

## Summary by the UNFF14 Chair

### Forest-based Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies:

#### Lessons Learned and Success Stories

#### Pre-HLPF Event on Forests- An initiative by the UNFF13 Bureau

**Sponsoring Countries: Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Malaysia, Russian Federation**

**10:00 a.m.- 1:30 p.m., Sunday 8 July 2018, UNHQ, New York**

1. Mr. Boris Greguška, Chair of the 14th session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), welcomed participants to the Event on Forests held in conjunction with the 2018 meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The Chair highlighted the outcome of UNFF13 on forest-based solutions for accelerating achievement of the SDGs, noting the importance to take concerted action on a set of four key messages and forest-based solutions contained in the UNFF13 Chair's summary transmitted to the 2018 HLPF<sup>1</sup>.
2. Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, emphasized the importance of forests to the achievement of SDG15 and SDG6, as well as to the integrated achievement of all other SDGs. Following the remarks, a short video “Forest-based solutions to improve people’s lives” produced by DESA was shown.
3. Ms. Eva Muller, Director of Forestry Policy and Resources Division, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) presented the State of the World’s Forests 2018, highlighting its main findings, a set of eight key messages and recommendations on strengthening forest pathways to sustainable development. Following the presentation, a short animated video “SDGs need forests” produced by FAO was shown.
4. H.E. Josh Frydenberg, Minister for the Environment and Energy of Australia, highlighted Australia’s experiences in implementing sustainable forest management through cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships, promoting global forest-based action to combat climate change through the Asia-Pacific Rainforest Partnership, addressing illegal logging and its associated trade through legislation and innovative measures, enhancing enabling environment for the private sector investment and catalyzing the climate finance.
5. H.E. Ivan Valentik, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation - Head of the Federal Forestry Agency, underscored the need for multisectoral and interdisciplinary approach to implement the 2030 Agenda at the global, regional and national levels, based on its experiences in improving and implementing the forest legislations and policies, particularly in the areas of forest resource assessment and monitoring, forest fires, bioenergy and urban development.
6. H.E. Jaana Husu-Kallio, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, stressed the importance of strengthening a nexus approach to the forest-food-energy-water issues to fully realize

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<sup>1</sup> E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9. Also available on the HLPF website at [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18609UNFF13\\_Chairs\\_Summary\\_2018\\_HLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18609UNFF13_Chairs_Summary_2018_HLPF.pdf).

the values of forests, and promoting innovation and technology to transform towards sustainable economy through bio-based renewable products, involving small-scale land and forest owners, women and youth, indigenous peoples, academia and research communities, among other partners.

7. Moderated by H.E. Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations (FAO, WFP and IFAD) in Rome, the panel discussion was held to explore ways and means for forest-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. The initial interventions were made by the panelists.

Ms. Salina Abraham, President of the International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA), stressed the importance of strengthening the role of the youth and using them as accelerators and innovators of new ideas, including through their access to forest education, involvement in national strategies, international events, partnerships, communications and international policy making.

Mr. Alexander Buck, Executive Director of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), highlighted the importance to identify the current and potential contributions of forests to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, noting the need for a more systematic analysis of interlinkages among the SDGs and the trade-offs and synergies from the perspective of forests, building on the findings of the Global Forest Expert Panel assessment on forests and water.

Ms. Adriana Dinu, UN-REDD Strategic Group Member and Executive Coordinator and Director, Global Environmental Finance, UN Development Programme (UNDP), highlighted the need to elevate the profile of forests and their sustainable management in climate finance, and include concrete REDD+ targets in the Nationally-determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement so as to help raise the ambition level of those commitments.

Mr. Charles McNeill, Senior Advisor on Forests and Climate, United Nations Environment (UNEP), emphasized the necessity to expand and deepen partnerships to facilitate normative shift and behavioral change towards halting deforestation and forest degradation, working with new constituencies such as faith-based organizations and indigenous leaders, including through the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative.

Ms. Eva Muller, Director of Forestry Policy and Resources Division, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), stressed the need to promote ways to use forests and their resources in the most beneficial way for society through social inclusion, innovation, easy-to-understand communication and marketing, using wood and non-wood forest products for resilient cities and low-cost wooden housing.

