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Items 3 (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the provisional agenda*

Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024:

Updates on the activities of members of the Forum,
including new announcements of and updates on
voluntary national contributions

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

Updates on the activities of regional and subregional
organizations and processes

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

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

Policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024

Note by the Secretariat

* [E/CN.18/2024/1](#).



Summary

In accordance with its programme of work for 2022–2024,^a the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its nineteenth session, will hold policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and consider the activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024 undertaken since the eighteenth session of the Forum. The present note serves as the basis for discussion during the nineteenth session of the Forum on agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (e), and provides information on progress made in the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan, as well as the International Day of Forests.

^a See Economic and Social Council resolution [2021/6](#).

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with its programme of work for the period 2022–2024, the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its nineteenth session, will hold policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

2. The present note serves as the basis for discussions of the Forum under agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (e). It also contains information on the progress made in implementing the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, as well as the International Day of Forests 2024. The note further provides an overview of the relevant intersessional activities conducted since the eighteenth session of the Forum and contains references to relevant proposals contained in the summary by the Chair of that session for consideration at the nineteenth session.

II. Background

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

4. In that respect, for the biennium 2023–2024, the Bureau decided to focus on global forest goals 2 (enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits) and 3 (increase significantly the area of protected forests) as the substantive goals, along with global forest goals 4 (mobilize financial resources), 5 (promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management) and 6 (enhance cooperation, coordination and synergies) as cross-cutting goals. In this respect, the Bureau decided that the thematic priorities for the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Forum 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

5. At the eighteenth session of the Forum, technical discussions were held on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, including the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024 and the contribution of members of the Forum and stakeholders to the thematic priorities. The summary by the Chair of the discussions at that session includes his proposals regarding the items contained in the present note as follows:

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

(i) Invite members of the Forum to take concrete steps to accelerate efforts towards achieving all global forest goals, including through increasing financial,

¹ The thematic priorities of the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Forum are available at www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html.

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;

(ii) 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;

(b) Voluntary national contributions:

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;

(c) Communication and outreach strategy:

Invite members and the secretariat of the Forum 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 for Sustainable Development;

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

(i) 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;

(ii) 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.

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

A. Activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023–2024

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

6. Since the eighteenth session of the Forum, no Forum members have announced voluntary contributions in support of the global forest goals and targets, or provided

information on any voluntary national contribution to be announced during the nineteenth session of the Forum.

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

(a) Implementation of the Partnership's workplan for the period 2021–2024 and the Strategic Vision towards 2030

7. The workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests presents the Partnership's planned activities over the period 2021–2024 to facilitate their implementation and provide information on the activities to Member States, governing bodies of the Partnership's member organizations and stakeholders.

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

9. The current workplan was developed in 2021 on the basis of guidance received from the Forum and other governing bodies of its member organizations in response to paragraph 22 (e) of Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 and is aligned with the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the programme of work of the Forum for the period 2021–2024. The workplan is updated annually in preparation for the Forum session and published on the Partnership's website and circulated to Forum members.

10. The Partnership will report to the Forum at its nineteenth session on progress made in implementing its workplan for the period 2021–2024. Information on the progress achieved in implementing the current workplan since the eighteenth session of the Forum is provided below.

11. The Partnership will develop a new workplan for 2025–2028 in line with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2025–2028, taking into consideration the guidance received by the Forum and the discussions at the Partnership's meetings and retreat.

(b) Recurrent activities of the Partnership

12. The Partnership held a briefing for members of the Forum on 11 May 2023² as a side event during the eighteenth session of the Forum and has convened three meetings of its members, including a strategic retreat, since January 2022 to discuss its activities to support the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of its global forest goals and targets. The meetings of the members of the Partnership were held on 23 February,³ 9 May,⁴

² See www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/UNFF18-CPFside-event-Concept-note-programme.pdf and www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/meetings/roadmap/en.

³ Summary report available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CPF-Meeting-Summary-report-Feb2023.pdf.

⁴ Summary report available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/CPF-Meeting-Summary-report-9May2023.pdf.

22 and 23 June 2023⁵ and 23 January 2024. The Partnership is planning to hold the next meeting of its members in March 2024.

13. During its briefing to members of the Forum on 11 May 2023, the Partnership indicated that it had accepted the membership request of the Green Climate Fund and admitted the Fund as a member during the meeting held on 23 February 2023.

