

Brussels, 15 September 2016

**Submission by the European Union and its Member States
on
initial proposals of the Co-Chairs of the United Nations Forum on Forests Ad Hoc
Expert Group established pursuant to paragraph 48 of the Economic and Social Council
resolution 2015/33**

This submission by the European Union (EU) and its Member States is a response to the invitation by the Co-Chairs of the United Nations Forum on Forests Ad Hoc Expert Group established pursuant to paragraph 48 of the Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 (UNFF AHEG) to provide views/comments on their initial proposals on (i) Building Blocks / Options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, and (ii) Quadrennial Programme of Work 2017-2020.

The EU and its Member States find both proposals from the Co-chairs as a good basis for further work towards the twelfth Session of the UNFF that will be held in New York in May 2017.

equality. We appreciate that a reference to the importance of forests and the role of SFM in climate change mitigation and adaptation is included. Nevertheless, in addition to this, the role of forests and other wooded lands in

2.2 IAF vision and mission statements – options

The EU and its Member States reiterate their earlier position that SP shall have both a vision and mission statement. Options proposed by the Co-chairs provide good basis for further discussions.

The mission statement should adequately describe the distinctive role and added value of the IAF (enhance cooperation, coordination, political commitment). On the other hand, it should be kept concise.

2.3 Strategic approach/global goals/objectives/targets – options

Clarity on how goals are related to targets and targets are related to actions is needed. The several proposed options in the Co-chairs text are not consistent. Some goals look more

regional partners and processes in the implementation of SP, as they play an important role in the IAF.

A key role of Major Groups in implementing SP should be particularly stressed. More clarity on the proposal to establish a multi-stakeholder advisory group would be needed.

Means and resources for implementation should be addressed in general terms in SP (e.g. introducing main financing instruments). The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development (AAAA) which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, need to be taken into account and agreed language on ODA interpreted in this new context.

Private sector involvement in mobilisation of resources for implementation should be encouraged, as well as domestic resource mobilisation. They both are central in the AAAA and should be clearly visible. Creating enabling environment for better use of ODA and private sector financing is needed too. It is in the quadrennial programmes of work we can allocate the resources and see the real needs for implementation. Relation to the proposal for voluntary commitments by countries, stakeholders and organisations need to be addressed as well here.

Overall priorities for GFFFN should be listed in the SP while specific priorities for 2017-2020 should go to quadrennial programme of work. The EU does not support assistance in project development through the GFFFN. The review of the GFFFN should focus on the functioning of this instrument, not only on sufficiency of resources.

Concerning GEF, the text should be revisited in terms of consistency with general principles and exiting strategies of GEF and desirable options to enhance cooperation between GEF and GFFFN. Inter alia, we see no reason to establish any new focal area on forests. The current cross-cutting forest programme is functioning and can be developed, if necessary.

There is no need to have the section on a global forest fund since it is only a repetition from UNFF11 resolution.

2.5 Review framework

We note that the current co-chairs text does not include elements of assessments. As it is stated above, the alternating UNFF sessions can also play a fund oreamework

Quadrennial Programme of Work 2017-2020

The text submitted by the Co-chairs elaborates that quadrennial programmes of work should identify priority actions and associated resources needs and responsible parties for specific period time, based on the guidance of the SP. Nevertheless, it is stated further in the text that priority actions and resource needs can be better considered once “the strategic approach/global goals and targets” and “actions” of the SP are agreed.

Considering the above, the EU and its Member States are of the view that the Quadrennial Programme of Work 2017-2020 needs to be developed concurrently with the SP to ensure its relevance and consistency. Namely, consistent with our earlier comments, some deliverables of the SP suggested by the Co-chairs could be more relevant for 4PoW. Also, the concept of Voluntary Planned Contributions (VPCs) proposed in the SP should be linked with the cycles of 4POWs. The question needs to be clarified how these contributions and other actions can be monitored against global goals/objectives/targets/deliverables/indicators.

We believe that within 4POW the focus should also be on actions that are headed to a stronger involvement of all potential IAF actors. Therefore, we are not aiming only on restructuring the UNFF sessions and outputs but we should strive for a strengthened IAF as a result of an active participation and engagement of all potential relevant actors, meaning that we should also maximize involvement.