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Items 3 (a), (c), (d) and 6 of the provisional agenda*

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

Contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030
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 2025 and 2026, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, and other international forest-related developments
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 2025

Emerging issues

* E/CN.18/2025/1.



Technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030: activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2025–2026

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution [2024/15](#), the United Nations Forum on Forests, at its twentieth session, will hold technical discussions on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and consider the activities undertaken since its nineteenth session in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2025–2026. The present note serves as the basis for discussion during the twentieth session of the Forum on agenda items 3 (a), 3 (c) and 3 (d), and item 6.

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2025–2028 contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution [2024/15](#), the Forum, at its twentieth session, will hold technical discussions on its thematic priorities in support of the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.

2. The present note serves as the basis for discussion under agenda items 3 (a), 3 (c) 3 (d), and item 6. Under item 3 (a), the Forum will consider the contributions of members of the Forum to implementing the strategic plan for forests, including the report on the outcomes of the country-led initiatives held since the nineteenth session of the Forum (sub-item (i)), new announcements of voluntary national contributions (sub-item (ii)), and updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities (sub-item (iii)). Under item 3 (c), the Forum will discuss 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 2025 and 2026, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, and other international forest-related developments. Under item 3 (d), the Forum will consider the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan for forests, including activities regarding the International Day of Forests 2025. Under item 6, the Forum will discuss emerging issues.

3. The present note also contains information on the progress in the implementation of relevant provisions of Council resolution [2024/15](#) since the nineteenth session of the Forum and includes proposals for discussion by the Forum at its twentieth session.

II. Background

4. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work, the twentieth session of the Forum is a technical session. The output of the twentieth session will be a concise Chair's summary that may include proposals for consideration at the Forum's policy session in 2026. The thematic priorities for the biennium 2025–2026, and therefore the twentieth and twenty-first sessions of the Forum, will be global forest goals 1, 3 and 5.

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

5. Pursuant to paragraph 25 (d) of Council resolution [2024/15](#), the Forum secretariat is producing a policy brief with the support of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests that will be presented during the twentieth session of the Forum to provide a substantive context for the discussion of the Forum on its thematic priorities.

A. Activities in support of the thematic priorities for the biennium 2025–2026: contributions of members of the Forum

1. Report on the outcomes of the country-led initiatives

6. In accordance with annex II to Council resolution 2017/4, the overall purpose of a country-led initiative is to support the work of the Forum. Since the nineteenth session of the Forum, the Government of the Congo has organized a country-led initiative, which took place from 2 to 5 July 2024 in Brazzaville and was focused on afforestation and reforestation. Once available, the report of the initiative will be posted on the website of the Forum. The organizer will also present the outcome of the initiative during the twentieth session of the Forum.

2. New announcements of voluntary national contributions

7. In accordance with the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/285, members of the Forum may, on a voluntary basis, determine their contributions towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, taking into account their national circumstances, policies, priorities, capacities, levels of development and forest conditions. Members may include in their voluntary national contributions, as appropriate, the forest-related contributions they intend to make with regard to other international forest-related commitments and goals, such as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and actions to address climate change under the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

8. Members may, on a voluntary basis, communicate their progress on the voluntary national contributions to the Forum at regular intervals determined by the Forum, in accordance with paragraph 67 of the strategic plan. In order to avoid any additional reporting burden, such voluntary communications on their voluntary national contributions may be part of their voluntary reporting on the strategic plan and the United Nations forest instrument.

9. Since the nineteenth session of the Forum, Georgia has announced its voluntary national contribution.

3. Updates on voluntary national contributions and their follow-up related to the thematic priorities

10. As of January 2025, 27 countries (Australia, Botswana, Canada, China, Ecuador, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan) had officially announced their voluntary national contributions. All contributions communicated to the secretariat have been compiled in a publicly accessible and centralized repository on the Forum's website.¹

11. Since the nineteenth session of the Forum, there has been no update provided regarding any previously submitted voluntary national contribution. Given the importance of the voluntary national contributions, the Forum members that have already announced such contributions are encouraged to actively monitor progress in the implementation of their respective voluntary national contributions and provide updates to the Forum.

