

Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting Function of UNFF

1. Introduction

Monitoring assessment and reporting (MAR) is one of the most critical functions of UNFF. There is a need to define the scope, framework, and expected outputs of UNFF's and CPF's initiatives on MAR over the next four years and beyond. This "think piece" brings together the UNFF mandate on MAR and the IPF/IFF proposals for action relevant to MAR, in order to define the scope of the MAR function of UNFF. The paper proposes a framework to structure UNFF deliberations on MAR. These deliberations are envisaged as an evolving process that would extend to UNFF 5 in 2005, and beyond.

MAR is a complex and potentially very expensive function. There is a need to develop cost effective, practical and pragmatic approaches to achieve meaningful results.

2. Background

The UNFF mandate related to its MAR function, as identified in Annex 1, para 3, focuses on the following three Areas:

- Area 1. "Progress in implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests"
(i.e., clustered along 16 Elements of IPF/IFF);
- Area 2. "Progress towards sustainable management of all types of forests"
(i.e., one of the strategic objectives of the IPF/IFF/UNFF processes); and
- Area 3. "Review of the effectiveness" of the international arrangement on forests (IAF)
(i.e., the UNFF 5 decisions on the future of the UNFF and the "future arrangements and mechanisms on forests" will be strongly influenced by the outcome of UNFF deliberations based on its MAR function and "effectiveness" of IAF).

See Annex 3 on IPF/IFF proposals for action relevant to these three Areas.

3. Terminology

There is a need to adopt simple explanations of the three terms, namely, monitoring, assessment and reporting. For example: monitoring involves periodic quantitative or qualitative measurements or observations of a specific parameter. Assessment involves analysis and synthesis of the monitoring data and observations. Reporting involves dissemination of the results of assessments, and interpretation of their policy significance, as well as making the data banks easily accessible.

4. Policy objectives and benefits of MAR

It is useful to list a few significant policy objectives and benefits of MAR to countries and international organizations and instruments, for example:

- The need to make MAR more cost effective, efficient and relevant, primarily to meet the needs of countries, as well as the needs of maintaining an effective monitoring, assessment and reporting system at the regional and global levels;
- Develop a common understanding of concepts, definitions and terms related to forests, as employed by different monitoring systems and endeavour to harmonize the timing of monitoring requested to governments by different international organizations and instruments, thereby, reduce the reporting burden, establish more cost effective operations; disseminate meaningful policy- and politically-relevant information primarily to benefit countries and secondly to the international community;
- Identify and use a few critical diagnostic indicators that allow monitoring the state of forests, progress towards SFM, effective policy development and implementation at the national, regional and global levels;
- Employ MAR as the basic function of UNFF and as a tool to identify new and emerging issues relevant to the international cooperation, coordination and capacity building;
- Undertake MAR on progress of the IPF/IFF process and the effectiveness of IAF

5. Tools for monitoring, assessment and reporting, including concepts, terminology and definitions.

The IPF/IFF proposals for action have already identified a few tools in order to effectively perform the MAR function. For example, the need to: develop a common understanding of concepts, terminology and definitions; formulate approaches for collection and analysis of data and to reduce reporting burden; strengthen data banks with timely and reliable information; and to make the data banks more accessible. IPF/IFF proposals for action have identified the following tools relevant to MAR (Annex 2):

- Definitions, Concepts and Terminology. IPF 89(f) and (g); IPF 109; IPF 111; IPF 115 (d); IPF 115 (e); IFF 10; IFF 14; IFF 68; Definition of Low Forest Cover countries: IPF 53
- Harmonize Approaches to Collection and Analysis of data. IPF 81; IPF 84; IFF 11; IFF 14; IFF 19(a).
- Database. IPF 80; IPF 112; IPF 138; IFF 85(g).
- Dissemination of data. IPF 82; IFF 17(a) and (b).

MAR function is a complex and very challenging task, would require the application of different "tools" to monitor progress in the three Areas identified by UNFF for MAR. For example, an "array of monitoring tools", necessary to evaluate progress for Area 2, towards sustainable management of all types of forests, are likely to be considerably distinct from those applied to Area 3, to evaluate the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (IAF), notwithstanding some overlaps between the two. Consequently, UNFF has to identify and apply some specific "tools" needed to monitor progress towards a specific Area. While many of the tools are already available within various existing monitoring systems, other tools may need further elaboration and fine-tuning. For example, it would be necessary to work on the development of a common understanding of terms, concepts and definitions, as well as on comparability and compatibility of existing data bases.

Item 3 (v) of the Provisional Agenda for UNFF 2 also calls for UNFF deliberations on "concepts, terminology and definitions". A common understanding of concepts, terminology and definitions is an important part of the tools to perform UNFF's MAR function. Accordingly, it would be more effective to integrate UNFF deliberations on concepts, terminology and definitions with UNFF 2 deliberations on the "tools" for MAR.

6. Significance of monitoring, assessment and reporting to countries and the international arrangement on forests

Most countries are already engaged in MAR of their forests and of the effectiveness of their forest policies. Countries also prepare reports, either voluntarily, or as a requirement under international agreements, or in response to intergovernmental decisions adopted in various international organizations. It is important to note that MAR at the country level, undertaken by countries, is primarily for their own benefit. However, in view of regional and global dimensions of forests, there is also a need to assess progress in different Areas at the regional and global levels.

