efficiency could also be improved through the utilization and standardization of technology.

Agenda item 3 (g) (Monitoring, assessment and reporting) and its sub-items (i) (Global core set of forest-related indicators) and (ii) (Preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025)

44. The Director of the Forum secretariat introduced the note by the secretariat on agenda item 3 (g) ([E/CN.18/2023/5](#)).

45. The representative of FAO provided an update on the global core set of forest-related indicators and preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025. She highlighted the findings of two reports (one on the status of and trends in the global core set of forest-related indicators and one containing an assessment of the uptake of the global core set of forest-related indicators) prepared in close collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in 2022. An online expert consultation on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 was organized in September 2022. Capacity development and data collection for the Assessment started in March 2023 and was being implemented through a series of regional workshops in which FAO provided technical assistance and guidance to national correspondents

¹⁷ Saudi Arabia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador.

involved in the Assessment on the compilation of country reports. The process of the compilation of the country reports would be completed by the end of 2023 and would be followed up by data analysis and the preparation of Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 publications and other products.

46. The Co-Chairs of the global workshop on reporting on progress towards the global forest goals and targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, which took place at FAO headquarters in Rome from 22 to 24 March 2023, reported on the discussion of the workshop.¹⁸

47. The Forum secretariat also provided a brief overview of the terms of reference of the advisory group on reporting (see [E/CN.18/2023/5](#)). It was recalled that the terms of reference were developed considering the positive experience of the informal advisory group established for the flagship publication, and in response to Economic and Social Council resolution [2022/17](#).

48. During the general discussions, several representatives made statements.¹⁹ The following main points emerged from the discussions:

(a) Participants welcomed the results of the global workshop on national reporting in March 2023, the pilot phase for the use of the amended format for voluntary national reporting and the improvements made to the format;

(b) Delegations commended the ongoing cooperation between the Forum secretariat and FAO in the area of monitoring, assessment and reporting, and underlined the importance of this cooperation to reduce the reporting burden and increase the consistency of international forest-related data;

(c) Participants took note of the information on the preparations for the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 and underlined the importance of aligning the reporting cycles with the Assessment;

(d) Regarding the global core set of forest-related indicators, delegations welcomed the progress on indicators 10, 12 and 13 and the role of FAO in this regard. The need for the continuation of this work was underlined, in particular in the context of existing data gaps in statistical data on the socioeconomic aspects of forestry;

(e) One delegation expressed concerns over the longevity of work on the whole global core set of forest-related indicators, and another delegation expressed concerns over the incomplete methodology used for the indicator 12, which covered primary forest sector employment and underrepresented all employment in the forestry sector;

(f) Several delegations generally supported the preparation of another flagship publication on the state of implementation of the global forest goals. Some delegations indicated there was a need for a decision by the Forum on this issue, including whether the terminology “flagship” should be retained in such a publication. Several delegations indicated that the nineteenth session of the Forum should further discuss this matter and requested information regarding the pros and cons of

¹⁸ Please see the Co-Chairs summary at <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/events/mar-workshop-march-2023/index.html>.

¹⁹ China, Republic of Korea, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden), Malawi, India, Philippines, Peru, Ecuador, Japan, Malaysia, Brazil, Canada, Russian Federation, United States, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Dominican Republic, New Zealand, Thailand, Forest Europe, Commission for the Forests of Central Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Convention on Biological Diversity, Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, children and youth major group.

nomenclature, given that the term “flagship” triggered certain parameters within the United Nations system;

(g) One delegation noted the role the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Global Forest Expert Panel could play in providing additional science-based contributions to future potential global forest goal reporting cycles;

(h) Several countries emphasized the need for transparent and inclusive discussions regarding the scope and topics of the publication and the importance of demonstrating the synergies and coherence with other forest-related goals such as those under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Some delegations suggested that the publication should occur around six months after the release of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025;

(i) The Forum secretariat was also encouraged to seek other cost-effective ways of disseminating and publishing the information submitted by member States in their national reports to the Forum, such as short case studies and fact sheets, and make efforts to link them to the FAO publication entitled *The State of the World's Forests*;

