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**FAO European Forestry matters: Global processes and
initiatives****Food and Agriculture Organization
European Forestry Commission****Forty-first session**

Rome, 22-25 November 2021

Global processes and initiatives**Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

This document provides updates on global processes and initiatives in the forest fora where FAO participates, including the UN-Secretary-General's initiative on "Turning the Tide on Deforestation"; preparations for the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), The State of the World's Forests 2022 (SOFO22), the International Conference on Forest Education (ICFE); and outcomes of the 26th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) and of the fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The Commission is invited to provide inputs to FAO contributions to the global process and initiatives.



I. Introduction

1. Forests continue to be a crucial topic in several global processes and negotiations. In his message for the 2021 International Day of Forests, United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, reiterated that humanity's well-being is inextricably linked to the health of our planet and that forests play a crucial role.
2. This paper provides an overview of key global developments of relevance to forests and the forest sector and of interest to the Commission, notably:
 - (a) Update on the preparation of State of the World's Forests 2022;
 - (b) The UN-Secretary-General's initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation;
 - (c) The United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021;
 - (d) The sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests;
 - (e) The twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
 - (f) The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (CBD).

II. Key developments of global processes and implications for forestry

A. Update on the preparation of the State of the World's Forests 2022

3. FAO's flagship publication "The State of the World's Forests" (SOFO) presents data and analysis on the interaction between forests and people every two years, with a specific focus on a pertinent topic. SOFO complements the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), which is issued every five years.
4. SOFO 2022 will focus on the topic of "Forestry and Green Recovery, Building Inclusive and Sustainable Green Economies". The climate, biodiversity and the recent health crises have raised awareness about the risks and weaknesses in current societal and economic systems. Forests and trees play a central role in containing or preventing these crises. Given that wood is a renewable material, forest-based sectors have the potential to be amongst the leaders of sustainable economies, providing jobs and income, particularly in rural areas. Forests and trees could play a key role in accelerating the transformation of societies towards being more sustainable, resilient and inclusive.
5. SOFO 2022 will provide a new perspective on environmentally-friendly development. It will review the status and trends of forest and tree assets as well as the benefits they provide to society. It will discuss "solution pathways" for managing, restoring and using forests and trees in ways that build more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable green economies in the context of a green recovery. It will demonstrate how these pathways could potentially be integrated in existing and emerging policy and finance/investment frameworks and mechanisms in ways that reach local communities, farmers and foresters, thus contributing effectively to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
6. Findings of SOFO 2022 should spur policy dialogue on pathways and actions that maintain and use forests and trees more effectively to solve a range of existential crises and build more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable green economies.
7. The SOFO report is planned to be launched at the XV World Forestry Congress (WFC) "Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests" in May 2022 and will be discussed at the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO26) on 3-7 October 2022.

B. The UN-Secretary-General's initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation

8. In September 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General called for a scaling-up action to “turn the tide on deforestation”, stating that “we must halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and change the way we farm”, and initiated a discussion aimed at exploring how the United Nations can accelerate efforts to halt deforestation and restore forests through ambitious and concerted actions and advocacy across the United Nations system.

9. To this end, in October 2019 the United Nations Executive Committee (EXCOM) decided, inter alia, to strengthen United Nations advocacy efforts to combat deforestation and establish new partnerships with the aim to halt deforestation. A Working Group on Turning the Tide on Deforestation, led by FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in coordination with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)/United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established to operationalize actions requested by EXCOM. The actions requested by the EXCOM include, inter alia, strengthening United Nations advocacy efforts to combat deforestation and its linkages to peace and security, sustainable consumption and production and health, and agreement on common United Nations messages on deforestation; establishment of new partnership strategies with local governments, corporations and youth and indigenous communities, including through the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF) and the private sector; support ongoing processes in countries to clarify and secure land tenure rights, especially for rural people, indigenous people and local communities; provide enhanced support to United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams to strengthen their efforts to enhance country-level sustainable land and forest management develop more innovative instruments and adequate incentives to mobilize resources to finance sustainable forest management and reforestation/restoration, including through advocating for a strong replenishment of the Green Climate Fund.