Most institutions and organizations monitor progress towards their mission or strategic objectives and assess their accomplishments and effectiveness. There is a need to identify and apply appropriate tools to assess the effectiveness of UNFF and CPF.

6.1 Four Principal Tasks

Effective performance of the MAR function by UNFF would require undertaking concurrently, a number of interactive initiatives and activities in support of at least the following four Tasks:

- Task 1: Apply specific monitoring tools to Area 1: assess and report progress in the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action.
- Task 2: Apply specific monitoring tools to Area 2: assess and report progress towards sfm.
- Task 3: Apply specific monitoring tools to Area 3: assess and report on the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (IAF).
- Task 4: Identify, assemble and develop appropriate monitoring "tools" aimed to evaluate the three Areas of UNFF's MYPOW addressed in Tasks 1, 2 and 3.

It is emphasized that **all four Tasks**, listed above, **are cross-connected** and would involve a dynamic learning processes. Consequently, a successive fine-tuning of monitoring tools and approaches would be required through the experience gained by the application of the monitoring tools (Figure 1). Task 4 would basically develop a supporting "tool box" which would include a range of monitoring tools designed to assess, through Tasks 1, 2, and 3, the three Areas identified for MAR by UNFF. Furthermore, **the three Areas identified by UNFF for MAR are also cross-connected and interdependent. For example, an evaluation of the effectiveness of IAF (Task 3) would require application of some new specific tools as well as the integration of the results of Tasks 1 and 2.**

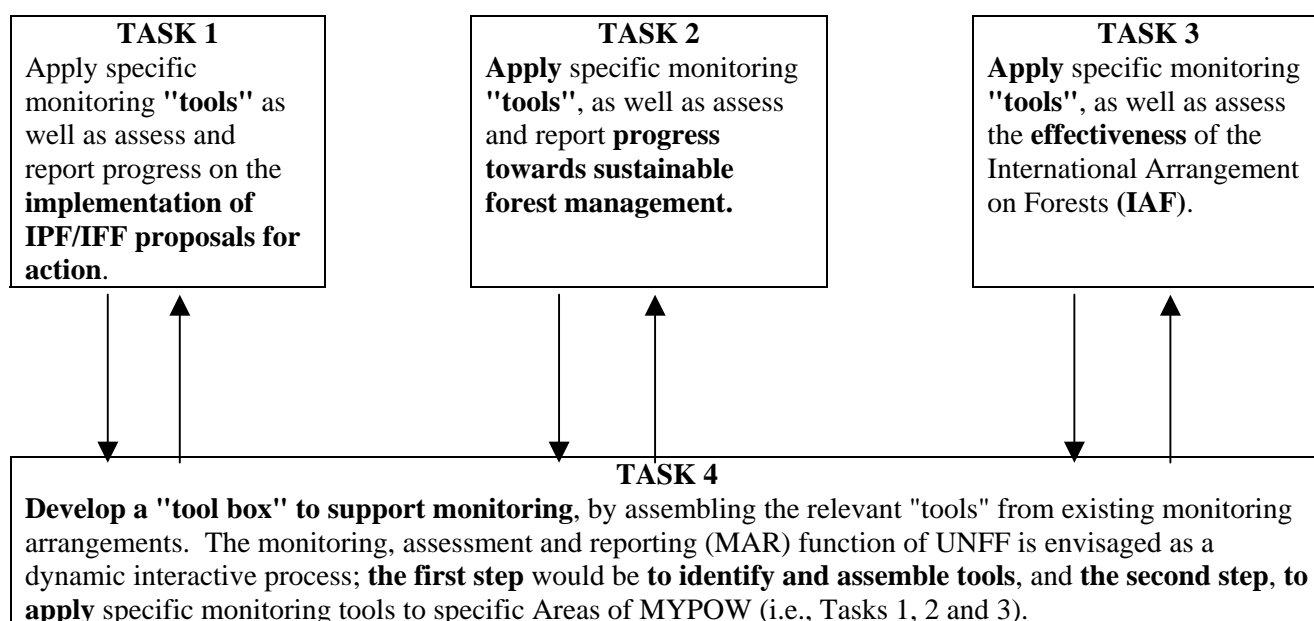


Figure 1. Four principal tasks of UNFF towards monitoring, assessment and reporting of progress on the three areas, identified by UNFF 1.

7. UNFF's monitoring, assessment and reporting function: an evolving process

The overall approach for Area 1 is envisaged as a learning experience and as an evolving, iterative process. While the launching of the MAR will take place at UNFF 2, it will be further developed for Areas 1, 2 and 3 at UNFF 4 and its full applications for Area 3 will be undertaken at UNFF 5, which will influence UNFF decisions on the future of IAF, including the UNFF.

There is a need to inventory the various initiatives to-date under each of the four Tasks noted above, i.e., who is doing what, for example, UNDP's Synergies and FAO's attempt at developing a common understanding of terms, concepts and definitions; FRA 2000, SOFO; UNEP's initiative on harmonizing the work of environmental conventions; definition of Low Forest Cover; IUFRO's work on terminology, etc., voluntary country reports to: CSD; FAO; various conventions; ITTO; UNEP; etc..