9. Following the intervention by Mr. Mafa Chipeta, lead discussant, the representatives of Brazil, Canada, Finland, Germany, Malaysia, Sweden, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), UNFF Major Group for Children and Youth, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) took the floor during the panel discussion. Salient points highlighted during the discussion are as follows:

- (a) The world's forests are essential to realizing our shared vision for people and the planet, and central to our future prosperity and the stability of the global climate- the reason why the SDGs call for transformative action to safeguard forests towards resilient communities.**

Forests have been on the international agenda since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, with a focus on reversing deforestation and forest degradation. While much progress has been achieved to date in some countries, over 6 million hectares of natural forests, equivalent with more than 10 million soccer fields, continue to be lost annually, often as an unplanned response to meet demands for food, fodder, fuel and fiber.

The total demand for timber is projected to grow faster than population over the period to 2050, rising from the current 3.5 billion m<sup>3</sup> per year to 15 billion m<sup>3</sup> per year. Some estimates indicate the demand-supply gap for industrial wood, excluding locally-used fuelwood, to reach 4.5 billion m<sup>3</sup> in 2050.

**(b) Sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests is vital to integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the SDGs, including to combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss and climate change.**

From tackling poverty and hunger to mitigating climate change and conserving biodiversity, the impact of forests goes well beyond the SDG 15 to contribute to achieving the multiple goals and targets across the 2030 Agenda. Sustainable agriculture needs healthy and productive forests.

The call for action is more than urgent as the translation of the existing international commitments into action is lagging behind, due partly to the limited involvement of relevant stakeholders.

**(c) The implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forest 2017-2030 (UNSPF) provides a framework for transformational change, which set a target to increase the forest area worldwide by 3 per cent, equivalent to 120 million hectares, by 2030.**

Capturing full benefits of forests and harnessing innovation and technology is essential to transform to sustainable and resilient societies. The best practices and tools on forest-based solutions are available and need to be applied, replicated, and up-scaled by governments, the private sector and civil society to accelerate the progress in SDG15 and other SDGs. A clearing house mechanism at the international level could facilitate to capture lessons learned at the country level, scale up and replicate successes.

Leaving no countries/societies/local communities/youth behind requires a two-track approach to halting deforestation and forest degradation while making full use of crucial benefits provided by forests.

Forest Financing should have a more innovative approaches, including crowding in the private sector, catalyzing financing including institutional investors, co-managing programmes and projects, making full use of the benefits of forests for civil society.

**(d) A more coherent approach to land use is crucial to address the nexus between forests, agriculture and food systems, water and energy at the international, regional and national levels through cross-sectoral dialogue between stakeholders.**

Further emphasis needs to be provided to the nexus between science, technology and

innovation to bring together the available data, interdisciplinary approaches and assessments, so as to systematically analyze and address the interconnected issues in support of the SDGs implementation.

It is crucial to strengthening the role of local communities and indigenous peoples to recognizing their traditional knowledge, social, ethical, spiritual and religious values of forests.

Strengthening the role of the youth, including access to forest education, involvement of national strategies, international events, positioning youth perspectives, partnerships, communications and international policy making, using them as accelerators and innovators of new ideas.

Communication, story-telling and marketing of forests and their benefits needs to be improved to signal clear message on the importance of forests to the public, while enhancing education of sustainable forest management and its cross-sectoral issues, involving children and youth. In doing so, it is essential to address negative aspects associated with deforestation while communicating positive aspects that derive from forests and their resources.

**(e) Forest governance should be strengthened at the international level.**

Enhanced coherence and synergies on forest-related issues within governments, the UN system and across the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) are a prerequisite to address continued fragmentation in global forest governance and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. Within the effort to enhance coherence and synergies, more focus should be given to include forests into the Nationally-determined Contributions (NDCs) at country level. Governance should be deepened, focusing on an enabling environment, especially for the private sector.

The current development paradigm needs to shift to break down the siloes in an inclusive land use and landscape approach, combining sustainable forest management, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity and climate change, with stronger involvement of the private sector, civil society networks, private financial institutions and foundations.

A “UN Forest” type coherent approach to the implementation of the SDGs and UNSPF needs to be ensured and strengthened to improve the effectiveness of the forest work by the UN organizations.

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