

## **XIV World Forestry Congress**

### **“Business meeting”: Further strengthening international collaboration on criteria and indicators, monitoring, assessment and reporting**

**Date:** Friday 11th September 2015

**Time:** 10:45-12:30

**Venue:** Room 4D

**Chair and Moderator:** Eva Müller, supported by Ewald Rametsteiner

#### **Participants:**

- UNFF: Tomasz Juszcak, Forest Affairs Officer
- CBD: Robert Höft, Environmental Affairs Officer, Scientific Assessment
- UNCCD: Sergio Zelaya, Special Advisor on Global Issues
- FOREST EUROPE: Elena Estrada, Myriam Martin, FE Liaison Unit Madrid
- ITTO: Takeshi Goto, Assistant Director, Adje Ahimin Olivier, Sous-Director des Etudes et Recherche-Ecologie
- Montreal Process: Aaron Cavieres, MP Working Group Chair, Executive Director CONAF (Chile), Andres Meza, CONAF Protected Areas Director
- CIFOR: Robert Nasi, Deputy Director General-Research
- FAO: Eva Müller, Director, Forest Economics, Policy and Products Division; Ewald Rametsteiner, Head of the Forest Governance Unit, Forestry Department
- Observer: Matthias Schwörer, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany

#### **- Welcome remarks by the chair, Ms. Eva Müller, FAO**

Eva Müller, Director of the Forest Economic, Policy and Products Division of FAO's Forestry Department welcomed the attendees to the meeting “Further strengthening international collaboration on criteria and indicators, monitoring, assessment and reporting”.

The objectives of the informal meeting were

- to discuss and clarify perspectives on a possible way forward to further develop indicators to measure and report on sustainable forest management, provide the forest component to multi-sector C&I sets such as the SDGs or sustainable land management; and
- to further streamline related data collection, , monitoring and reporting, including reporting to key global forest-related goals, objectives and targets, particularly those related to the SDGs and the “Global Objectives on Forests” of the UN Forest Instrument.

The expected outcome of the meeting was a summary of the specific needs for further action and possible next steps on the two items addressed by the objectives above.

#### **- Presentation of Mr. Ewald Rametsteiner, FAO**

Rametsteiner introduced the context for the meeting, which is a project funded by the Government of Germany on strengthening C&I for sustainable forest management and their use in policy and practice. In the context of this project a vision and roadmap was elaborated after broad consultation aiming to mobilize the full potential of C&I to promote sustainable forest management (SFM) in policy

and practice (see annex). The roadmap proposes ten action points, three of which are directed at international and regional bodies.

In addition, an initial draft set of 15 global forest indicators was developed that can potentially be used to report on key global forest-related policy goals, objectives and targets with a limited set of indicators, yet provide information on some 11 of 17 SDG indicators. One of the indicators is focused on SDG 15.2, “forest area under sustainable forest management”. This initial proposal was presented at a side event at UNFF11 in May 2015 (see introduction PPT in the annex).

Mr. Rametsteiner presented the three proposed action points of the roadmap which are directed at international and regional bodies:

Proposed action 1: further develop **sets of indicators** to measure and report on **sustainable forest management**, to demonstrate the contribution of forests and forestry to **sustainable development** and to other sectors, aiming at sets that are simple, clear and easily understood by policy-makers, stakeholders and wider society;

The proposal is to further collaborate on developing the SFM indicator as specified in SDG15.2, i.e. on the specifics and details of an “SFM index”, based on the proposal discussed in the context of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG).

With regard to indicators in the context of SDGs and other key global forest-related policy goals, objectives and targets, it is suggested to aim at covering most key areas where forests contribute with indicators. The proposal is to use the initial draft set of 15 global forest indicators presented at UNFF11 to further explore usefulness and feasibility of further work on these, focusing on a few less well developed indicators of common interest to several bodies, avoiding duplication of work.

Overall, Rametsteiner suggested that further work on these indicators be based on and aligned with results of the IAEG and the UN Statistics Commission.

Proposed action 2: further **streamline C&I-related data collection, monitoring and reporting**, building on existing mechanisms and institutional arrangements; and

Mr. Rametsteiner underlined that good global & regional mechanisms, arrangements and experiences on this exist, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the C&I processes and joint data collection mechanisms such as the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire, or the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ). Further progress seems feasible, and areas where interest of collaboration exists need to be identified. The question is whether concrete collaboration can be strengthened, with tangible results in view of known upcoming work planning and reporting requirements 2015-2020(?) of different bodies?

Proposed action 3. provide broad **access to experiences and lessons** learned using C&I for SFM and support **research and capacity building** on their development and use by different stakeholders, promoting scaling up of successful applications.

Given that the objective of the meeting was to discuss proposed actions 1 and 2, Mr. Rametsteiner noted that for the bodies present it might be useful and feasible to reach out, mobilizing work and collaboration at different levels. Hence, there might be scope for concrete collaboration beyond monitoring, assessment and reporting at the global (regional) level, which should be explored, too.

## - Discussion

Ms. Eva Müller opened the discussion asking for general comments and questions on FAO's proposal on the way forward. The participants of the meeting took note of FAO's vision and roadmap, including 10 actions directed to bodies of global and regional levels and distinct stakeholders. The discussion focused on the two items on the agenda

- I) Further work on developing global indicators for SFM and SDGs/other sectors
- II) Further work on further streamline related data collection, monitoring and reporting (building on existing mechanisms and institutional arrangements)

General discussion:

With regard to the relationship between this business meeting, the C&I project and the on-going global process concerning the forest-related SDG targets, Rametsteiner clarified that the C&I project can help fund some of the work and discussions needed on SFM/SDG indicators amongst the bodies present and hence provide and a contribution through funding for technical work and expert exchange for a limited time span (likely until July 2016) to a process that has been ongoing in the past, and will go on after termination of the project.