7.1 Need for specific initiatives to accomplish the four Tasks

There is a need to identify a few (8-10?) specific initiatives to attain the objectives of the four Tasks to support MAR. For example: develop common understanding of concepts, terms and definitions; develop more cost-effective monitoring system; comparability and compatibility of different monitoring systems; reduce reporting burden through better interagency cooperation; improve access to data banks, etc.); how these tasks will be executed (e.g., CPF Task Forces, UNFF working groups, country-led initiatives); role of CPF; and expected outputs and timeline. Also indicate the desirable input from the proposed UNFF working group of experts to be established at UNFF2.

Annex 1

UNFF decisions on monitoring, assessment and reporting

1. Reference on “intersessional”

- Para 8 of Structure (MYPOW) “*Invites* intersessional work, such as ad hoc expert groups and country led initiatives to support the UNFF deliberations,”
- Title of section D. of MYPOW reads “Intersessional work by *ad hoc* expert groups and country-led initiatives”

2. MAR-related issues as elements/common items in MYPOW

- Monitoring, assessment and reporting; and concepts, terminology and definitions” is one of the 16 elements [implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action] (para 15 of POA):
- “Concepts, terminology and definitions” is among the elements of **UNFF 2**.
- “Monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions”; and “Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management”, are among the elements of **UNFF 4**; (Para 4. of Structure)
- “Monitoring, assessment and reporting” is also included among the common items that will be addressed at each of the UNFF sessions (para 6 of Structure)

3. Scope of monitoring, assessment and reporting

Decides that UNFF’s **function of monitoring, assessment and reporting** comprises the following **areas**: (para 3 of Section B of MYPOW)

- "Progress in implementation of the Proposals for Action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests / Intergovernmental Forum on Forests";
- "Progress towards sustainable management of all types of forests";
- "Review of the effectiveness";

Invites reporting from countries, regions, organizations and processes based on a credible, **voluntary reporting system**, with a focus on the **implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action**, (para 5 of Section B of MYPOW)

Countries will, on a voluntary basis, report progress towards the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action to the UNFF as soon as possible, and if practicable to the first Ministerial segment of UNFF. (para 9 of POA)

Reporting on **progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action** is based on **voluntary reporting, including by sub-regional and regional groups and processes, drawing upon existing formats**, as appropriate. (para 22 of POA)

Voluntary reporting by countries, regions, organizations and processes on their implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action should include **achievements and identify gaps and obstacles to implementation**, *inter alia*, on means of implementation. The reports may be prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Such voluntary reports would start at **second session of the UNFF**. (para 23 of POA)

Stressing the importance of the use of regional and national **criteria and indicators** for sustainable forest management **as a basis for reporting on sustainable forest management** (para 2 of Section B of MYPOW),

Relevant stakeholders are encouraged to provide reports **on their contribution to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action**. (para 24 of POA)

Decides that a representative selection of lessons learned, achievements, as well as obstacles to implementation should be presented and discussed at each UNFF session, as organized by the Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau, (para 6 of Section B of MYPOW)

4. Review (section G of MYPOW)

3. *Recognizes* the need to identify the criteria against which to assess the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in a systematic and objective manner,

4. *Further recognizes* that these criteria might, *inter alia*, take into consideration the effectiveness in terms of the following:

- Facilitating and promoting the implementation of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action
- Implementing the UNFF Plan of Action
- Addressing the common items, as referred to in Section A, paragraph 6
- Addressing the means of implementation: finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity building in developing countries, including in low forest cover countries and other countries with fragile ecosystems
- Strengthening synergies between UNFF and other international bodies
- Enhancing cooperation and policy and program coordination
- Fostering a common understanding of sustainable forest management and addressing emerging areas of priority concern
- Fostering international and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels including public-private partnerships
- Reporting by Governments, as well as by regional and international organizations, institutions and instruments
- Strengthening political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests
- Qualitative approaches
- Implementation of the decisions of UNFF
- Involvement of major groups

4. *Decides* that more specific criteria should start to be considered, with a view to being adopted, if possible at UNFF 2, taking into full account that priority should be given to the substantive agenda of that session,

5. CPF's role in monitoring, assessment and reporting

Calls upon member organizations of the CPF to facilitate efforts, including those by countries, to **report on the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action**, and to make easily accessible information on: financial resources, environmentally sound technology, to support national capacity building for forest-related information collecting and reporting in developing countries (MYPOW, para 4. of section B)

Invites the CPF and its member organizations to: **report its progress** at each UNFF session (para 7(d) of CPF)

Requests the CPF member organizations to assist the UNFF to monitor, assess and report on progress towards its objectives, including through the use of **criteria and indicators** for sustainable forest management (para 8 of CPF)

Further requests the CPF and its member organizations to (para 9 of CPF):

- (a) support UNFF's intersessional work,
- (b) facilitate the efforts of the UNFF to achieve **a common understanding of forest-related terms, concepts and definitions**,
- (c) **reduce duplication in the reports** required from countries by its member organizations,
- (d) **make information easily accessible and available** on financial resources and environmentally sound technologies, as well as on the state of forests and its related aspects,
- (e) facilitate countries' **capacity** to provide forest-related information;

Annex 2

Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, including Concepts, Terminology and Definitions in the Final Reports of IPF and IFF

Reference to monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR), including concepts, terminology and definitions is made in several programme elements of both the IPF and the IFF, in particular in IPF III A and IFF II B. Excerpts from IPF and IFF paragraphs of particular interest to MAR have been extracted for easy reference below. The UNFF Secretariat has highlighted text of key importance, shown here in bold.