14. During the retreat held on 22 and 23 June 2023, member organizations of the Partnership discussed and identified ways to implement the outcome of the discussions at the organization-led initiative of the Partnership held in February 2023 and further strengthen the work of the Partnership to support the Forum and its members in their implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and in achieving progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals on the basis of the comparative advantages of the 16 member organizations of the Partnership. The Partnership also discussed ways to improve the effectiveness of its workplans, and its impact and added value towards achieving the global forest goals and other global intergovernmentally agreed forest goals and targets in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 and in the context of Council resolution 2022/17, as well as the results of the organization-led initiative of the Partnership.

15. During its retreat, member organizations of the Partnership also discussed the means of further improving its joint programming, including by identifying priority thematic areas and *modi operandi* for the Partnership's work. Member organizations also exchanged ideas on how to improve communication and outreach among themselves and to Member States through the preparation of communication pieces and issue briefs, as well as the organization of events and briefings. The preparation for the high-level event of the Partnership during the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit was also discussed.

16. On 18 September 2023, the Partnership held a high-level event on “Forests for our future” on the margins of the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit.⁶ The event featured two interactive round tables with the participation of ministers, Heads of Government and other senior representatives of Partnership members, outlining how their countries and organizations contributed to coordinated forest-based actions to accelerate progress towards achieving global goals and targets by 2030. At that event, which was moderated by Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan, the Partnership launched a “joint call to action for forests towards 2030”, which is intended to serve as a clarion call for heightened commitment, political will and concerted efforts to fortify forest-based solutions to tap the potential of forests to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the global forest goals by 2030, with a focus on four focal areas: implementation and action; data, science and innovation; finance for forests; and communication and awareness-raising.

17. On 9 December 2023, during the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Partnership held an event on “Beyond carbon: realizing untapped potential of forests to combat climate change”. The event brought together representatives of six member organizations of the Partnership. It provided an opportunity to share and discuss best practices and case studies on capturing the full value of forests, their productive functions and the potential of renewable materials and green jobs. The event also highlighted the opportunities and possible next steps for Partnership members to

⁵ Summary report available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CPF-Meeting-Summary-report-22-23June2023.pdf.

⁶ Summary report available at www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/18Sep23-CPF-summary-report-fin.pdf.

realize the full value of forests beyond carbon in the focal areas of its joint call to action for forests towards 2030 (see para. 16).

18. On 10 December 2023, also during the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, the Partnership held a high-level dialogue on “Forests for our common future: halting and reversing deforestation by 2030”.⁷ The dialogue brought together the heads and principals of seven member organizations of the Partnership. It provided an opportunity for the leaders of United Nations agencies and other member organizations of the Partnership to share their perspectives and outline their individual and joint actions to accelerate efforts to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. The discussions held during the event highlighted the critical importance of taking a coherent approach to accelerating progress towards the achievement of the global forest goals by 2030 and other forest-related goals and objectives through joint actions and initiatives of the Partnership and supporting countries to enhance and implement their nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and strengthen the international arrangement on forests through its midterm review at the Forum’s nineteenth session.

(c) Joint initiatives of the Partnership

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

Forest Communicators’ Network

20. Events were held to mark the 2023 International Day of Forests, on the theme “Forests and health”, by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other members of the Partnership. FAO prepared a video spot that aired on major global television channels. For the first time, the video spot was translated into 46 languages, celebrating multilingualism and reaching 1 billion households in 170 countries. FAO also created a dedicated website for the International Day⁸ with outreach materials available in several languages. For the 2024 International Day of Forests, the Partnership proposed the theme “Forests and innovation” and will celebrate the day widely. The Forum subsequently adopted this theme at its eighteenth session.

21. Communication and outreach efforts were amplified, designed and supported through the five regional Forest Communicators’ Networks hosted by FAO (for Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Asia-Pacific, the Mediterranean and Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean) at the regional and national levels.

22. The communication campaign “Grow the solution”, as part of the joint initiative on communication and aligned with the Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World joint initiative, has gained momentum by strengthening global advocacy and awareness of the role of sustainable wood value chains and their contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 12. The “Grow the solution” campaign was presented at the World Congress of Architects in July 2023. On the sidelines of the Congress, round-table meetings and workshops were held with architects and Network members to discuss opportunities to advance sustainable wood in construction, including by establishing a coalition of practitioners.

