

Summary of key issues contained in the AHEG2 Co-Chairs' Summary

While there remain some issues that require further discussions to narrow the differences, there was emerging convergence of views among experts on a number of topics. The main areas of emerging convergences include, among others:

- The substance of the Forest Instrument and GOFs remains relevant and should be reaffirmed, whether non-legally binding or legally binding, through an addendum or any other relevant means regarding its title, changing the references to MDGs to SDGs, extending the timeframe of the GOFs to 2030, integrating forest-related SDGs and targets, and the role of the Forum;
- The Forum needs a plan, whether it is called a “strategic plan”, “Multi-Year Programme of Work” or something else, to focus the work of the IAF, set priorities, and increase visibility for implementation of the Forest Instrument.
- The Forum has a strong potential role in the forest aspects of the SDGs, including a role as the body to review forest-related elements of the SDGs and provide the review outcomes to High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
- The Forum needs a strengthened secretariat, based in New York, as part of DESA. The secretariat needs adequate financial and human resources, commensurate with the functions assigned to it by the Forum.
- The CPF should continue to exist in a strengthened format, retaining its voluntary nature to maintain flexibility, while receiving overall guidance from the Forum. The CPF should develop a strategy and costed workplan for CPF to provide a basis for prioritization, which will also provide clarity to eventual donors.
- The Forum should form closer ties to all existing financing mechanisms to promote coherence, and to allow and improve access by countries to forest funding. In this context, the Facilitative Process could be strengthened as a catalytic mechanism.
- The Forum should maintain its multi-stakeholder nature and find ways to enhance participation of Major Groups in the Forum sessions and intersessional activities, as well as regional groups.
- The Forum should provide a framework to encourage closer linkages between regional/sub-regional and thematic organizations/processes and global forest policy processes, including through the Facilitative Process.

The remaining areas of differences include, among others:

- The future legal character of the post-2015 IAF, including the issue of whether transitioning the Forest Instrument to a legally-binding agreement would ultimately benefit implementation of SFM on the ground;
- The degree to which the Forum should focus on promoting, reviewing, or actually doing “implementation” versus focusing on policy dialogue and coordination;
- The types of concrete institutional changes that might be needed, including “UN Forest Assembly”, “UN-Forest”, “Special Envoy on Forests”, and potential financial mechanisms;

- The desirable degree of regionalization and role assumed by regional organizations and processes; and
- The need for a dedicated global forest fund for the post-2015 IAF/UNFF.

The AHEG Co-Chairs also put forth a set of recommendations for inclusion in the resolution of UNFF11 on the future IAF, providing a strategic direction on the function and institutional arrangement of the IAF for the period beyond 2015. The main issues to be addressed include the agreements on:

- 1) the rationale, objective, core functions and principles to follow for the future IAF;
- 2) the core components of the future IAF, as well as their objectives, functions and their roles and responsibilities;
- 3) strengthening the future IAF, including through:
 - a. Reaffirming the universal membership, composition and headquarters of the future Forum, as agreed in ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35;
 - b. Defining the working modalities of the future Forum;
 - c. Establishing an effective intersessional mechanism under the future Forum (e.g. subsidiary bodies/committee(s)/virtual groups on Implementation and/or Financing SFM);
 - d. Establishing a voluntary strategic trust fund under Forum or subaccount within the existing UNFF Trust Fund, to be guided by a steering committee/executive body;
 - e. Consider other options such as establishing the Global Forest Fund;
 - f. Future of the Forest Instrument
 - g. Strengthening the human and financial resources of the Forum Secretariat;
 - h. Strengthening CPF;
 - i. Using the regional criteria and indicator processes as a tool for implementation;
 - j. Strengthening cooperation between CPF and the Regional Entities;
 - k. Supporting greater involvement of Major Groups;
 - l. Ensuring coherence with the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs;
 - m. Advancing coordination and collaboration with other forest related processes;
 - n. Strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting through data-sharing arrangements and synchronizing the reporting processes; and
 - o. Developing a Strategic Plan for the future IAF.
- 4) post-UNFF11 follow up measures, for instance through:
 - a. Establishing a working group of the Forum to propose, inter alia: i) Updated Forest Instrument; ii) A Strategic Plan for the future IAF, and the modalities and operational rules of the Strategic Trust Fund and the Facilitative Process; iii) Interaction of the future CPF and the Forum, possible organizational matters related to the future Forum sessions; and
 - b. Submitting the agreed outcome of the working group to a Special Session of the Forum in 2016, to be facilitated by a Bureau-designated task force who will prepare initial proposals on 4.a.i, 4.a.ii, and 4.a.iii for consideration by the working group.