(j) Delegations supported the establishment of the advisory group on reporting to the United Nations Forum on Forests, and emphasized the need for effective participation by experts from developing countries, FAO, other Collaborative Partnership on Forests member organizations and intergovernmental organizations, with geographical and gender balance, and the need for cost-effective working modalities and the organization of virtual meetings of the group. Several delegations emphasized that the group should also aim at streamlining reporting and avoiding duplications;

(k) Some countries suggested that the advisory group should be multidisciplinary and address the existing technical capacity needs and gaps in order to improve the development of indicators and further enhance the coherence of forest-related data;

(l) Delegations expressed appreciation for the capacity-building activities conducted jointly by the Forum secretariat and FAO in the area of monitoring, assessment and reporting, and requested the Forum secretariat to continue to jointly organize, with FAO, similar capacity-building workshops, as many developing countries still lacked adequate technical and technological capabilities to monitor and report on sustainable forest management.

Agenda item 3 (h) (Update on the preparations for the 2024 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)

49. The Director of the Forum secretariat introduced the note by the secretariat on agenda item 3 (h) (E/CN.18/2023/6). During the general discussions, several representatives made statements and recognized the progress made in the implementation of the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 2022/17 related to the preparations for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests. All speakers emphasized the significance of the ongoing intersessional work on this matter, and the need for its inclusiveness and transparency. Several delegations stressed the need to share background and related documents for the intersessional meetings with countries well in advance, in particular the background documents, programme of work and agenda of the upcoming meeting of the ad hoc expert group on the preparations for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests. Several countries also requested that the outcome of the Collaborative Partnership on

Forests retreat in June be shared with members of the Forum. Several countries asked that the upcoming expert group meeting in Nairobi be conducted in a hybrid format. In follow-up to this request, the secretariat confirmed that the expert group meeting on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 in Nairobi in June 2023 would be held in a hybrid format.

Agenda item 5 (Emerging issues)

50. The discussion on emerging issues was facilitated by a panel comprising representatives of FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The panel was moderated by the representative of the Economic Commission for Europe.²⁰ Panellists presented the activities within their respective organizations, including on the areas of their contributions to achieving the thematic priorities of the Forum.

51. The Director of the FAO Forestry Division and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests said that combining efforts to protect and sustainably use forests, expand clean energy and support livelihoods could contribute significantly towards the creation of sustainable and resilient economies, especially in rural communities. He stressed that addressing energy-, livelihood- and forestry-related challenges in an integrated manner was a good example of a topic that could form the basis for possible work for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, within its mandate. FAO had been supporting its members with the promotion of the sustainable production and consumption of wood fuels, and more broadly bioenergy, through the provision of technical assistance and information-sharing. Following the recommendation of the FAO Committee on Forestry at its twenty-sixth session, held in 2022, FAO would continue to collect, assess and disseminate information on good practices in the sustainable production and trade of charcoal and other forms of wood energy, with a view to supporting members' efforts and dialogue towards the transition to sustainable uses of wood fuels and meeting the Sustainable Development Goal targets of sustainable energy for all by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. He concluded by highlighting the need for integrated policies on forests, energy and livelihoods and for more dialogue on sustainable forest use and technological collaboration and innovation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to better meet the future demand for materials and energy in the transition to carbon-neutral bioeconomies.

52. The Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization focused on the benefits of bioenergy/wood-based renewable fuels, challenges and opportunities, and on the potential abilities of wood-based energy to meet livelihood demands and environmental concerns. She indicated that the potential of bioenergy and biobased economies from sustainably managed forests as a cost-effective and efficient nature-based solution/ecosystem-based approach was still very much unappreciated. She said that environmental and social safeguards and governance and policy frameworks; market demand and economic viability based on innovative financing and investments and fiscal and non-fiscal incentives; and capacity-building and technical cooperation were the key elements in realizing the nexus of forest restoration, climate change mitigation/adaptation and credit-sharing.