23. The Forest Communicators’ Network directly contributes to global forest goal 6 and indirectly to all other global forest goals.

⁷ Event recording available at <https://unfccc.int/event/turning-the-tide-on-deforestation>.

⁸ See www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/en.

Forest education

24. The Joint Initiative on Forest Education is led by FAO, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the Center for International Forestry Research–World Agroforestry, with the collaboration of the secretariats of the Forum and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It links closely with the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and all six global forest goals.

25. As a contribution to this joint initiative, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations undertook various research activities and produced several publications and events, including its symposium on forest education, held from 2 to 4 October 2023 in Helsinki and online;⁹ the Global Competition on Best Practices in Forest Education 2.0, organized by the Joint Task Force on Forest Education of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the International Forestry Students' Association, with the collaboration of Reforestamos México and the World Resources Institute;¹⁰ and the ongoing work on restoration education with the Global Landscapes Forum and Wageningen University and Research,¹¹ including regional collaboration workshops around the Bay of Bengal.¹²

Facilitation of forest finance

26. The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network was established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 and is led and coordinated by the Forum secretariat. The Network works in close cooperation with member States and Partnership members to implement its priorities, as outlined in the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. Detailed information on this work is contained in [E/CN.18/2024/3](#).

Global Forest Expert Panels initiative

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

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

29. On the occasion of the International Day of Forests 2023, the initiative published a global assessment on forests and trees for human health¹³ and an accompanying policy brief. The assessment synthesizes scientific information on how forests, trees and green spaces affect human health across all life stages and provides policymakers, investors, donors and other stakeholders with a stronger scientific basis for decisions of relevance to human well-being and forests. The assessment report and its accompanying policy brief, written in English and translated into Spanish and French, were widely disseminated among key stakeholders in international forums

⁹ See www.helsinki.fi/en/conferences/iufro-symposium-forest-education.

¹⁰ See www.iufro.org/science/task-forces/forest-education/competition-best-practices-in-forest-education-2.

¹¹ See <https://academy.globallandscapesforum.org/restoration-education>.

¹² See www.linkedin.com/pulse/regional-collaboration-restoration-education-around-bay-bengal.

¹³ See www.iufro.org/science/science-policy/gfep-initiative/panel-on-forests-and-human-health.

that consider forest-related issues, including through the arrangement of the side event at the Forum's eighteenth session on "Forests and trees for human health". The global assessment directly supports global forest goals 2 and 4 and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by highlighting the interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being) and 15 (life on land), while providing relevant links to other Goals.

30. Based on the detailed global assessment, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations published an expanded regional policy brief on forests for human health in Asia¹⁴ in October 2023. The brief shows that while there continues to be a lack of awareness in Asia and elsewhere of the vital relationship between forests and human health, Asia can be considered a cradle of more integrative and close-to-nature health care, which can lay the foundation for adopting approaches such as the One Health framework.

31. In 2023, the initiative began preparing for the next global assessment, including by undertaking background research and consultations with relevant stakeholders and scientists on potential topics. The new topic will be chosen, among other criteria, on the basis of the need for a synthesis of relevant scientific information and its policy relevance, especially regarding the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. A concept note on the selected topic will be developed and submitted to all members of the Partnership for approval in early 2024. The publication of the new global assessment is planned for 2025.

Green finance for sustainable landscapes

32. The Land Finance Hub¹⁵ has been launched and operationalized. The Hub is a web-based platform for financiers and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises seeking to transform sustainable production systems. It is aimed at attracting financiers with diverse investment interests and a broad geographical focus. The agricultural and forestry-related micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises on the Hub comprise mainly micro-businesses that lack access to and experience in securing private commercial finance. Women hold multiple roles in such enterprises, from owner, to manager, to worker, to investor. Bridging green finance to agriculture and forestry micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises serves as leverage for improving visibility, access and capacity.

33. The Hub contains knowledge products and toolkits. The Hub hosted 317 registered users and showcased 31 registered projects for which financing is being sought. Its web analytics also indicated that, as of September 2023, 1,256 web users from Australia, Ghana, Indonesia, the United States of America and beyond had accessed the Hub. A promotional video introducing the Hub has been created,¹⁶ as have guidelines for navigating and registering with the Hub.