10. In response to the above mandate, work is in progress on several points. The Working Group has defined common key messages based on state-of-the-art insights and scientific and institutional publications. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) has reviewed these and has launched a joint statement entitled "Challenges and Opportunities in Turning the Tide on Deforestation"¹.

11. In order to increase advocacy, several high-level events contributed to building momentum and political engagement for the initiative² and highlighted the key role of forests in solving climate, biodiversity, hunger and poverty challenges, as well as the role of forests in a green recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. To strengthen advocacy further, as well as to support efforts of countries, a CPF Joint Initiative on turning the tide on deforestation is being developed.

C. The United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021

12. The United Nations Secretary-General convened a high-level Food Systems Summit that was held at the margins of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September 2021 as part of the Decade of Action to Deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. The Summit was designed to develop principles and identify, raise awareness and elevate public discussion about positive solutions for improving global food systems as well as to generate significant action towards implementing those solutions. A pre-Summit was held in Rome on 26-28 July 2021³ to present initial results and create momentum for the Summit. While

¹ <http://www.cpfweb.org/50449-0941d79c54a6810d4c9eb2f45bbcb25f7.pdf>.

² “High-Level Dialogue on Turning the Tide of Deforestation” (www.fao.org/redd/news/detail/en/c/1410559/), and the High-Level Panel organized at the European Development Days (16 June 2021) “Forest are too precious to lose: Halting deforestation and enhancing biodiversity” (www.fao.org/redd/news/detail/en/c/1413809/).

³ <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/pre-summit>.

the event did not produce any formal declaration, the United Nations Secretary-General summarized the key messages and conclusions in a concluding statement.

13. The majority of the Summit's activities were organized along five action tracks to focus on safe and nutritious food, sustainable consumption, nature-positive production, equitable livelihoods, and resilience. Each of these action tracks includes elements related to forests, however, the action track that most strongly focuses on forests is the one concerned with nature-positive production (Action track 3). FAO and the Summit's Advisory Committee and Scientific Group have been actively involved in all five action tracks.

14. Action track 3's work is focused on three areas: protecting natural ecosystems from conversion, sustainably managing existing production systems, and restoring degraded ecosystems. Within this context, specific groups have been working on various forest-related topics, including deforestation-free and conversion-free supply chains, transformation through agroecology and regenerative agriculture, and indigenous people's food production systems, among others. Each of these groups has been preparing short position papers on their topic and identifying Member Governments and other potential partners with whom to collaborate on specific activities. This is likely to increase attention to these issues in global and national forestry policy dialogues. National dialogues about food systems are also taking place in many countries, which may contribute to national policy reforms. Farmer organizations - including many agroforestry and forestry producers - have also been holding regional and global dialogues to discuss solutions to the pressing problems affecting food systems.

D. The sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

15. The sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF16) was held from 26-30 April 2021 as a technical session, in accordance with the guidance provided in Annex I of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 2020/14. The thematic priorities for UNFF16 (and UNFF17) are: (i) reversing the loss of forest cover; (ii) enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits; and (iii) 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. FAO participated actively in the technical discussions.

16. The output of UNFF16 is the Chair's Summary, which will be transmitted in the next session. UNFF16 adopted three decisions and the report through silence procedure: Date and Venue & Provisional Agenda for UNFF17⁴ ⁵, UNFF Programme of Work for the period 2022–2024⁶ and the UNFF16 Report⁷.

17. The CPF proposed themes for the worldwide celebrations of the International Day of Forests 2022: *Forests and Sustainable Consumption and Production*, and 2023: *Forests and Health*. Both themes were supported by UNFF16.

