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Sustainable Development Goals and Forests

A summary of UNECE
engagement and
perspectives

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About the project

For more information about this report, or the 'Integrating forests into the post-2015 development framework' project, visit www.iied.org/integrating-forests-post-2015-development-framework, or contact:

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Acronyms

COFFI	Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
COFO	Committee of Forestry
EFC	European Forestry Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
OWG	Open Working Group
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
HLPF	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SG	Secretary General of the United Nations
G77	The Group of 77 (member States)
TST	Technical Support Team
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests

Executive Summary

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, member States agreed to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the post-2015 development agenda. The process to develop the post-2015 development agenda is multi-layered. The UN Secretary General released his Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda in December 2014, which included a range of inputs including the work of the UN Open Working Group on SDGs, the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons, Intergovernmental Committee on Sustainable Development Financing, High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and United Nations Regional Commissions. Many regional and national consultations have taken place.

Intergovernmental negotiations started at the 69th session of the General Assembly in September 2014, with adoption of the new post-2015 development framework expected at a high level summit under the auspice of the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

Forests are essential to sustainable development and the post-2015 agenda. They are one of the key topics contained in the Rio+20 outcome, *The Future We Want*, and forests are specifically mentioned under OWG proposed goals 6 and 15, including specific reference to sustainable forest management.

The international forest community, including through the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC), have considered the relevance of forests in SDGs because well-formulated goals and targets will create the conditions for the optimal contribution of forests and trees to a range of sustainable development outcomes in developing and developed countries. UNECE member countries have been active in contributing towards the sessions of the UN Open Working Group on SDGS.

Engagement by COFFI and EFC on forests and SDGs has included during their joint session "Metsä2013" and a two-part workshop in January and June 2014. This work has discussed how best to include forests in SDGs, including strategic aspects (raising the profile of forests, reflecting the multi-functionality of forests, and building on global objectives for forests and existing criteria and indicators) and formulations for a forest goal, related targets and indicators. The results have been presented to OWG in February 2014, UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management session in June 2014, and FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) in June 2014. It has acknowledged the ongoing role played by UNECE/FAO in collecting datasets, reporting on indicators and in contributing to the global discussion on the development of SDGs, forest related targets and indicators.

This paper was produced in preparation for the 72nd session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and Forest Industry in November 2014, specifically to provide a synthesis of information on the goals framework, implementation and accountability from the perspective of forests.

The integration of forests within the SDGs has been influenced by a combination of sources including experience with MDG7 implementation, the Rio+20 outcome document *The Future We Want*, an Issues Brief by the United Nations inter-agency Technical Support Team, debates at several OWG sessions, and various technical submissions. The final OWG proposal for SDGs, released in July 2014, has forests and their multiple functions more clearly recognised within Goals 15 and 6.

Forests, the need for their sustainable management, and various targets, criteria and/or indicators feature in a number of other international commitments and initiatives that need to be taken into account when formulating SDGs and considering their accountability framework, including several forest sector instruments, UNCED and Rio Conventions, and the Climate Summit 2014 New York Declaration on Forests.

Various intergovernmental and international organisations have recommended formulations of goals, targets and indicators from a forest perspective, including the outcomes of a joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section workshop on "Forests and Sustainable Development Goals: a regional view", the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, FAO and UNFF, Climate Advisors and the International Institute for Environment and Development.

These inputs collectively suggest that an integrated approach to integrating forests in the SDGs is most likely to achieve transformative change, by incorporating not only sustainable forest

management, deforestation and reforestation targets, but a range of other targets that address systemic drivers, create enabling conditions and reflect the cross-sectoral nature of forest ecosystems. The strongest outcome is an integrated approach to SDG implementation that incorporates three components: forest-specific targets within goal 15; outcome targets that reflect the contribution of forests and their ecosystem services to diverse development goals; and enabling targets that address systemic barriers to progress and enabling conditions that better address the priorities of marginalised and poor communities.

The OWG proposal for SDGs includes several positive changes with respect to forests:

- Specific mention of forests within goal 15 and inclusion of restoration and afforestation alongside sustainable management, reforestation and halting deforestation within target 15.2, as well as maintenance of a focus on incentives and financing within target 15b
- Inclusion of sustainable management of water within goal 6, inclusion of restoration including forests within target 6.6, and local community participation in target 6b, reflecting the need for integrated water resource management
- Equal control included alongside rights, access and ownership with regards to land, property and natural resources, in targets 1.4 and 5a
- Explicit recognition of indigenous peoples within targets 2.3 and 4.5
- Inclusion of sustainable food production systems alongside resilient agricultural practices within target 2.4

Review of the OWG proposal for SDGs also reveals outstanding issues from a forest perspective. Some issues considered high priority during consultations and surveys do not feature in the proposed SDGs, including forest and farm producer organisation, land use planning, and stronger commitment and ambition on agricultural drivers of deforestation. Addressing these issues may be achieved without opening up the OWG proposal for SDGs to renegotiation.