34. A total of 332 micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (comprising 354 participants, of which 161 were women) have received training on navigating and registering on the Hub. The enterprises that have been registered have been showcased for their profiles, and their projects for which financing is being sought have also been showcased.¹⁷ The Hub also engaged financiers that included venture capital and banks.¹⁸

¹⁴ See www.iufro.org/index.php?id=7634.

¹⁵ See <https://landfinancehub.org>.

¹⁶ Center for International Forestry Research, "Introducing: Land Finance Hub", YouTube, 23 March 2023. Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZ5C90K_0AY.

¹⁷ See <https://landfinancehub.org/en/projects>.

¹⁸ See <https://landfinancehub.org/en/financiers>.

35. A communication, outreach and engagement strategy was developed in 2022. The Center for International Forestry Research–World Agroforestry actively promoted the Land Finance Hub on social media and blogs, in promotional videos and at national and international events such as the Global Landscapes Forum, the FAO regional learning workshop, the SME Finance Marketplace, the Sustainable District Festival held in Sigi District, Indonesia, and many others. The Center for International Forestry Research–World Agroforestry also engaged with micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, associations, companies and financiers to jointly organize training sessions.¹⁹ A set of training materials on navigating and registering on the Hub, gender equity and social inclusion in business, building inclusive business profiles, and financial literacy was developed and presented during the training sessions.²⁰

36. The Land Finance Hub has contributed to global forest goals 2 to 6 by increasing the forest-based economic benefits of selected micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia through improved access to finance. It has produced a platform that has improved the financial literacy of such enterprises and the visibility of their projects for which financing is being sought. In addition, it has built the capacities of such enterprises through the provision of knowledge products and helped to connect them with potential financiers. The Hub has much potential to be further developed in Indonesia and other countries. The Center for International Forestry Research–World Agroforestry will continue to maintain the Hub, with planned future linkages to the country’s blended finance instrument and peatland restoration project.

Streamlining global forest-related reporting

37. Under the joint initiative on streamlining global forest-related reporting, efforts have continued to improve forest-related data coverage, quality and transparency and to reduce the reporting burden on countries. This has involved further improvement of the online Global Forest Resources Assessment data entry, review and dissemination platform and the publishing of revised terms and definitions, as well as guidelines and specifications for the 2025 assessment. In addition, it has included implementing an extensive capacity development programme (12 regional in-person and 3 virtual workshops) on country reporting for the 2025 assessment.

38. The initiative has also involved refining the global core set of forest-related indicators. Work on the indicators has focused on documenting the overall status of and trends in the indicators and further analysis of the way forward for tier 3 indicators. In 2022, FAO published two reports prepared under the Partnership: *Status of, and Trends in, the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators* and *An Assessment of Uptake of the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators*.

39. The joint initiative contributes to global forest goal 6 by enhancing coordination and improving the coherence of forest reporting systems, increasing transparency and reducing the reporting burden on countries.

¹⁹ See www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/9032.

²⁰ See <https://landfinancehub.org/en/toolkits/detail/36> (gender and social inclusion), <https://landfinancehub.org/en/toolkits/detail/35> (navigating the Hub), <https://landfinancehub.org/en/toolkits/detail/34> (obtaining financing) and <https://landfinancehub.org/en/toolkits/detail/33> (developing an inclusive business profile).

Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World

40. The Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World initiative is co-led by FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization. The Center for International Forestry Research, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the World Bank are members of the initiative. The global non-governmental organization Worldwide Fund for Nature International has aligned itself with the initiative since its inception.

41. The initiative was launched at the thirteenth session of the Forum, in 2018, and focuses on delivering more sustainable, efficient and inclusive wood supply chains to generate higher value-added jobs and renewable low-carbon products. It works with governments, the private sector and national, regional and international stakeholders to promote the adoption of innovative policy approaches, technical knowledge and finance to increase sustainable and legal wood production and consumption. The initiative has a strong advocacy and communication component, delivered together with the Forest Communicators' Network.