¹ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vnecs/index.html>.

B. 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 2025 and 2026, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, and other international forest-related developments

12. Since the conclusion of the nineteenth session of the Forum, several conferences, summits and meetings have been held, and important developments related to forests have occurred. A brief description of these developments and interlinkages with global forest goals and targets is presented in this section.

1. General Assembly resolution 78/320

13. On 14 August 2024, the General Assembly adopted resolution 78/320, entitled “Fostering sustainable forest management, including afforestation and reforestation, in degraded lands, including drylands, as an effective solution to environmental challenges”, in which it emphasized the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable forest management. The Assembly invited Member States to implement, participate in and support, as appropriate, sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation projects and initiatives incorporating tree planting, seeding or regeneration in degraded lands, including drylands, noting that the Assembly would strive to strengthen the provision and mobilization of and access to new and additional resources from all sources for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests, in particular developing countries, and provide support for efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.

14. The General Assembly recognized the need to work collaboratively to protect, conserve, sustainably manage and restore forests and forest ecosystems in line with the global forest goals and all relevant multilateral agreements and related processes, including through meaningful engagement with and supporting the contributions of partners and stakeholders at all levels. A brief presentation on the resolution will be given during the twentieth session of the Forum.

2. Summit of the Future

15. At the Summit of the Future, held on 22 and 23 September 2024, Heads of State and Government adopted the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), the Global Digital Compact (annex I to the resolution) and the Declaration on Future Generations (annex II to the resolution). The Pact serves as a strong statement of countries’ commitment to the United Nations, the international system and international law, and outlines 56 actions in the areas of sustainable development and financing for development, international peace and security, science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation, youth and future generations, and transforming global governance.

16. Under action 10 of the Pact, world leaders called for action to accelerate efforts to restore, protect, conserve and sustainably use forests and other ecosystems. They emphasized the importance of conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal, including

through enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by conserving biodiversity, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

17. World leaders expressed their deep concern about rapid environmental degradation and recognized the urgent need for a fundamental shift in approach in order to achieve a world in which humanity lives in harmony with nature. They noted that the international community must conserve, restore and sustainably use the planet's ecosystems and natural resources to support the health and well-being of present and future generations, and pledged to address the adverse impacts of climate change, sea level rise, biodiversity loss, pollution, water scarcity, floods, desertification, land degradation, drought, deforestation and sand and dust storms.

18. Under action 10, Heads of State and Government also decided to take ambitious action to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems, and conserve and sustainably use and restore seas and freshwater resources, as well as forests, mountains, glaciers and drylands, and protect, conserve and restore biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife.

19. The Pact and its annexes provide for concrete follow-up mechanisms, including a high-level review of the Global Digital Compact to be held during the eighty-second session of the General Assembly, a high-level plenary meeting on future generations, and a meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government to review the implementation of the Pact, both to be held during the eighty-third session of the Assembly.

3. Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

20. During the first part of its sixteenth meeting, held from 21 October to 2 November 2024 in Cali, Colombia, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted several decisions that are directly relevant to forests. The session was suspended on 2 November 2024.

21. The Conference of the Parties took stock of progress in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework since adopting the Framework during its fifteenth meeting and highlighted the need to accelerate action. A total of 119 countries had submitted national biodiversity targets reflecting alignment with the Framework. In addition, 44 countries had submitted national biodiversity strategy and action plans that support the implementation of national targets.

22. In its decision 16/12 on scientific and technical needs, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to conduct a strategic review and analysis of the programmes of work in the context of the Framework to facilitate its implementation and to prepare draft updates, taking into account documents prepared for the twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice related to that work, and submit them for consideration by the Subsidiary Body at a future meeting to be held before the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Depending on the availability of resources and the agenda of the Subsidiary Body's meetings, the revision of the forest biodiversity programme of work will be carried out before the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

23. In its decision 16/22 on biodiversity and climate change, the Conference of the Parties emphasized the importance of prioritizing the protection, restoration and management of ecosystems that are important for the full carbon cycle and contributing to climate change adaptation as effective social and environmental

safeguards for climate actions. In the same decision, they requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention, including when supporting activities undertaken under the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, to promote synergies and closer cooperation with the biodiversity-relevant multilateral environmental agreements, organizations and processes, and integrated approaches to addressing biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ocean degradation. The decision calls for due consideration of forest biodiversity when undertaking actions to increase forest carbon sinks.