IPF

8. The Panel recognized the importance of comprehensive forest policy frameworks or **"national forest programmes"** for the achievement of sustainable forest management. It agreed that the term "national forest programme" is a generic term for a wide range of approaches to sustainable forest management within different countries, to be applied at national and subnational levels based on the basic principles outlined below. It emphasized that national forest programmes demand a broad intersectoral approach at all stages, including the formulation of policies, strategies and plans of action, as well as their **implementation, monitoring and evaluation**. National forest programmes should be implemented in the context of each country's socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental situation, and should be integrated into wider programmes for sustainable land use, in accordance with chapters 10 to 15 of Agenda 21. The activities of other sectors, such as agriculture, energy and industrial development, should be taken into account.

17. The Panel:

(a) Encouraged countries, in accordance with their national sovereignty, specific country conditions and national legislation, to develop, **implement, monitor and evaluate national forest programmes**, which include a wide range of approaches for sustainable forest management, taking into consideration the following: consistency with national, subnational or local policies and strategies, and - as appropriate - international agreements; partnership and participatory mechanisms to involve interested parties; recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, *inter alia*, indigenous people and local communities; secure land tenure arrangements; holistic, intersectoral and iterative approaches; ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources; and adequate provision and valuation of forest goods and services;

(c) Stressed the need for international cooperation in the adequate **provision of ODA**, as well as possible new and additional funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other appropriate innovative sources of finance for the effective development, **implementation, monitoring and evaluation** of national forest programmes;

(d) Encouraged countries to integrate suitable **criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management**, as appropriate, into the overall process of the formulation, **implementation, monitoring and evaluation** of national forest programmes, on a step-by-step basis; [I & II]

(f) Encouraged countries to elaborate systems, including **private and community forest management systems**, for planning, **implementing, monitoring and evaluating** national forest programmes that identify and involve, where appropriate, a broad **participation of indigenous people**, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities in meaningful decision-making regarding the management of state forest lands in their proximity, within the context of national laws and legislation;

26. The **diagnostic framework** should be employed in a constructive, corrective and forward-looking manner. It would complement and strengthen other existing planning exercises, and could also be used, **together with criteria and indicators, as a tool for the periodic assessment of progress**. As a management tool, it should be developed voluntarily and should not be used as a basis for conditionality in ODA. Its development, however, should not delay action, and it may not be needed in countries where major direct or indirect causes have been identified, well understood and documented, or where deforestation is not viewed as a problem at the national level.

29. The Panel also encouraged countries to undertake, as needed, the following activities:

(b) To develop mechanisms, such as **environmental impact assessments**, to improve policy formulation and coordination, through an open and participatory process;

48. The Panel emphasized the need to **continue monitoring and evaluating the impact of airborne pollution** on forest health wherever it has been demonstrated in the world, and the need for information on how the countries concerned have addressed such problems. The Panel also stressed the need for continuing action to reduce airborne pollution, including the transfer and use of the best available as well as future environmentally sound technologies on mutually agreed terms. The problem has to be solved by action outside the forests. *(Paragraph 49-50 also discuss the issue of monitoring the impact of airborne pollution)*

53. The Panel felt that there was a need for more **precise identification of countries categorized as countries with low forest cover**. The definition of forest used by the Panel, based on the global forest resources assessment of the Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations (FAO), is that it includes vegetation with 20 per cent and 10 per cent minimum tree crown cover for developed and developing countries, respectively. That definition does not have a strong scientific foundation, nor does it allow for comparability of data on a worldwide basis. Furthermore, there is no consistent way of classifying countries by the extent of forest, however defined, into those with low and those with high forest cover.

58. The Panel:

(vi) In particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to embark on **capacity-building programmes** at national, subnational and local levels, including especially existing national institutions, to promote effective participation in decision-making with respect to forests throughout the planning, **implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes**, and taking full advantage of the wealth of traditional knowledge available in the country;

71. The Panel:

(b) Urged recipient and donor countries to jointly explore, as a priority activity, **appropriate indicators for monitoring and evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of forest programmes and projects at the national and local levels, supported by international cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer;**

79. The Panel emphasized that **national inventories** are an important basis for effective national forest programmes. Assessment of the actual and potential conditions of all types of forests is central to sustainable forest management and to a wide range of other considerations related to forests and forest ecosystems at the local, national, regional and global levels. Inadequate recognition of the contribution of forests to national economies has in many cases led to deforestation, forest degradation and underinvestment in forest management.

80. The **database on forest types** in both developed and developing countries is uneven. Much attention is still given to timber and forest cover, whereas other goods and services provided by forests, such as fuelwood, the sustainable use and conservation and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits of biological diversity, soil and water protection functions, and carbon sequestration and sinks, as well as other social, cultural and economic aspects, are rarely covered and need to be considered.

81. **Forest assessments** at the national level **should adopt an integrated and holistic multidisciplinary approach**, and should be **user-oriented and demand-driven**. Such assessments should be transparent and accessible to all interested parties. Further study is needed to define the levels of precision required and the specific needs of different users, including forest managers. Assessments should fully utilize the data already collected and analyses already carried out by local, national, regional and international institutions. Efforts should be made to **harmonize approaches to data collection and analysis in order to enhance comparability**.