42. The wood-based industry supports the generation of income and employment in remote rural areas, contributing to poverty eradication. Through its focus on sustainable, efficient and inclusive value chains, the initiative has contributed to increasing the country capacities of micro-, small and medium-sized producers while addressing aspects of sustainable supply and the use of raw materials (global forest goal 2). The focus on value chains, as well as supply chains, provides for improved forest governance, as it relates to all segments, from production to consumption, with the aim of identifying and eliminating drivers of illegality, minimizing transaction costs and increasing data availability, transparency and efficiency in the wood-based sector (global forest goal 5).

43. Access to markets and finance is an essential part of the initiative (global forest goal 4), including through investment forums and capacity development for forest business management. The initiative plays a significant role in forest conservation and restoration by contributing to increasing socioeconomic benefits from sustainably managed forests and creating market opportunities to expand forest cover for production, with strong linkages to the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (global forest goal 3). The work on awareness-raising and policy support to advance the uptake of sustainable wood products as renewable low-carbon materials expands the contribution of forests to fighting climate change (global forest goal 6).

44. The initiative has undertaken several recent activities. FAO and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations are implementing the Wood for Globe project, funded by the Austrian Forest Fund, contributing to the development of regional sustainable wood policy platforms. The International Tropical Timber Organization has led the Global Legal and Sustainable Timber Forum and is developing the Global Timber Index. In collaboration with Argentina, Brazil and other regional stakeholders, the Center for International Forestry Research, FAO and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations delivered two regional dialogues in Latin America, during which opportunities for bioeconomy and ecosystem restoration to advance sustainable wood value chains were explored. In Asia-Pacific, FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization contributed to regional dialogues organized by the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and by Australia and Japan, while Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam were supported to promote sustainable wood use in domestic markets. In Central Africa, a regional assessment identified priority actions to support countries in implementing the log export ban established by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community

and the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa, and in developing sustainable wood value chains and bioeconomy. In Cameroon, a road map for supporting the sustainability and legality of production oriented towards domestic and regional markets was endorsed by the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife for resource mobilization.

Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award

45. Established by the Partnership in 2012 in memory of Kenyan environmentalist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai, the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award recognizes inspiring individuals who have a track record of outstanding achievements in conserving, restoring and sustainably using forests.

46. The Partnership will launch the selection process for the next Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award in 2024. Forest champions need recognition and visibility more than ever to advocate for change and inspire others to follow their exemplary path. The award is aimed at attracting the brightest minds, who deliver convincing arguments and innovative and impactful actions to manage all types of forests and forest landscapes more sustainably, recognize forests' multiple values and unlock the potential of their goods and services.

47. This joint initiative contributes to global forest goal 6 by creating awareness of forest champions, enhancing cooperation and creating visibility for grass-roots initiatives that contribute to improving forests and for the people who depend on them.

Turning the tide on deforestation

48. In response to the call of the Secretary-General and complementing the efforts of countries to halt deforestation, the Partnership has continued its global advocacy efforts on halting deforestation as a contribution to the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its global forest goals. In that regard, a high-level dialogue on “Forests for our common future: halting and reversing deforestation by 2030” was held at the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

49. The joint initiative on turning the tide on deforestation contributes to global forest goals 1 (reverse the loss of forest cover), 2, 3 and 4 through enhancing cooperation and advocacy to halt deforestation, promoting restoration and enhancing the use of sustainably grown forest products. It also provides space for the discussion of innovative finance models for forestry and thus contributes to global forest goal 6.

Primary forests

50. The joint initiative on primary forests is aimed at fostering the enhanced conservation of such forests. There is insufficient recognition, understanding and conservation of primary forests globally, which poses a significant threat to climate, biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, this lack of understanding and integration of the values and benefits of primary forests in forest financing strategies, national budgets and global policy agendas has led to their inadequate prioritization, contributing to ongoing deforestation and loss of these vital ecosystems.

51. The joint initiative will support the Forum in elevating the importance of primary forests in global discourse and helping its member countries to provide conditions for strategically channelling investments to good projects and monitoring progress. The initiative is also aimed at facilitating and stimulating financing for primary forest conservation by establishing robust donor-recipient dialogue and

coordination mechanisms and providing information on financing opportunities. Through capacity development and information-sharing on the value of primary forests, the initiative will raise the visibility of such forests among stakeholders, policymakers and the public, transforming the perception of them and ensuring their inclusion in forest financing strategies, conservation initiatives and the global policy agenda. It is intended that the initiative will be formally launched at the nineteenth session of the Forum.

