

The eleventh session of the UNFF (UNFF11) will be held from 4 to 15 May 2015 in New York. In accordance with *Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward on the international arrangement on forests (IAF)*, with the following sub themes:

1. Reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of all future options
2. Reviewing the progress towards the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types

Introduction:

Since its establishment in 1947, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has become the largest regional international organization in the Pacific. As a result of the restructuring of created with strong comparative advantages in many of the technical and scientific areas that are critical to the Pacific region. SPC now has seven divisions with a total staff complement of more than 600 based at its Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, its regional offices in Suva, Fiji, and Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, and in the Solomon Islands Country Office in Honiara.

SPC has strengthened further its commitment and vision for the region, that is *a secure and prosperous Pacific Community whose people are educated and healthy and manage their resources in an economically*. It has also created new opportunities to develop integrated solutions to cross-cutting regional challenges, such as climate change, food and water security, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, that impact on Pacific Island communities and governments. SPC works across more than 20 different sectors and seeks to leverage added impact through the depth of work made possible by a regional, multi-sector approach.

Its membership includes the 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and its four founding members, namely; Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States. The PICTS include: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna. The Pacific Community covers no less than one third of the global area.

The Land Resources Division (LRD), one of the seven technical divisions of SPC, is currently undergoing some re-structuring to further enhance its effectiveness in better responding to the needs of, and strengthen its focus on delivering improved services to, the member countries. The Division has moved away from its flat structure, focusing on seven thematic teams, to four main programmes, namely: Strategic Planning and Policy, Food and Nutritional Security, Sustainable Resource Management, and Trade and Agribusiness. Each of the programmes plan for 2013-2017. This programmatic approach will better facilitate a more effective integration in the way the Division will be delivering its services relating to land, agriculture and forestry.

The Strategic Plan of LRD for 2013-2017 has two medium term outcomes under its newly formed Sustainable Resource Management Programme, namely: 1. Increased capacity for sustainable land (SLM) and sustainable forest management (SFM), and: 2. National and regional capacity to mitigate and adapt climate change and to respond to disasters for land, agriculture and forest resources developed and strengthened. The main focus is on the continuing building and enhancing of capacities of SPC member countries to be able to manage its land, agriculture and forestry resources in a sustainable manner.

The governance structure for LRD continues to include bi-annual meetings of agriculture and yearly Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry meeting provides the political endorsement to the LRD work programmes and focus.

Section I: Progress towards the implementation of the forest instrument and the achievement of the GOFs as well as the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs

A. Progress towards implementation of the Forest Instrument

1. Briefly describe actions (e.g. regulatory, financial/economic and informational/educational) taken by your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process to foster political commitment for sustainable forest management (SFM).

Support member countries in building and enhancing their capacities towards the sustainable management of their forests. Actions are taken at the regional, sub-regional, national and community levels, and include those supporting policies, legislations and plans, codes of practice, establishment of community-based forestry, and education and awareness programmes

Organize Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry and officials meetings where regional cooperation is discussed and agreed. Provide support to regional sub-grouping such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group, members of which are the main countries which deal with trade in timber and timber products.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

Main challenge is the overreliance on log exports by some of the countries which is causing unsustainable harvesting of their forests.

4. Briefly describe actions taken to enhance regional cooperation to address illicit international trafficking in forest products through the promotion of forest law enforcement and good governance.

Presently working with one country to strengthen capacity to trade in legally sourced sandalwood. This will be a model for other Pacific island countries which are trading in sandalwood. The ultimate aim is to establish a regional framework under which the countries involved will be able to work together to ensure that sandalwood from the Pacific is certified as being legally sourced.

Please describe the main challenges encountered and/or lessons learned.

Introducing a 'chain of custody' system is new to most countries in the Pacific. It will require a lot of education, training and awareness for the system to work. It will also need to be simple, practical and cost effective. But without this, black markets will continue to thrive which would totally destroy the sector in the future.

5. List and briefly describe activities aimed at mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources for SFM.

Currently implementing three regional REDD+ projects which are providing new sources of funding to support countries towards SFM. Grant financing from REDD+ projects has enabled project countries to implement programmes that they have not been able to implement up to now for lack of resources e.g. forest inventory, revised policies and legislations, training of staff, etc.

C. Contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs

1.

3. What measures has your organization undertaken to strengthen the current IAF?
Please list the most important measures (maximum five):

Try to actively participate in the IAF discussions and to promote and support implementation of decisions by member countries.

4. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened regional/sub-regional component in a future IAF?

Has not established a position on this.

5. Has your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process worked jointly with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)² and/or major stakeholders to support the work of UNFF? If yes, please evaluate the overall collaboration.

Very good. Given the many issues and challenges faced in the use and management of land, agriculture and forests in the Pacific, it is important that we work in partnerships with other agencies, projects and programmes if we are to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes for our Pacific communities on the ground.

6. How would your respective regional, sub-regional organization/process envisage a strengthened collaboration with CPF member organizations and/or major stakeholders in a revised IAF?

Maintain level of collaboration currently enjoyed with a number of agencies.

Continue working on building new partnerships with other agencies, programmes and projects.

² CPF member organizations: Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFF), Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), The World Bank, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)