53. The President of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations said that forests were crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at local, regional and global scales owing to their provision of essential ecosystem services

²⁰ The concept note for the panel is available at www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html.

such as clean air and water, soil fertility and climate regulation. At the local level, forests supported sustainable agriculture, provided livelihoods for local communities and could play a vital role in disaster risk reduction and building resilience. At the regional level, forests were critical for climate regulation, biodiversity conservation and the provision of clean water. At the global level, forests mitigated climate change, provided habitats for millions of plant and animal species and regulated the hydrological cycle. However, forests faced challenges such as degradation, deforestation and the use of non-sustainable management practices, which required a coordinated effort from policy and decision makers, stakeholders and scientists. Science was vital for sustainable forest management, as it provided the knowledge and tools necessary to understand complex ecological and socioeconomic systems, identify underlying causes of forest degradation and develop effective strategies. Therefore, it was imperative to invest in forest-related research, interdisciplinary collaboration, capacity-building, public engagement and education to promote sustainable forest management and raise awareness of the importance of forests in achieving sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

54. A representative of UNDP highlighted that coherent, holistic and integrated approaches were needed to leverage synergies across the forests, energy and livelihoods nexus that accelerated progress across the Sustainable Development Goals. Policymakers and partners at all levels could consider options to: increase and better target finance and investment; strengthen institutional capacities and public and private sector systems of governance that ensured a just transition; shift public and market incentives; strengthen and increase access to cleaner technologies; increase meaningful stakeholder engagement and protect procedural rights; invest in applied research and digital technologies; promote gender, circular economy and One Health approaches; and promote learning through South-South and triangular cooperation. These policy options were aligned with the thematic priorities of the United Nations Forum on Forests and could be advanced through advocacy at the upcoming high-level political forum on sustainable development and other global and regional forums. They could also be integrated into broader national, sectoral and community initiatives designed to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and linked multilateral environmental agreements.

55. According to a representative of UNEP, forests – like water – were the epitome of nexus and interconnections. More than 2.4 billion people depended on fuelwood for cooking, boiling water and heating. In the debate on climate change, the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy, and forests had a critical role to play. Plantation forests could provide a steady source of energy, but at the same time, addressing charcoal and fuelwood consumption as drivers of deforestation could prove to be powerful ways to channel funding for communities to access energy in the form of electricity and power. Fiscal and financial policies such as adjustments in the price of carbon to \$30 to \$50 per ton, land-use policies and arrangements for climate finance could help steer action towards: (a) enhancing the conservation of high-value forests; (b) acknowledging the true value of forests, including their role in buffering climate impacts to reduce economic and non-economic losses and damages from those impacts; and (c) steering change towards a development paradigm that incorporated nature and forests as key assets rather than cheap resources.

56. During the interactive discussions, several representatives made statements.²¹ The following main points emerged from the discussions:

(a) Many delegations referred to wildfires as an emerging issue and major challenge, subject to ecological contexts, which had imposed significant impacts on peoples' lives and the socioeconomic and environmental condition of many countries. These representatives called for increased regional and international collaboration among countries and stakeholders to address this challenge in a holistic manner and reduce its severe impacts. Some delegations also pointed out the importance of forest maintenance activities and silvicultural methodologies to reduce the biomass and the risk of wildfires and to make forests and trees healthy;

(b) Several representatives referred to the social and economic challenges imposed by climate change, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on forests and people living in forests. Many delegations also drew attention to the need to reduce emissions from the building sector and enhance collaboration with the housing and building sector;

(c) The representative of India announced the decision of its Government to organize a country-led initiative in support of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests in India in October 2023. The main topics of this country-led initiative would be wildfires and forest certification;

(d) Several representatives emphasized the importance of wood fuel in many parts of the world, and called for the strengthening of international cooperation and technological innovation to address the negative impacts associated with the use of wood fuels and related pollutions. These representatives also stressed the need to produce and use biomass sustainably and efficiently. Several delegations also referred to their national policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote the green economy, and their production of biodiesel from oil. Some countries mentioned the need to minimize the use of wood and promote the use of alternative sources to avoid energy losses;