52. On 8 December 2023, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, in partnership with the Global Environment Facility, FAO and Griffith University, held an event on “Climate and canopy: amplifying action for Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 15 through primary forest conservation” during the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The event provided an opportunity to share ongoing collaboration among the joint initiative partners. It featured keynote addresses by the Director of the Forum secretariat and the Director General of the Forest Service of Brazil and a panel discussion with the participation of representatives of the Global Environment Facility, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, FAO and Griffith University. The discussions at this event highlighted the opportunities provided in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit of the Three Basins of Biodiversity Ecosystems and Tropical Forests and the Belem Declaration. Panellists stressed the importance of countries and stakeholders accelerating forest-based climate actions in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the Paris Agreement, in particular through increasing forest finance and capacity-building for developing countries.

53. The initiative contributes directly to global forest goals 1 and 3. In particular, it is aimed at promoting the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halting deforestation, restoring degraded forests and substantially increasing afforestation and reforestation globally. Further, it contributes to global forest goals 4 and 6.

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

54. Since the eighteenth session of the Forum, the Forum secretariat has continued to strengthen engagement with relevant regional and subregional partners and substantively contributed to meetings held by these entities. The secretariat represented the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and addressed the thirty-third session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission of FAO, held from 26 to 30 June 2023; the thirty-second session of the North American Forest Commission, held from 25 to 27 September 2023; the thirtieth session of the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission, held from 3 to 6 October 2023; the twenty-fourth session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, held from 30 October to 3 November 2023; and the forty-second session of the FAO European Forestry Commission, held jointly with the eighty-first session of the Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, held from 20 to 23 November 2023. The interventions from the secretariat reinforced the importance of implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and achieving the global forest goals at the regional and subregional levels.

55. The Forum secretariat also attended the expert-level meeting of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe), held on 21 and 22 June 2023; meetings on forest green jobs held on 29 March and 30 November 2023; the high-level dialogue of Forest Europe, held on 9 November 2023; the think tank meeting on sustainable forest management, held on 29 November 2023; and the

Forest Europe expert-level meeting, held on 9 and 10 January 2024, which served as a preparatory step for the next Ministerial Conference, to be held in October 2024 in Bonn, Germany.

56. In the context of the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests, the Forum secretariat organized an expert group meeting on the Forum's contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the involvement of regional and subregional entities, major groups and other stakeholders, held in Bangkok from 11 to 13 January 2023.²¹ Moreover, the secretariat was able to facilitate the participation of regional and subregional partners in the Forum's expert group meeting on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, held in Nairobi in June 2023, as well as the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group on the preparations for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests, held in October 2023 in Vienna.

57. The participation of the Forum secretariat in the meetings of regional and subregional forest-related entities, together with enabling the attendance of partners at events it organizes, positively contributes to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the achievement of the global forest goals and an inclusive process for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests.

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

58. The Forum secretariat continued to strengthen engagement with major groups and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. It kept major group representatives actively engaged in several intersessional activities, including activities related to the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests. Major groups and other relevant stakeholders contributed to the preparation of and discussions on an assessment report regarding their involvement in preparations for the midterm review process. Their valuable contributions, in addition to significantly strengthening those preparations, contributed to highlighting sustainable forest management, with planned activities in observance of the International Day of Forests on 21 March 2023. Major groups and other relevant stakeholders also attended and substantively contributed to the following meetings: the expert group meeting on the Forum's contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the involvement of regional and subregional entities, major groups and other stakeholders held in Bangkok in January 2023; the Forum's expert group meeting on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 held in Nairobi in June 2023; the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group on the preparations for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests held in October 2023 in Vienna; the country-led initiative hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India held in October 2023; and the Forum-related events at the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Substantive participation by major groups and other relevant stakeholders in these key meetings ensured diverse perspectives, enriched discussions and informed decision-making.

59. Major groups and other relevant stakeholders are also organizing, with funding from the Government of Germany, an initiative to solidify their governance structures and forge effective coordination arrangements among them, paving the way for their enhanced contributions to the Forum and the implementation of the United Nations

²¹ For a summary by the Co-Chairs, see www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Co-Chairs-Summary-Bangkok-EGM.pdf.

strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. The report of the initiative, once ready, will be posted on the web page of the nineteenth session of the Forum.