24. Also during the first part of the sixteenth meeting, on 25 October 2024, Forest and Water Day was held. The event was co-organized by the Forum secretariat, the Convention secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and other partners, and comprised sessions focused on the interlinkages between forests and water-related ecosystems as a key to implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

25. During these sessions, speakers highlighted the critical role that forests play in supporting livelihoods and the role of various stakeholders along the supply chain in ensuring sustainable forest management to benefit people, forests, climate regulation and biodiversity conservation. Special emphasis was placed on the need for better integration of forests into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the importance of leveraging synergies between the strategic plan for forests and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

26. During Forest and Water Day, the Forum secretariat, in collaboration with the Convention secretariat and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, launched two publications. The first, a joint information note entitled “Towards a coherent forest agenda”, outlines a framework for aligning global forest-related efforts, including the strategic plan for forests, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals, and marks the first deliverable from the joint initiative signed between the Forum and Convention secretariats in December 2023 aimed at enhancing cooperation to meet the global forest goals and support the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The second, “The forest factor”, which was launched by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, emphasizes the critical role of forests in achieving the aims of the Framework, highlighting how the protection, restoration and sustainable management of forests can contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, helping parties to implement the Framework effectively.

27. The resumed session of the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is to be held from 25 to 27 February 2025 in Rome, during which the Conference of the Parties is expected to consider decision 16/30 on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations. In that decision, Parties to the Convention that are members of the Forum would be invited to consider, as appropriate, the alignment of forest-related commitments and actions in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans and voluntary national contributions with the strategic plan for forests. The decision would contain a request for the Executive Secretary of the Convention to strengthen collaboration with the Forum and other relevant organizations, such as the International Tropical Timber Organization, and within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in order to support the coherent implementation of the strategic plan for forests, the Convention and the Framework. In addition, the decision would provide the secretariat of the Convention with the reinforced mandate to support, in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership for Forests, the alignment of forest-related commitments. The report on the implementation of the activities would be provided to the Subsidiary Body for

Implementation at a meeting to be held before the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

4. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement

28. During the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held from 11 to 22 November in Baku, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement at its sixth session adopted a decision on a new collective quantified goal on climate finance of at least \$300 billion per year by 2035 for developing country parties for climate action, including climate action in forests, and adopted standards relating to the mechanism under the provisions of article 6, paragraph 4, of the Paris Agreement. Finally, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement both welcomed the adoption of the Green Climate Fund policy for results-based payments for REDD-plus activities.

29. For parties to the Paris Agreement, 10 February 2025 was the deadline for submitting the most recent round of nationally determined contributions, which will likely be informed by the outcome of the first global stocktake as set out in decision 1/CMA.5. In the decision, Parties emphasized the need for enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, in accordance with article 5 of the Paris Agreement, including through results-based payments for policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries; and alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, while reaffirming the importance of incentivizing, as appropriate, non-carbon benefits associated with such approaches.

30. During the twenty-ninth session, the inaugural Forest Pavilion platform, part of the Sustainable Development Goals Pavilion organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs,² hosted over 50 sessions on daily themes that included: forest finance, investment and trade; forest policy and legal instruments; science, technology and innovation/digitalization; women, children and youth, and Indigenous Peoples; multi-stakeholder partnerships; sustainable forest-based bioeconomy for climate change mitigation and adaptation; and forests, nature and biodiversity. The organizing committee of the Forest Pavilion events was co-chaired by the Government of Canada and the Asian Development Bank. On 22 November 2024, the founding partners of the Pavilion released a communiqué entitled “From Baku to Belém: forests for climate, people and the planet”, in which they highlighted key points and recommendations that had emerged during the pavilion events on scaling up forest-based climate actions and introduced the road map from Baku to Belém. The partners reaffirmed their commitment to utilize the interconnected nature of forests as an indispensable means of achieving all Sustainable Development Goals, and leverage action towards the global forest goals to catalyse progress towards overcoming some of the world’s most pressing global challenges and crises. They also called upon all governments and all other stakeholders to deliver on the existing pledges and commitments on forests and enhance their ambitions to secure just and equitable net-zero transitions.