18. The new CPF Work Plan 2021-2024⁸ was presented by FAO, as the CPF Chair, and was welcomed by UNFF16. The member organizations of the Partnership were invited to further enhance coordination and coherence regarding forest-related issues at the global level, through their activities and initiatives.

19. The UNFF16 welcomed further development of the global core set of forest-related indicators by the CPF. Extending the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) could help to address the socioeconomic aspects of sustainable forest management. The UNFF

⁴ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/099/12/PDF/N2109912.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁵ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/099/12/PDF/N2109912.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁶ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N21/099/26/PDF/N2109926.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁷ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/120/62/PDF/N2112062.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁸ CPF Work Plan 2021-2024 : <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-work-plan-2021-2024/index.html>.

secretariat was requested to continue to organize, jointly with FAO, capacity-building workshops on the global core set of forest-related indicators.

20. The UNFF Flagship Publication: *Global Forest Goals Report 2021*, which builds on the FRA as a source of quantitative data and on country reports to UNFF for qualitative data, was launched during a high-level event. As a next step, it was recommended that efforts be made to disseminate the report widely.

21. The next session of the UNFF (policy session) will be held from 9-13 May 2022, in New York, United States of America. The session will hold, inter alia, policy discussions on the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and the preparations for the midterm review in 2024 of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in achieving its objectives, including the communication and outreach strategy of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030.

E. The twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

22. This document was prepared prior to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held from 1 to 12 November, 2021 in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

23. Priorities for COP 26 were to (1) secure global net zero emissions by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach, countries are being requested to come forward with ambitious emissions reduction targets to be achieved by 2030 that align with this goal; (2) adapt to protect communities and natural habitats, by protecting and restoring ecosystems and by building defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure and agriculture; (3) mobilise financial resources; developed countries must make good on their promise to mobilise at least \$100bn in climate finance per year by 2020; (4) work together to deliver and finalize the Paris Rulebook and accelerate action to tackle the climate crisis through collaboration between governments, businesses and the civil society.

24. The negotiations on the rules that would operationalize market and non-market mechanisms for the mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, thus very relevant to REDD+, were expected to be continued. The draft text issued by the 2021 session of the Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice on Article 6⁹ was expected to be discussed until COP 26 by technical experts and then completed by the Parties during COP 26. The update on the results of COP26 would be available at: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference>

F. The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (CBD)

25. At the time this document was drafted, the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15) was scheduled to take place from 11 to 24 October 2021 in Kunming, China during which the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework - as a steppingstone towards the 2050 Vision of "Living in harmony with nature" - was expected.

26. Further, CBD COP15 was expected to be reviewing progress of the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Forestry, even though not always explicitly mentioned, is relevant for several targets of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including - but

⁹ Article 6 enables Parties to choose to pursue voluntary cooperation in the implementation of their nationally determined contributions to allow for higher ambition in their mitigation and adaptation actions and to promote sustainable development and environmental integrity.

not limited to - species conservation, people's benefits, restoration, and biodiversity mainstreaming.

III. Points for consideration

27. The Commission may wish to:

- (a) Consider forest-relevant updates on international events and processes as contained in this document to facilitate policy dialogues and technical exchanges, and to assist in achieving Members' goals and contributions to international processes and goals;
- (b) Welcome the topical focus of FAO's flagship publication "The State of the World's Forests" 2022, titled "*Forestry and Green Recovery, Building Inclusive and Sustainable Green Economies*";
- (c) Welcome FAO's efforts in mainstreaming forest-related issues into the preparations of the United Nations Food Systems Summit and its Pre-Summit;
- (d) Welcome the developments under the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation;
- (e) Welcome the themes of the International Day of Forests 2022 and 2023 and consider them in the preparations of celebratory events in the region.

28. The Commission may wish to request FAO to:

- (a) Promote SOFO 2022 within and outside of the forestry sector;
 - (b) Play an active role in advancing the United Nations Secretary-General's Initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation and related activities;
 - (c) Continue to take an active role as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and through this enhance advocacy on forests through relevant global processes and initiatives.
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