60. The Forum secretariat continued to engage with the business and industry major group through the group’s focal point, the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations, attending meetings organized by the FAO Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries and encouraging private sector initiatives aimed at supporting the sustainable management of forests, such as the International Sustainable Forestry Coalition, officially launched in New York in September 2023 and composed of companies that, according to the Coalition’s website,²² collectively manage more than 12 million hectares of forests in at least 30 countries.

5. Interlinkages between the global forest goals and targets and the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2024 and international forest-related developments

61. The 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development will be held from 8 to 17 July 2024 at United Nations Headquarters under the theme “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”.^{23,24} The forum will also review in depth Sustainable Development Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

62. The interlinkages between the thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2023–2024, the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and international forest-related developments are shown in the table below.²⁵

Interlinkages between the thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2023–2024, the global forest goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and international forest-related developments

<i>Thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2023–2024</i>	<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in depth by the 2023 and 2024 high-level political forums on sustainable development</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to other Sustainable Development Goals</i>	<i>International forest-related developments</i>
Enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits	2	1, 2, 6, 9, 17	4, 5, 8, 12, 15	
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	3	7, 17	12, 14, 15	

²² See www.isfc.world.

²³ See General Assembly decision 77/553.

²⁴ Further information on the 2024 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development is contained in E/CN.18/2024/6.

²⁵ The concept note on the thematic priorities for the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Forum, as well as the background analytical studies and policy briefs, are available at www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html.

<i>Thematic priorities of the Forum for the biennium 2023–2024</i>	<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in depth by the 2023 and 2024 high-level political forums on sustainable development</i>	<i>Linkages and contributions to other Sustainable Development Goals</i>	<i>International forest-related developments</i>
Mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence for sustainable forest management	4, 5, 6	1, 2, 17	5, 10, 12, 15, 16	<p>2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development</p> <p>2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit</p> <p>Resumed second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity</p> <p>Twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</p> <p>Themes of the International Day of Forests in 2024</p> <p>Twenty-seventh session of the Committee on Forestry of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</p> <p>2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development</p> <p>Summit of the Future</p> <p>United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030)</p> <p>Decade of action and delivery for sustainable development</p>

63. All types of forests and their sustainable management have significant roles in providing livelihoods and employment, contributing to food, water and energy security through non-timber forest products and ecosystem services, supporting the bioeconomy, harbouring biodiversity, mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration, adapting to adverse impacts of and increased resilience to climate change, and reducing the risk of natural disasters, floods, droughts, sand and dust storms, landslides and other extreme events.

64. In particular, there are close interlinkages between forests, biodiversity and climate change. The sustainable management of all types of forests and 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, these interlinkages illustrate that accelerating the achievement of the global forest goals would also contribute to achieving the global climate and biodiversity-related goals and targets under the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

65. These interlinkages between forests and global challenges demonstrate the importance of ensuring that no one is left behind, enhancing regional and subregional collaboration and the exchange of experiences, promoting forest governance and forest law enforcement, increasing the involvement of local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision-making and the implementation of policies, and improving communication on forest values.

66. Accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and achievement of the global forest goals by 2030 would require meeting financial, technical and technological resource needs, including through the effective use of existing resources and the strengthening of international cooperation, enhancing coordination, mobilizing and facilitating access to new and additional resources from all sources at all levels and enhancing technical and technological assistance to countries.

67. Since the eighteenth session of the Forum, there have also been major developments regarding forests in various international meetings and conferences, including the Global Environment Facility Assembly in August 2023, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September 2023 and the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2023. An overview and an analysis of the major international forest-related developments are contained in [E/CN.18/2024/6](#).

IV. 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 2024

68. Raising awareness of the importance of forests to all aspects of global sustainable development is a key component of the work carried out by the secretariat of the Forum in implementing the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. Delivering targeted communications that reach beyond the forest community is critical in this regard. There remains a need for greater recognition of the full value of forests, in particular, how sustainable forest management offers a cost-effective nature-based solution to many of the most pressing sustainable development challenges.