82. The Panel emphasized that assessment **data already in the public domain, including remote-sensing information, should be disseminated effectively**. The use of existing FAO data, in combination with other data sets, offers a rich potential to address urgent questions in a cost-effective manner. The Panel also recognized that data interpretation in response to user needs is necessary. Consequently, a study of uses and categories of users of forest resources and related information at the international, regional, national and local levels is required. This would be particularly important when discussing new types of information to be included in the global forest resources assessment.

83. **International and national forest assessments should take account of appropriate international, regional, subregional and national-level criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management**. The need to include qualitative as well as quantitative information on forest goods and services was stressed, and should be addressed in future assessments. Site-specific field testing is also needed in order to ensure the adaptation of reliable parameters in forest assessments. Emphasis should be placed on the provision of reliable and high-quality data.

84. The Panel further noted that **capacity-building** at the national and local levels is important in many countries, and should involve all interested parties, including forest owners, local communities, indigenous people and other major groups. **Forest assessments should be multidisciplinary, and should involve data collection and analysis by local, national and possibly regional as well as international institutions**. Enhanced national capacity is considered

essential for **high-quality** national inputs to the global forest resources assessment for the year 2000 being organized by FAO.

85. The Panel expressed strong support for the **global assessment** and for the arrangements being made following the recommendations of the FAO Expert Consultation on Global Forest Assessment held in Finland in June 1996, and **urged FAO**, in consultation with countries and interested organizations, **to prepare a strategic plan for assessing global forest resources and a detailed plan for the implementation of the global assessment for the year 2000**, including detailed cost and funding options and target dates. The Panel noted the importance of eco-floristic zone and vegetation maps as tools for the assessment process, together with appropriate **qualitative parameters and criteria and indicators** defined through the Helsinki and Montreal processes, the Dry Zone of Africa initiative, the Tarapoto Proposal and the ITTO guidelines.

86. The Panel took note of the recommendation of the Expert Consultation to maintain the current **10-year interval between global forest resources assessments**. However, the possibility of rolling assessments by region could also be considered, together with the possibility of updating of data at regular intervals, taking into account the financial and resource implications for FAO, as well as for developing and developed countries, in meeting such requirements. The global assessment for the year 2000 should be a partnership exercise facilitated by FAO but also involving United Nations organizations, national institutions and other interested parties, including relevant major groups. Cooperation at the national level should involve all interested parties, both within and outside the forest sector.

87. While recognizing the value of remote-sensing **techniques** and geographical information systems **for forest assessments**, the Panel noted the need for ground validation of some parameters. Assessments impose a significant financial and technical burden on developing countries, and should therefore be carried out in the most cost-effective manner and should be assisted by developed countries and international organizations. **Coordination** is needed between forest information systems and other relevant systems, and required both **North-South and South-South cooperation**.

88. Resources available for the global assessment for the year 2000 in FAO's regular budget and at the national level are limited. The Panel stressed the urgency of identifying existing or **additional financial resources that would ensure an effective assessment**. Consideration should be given to establishing methods by which users would provide resources for data collection, and to more effective utilization of existing resources and capabilities of organizations and institutions, both in the public and private sectors, to assist FAO in executing the assessment.

89. The Panel:

- (a) Encouraged countries to integrate **national-level criteria and indicators** for sustainable forest management **in national forest assessments**, including qualitative indicators, where appropriate;
- (b) Encouraged all countries, where appropriate and on a step-by-step basis, to **improve national forest resources assessment, forest statistics and the capacity to analyse** and make proper use of forest resources information, and encouraged donor countries and international organizations to support those initiatives;

- (c) Urged countries, universities and relevant organizations and major groups to **strengthen research** on forest inventory and monitoring **techniques** with a view to expanding the scope and improving the quality of forest assessments;
- (d) Requested FAO, in consultation with Governments and relevant organizations, including UNEP, to prepare and distribute a detailed plan for the implementation of the global forest resources assessment for the year 2000. The plan should provide for the inclusion of a broad range of forest values, including non-timber values, and should include detailed cost and funding options associated with potential new parameters, actions, targets and responsibilities for carrying out the assessment consistent with the recommendations of the Expert Consultation and with due regard to the requirements arising from internationally or regionally agreed criteria and relevant indicators for sustainable forest management;
- (e) Requested FAO to implement the **global forest resources assessment 2000**, in collaboration with international organizations, countries and other organizations with competence in assessments, and to share the results of the assessment effectively with the international community;
- (f) Requested FAO, in consultation with countries and relevant international organizations and in an open and transparent manner, to formulate an **internationally acceptable set of definitions of key terms** used in the assessment of all types of forests and their resources, and to promote their adoption;
- (g) Urged FAO, in partnership with other international organizations, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Forest Statistics, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, to address the need for better coordination and **avoidance of overlap between forest and other related information systems**, and for clearer prioritization in data collection;

93. The Panel recognized the importance of developing and identifying **research priorities** at all levels: national, with the involvement of local communities and other interested parties; regional; and international. The Panel noted that research priorities relevant to further understanding and implementation of chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the Forest Principles that are in need of comprehensive intergovernmental examination include the development of **criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management**, including their testing at the field level in pilot studies; integrated site-specific socio-economic and biophysical studies to explore the relationship between human development and forests; **periodic forest assessment; valuation of forests and forest resources**; the use of forest valuation in national resource accounts; community participation, including the adoption of participatory appraisal and other **participatory techniques** to determine research and technology development agendas; **TFRK**; forest conservation, including human impact on protected forest areas; consideration of the long-term impacts of pervasive external stresses, such as climate change, ozone depletion and air pollution, on forest health, productivity and biodiversity; examination of **trends in the supply of and demand for forest products; forest policy at the national, regional and global levels; and environmentally sound technologies** for forest-based industries, including cost-effective processing techniques.