A synthesis report of regional consultations on the monitoring and accountability framework concluded that it should be multi-layered but anchored in national and sub-national efforts and be infused by a collaborative spirit at the regional level. The regional dimension is an effective means to build trust and promote this spirit, thus providing a critical link between the global and national levels. The UNECE and FAO already have an extensive system of monitoring and evaluation of all aspects related to the state of forests, forest resources, forest functions and services and sustainable forest management.

They now have an opportunity to contribute to the design of a complete and effective accountability mechanism, based on existing forest criteria and indicators including data collection, evaluation and dissemination. Such a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of forest related SDGs could serve as an example for other goals and targets as well as for other regions. It is important that the development of indicators adequately consider necessary enabling conditions for forests to deliver sustainable development outcomes, as well as carefully considering issues of equity.

Introduction

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) at their joint session “Metsä2013”, held in December 2013 in Rovaniemi, Finland, discussed how to include forests in SDGs, highlighting the strategic importance of properly reflecting forests in the post-2015 agenda. The Committee and the Commission underscored the importance of the SDGs in raising the profile of forests, the need to reflect the multi-functionality of forests in goals and targets as well to build on global objectives for forests and existing criteria and indicators.

Member States^{1a} considered the possible development of a forest goal, related targets and indicators and expressed an interest in continuing the debate among experts and to report outcomes to the Open Working Group.

At the request of the Committee and Commission, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section organised a workshop on ‘Forests and Sustainable Development Goals: a regional view’ in two parts, during January and June 2014. This workshop was supported financially by the Government of Sweden. Since then, the section has continued to monitor the development of the political agenda on SDGs and help discussions on how best to include forests in the SDGs. Member States have also been active in engaging with a range of processes subsequent to the Rio+20 Conference.

This paper was produced in preparation for the 72nd session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and Forest Industry held in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation, 18-21 November 2014, where discussions covered the role of forests in the post-2015 agenda. The paper was compiled from existing literature and describes the progress of work by the joint UNECE and FAO on forests in the post-2015 agenda in the UNECE region. It outlines the political process related to the development of the SDGs and the outcomes of the workshop on ‘Forests and Sustainable Development Goals: a regional view’. The paper also summarises relevant analytical work conducted to date, and existing systems of monitoring and evaluation of all aspects related to the state of forests, forest resources, forest services and sustainable forest management, and the outlook for the goals framework, implementation and accountability from the perspective of forests.

^{1a} The UNECE region has a membership of 56 States including the countries of Europe, countries in North America (Canada and United States), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and Western Asia (Israel).

Background

Process to develop post-2015 development agenda

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were officially established as the result of the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. Following the 2010 MDG Summit where progress with implementation of the MDGs was reported, the UN Secretary General initiated a multi-layered process for the development of a post-2015 agenda.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, member States agreed to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build upon the MDGs and converge with the post-2015 development agenda. The Rio +20 outcome document, *The Future We Want*^{1b}, resolved to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on SDGs, open to all stakeholders and with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the UN General Assembly.

The Rio+20 Conference also mandated the member States to form the intergovernmental United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG), which consisted of 30 countries and was active in preparing a proposal on the SDGs. The OWG work aimed to provide a set of ambitious goals and targets that enjoy broad political support, integrate all three dimensions of sustainable development, are universally applicable, concise, measurable, easy to communicate, and limited in number. This set of transformative goals at the core of the post-2015 development agenda must also be supported by an accountability framework and fit-for-purpose means of implementation. The OWG met on 13 occasions between March 2013 and July 2014, initially stock-taking and collecting the views of experts, member States and other stakeholders, and later preparing a report containing a proposal for SDGs.

In September 2014, the 69th session of the UN General Assembly discussed the SDGs as part of a wider debate on the post-2015 development framework and decided that the OWG proposal for SDGs² – totalling 17 Goals (Annex 1) and 169 targets published at the end of July 2014 – would be the main basis for integrating the SDGs into the future development agenda. However, other inputs, including those described below, would also be considered during the intergovernmental negotiation process.

The Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons was formed in July 2012, comprising 27 members, to advise on the post-2015 development framework. The Panel's report³, submitted to the Secretary-General on 30 May 2013, outlined five transformational shifts applicable to both developed and developing countries.

The Rio+20 Conference agreed to form an Intergovernmental Committee on Sustainable Development Financing to assess financial needs and facilitate the mobilisation of resources. Established in June 2013 and comprising 30 experts nominated by regional groups, the Committee produced a final draft report⁴ in August 2014 as input into the means of implementation discussion. The third international conference on financing for development will be held in Addis Ababa during July 2015 and is expected to be an important contribution towards the implementation strategy for the SDGs.

The Rio+20 Conference also agreed to form a High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to provide political leadership and guidance. The inaugural HLPF meeting in September 2013 decided on the format and organizational aspects, with a second meeting held during June-July 2014.

Development of a technology facilitation mechanism has proceeded since the Rio+20 Conference (which requested the "relevant United Nations agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound

^{1b} <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html>

² <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

³ http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf

⁴ <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4588FINAL%20REPORT%20ICESDF.pdf>

technologies”), including two options reports issued by the Secretary-General (September 2012 and September 2013) and a series of structured dialogues by the General Assembly.

In December 2014, the UN Secretary General released his Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda, *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet*.⁵ The report proposes an integrated set of six essential elements that can bring about a truly universal transformation of sustainable development: Dignity (to end poverty and fight inequality); People (to ensure healthy lives, knowledge, and the inclusion of women and children); Prosperity (to grow a strong, inclusive, and transformative economy); Planet (to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children); Justice (to promote safe and peaceful societies, and strong institutions); and Partnership (to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development). The report draws on many of the processes outlined above and is therefore a key contribution for the intergovernmental processes during 2015.

Member States have acknowledged the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development, including through the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference (June 2012) and Resolution 67/290 adopted at the High-level Political Forum in July 2013, which invited the United Nations Regional Commissions to seek the views of member States and other stakeholders on priorities for the post 2015 development agenda.

Consultations within the UNECE region have included a regional consultation⁶ on the post-2015 agenda in Turkey during November 2013, and national consultations in 15 countries of the region involving some 250,000 citizens through town hall meetings, on-line discussions and the “MY World Survey”. According to an HLPF Issue Brief,⁷ key messages included:

“a call for a new development paradigm involving radical changes in how societies are built, how economies produce goods and services and how they generate inclusive and sustainable growth and jobs. This includes a deep transformation of the current production and consumption patterns and calls for equality and inclusion to be at the centre of the development agenda. Eradicating poverty is an overarching goal of the SDGs and can only be reached if its main drivers are jointly addressed, namely creating decent jobs for all, reducing inequalities of income and providing access for all to a wide range of public services, notably health, education, transport, energy and water. Gender equality and women’s empowerment need to be promoted. Governance should be both a goal in itself and mainstreamed in all other SDGs. An integrated, cross-sectoral approach to policy-making, public participation and ‘honest and responsive government’ are seen as key components. Strengthening statistical, information and observation capacities for ensuring reliable data, fostering new sources of data, and using these various sources for policy debate and transparent decision-making are essential parts of the data revolution that is being called for to track progress on the post-2015 agenda.”

During the interactive dialogue organised by the President of the General Assembly on 1 May 2014 on ‘Elements for a Monitoring and Accountability Framework for the post-2015 Development Agenda,’ the Secretary-General requested the UN Regional Commissions to organise regional meetings to solicit views and options on monitoring and accountability, which should be an integral part of the Post-2015 development agenda. Consultations in the UNECE region took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 15-16 September 2014. Among the key points emerging from the consultation included the need for incentives for countries and other stakeholders to participate, the need for a “data revolution” to strengthen monitoring and accountability, the value of peer reviews, and the importance of the regional level in a multi-layered accountability mechanism, The consultation also highlighted the role that regional commissions as well as the Regional UNDG Teams can play in promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices and facilitate capacity building.

⁵ http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf

⁶ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=33455#/>

⁷ http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1439HLPF_Brief_2.pdf

In the Outcome document⁸ of the Special Event on MDGs of the President of the General Assembly in September 2013, member States agreed to initiate a process of intergovernmental negotiations at the beginning of the 69th session of the General Assembly in September 2014.

