

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
19 November 2013

Original: English

**Food and Agriculture Organization****Economic Commission for Europe****Food and Agriculture Organization****Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry****European Forestry Commission**

Seventy-first session

Rovaniemi, 9-13 December 2013

Thirty-seventh session

Rovaniemi, 9-13 December 2013

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

Outcome of UNFF10**Review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests and role of forests in the post-2015 development agenda****Note by the Secretariat****I. Independent assessment of International Arrangement on Forests**

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/49 of 28 July 2006, the 10th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF10) decided that the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests will be reviewed in 2015 and that on this basis a full range of options will be considered, including a legally binding instrument on all types of forests, strengthening the current arrangement, continuation of the current arrangement and other options.
2. In preparation of the review of the International Arrangement on Forests at the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2015 (UNFF11) and as a part of intersessional activities on this matter leading up to UNFF11, member States through resolution 2 of UNFF10, also decided to conduct an 'Independent Assessment of IAF'.
3. Consultants were identified to carry out this work, according to its terms of references (ToRs can be found on the UNFF website¹). In this regard, two consultants were assigned to cover the UNECE region. At the recent meeting of the Facilitative Dialogue Workshop on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), which took place on 22-23 October 2013 in Vienna, Austria, it was suggested to invite at the joint meeting of the

¹ <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/iaf-assessment.html>

UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) these consultants, in order to inform the meeting of the work to be undertaken in this regard and have the opportunity to gather regional inputs to the review. This suggestion was welcomed and the consultants have been invited to address the meeting in plenary but also to meet delegates on a bilateral basis in the margins of the meeting.

II. The role of forests in the post-2015 development agenda

4. At the above mentioned meeting in Vienna, participants also explored ways to elevate the profile of forests in the ongoing intergovernmental consultations related to the post-2015 UN development agenda, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several ideas were raised to integrate forests among the SDGs including a stand-alone goal on forests, integrating forests under a broader goal such as renewable natural resources or land use, and the possibility of addressing forest-related issues under other goals.

5. All participants emphasized the significance of active involvement of all countries in the upcoming meeting of the Open Ended Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG/SDG) in February 2014, as well as the intersessional activities on the IAF.

6. The active participation of COFFI and EFC in the work of SGD and the possible development of a forest SDG and related targets and indicators are of paramount importance to be discussed at Metsä2013 (see item 5(c), document ECE/TIM/2013/11-FO:EFC/2013/11), and report to the OWG/SDG to take place in New York from 3 to 7 February 2013. In this regard the Committee and the Commission may wish to note that the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) and the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission, at their last sessions, recommended a stand-alone sustainable development goal on forests and that countries in their regions engage actively in the discussions on a forest-related SDG through the OWG, and requested FAO to support its development. AFWC further requested that the Regional Conference for Africa support FAO's effort in this regard; and requested its Chair to submit the "Recommendation for the Establishment of a Sustainable Development Goal on Forests" (Annex I) to the OWG.

7. To this end the Committee and the Commission may wish to:

- Discuss the possible development of a forest SDG and related targets and indicators;
- Agree to organize an expert meeting to further elaborate on ideas developed by the Committee and the Commission in January 2014 and to report to OWG meeting as a contribution from the region to the debate.
- Provide guidance on other possible activities until 2015 by the Committee and Commission

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Annex 1

RECOMMENDATION OF THE 19TH SESSION OF AFWC

For the Establishment of a Sustainable Development Goal on Forests²

Considering that

- Forests and trees outside forests cover more than 1/3 of the global land surface. Their relevance for environmental sustainability, for human life and for wildlife is crucial and unique, and so is their management;
- Wildlife is integral part of forests;
- The role of forests is recognized in attaining the objectives of other Sustainable Development Goals; however this does not always mean that the forests are sustainably managed;
- Including forests in other Sustainable Development Goals may limit the potential for investment into addressing specific challenges and threats to sustainable management of forest resources;
- Financing only utility aspects of forests is not sufficient for securing sustainable forest management and multiple products and services that forests provide;

Supporting the process led by the United Nations to establish the Sustainable Development Goals as launched in the Rio+20 Conference “The future we want”;

Acknowledging the work done until now by the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group and the issue briefs prepared by the United Nations agencies, including the forest issue brief;

Looking forward to the discussions in the Open Working Group during the week of 3-7 February 2014 in New York on the role of forests in the Sustainable Development Goals and in relation to their sustainable management;

Recognizing the value of the MDG process in galvanizing action to address social, economic and environmental issues through the wise use of forest and tree products and services. However this approach was limited to profiling the contributions these forest and tree resources could make in this regard and did not automatically translate to their sustainable management. Such profiling of contribution of forest and tree resources also features in other global and regional initiatives and in overall national economic development plans, where again it has failed to secure the sustainable management of these resources;

Taking into account the discussions that have started on how to compile the different elements of possible Sustainable Development Goals,

² FO:AFWC/2013/REP, Annex C

The Commission

1. strongly recommended a standalone forest Sustainable Development Goal that takes into accounts the achievements and inadequacies of the Millennium Development Goals and related processes;
 2. requested its Chair to submit this “Recommendation for the Establishment of a Sustainable Development Goal on Forests” to the Open Working Group process on the development of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the G-77 and China; encouraged its Members to convey the recommendation through their representatives of the Open Working Group; and invited other forestry and related bodies on the African continent and other regions of the world to support the implementation of the recommendation.
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