69. The key communications and outreach methods utilized by the secretariat of the Forum include statements, presentations and video messages targeting policymakers at key international events, and compelling social media content aimed at public audiences. Best practices and success stories remain an integral part of the secretariat's ongoing work on capacity development, including, in particular, as it relates to forest financing. The "Forest financing quarterly highlight" newsletter of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network clearing house provides updates on recent developments, new learning resources and upcoming opportunities related to forest financing. A new quarterly newsletter of the Forum was also launched in

February 2024 to inform members of relevant developments and upcoming events related to the work of the Forum. All of these activities contributed to raising awareness of the multifaceted contributions of forests to sustainable development and the work carried out by the Forum in this regard, as evidenced by the high level of engagement by participants at events.

70. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs works with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to jointly mobilize resources for communication and outreach while at the same time exploring new opportunities for partnership with other Forum-related entities. The Department leverages its broad-based communication services to feature work on forests and the Forum, including the monthly newsletter *UN DESA Voice*. The Department of Global Communications provides guidance on how to feature forests within the broader narrative of the United Nations system on sustainable development. The communication focal points at the Partnership and the FAO regional communications networks provide support in amplifying messaging and outreach, including through the annual celebration of the International Day of Forests.

71. The theme of the 2023 International Day of Forests of “Forests and health” provided an opportunity to highlight how forests sustain all aspects of health, from clean air and water to providing essential food, fuel, medicines and income.

72. As part of the global celebration, the Forum secretariat held a special event to celebrate the International Day at United Nations Headquarters, which featured the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Chair of the Forum and experts from United Nations system partners, regional entities, local communities, the private sector, academia, Indigenous Peoples and youth. A common thread in all of the presentations and statements was that it was essential to restore balance between human health and well-being and the health of the natural environment. The vital roles of all stakeholders, from governments, local authorities and cities to Indigenous communities, youth and academia, in safeguarding the health of forests and people was emphasized.

73. Social media messaging was a key component of the public communication and outreach campaign for the International Day. Multimedia products included digital posters, social media cards, suggested messages and animated gifs, all of which were made available on the Trello board for the International Day.²⁶

74. The Facebook and Twitter social media accounts of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were the primary channels for disseminating the social media content produced by the Forum secretariat. The social media advisory and Trello board were also shared with United Nations system social media focal points, the Forum’s national focal points, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional entities and major group organizations. The campaign hashtag “#IntlForestDay” was widely used and was included in over 17,000 tweets by over 11,000 contributors during the International Day itself, with over 284 million timeline deliveries and over 153 million accounts reached on Twitter, according to estimates.

V. Conclusion

75. In 2024, the theme for the International Day of Forests is “Forests and innovation”. The communication and outreach activities planned for the occasion will follow a similar approach as for previous International Days, with a focus on social

²⁶ See <https://trello.com/b/CVulcXZ8/international-day-of-forests-2023>.

media-friendly products and the organization of a special event at United Nations on 21 March 2024.

76. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations, regional and subregional entities, major groups and other relevant stakeholders continue to contribute to and play a fundamental role in the work of the Forum. In the past year, Forum partners actively participated in the process related to the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests and in Forum intersessional activities, culminating in the inclusion of their views and proposals in the zero drafts of the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2025–2028, the zero drafts of the ministerial declaration and the omnibus resolutions of the Forum at its nineteenth session.

77. Members of the Forum are invited to consider announcing additional voluntary national contributions, an important tool to ensure the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of the global forest goals.

78. Recent joint activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests were undertaken to support the accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and make progress towards the global forest goals by 2030, in particular, with a view to enhancing coherence and synergy on forest-related issues and values among its member organizations.

79. As the global community increasingly recognizes and strives to mobilize and promote forest-based actions and solutions to address major global challenges, additional efforts should be made to further enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies among member organizations of the Partnership, in particular through the work of the Forum, the Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to enhance their synergies further and sustain the global shift from deforestation to restoration, and sustainable forest management.

80. The Forum secretariat continued to implement the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and promote the celebration of the International Day of Forests.

VI. Proposals

81. The Forum may wish:

(a) To accelerate efforts towards achieving global forest goals 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, including through the mainstreaming and upscaling of forest-related actions in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the development of joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030;

(b) To invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, through the development of its new workplan for the period 2025–2028, to strengthen its support for the work of the Forum and for the accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and its global forest goals, and present progress reports at the annual sessions of the Forum;

(c) To consider further supporting the participation of regional and subregional partners and major groups in the Forum.