94. The Panel:

- (d) Encouraged countries and regional and international research organizations to **extend on-site research** and to enhance its prioritization and the application of its results, with the

involvement of all interested parties, in the planning, implementation, **monitoring and evaluation of research** so as to enhance its relevance and impact.

106. The Panel recognized that **criteria and indicators provide a conceptual framework** for policy formulation and **evaluation**, and should be considered as useful tools for assessing trends in **forest conditions**, for reporting on the state of forests and for achieving sustainable forest management. Criteria define the essential elements of sustainable forest management, while indicators provide a basis for assessing actual forest conditions. When combined with specific national goals, criteria and indicators also provide a basis for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management. Criteria and indicators can therefore play an important role in defining the goals of national forest programmes and policies, and evaluating the effectiveness with which they are implemented. Because they reflect components of sustainable forest management, they collectively contribute to its development as a concept.

108. While recognizing that national-level criteria and indicators may play an important role in clarifying issues related to forest certification and the labelling of forest products, the Panel emphasized that the **development of criteria and indicators is primarily intended for promoting and monitoring sustainable forest management**, and not for imposing certification or labelling schemes for forest products. Criteria and indicators are not performance standards for certifying management at any level, and should not be made a basis for restriction of trade. The Panel also emphasized that criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management should not be used as grounds for conditionality in the provision of ODA.

109. The Panel stressed the need for further efforts to **reach a common international understanding of key concepts, definitions and terms used in formulating and developing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, and methodologies for data collection**. Those **terminologies and approaches must be compatible** with terminologies used in other related fields, such as inventory, assessment and valuation, environmental assessment, national forest programmes, land-use plans and trade-related forest issues.

111. The Panel noted that a number of countries are participating actively in international and regional initiatives for defining and implementing national-level criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. That cooperation has enabled countries to benefit from the experience of others and at the same time bring new dimensions and ideas into international processes. While recognizing that the countries currently involved are at different stages in the process, the Panel stressed the need for further progress towards **consensus on concepts, terms and definitions**. The Panel also urged continuing efforts to involve countries and regions that are not yet participating in such initiatives.

112. The Panel placed particular emphasis on the need to involve regions and subregions with distinctive ecological and geographical characteristics, and countries with low forest cover. It also agreed that the development of appropriate criteria and indicators for application at the regional levels, in particular for forests in similar ecological zones, should be considered. The Panel also emphasized the need for efforts to enhance comparability and **compatibility between various international and regional processes on the development and implementation of criteria and indicators**, and stressed the importance of mutual recognition among sets of criteria and indicators as tools for assessing trends in forest management and conditions at the national level; and on

transparent methods for the measurement of **indicators and for the collection, assembly, storage and dissemination of data.**

113. The Panel recognized that there needed to be **consistency in the methodology employed in global forest assessments.** It supported the promotion of ways and means to maximize the exchange of information, experience and technical knowledge at the global level, in particular the promotion of best forest practices for sustainable forest management.

115. The Panel:

(d) Urged countries and international organizations, in particular FAO, UNEP and other participants in international and regional initiatives, to undertake efforts to achieve a **common international understanding on concepts, essential terms and definitions** used in formulating and developing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (and to promote their adoption); on indicators for forests in similar ecological zones; on mutual recognition among sets of criteria and indicators as tools for assessing trends in forest management and conditions at the national level; and on transparent methods for the measurement of indicators and the collection, assembly, storage and dissemination of data;

(e) Recommended that FAO and participants in regional and international initiatives draw on commonalities between criteria and indicators developed in such initiatives, as well as on the Forest Principles, and recommended that **criteria and indicators be used** by FAO and other relevant organizations in order **to improve consistency in reporting on forest assessment and sustainable forest management;**

138. The Panel noted the need for **enhanced international efforts in a number of interlinked forest-related areas**, including effective governance of international institutions, organizations and instruments dealing with forest issues; **improved mechanisms for focusing, coordinating and monitoring** the activities undertaken by agencies and to implement instruments on international forest-related issues; **improved participation** of major groups in forest-related forums and processes to promote sustainable forest management; **strategic data collection and analysis;** projects to strengthen capacity-building, technology transfer and exchange, and human resource development, in particular at the national and field levels; improved coordination between international and bilateral funding agencies; and more focused and effective funding for and coordination of research and development in priority areas concerned with sustainable forest management.