² See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/outreach/the-forest-pavilion-at-climate-cop29/index.html>.

31. During a high-level event on the theme “Forests for climate, nature and people: harnessing climate finance for forests”, held on 21 November 2024 and co-organized by the President of the Conference of the Parties and the Forum secretariat, the President announced the road map from Baku to Belém, outlining several priorities in the lead-up to the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held from 10 to 21 November 2025 in Belém, Brazil. These priorities are: elevating forests as a top priority at all levels; scaling up forest financing, leveraging both existing and new innovative mechanisms; addressing the critical gaps in forest-related data by improving access; and catalysing and expanding strategic partnerships to accelerate impactful actions on forests. The President also announced the plan to hold an international conference on forests and biodiversity in 2025 in Azerbaijan to provide an opportunity to join forces under the road map and to make tangible progress on preparations for the thirtieth session.

5. Convention to Combat Desertification, including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme

32. The sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, was held in Riyadh from 2 to 13 December 2024, and resulted in a series of commitments to accelerate action and investments on land and drought resilience. Parties to the Convention made strides in laying the groundwork for a future global drought regime, which they intend to complete at seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Mongolia in 2026. Other key agreements reached included the creation of a Caucus for Indigenous Peoples and a Caucus for Local Communities; a continuation of the Convention’s Science-Policy Interface to strengthen science-based decision-making, and the mobilization of private sector engagement under the Business4Land initiative. In addition, more than 12 billion dollars were pledged to tackle desertification, land degradation and drought, especially in the most vulnerable countries.

33. During the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, the Forum secretariat participated in activities aimed at highlighting the importance of forests and sustainable forest management in combating drought, desertification and land degradation. These events provided an opportunity to emphasize the role of the strategic plan for forests and its global forest goals as a useful framework to effectively promote collective forest-based actions, while advocating a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach that addresses the drivers of deforestation, as well as the need for adequate financing from all sources.

34. On 6 December 2024, the Forum secretariat and the National Centre for Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification of Saudi Arabia co-organized a side event on the significance of dryland forests for achieving land degradation neutrality, combating biodiversity loss and climate change. Further details regarding the side event are provided in paragraphs 54 and 55 of the present note.

6. Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2025 and 2026

35. The theme of the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held from 14 to 23 July 2025 at United Nations Headquarters, will be “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind” (see General Assembly resolution [78/285](#)). The high-level political forum will review in depth Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 14 (life below water) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). It is expected that 39 countries will present voluntary

national reviews of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level and that the high-level political forum will adopt a ministerial declaration. The President of the Economic and Social Council will also prepare a summary with the key policy messages of the deliberations during the high-level political forum.

36. In a letter dated 18 December 2024 soliciting input from the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Council invited the Chair of the Forum on Forests at its twentieth session to provide substantive input to the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development by 3 March 2025. The President requested input on the following points:

(a) An assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of Goals 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17;

(b) Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for achieving the Goals and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of Goals under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets;

(c) Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards the Goals through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between the Goals to ensure cohesive progress;

(d) Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by the Forum to support implementation of the political declaration of the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the outcomes of the Summit of the Future, held in 2024, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(e) Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the ministerial declaration of the 2025 high-level political forum.

37. In response to the letter from the President of the Council, as of February 2025, the Bureau of the twentieth session of the Forum is preparing its input, in consultation with members of the Forum, for submission to the President of the Council as the input of the Forum to the 2025 high-level political forum. The input will be made available on the websites of the Forum on Forests and the high-level political forum.