(e) Many representatives stressed the importance of increasing financing for forests, capacity-building and the use of existing and available resources, and the provision of resources to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to assist countries in advancing integrated policies on forests, energy and other relevant sectors;

(f) Some countries called for the promotion of forestry bioenergy and the incorporation of biomass energy in forestry policies, the promotion of green and low-carbon industries, the diversification of the use of bioenergy and the transformation of energy use in rural areas to green sources of energy. Some countries also called for measures to make the use of alternative energy sources more cost-effective;

(g) Some representatives highlighted that advanced biofuels had the potential to leverage restoration efforts and in doing so reduce pressure on forest ecosystems;

(h) Some representatives mentioned the need to encourage concrete measures in favour of deforestation-free supply chains and concrete actions towards reducing

²¹ Saudi Arabia, Suriname, Türkiye, India, Indonesia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, European Union and its 27 member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden), Mali, China, Ecuador, United States, Brazil, Switzerland, Australia, Dominican Republic, Morocco, business and industry major group.

the loss of forest cover and biodiversity. Other countries raised concerns over regulations that infringed on national sovereignty and were not compliant with those of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Some countries indicated that any effort to improve the sustainability of agricultural systems must be implemented in harmony with national legislations and recognize the wide range of sustainable land management approaches, which would also require eliminating trade-distortive agricultural subsidies that harmed the livelihoods of producers in developing countries. They indicated that any due diligence measure, when and if applied at a global scale, must be WTO-compliant and would not generate trade barriers;

(i) Some countries highlighted that forest certification had become increasingly intertwined with sustainable forest management, leading to trade barriers for forest products.

B. Proposals by the Chair for transmission to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its nineteenth session

57. Based on the technical discussions at the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the following proposals of the Chair will be submitted for further consideration by the nineteenth session of the Forum in 2024:

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

(a) Invite members of the Forum to take concrete steps to accelerate efforts towards achieving all global forest goals, including through increasing financial, technical and technological collaboration, enhancing forest governance and forest law enforcement and increasing the involvement of local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision-making and implementation of policies;

(b) Encourage members to promote coherence and integration of forest-related actions in the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as reflect these agreements in their forest-related actions, in accordance with the mandates and principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity;

Voluntary national contributions

(c) Welcome the announcement of new voluntary national contributions and update the existing ones, and invite members of the Forum that have not yet done so to announce their 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 update the Forum on their progress;

Communication and outreach strategy

(d) Invite members and the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests to develop additional digital outreach materials, including infographics, fact sheets, posters, videos and the compilation of good practices regarding the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda;

Support by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030

(e) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations to continue their efforts to support the work of the Forum and the provision of technical support to its members, enhance interactions with Forum members, improve the focus of its workplans on the global forest goals, convene regular and short virtual briefing meetings on its joint initiatives for members of the Forum and facilitate the engagement of relevant stakeholders in its work, and report the progress to the Forum at its nineteenth session;

(f) Continue to support the active involvement of regional and subregional partners and intergovernmental organizations, as well as major groups and relevant stakeholders, in the work of the Forum, including through regional workshops, and also engage in a dialogue with the private sector and philanthropic community to explore their potential to provide support to the ongoing efforts of major groups in capacity-building and resource mobilization;

Monitoring, assessment and reporting

(g) Take note of the amended format for national reporting and the ongoing preparatory work for the next reporting cycle to the Forum;

(h) Decide to establish an advisory group on reporting to the Forum, in accordance with the terms of reference contained in the note by the secretariat to the eighteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (see [E/CN.18/2023/5](#));

(i) Request the Forum secretariat to produce another publication/report that includes short case studies on progress on the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the global forest goals;

(j) Request the Forum secretariat to continue to organize, jointly with FAO, capacity-building workshops in the area of monitoring, assessment and reporting;

Means of implementation

(k) Welcome the support provided by the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to countries at the national and regional level in strengthening capacity to mobilize resources from all sources for sustainable forest management;

(l) Invite members of the Forum, and others in a position to do so, to provide voluntary contributions to the Forum trust fund to scale up the activities of the Network.