IFF

3. The Forum considered **national forest programmes**, as defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), to be a **viable framework** for addressing forest sector issues, including **implementation of the IPF proposals for action in a holistic, comprehensive and multisectoral manner.** It took note of the **national** case studies prepared under the Six-country Initiative of Finland, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Uganda and the United Kingdom, as well as of the Baden-Baden workshop and its results. This initiative was considered an important contribution to the assessment of the IPF proposals for action at the national level, and for supporting implementation work at national and subnational levels. The Initiative had recognized the diversity of national conditions and

interested parties in assessing the relevance and prioritization of the proposals at the national level, and had also produced a useful Practitioners Guide, which should be revised to facilitate assessment exercises. In order to enhance the implementation of the proposals for action adopted by IPF, the Forum identified the need for effective follow-up and long-term commitment at all levels.

7. The Forum took note of the continuing **monitoring of the effects of airborne pollutants** on forests within member countries of the International Cooperative Programme on Forests (ICP Forests), as well as the establishment of new protocols dealing with nitrogen, heavy metals and persistent pollutants under the Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution,¹ as well as the beginning of **regional cooperation** on a monitoring network on acid rain among countries in Eastern Asia. It noted with appreciation the offer by some countries to extend their cooperation to interested countries not presently participating in international networks.

9. The Forum agreed that the following are particularly important for the implementation of IPF proposals for action:

(d) A **systematic assessment**, by all countries, of the **IPF proposals for action** and planning for their implementation in the context of countries' own national processes aimed at sustainable forest management;

(f) Establishment, by each country, of a **focal point to guide and coordinate the implementation and assessment process of the IPF proposals for action**, including the participation of all relevant interested parties;

10. IFF recognized that there are **various aspects to data collection, monitoring, assessment and reporting**. One aspect relates to **assessing progress in implementation of the IPF proposals for action in terms of existing and, if appropriate, new legislation, policies, programmes and processes**. Another aspect relates to **assessing trends in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests** as well as the **state of forests**, and to make the best use of **criteria and indicators** for sustainable forest management. IFF also recognized that the national implementation of criteria and indicators and assessing progress is affected by **enabling conditions and mechanisms, including financial and technical resources**. The **primary value and benefits of reviewing, monitoring and reporting is at the national level**. Efforts should be made to make **national data timely, accurate and internationally comparable, as well as transparent and accessible to all interested parties**.

11. The collection, assessment, monitoring, organization, reporting and dissemination of data can involve **substantial costs and institutional capacity**. Therefore, efforts should be made to **avoid duplication** by utilizing, where appropriate, **existing reporting systems** of international organizations and instruments, and by **harmonizing**, where appropriate, **existing monitoring and reporting systems**.

¹ See *1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and its Protocols* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.II.E.24).

12. There is a need to **build and strengthen institutional, technical and human capacity** at the national level to enable periodic monitoring of the state of forests in order to measure and report on policy effectiveness and progress towards sustainable forest management as well as to identify priority areas of action. **Monitoring, assessment and reporting activities** should be **integrated into national forest programmes**. Approaches to strengthening national capacities should be practical and cost-effective.

13. Cooperation, coordination and partnership among countries and between countries and organizations would assist **capacity-building**. In this regard, greater priority should be given by all countries to financial and technical assistance programmes and the transfer of technology to help developing countries to strengthen their capacity for **reviewing, monitoring and reporting**.

14. There is also a need to develop a better common understanding of **key concepts, definitions and terms** at both the national and international levels, as well as **greater comparability of data** that permits aggregation at the regional and global levels. This would assist countries in meeting the various demands for reviewing, monitoring and reporting on forests by international instruments, multilateral organizations and various regional and international criteria and indicator processes.

15. **Criteria and indicators** for sustainable forest management are **important tools** for reviewing, monitoring and reporting on the state of and trends in all types of forests and for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management. Incorporating the results of criteria and indicators, for instance, in voluntary national reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as to the FAO global forest resources assessment, national forest programmes reporting, and the *State of the World's Forests* reporting, would provide useful bases to assess progress towards management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

17. IPF encouraged countries to:

(a) **Prepare national information** on the management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests as the **basis for any consolidated information on forests at the international level**. **Adequate financial resources**, both domestic and international, should be available for capacity-building and implementation of national reporting initiatives;

(b) **Make forest-related information** for reviewing, monitoring and reporting progress in implementation of sustainable forest management **widely available and accessible** to policy makers and to interested groups, noting the important role that subnational levels of government and interested groups play in contributing to assessment and information gathering;

(c) **Report on the implementation of IPF proposals for action** in the context of reporting on forests to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session, taking into account, where appropriate, the process used to assess the relevance of the proposals and priorities for action, the organizations and interested parties involved, and noting progress made and the areas where new actions could be undertaken;

(d) Further **develop and implement, with the support of international organizations**, as appropriate, **criteria and indicators** for sustainable forest management, and use them as a basis for reviewing, monitoring and reporting national trends in the state of forests, as well as progress on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

(e) Encourage the **donor community to assist** developing countries in preparing national information and reports on forests, recognizing that information collection and **reporting are costly activities**.

18. IFF encouraged **ITFF member organizations and other relevant international and regional organizations to consult with countries regarding collection and synthesis of national information** in order to facilitate accurate reporting with a view to having countries verify the information synthesized, and give effective feedback on the overall results of data collection and reporting and make such information widely available and accessible to policy makers and to interested groups.