38. In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work for 2025–2028, at its twentieth session, the Forum of Forests should also discuss its input to the 2026 high-level political forum. The 2026 high-level political forum on sustainable development will be held under the theme “Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for a sustainable future for all” (see General Assembly resolution [78/285](#)). During its 2026 session, the high-level political forum will review in depth Goals 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

39. The input of the Forum on Forests to the 2026 high-level political forum should focus on action taken by the Forum, its members, partners and stakeholders at the policy, technical and operational levels to implement the strategic plan, and achieve the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, while leaving no one behind. The input should identify key areas where solutions are being effectively delivered, as well as recommendations for follow-up action, especially as they relate to Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17.

40. A summary of discussions of the Forum at its twentieth session on the interlinkages of global forest goals with the Sustainable Development Goals under review at the 2026 session of the high-level political forum will be included in the summary by the Chair of the twentieth session and will be submitted to the President of the Council at the time of soliciting inputs for the 2026 high-level political forum. This input will be adjusted as necessary in accordance with the template for inputs to be provided by the President of the Council, in consultation with members of the Forum.

41. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in its resolution [78/285](#), agreed to fully review at its eightieth session, in September 2025, the arrangements contained in resolutions [75/290 A](#) on the strengthening of the Council and [75/290 B](#) on the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level.

7. Interlinkages between the global forest goals, the Goals under review by the 2025 and 2026 sessions of the high-level political forum and international forest-related developments

42. There is growing recognition in various intergovernmental forums of the critical role of forests in providing livelihoods, supporting a sustainable future for all, increasing employment, protecting biodiversity, contributing to food security through non-timber forest products, mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration, and adapting to its adverse impacts, as well as reducing the risk of natural disasters, floods, droughts, sand and dust storms, landslides and other extreme events.

43. The table below presents an overview of the interlinkages between the global forest goals and the discussions and outcomes of international forest-related developments that have occurred since the nineteenth session of the Forum, as explained in section B of the present note.

<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Interlinkages between global forest goals and the Goals to be reviewed in-depth by the 2025 and 2026 high-level political forum</i>	<i>International forest-related developments</i>
Global forest goal 1. Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change	6 (2026), 14 (2025)	2025 high-level political forum 2026 high-level political forum Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity Twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Global forest goal 2. Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people	6 (2026), 8 (2025), 9 (2026)	Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification Summit of the Future
Global forest goal 3. Increase 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	7 (2026), 14 (2025), 17 (2025, 2026)	General Assembly resolution 78/320

<i>Global forest goals</i>	<i>Interlinkages between global forest goals and the Goals to be reviewed in-depth by the 2025 and 2026 high-level political forum</i>	<i>International forest-related developments</i>
Global forest goal 4. Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships	17 (2025, 2026)	
Global forest goal 5. Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	5 (2027), 17 (2025, 2026)	
Global forest goal 6. Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders	17 (2025, 2026)	

C. 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 2025

44. In accordance with the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan for forests, raising awareness of the vital role that forests play in global sustainable development, as a nature-based solution to the most pressing global challenges, remains a cornerstone of the work of the secretariat of the Forum. Delivering targeted communications to raise awareness, within and beyond the forest sector, to a diverse range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector, continues to be a priority for all key actors, including the secretariat of the Forum. Synergistic implementation by all relevant stakeholders of the strategic plan, the 2030 Agenda, the Rio conventions and other key frameworks underpins these communication efforts.

45. In Council resolution [2024/15](#), section H, additional provisions are outlined for members and partners of the Forum and its secretariat to promote communication activities, including through producing various communication products and services.

46. In advancing the implementation of the communication and outreach strategy, and in response to requests made to the secretariat of the Forum in section H of resolution [2024/15](#), since the conclusion of the nineteenth session of the Forum, the secretariat of the Forum has undertaken a wide range of measures, despite the scarcity

of resources. These measures included a wide range of communication methods to advance the secretariat's outreach goals, including through the preparation of presentations, statements and video messages at international events, as well as targeted digital campaigns. In addition, and as a major step forward, the secretariat launched monthly "UNFF updates" bulletin, with the objective of informing Forum members and stakeholders about the work and achievements of the secretariat and Forum partners. During the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the secretariat issued such updates on a daily basis, in connection with the Forest Pavilion.