It was noted that one project won't be able to achieve the ambition, and wondered whether there can be a political mandate for the work. This, however, was seen to exist given a global mandate to work on this topic from UNFF11. Several participants emphasized that the success of CFRQ lies in its informality in collaboration on a (non-binding) product of joint interest, which resulted in support of agencies, followed by support of countries. It was suggested that such a model of collaboration be pursued also on the topics in question, starting with taking stock of experiences and lessons. One participant suggested that seeking a broader political mandate might be useful, given the many and diverse reporting burdens by countries.

With regard to the need to clarify the different concepts underlying SFM indicators as used in the UN Forest Instrument and C&I processes, and indicators in the SDG context, it was clarified that the proposed initial set of SDG related indicators contains an SFM indicator, i.e. 15.2, and this is suggested as focus of further work for the time being.

It was noted that reporting on SDGs will be done by countries – more specifically, by national statistical offices. It was suggested that any work on indicators as a result of collaboration amongst key international bodies can/should be seen as voluntary guidance that can be taken up by countries (and bodies) if they so wish.

### **I) Further work on developing global indicators for SFM and SDGs/other sectors**

#### a) SFM indicator (SDG 15.2 "SFM index")

Referring to the SDG 15.2 "SFM index" and its 13 sub-indicators as discussed by the IAEG-SDG, it was noted that this is relevant for application in other contexts, such as Aichi Target 7. However, a vastly larger number of variables for the index (e.g. the full CFRQ) seems not feasible. CBD used a list of thresholds to judge ("yes/no"). Additional information can be brought in through "Thematic Reports". ITTO used a combination of some key variables and experts' assessment for ITTO's SFM Tropics 2011 report in order to identify areas of sustainably managed forests. Such existing approaches and experiences should be used to work towards technical specifications that agencies can informally agree on to use in their respective work.

It was observed that the CFRQ variables suggested for the “SFM index” were primarily those where data availability was high – some more thinking might be necessary to clarify which variables are best suited to assess SFM in an “SFM index”. Participants noted that the CFRQ represents a step forward in collaboration, and further improvement is welcome. Work in this context can contribute to shaping direction and contents of parts of the Forest Resources Assessment 2020.

Some participants cautioned against focusing on only one set of indicators, recognizing the need for a certain level of flexibility to address different user contexts and needs at different levels (national, regional, global). A participant suggested that, while this flexibility is needed at all levels, having a globally agreed set would be highly desirable, providing guidance at different levels, and allowing assessment on a commonly agreed basis.

a) work on other SDG indicators: during the discussion participant’s interventions

emphasized the need to look into consistency of approaches to measuring 15.2, 15.3 (land degradation neutrality) and 2.4 (agricultural practices).

called for stronger people focus in SDG (and SFM) indicators – this would be needed to better understand effects of forest management on people, and generating more and better information on the value of forests to people. Juszczak also emphasized the need to expand information on people, suggesting further development of indicators for the value of forests to society, including contribution to livelihoods/poverty, and value of ecosystem services.

noted that the seven Thematic Elements as reflected in the UN Forest Instrument are a framework that covers the different functions of forests to society in a broad way.

## **II) Further work on further streamline related data collection, monitoring and reporting (building on existing mechanisms and institutional arrangements)**

In terms of further streamlining work, the discussion focused on continuing and building on the momentum created amongst different bodies in the context of the CFRQ, learning from its lessons, and clarifying open issues.

### **4) Summary and way forward**

Summarizing the discussion and the suggestions for the way forward, Rametsteiner noted:

- a sufficiently strong global political mandate for further work on SFM and forest-related indicators for SDGs exists
- there is a strong will to continue collaboration on further developing indicators for SFM and some (not yet specified) SDG indicators
- the C&I project funded by Germany can contribute to this process through providing funds for compiling experiences, options, and expert exchange and discussions until July 2016
- building on experiences of the CFRQ, it is suggested that the approach to follow is informal technical collaboration amongst agencies and bodies concerned, with a view to arrive at results that agencies and bodies are free and willing to use and promote in their respective contexts.
- Work on the 15.2 “SDG index” could start with the development of short background paper on experiences/lessons on SFM indices that exist(ed), focusing on the ones relevant in the context of further developing the SDG 15.2 SFM “index”. This includes e.g. approaches used by FAO FRA2015, ITTO, CBD and a few others. This should include expert interviews with those involved to compile experiences and lessons. Based on this, different relevant approaches to SFM indices for SDG15.2 can be compared, and 2-3 options for a 15.2 “SFM Index” developed and proposed for discussion.

The background paper and proposals could be discussed at a (small, informal) expert meeting around end 2015/early 2016. Options could then be further narrowed and refined, with a view to hold a second “vetting” expert meeting on the 15.2 “SFM index” in spring 2016, as useful.

- With regard to other forest-related SDG indicators, the emphasis of work should fall on consistency between 2.4, 15.2 and 15.3 as well as “people” indicators, using the indicators proposed at UNF11 as initial starting point. A short enquiry amongst key bodies to identify a limited set of priority indicators for further development might be useful.
- Further streamlining data collection, monitoring and reporting can and will be discussed in the context of work above, and will be useful input to the preparation for a future FRA 2020.

Closing the meeting, Ms Eva Müller thanked the participants for their active and constructive contributions, looking forward to continuing the successful collaboration.