19. IFF encouraged countries, ITFF member organizations and other relevant international and regional organizations to:

(a) Develop **harmonized, cost-effective, comprehensive reporting formats** for collecting and synthesizing national forest information to meet the diverse demands for reliable and timely data by various forest-related international organizations and instruments. There is a need to incorporate information on relevant criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, including indicators on environmental, social and economic functions, such as non-wood products, forest resources and services, and the competitiveness of forest products at the domestic and international levels, **into such reporting formats in order to reduce reporting burdens on countries and increase the timeliness and consistency of reporting**;

(b) **Improve the effectiveness** of coordination and partnership within countries and with international organizations and instruments as a means of building the capacity in developing countries for periodic and timely collection, review, synthesis and utilization of information related to sustainable forest management.

30. IFF recalled the IPF proposals for action relevant to this programme element (in particular, E/CN.17/1997/12, paras. 67-71) and called upon countries and relevant international organizations to:

(d) Undertake **activities for systematic collection and analysis of financial flows data in the forest sector** in order to enable informed and rational policy decisions based on reliable information;

68. The **involvement of indigenous people and local communities** (including indigenous people and other forest-dependent people practising traditional lifestyles, forest owners and local communities, many of whom possess important traditional forest-related knowledge; see General Assembly resolution A/S-19/2, annex, para. 37) and the understanding and use of their traditional knowledge, as well as recognition of their rights to the natural resources in their traditional areas within national laws and jurisdiction, **can**

support the formulation, design, implementation and monitoring of policies towards sustainable forest management. The sharing and application of this knowledge can help interested parties to avoid procedures that impact unfavourably on ecosystems and local social systems. Traditional knowledge can complement new technologies, and might be adapted and used more widely. In this context, IFF recalled relevant IPF proposals for action (in particular, E/CN.17/1997/12, para. 40 (r)).

80. There are several existing categories of protected areas. The one developed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas is being used by many countries, United Nations institutions and major groups. IUCN is currently working with other organizations and countries to interpret the categories for use in national and international statistics. The categories need to be more flexible in order to encompass the wide range of forest protection regimes existing in various countries. There is also a need to develop common understanding on the **key concepts, definitions and terminology concerning management regimes consistent with forest conservation** inside and outside protected areas. In establishing and managing protected forest areas and identifying them with appropriate categories, consideration should be given to their value as representative of unique forest types, their potential to generate information on ecological processes, conservation of biodiversity and environmental services, and their impact on the indigenous and local communities and others depending on them for sustenance.

85. The Forum encouraged countries to:

(g) Contribute to a **global and regional assessment** of the current status of **protected forest areas**, including total number, extent of each area, objectives of establishment, effectiveness of management, IUCN-system equivalent category, and basic biological and social information available. This can assist in the establishment of bio-geographically balanced networks of protected forest areas.

121. The Forum encourages **countries and international organizations to improve data collection and information dissemination** through:

(b) Giving adequate attention to collection and reporting on the use of a broad range of **non-wood products**, including quantities gathered and consumed, ownership rights and their importance to rural and indigenous communities;

(c) The systematic collection and reporting of information on the source and use of **wood fuels**; and

(e) **Monitor and assess progress at the national, regional and global levels** through reporting by **Governments**, as well as by **regional and international organizations, institutions and instruments**, and on this basis consider future actions needed;

ANNEX 3

IPF/IFF Proposals for Action relevant to the three "Areas" identified by UNFF

Area 1: Progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

- Systematic Analysis. IFF 9(d) and (f); IFF 10; IFF 17(c).
- Provision and effectiveness of ODA. IPF 17(c); IPF 71; IPF 88; IFF 10.
- Environmental Impact Assessment. IFF 29(b)
- Capacity building, Cooperation and Coordination. IPF 58(vi); IPF 84; IPF 86; IPF 87; IFF 7; IFF 12; IFF 17(e); IFF 19(b).
- Trends in Supply and Demand. IPF 93
- Trends in financial flows to forest sector. IFF 30(d)
- Review of Effectiveness
- CPF role (also see IPF/IFF proposals for action and reference to ITFF)

Area 2: Progress towards sustainable management of all types of forests

- nfps and forest policy. IPF 8; IPF 17a; IPF 93; IFF 12; IFF 3; IFF 12
- Participatory decision-making, including communities and indigenous people. IPF 17(f); IFF 68;
- Forest Assessment: national, regional, global. IPF 81; IPF 85; IPF 89(d); IPF 89(e); IPF 138; IFF 85; IFF 121 (b) and (c); IFF 85(e).
 - Consider C&I. IPF 17(d); IPF 85; IPF 89(a); IPF 93; IPF 106; IPF 108; IPF 112; IFF 14; IFF 17(d).
 - Techniques, including TFRK. IPF 87; IPF 89(c); IFF 93; IFF 18.
 - Research. IPF 89 (c) ; IPF 94(d).
- Airborne Pollution. IPF 48; IFF 7
- Capacity Building. IFF 12; IFF 19(b) (Please also see capacity building under Implementation of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action.)
- Reporting. IFF 17(a) and (b); IFF 18. (Please also see "Dissemination of Data" above under Forest Assessment: national regional and global.)
- Protected Areas. IFF 80

Area 3: Review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests

The assessment of this Area will be based on: the integration of the synthesis of Area 1 (Section 2.1) and Area 2 (Section 2.2) above; the advice from the proposed working group of experts to be established by UNFF2 relevant country-led initiatives; as well as the guidance received from the UNFF. Also see Annex 1, para 4.