47. The Forum secretariat has also promoted collaboration with partners, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and with regional communications networks such as those hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The Forum secretariat has also enhanced collaboration with the Department of Global Communications, which assists in aligning forest messaging with broader United Nations narratives on sustainable development and climate action. These partnerships amplify the impact of outreach efforts and ensure coherence in messaging. These collaborative efforts were showcased during the joint Sustainable Development Goals Pavilion and Forest Pavilion at the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, where partners hosted and promoted their events collaboratively. These events demonstrated synergies between forests, the Sustainable Development Goals and innovative solutions to global challenges.

48. Furthermore, pursuant to Council resolution [2024/15](#), the Forum secretariat has taken initial steps with the objective of updating the Forum website by gathering feedback through a survey that is shared with national focal points through the monthly "UNFF updates" bulletin. The survey will remain active until the end of the twentieth session in order to gather input from Member States. The plan and timeline for the redesign and migration of the Forum website to the platform recommended by the Office of Information and Communications Technology has been developed, but its implementation has been postponed due to a lack of available funds. Initial steps have also been taken to identify a consultant to carry out the technical work. Nevertheless, the work of the Forum secretariat to update the Forum website is severely hampered by the lack of human and financial resources.

49. In 2025, the theme for the International Day of Forests is "Forests and foods". The communication and outreach activities planned for the occasion will follow a similar approach as for previous International Days, with a focus on social media-friendly products and the organization of a special event at the United Nations on 21 March 2025. Detailed information about International Day of Forests 2025 and its programme are available on the websites of the Forum and of the International Day of Forests.

50. Social media played a key role in the outreach campaign for the International Day of Forests in 2024. Multimedia products included digital posters, animated GIFs and suggested social media posts, which were made available online through the Trello board³ in the six official United Nations languages. Although the Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) social media accounts of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs were the primary channels for the dissemination of social media content, all digital resources were shared with United Nations system social media focal points, Forum national focal points, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and regional entities, thereby further extending the reach of the campaign. The hashtag

³ See <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/outreach/international-day-of-forests/social-media-campaign/index.html>.

“#IntlForestDay” was widely used and was included in over 3,600 posts with 25,700 engagements, reaching 164.1 million users on X during the International Day itself.

51. Promoting communication and outreach activities is a key component of the work of the Forum secretariat. These activities require sustainable financial resources and skilled human resources. Considering the increased demand from the Forum and the increased expectations of Forum members regarding the Forum secretariat promoting this area of work, and in the absence of a dedicated permanent post for communication activities in the secretariat, urgent action must be taken by the Forum to address this gap. Currently, the activities in this area of work of the secretariat are being conducted on an ad hoc basis. In addition, the pace of work in the communication area, including the ongoing work on updating the Forum website, is severely affected by the lack of human and financial resources. In this respect, and in the context of discussions at the twentieth session of the Forum with respect to the information paper on the workload, gaps and needs of the secretariat, members of the Forum are encouraged to address this human and financial gap in a sustainable and reliable manner. The information paper will be posted in advance of the upcoming session on the Forum website and will be discussed under agenda item 4 during the twentieth session.

IV. Emerging issues

52. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2025–2028, an item on emerging issues has been included in the provisional agenda for the twentieth session of the Forum (item 6). Under this item, the Forum will discuss emerging issues and urgent challenges of global significance that are related to and/or have an impact on forests and sustainable forest management and that are not already addressed in the agenda of the session.

53. For the twentieth session of the Forum, the Bureau recommended that “dryland forests” be discussed under item 6. Dryland forests play an essential role in combating desertification, preserving biodiversity, supporting livelihoods and regulating local climates. Drylands are home to about 2 billion people, the majority of whom depend on ecosystem services from forests and trees outside forests. Trees and forests are critical resources for both people and animals in drylands, where livestock production is the primary livelihood activity of many rural people and is considered key for food security and resilience. Despite numerous environmental, social and economic benefits, there is a lack of sufficient awareness and recognition of the significance of dryland forests. These ecosystems and their contributions have received limited attention in national and regional policy and planning frameworks. Their potential to enhance local and national economies has been overlooked, and their role in sustainable environmental management remains underappreciated. Therefore, it is essential to provide a space for Forum members, partners and stakeholders to discuss policies, best practices and innovative solutions, including opportunities for increased international cooperation and the mobilization of resources in support of dryland forest conservation, restoration and sustainable management.

