

## Thematic priorities for eighteenth and nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

### Background

In accordance with ECOSOC resolution 2020/14, the quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) for the period 2021–2024 includes two thematically linked biennium: 2021–2022 (UNFF16 and UNFF17) and 2023–2024 (UNFF18 and UNFF19). According to this resolution, the thematic priorities should be based on the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and targets, taking into account the programme of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and other relevant international forest-related developments. The resolution requires that the Bureau of the UNFF to decide on the thematic priorities for each biennium in consultation with Members of the UNFF.

### High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and Other Relevant International Forest-related Developments

ECOSOC resolution 2020/14 requires that the thematic priorities to be decided taking into account the programme of work of the HLPF and relevant international forest-related developments. Regarding the programme of work of the HLPF, the theme and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be reviewed in-depth by the HLPF in 2022 and 2023 are as follow:

- Theme of the 2022 HLPF: Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- SDGs to be reviewed in depth at the 2022 HLPF<sup>1</sup>: SDG 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17
- Theme of the 2023 HLPF: Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels
- SDGs to be reviewed in depth at the 2023 HLPF<sup>2</sup>: SDG 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17

The UN General Assembly will decide at its seventy-seventh session on the theme of the 2024 HLPF and the set of the SDGs to be reviewed in depth in 2024<sup>3</sup>.

Other relevant international forest-related developments to be taken into account for the period 2023-2024 include:

- UN Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030
- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030
- Twenty sixth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry, October 2022
- Themes of the 2023 and 2024 International Day of Forests: Forests and health (2023)<sup>4</sup>
- Twenty seventh and twenty-eight of the Conference of Parties (COP27 7 COP28) of UNFCCC, including the global stocktake of the Paris Agreement in 2023
- Fifteenth session of the Conference of Parties (COP15) of CBD<sup>5</sup>, including the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

### Thematic Priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19

UNFF18 (8 to 12 May 2023, UNHQ, New York) will be a technical session, and thematically linked to the UNFF19 (policy session) in 2024. As a technical session and in accordance with the guidance provided in ECOSOC resolution 2020/14 and 2021/6, UNFF18 should include an interactive exchange of experiences and lessons learned on thematic priorities among Members of the UNFF, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and its member organizations, regional and subregional organizations and processes, and major groups and other relevant stakeholders. The interactive exchange should include consideration of the science-policy interface and

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution A/RES/75/290B

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The Theme of the 2024 International Day of Forests has yet to be proposed by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

<sup>5</sup> COP15 of CBD has been postponed and is scheduled to be held in the third quarter of 2022 in Kunming, China.

cross-sectoral and emerging issues and will take into account youth, gender and regions perspectives. The main outcome of UNFF18 will be a chair's summary of the discussions, including possible proposals for consideration at UNFF19.

Against this background, the previous Bureau decided that GFG1 and GFG2, along with cross-cutting GFGs, namely GFG4, 5 and 6 to be the thematic priority for UNFF16 and UNFF17. Concurrently, there is growing recognition of the need to halt deforestation and tap into the potential of forests to address many of the socio-economic challenges in light of the increased level of inequality and poverty around the world, and issues related to food and energy insecurity, as well as increased prices of foods and goods.

In this respect, for the biennium 2023-2024 (UNFF18-UNFF19), GFG2 (Enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits) and GFG3 (increase area of protected forests and proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests) along with the three cross-cutting GFGs (GFG4, GFG5 and GFG6), and their interlinkages with the SDGs under consideration of 2023 and 2024 sessions of the HLPF, and international forest-related developments are proposed to be the basis for deciding on the thematic priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19. These interlinkages are reflected in the table below<sup>6</sup>.

In light of the above, it is recommended that the Bureau of UNFF18 decide that the thematic priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19 to be as follows: (i) Enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits; (ii) 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; and (iii) mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence, for sustainable forest management.

Thematic priorities for UNFF18 and UNFF19	GFGs	Linkages/contributions to the proposed SDGs to be reviewed in-depth at 2022 and 2023 HLPF	Linkages/contributions to other SDGs	Other int. forest-related developments
(i) Enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits	GFG2	SDG4, SDG5, SDG6, SDG9, SDG15	SDG1, SDG2, SDG8, SDG12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030</li> <li>- UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030</li> <li>- Themes of the International Day of Forests 2023 and 2024</li> <li>- COP27 and COP28 of UNFCCC</li> <li>- COP15 of CBD</li> </ul>
(ii) 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	GFG3	SDG7, SDG14, SDG15, SDG17	SDG12	
(iii) mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation; promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation; and enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence for sustainable forest management	GFG4, GFG5, GFG6	SDG15, SDG17	SDG1, SDG2, SDG5, SDG10, SDG12, SDG16	

<sup>6</sup> The GFGs' linkages and contributions to the SDGs are identified based on the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030.

**Next Steps**

Upon confirmation, the UNFF Secretariat will inform Members of the Forum and stakeholders of the decision of the UNFF18-19 Bureau on the thematic priorities of UNFF18 and UNFF19.