54. Several activities have been conducted in preparation for the discussions of the Forum on dryland forests at the twentieth session. During the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Forum secretariat and Saudi Arabia organized a side event on: “Significance of dryland forests for achieving land degradation neutrality, combating biodiversity loss and climate change”. The side event provided a space for representatives of Forum members, United Nations system entities and other experts to discuss the challenges

and threats faced by countries with dryland forests and to share information on best practices.

55. The discussions at the side event emphasized the need for innovative, bold and articulated actions to protect, restore and expand dryland forests at all levels. Experts highlighted the importance of knowledge-sharing among practitioners to help identify and support the dissemination of innovative practices. Further, significant efforts should be undertaken to bring further visibility to dryland forests and their contributions, for example by including dryland forests in natural capital accounting, which can ensure that the economic value of dryland forests is considered in decision-making and that the right fiscal and policy incentives are put in place. Finally, working in partnership with communities is critical to the conservation, effective management and restoration of dryland forests.

56. A panel discussion on dryland forests will be held during the twentieth session under item 6. It is expected that the discussions during intersessional activities and panel discussion on dryland forests at the twentieth session will encourage interested countries to move towards developing common policies for the conservation and sustainable management of dryland forests.

V. Conclusion

57. The outcome documents and discussions of recent international meetings and conferences highlight close interlinkages between forests and other ecosystems, biodiversity and climate change. They also emphasize the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, as well as ensuring their sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources.

58. These interlinkages between forests and their significance in addressing global challenges demonstrate the importance of ensuring a coherent approach to the accelerated implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of the global forest goals by 2030. Such a coherent approach should include addressing financial, technical and technological needs through strengthening international cooperation and enhancing coordination. It is also critical to promote forest governance and forest law enforcement, increase the involvement of local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision-making and the implementation of policies, and improve communication that highlights the significant value of forests in all its aspects.

59. Furthermore, the outcomes of recent Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification with regard to the accelerated implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement and the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme provide additional avenues for further integration of forest-based actions and solutions into the revised and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the updated nationally determined contributions, in synergy with the voluntary national contributions towards achieving the global forest goals and targets.

60. Communication and outreach activities remain a critical area of work for all components of the international arrangement on forests, including for Forum members, the Forum secretariat and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Important progress has been made by the secretariat to advance this area of work. Nevertheless, efforts to continue to maintain the level of activities and to advance the effective implementation of the communication and outreach strategy of the strategic

plan for forests require urgent action by the Forum to strengthen the human and financial resources of the secretariat in this area of work.

VI. Proposals

61. The following points are suggested for discussion during the twentieth session of the Forum and for inclusion in the Chair's proposals for submission to the twenty-first session of the Forum:

(a) Invite Members of the Forum to take concrete steps to accelerate efforts towards achieving global forest goals 1, 3 and 5, including through mainstreaming and upscaling of forest-related actions in their national development programmes, as well as developing joint initiatives and partnerships on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan on forests;

(b) Invite Members of the Forum that have not 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) Encourage the further integration of forest-based actions into national sustainable development strategies, the updated nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and the revised and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework so as to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the respective goals and objectives;

(d) Request the Forum secretariat to explore the possibility of making the Forest Pavilion a recurring initiative at the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in cooperation with the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant partners, in order to keep the momentum in raising awareness of the significance of forests as a climate solution;

(e) Encourage Forum members and partners, as well as the Forum secretariat, to effectively apply communication tools to raise awareness of the significance of forests and engage in celebrating the International Day of Forests, and invite the Forum to address the related human and financial resource gaps and needs of the Forum secretariat in a sustainable manner.