The final phase of the intergovernmental work will culminate in September 2015 where the sustainable development agenda and related goals (SDGs) will be adopted. Adoption of the new post-2015 development framework is expected at a summit at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspice of the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

Forests and sustainable development

The UNECE region has 40% of the world's forests and, covering 36% of the region's land area, they have much to contribute to sustainable development⁹. The forest sector contributes nearly \$300 billion of economic activity in the UNECE region, including forest management, the wood industry (sawnwood and panels) and the pulp and paper industry. The economic activities of the forest sector accounts for about 1% of GDP in Europe and North America, and 0.8% for Russia, although this does not reflect many forest related activities such as tourism, biodiversity conservation, secondary products such as furniture or joinery, and many non-wood forest products. Forests generate jobs and incomes with almost 5.4 million people working in the forest sector in the region, equivalent to about 1% of the economically active population. Furthermore, forests support many livelihoods with half of Europe's forests privately owned, often in very small holdings, while families own 36% of forests in the US. Nearly half the wood consumed in the UNECE region is used as a source of energy, and wood is the largest source of renewable energy. Carbon sequestration is the equivalent of nearly 10% of greenhouse gas emissions by the UNECE economies.

A forest sector which plays a leading role in a green economy is also promoting sustainable development, in the forest sector and outside it. The *Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy*¹⁰ was adopted in December 2013 by "Metsä2013", the joint meeting of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission. The Action Plan is not binding but describes how UNECE region's forest sector could contribute to the development of a green economy. The forest sector in a green economy is described as a forest sector which contributes to the emerging green economy by improving human well-being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In every aspect of its activities, it minimises its carbon emissions, uses resources efficiently and is socially inclusive.

Hence, forests are essential to sustainable development and the post-2015 agenda. They are one of the key topics contained in the Rio+20 outcome, *The Future We Want*, and forests are specifically mentioned under OWG proposed goals 6 and 15, including specific reference to sustainable forest management.

The international forest community, including through the work of COFFI and EFC, have engaged in shaping the post-2015 agenda because soundly formulated goals and targets will create the conditions for the optimal contribution of forests and trees to a range of sustainable development outcomes in both developed and developing countries. Particular attention has been placed on the OWG proposed SDGs since they are expected to significantly facilitate the formulation and subsequent adoption of an effective post 2015 development agenda in the forest sector.

Country perspectives and priorities

Some insights into country perspectives and priorities with regards to forests and SDGs can be derived from the OWG sessions. During the themed discussions of the first nine OWGs, from March 2013 to March 2014, developed and developing countries shared some views but also revealed differences (Brack, 2014).

Developed countries' views included very broad support for the concept of SFM; some support for an approach based on natural capital and ecosystem services; a focus on the need to address the

⁸ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Outcome%20documentMDG.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/publications/SP-31WebSmall.pdf>

¹⁰ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/publications/1406075_E_UEC_TIM_SP_35interactive.pdf

drivers of deforestation, including agriculture and illegal logging; and some references to the needs of forest communities, forest governance, tenure rights and community ownership.

During the same period of OWG sessions, developing countries' views included very broad support for the concept of SFM and the need for assistance for implementation, in the form of finance, capacity-building and technology transfer; repeated references to the role and importance of the UNFF and its Non-Legally-Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests; some references to the role and rights of local communities; and some references to illegal deforestation and the importance of forest governance (though the G77 made it clear that they regarded this as a matter for national governments; international guidelines were only voluntary).

For the purposes of the OWG, countries were grouped and included the following UNECE members: Italy/Spain/Turkey; Denmark/Ireland/Norway; France/Germany/Switzerland; Netherlands/United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland/Australia¹¹; Hungary; Belarus/Serbia; Bulgaria/Croatia; Montenegro/Slovenia; Poland/Romania; and Canada/Israel/United States of America. Annex 2 summarises and paraphrases UNECE members' statements relating to ecosystems and biodiversity during OWG10 and OWG11.

In early June 2014, the European Commission published the communication, *A Decent Life for All: From vision to collective action*, outlining the European Union's proposals for the SDGs¹². The section on 'biodiversity and forests' includes:

- The loss of forest cover worldwide must be reversed, the loss of primary forests halted and illegal logging and associated trade eliminated. Potential target topics included:
 - i. Safeguard and restore ecosystems that provide essential services;
 - ii. Prevent the extinction of known threatened species and improve conservation status;
 - iii. Reduce the rate of loss, degradation, and fragmentation of all natural habitats;
 - iv. Reduce deforestation and forest degradation based on sustainable forest management; and
 - v. Reduce levels of illegal trade in wildlife and timber.

The European Union position was further elaborated in Council conclusions on a transformative post-2015 agenda adopted in December 2014.¹³ Among guiding principles, the Council conclusions recommended that 'The post-2015 agenda should be guided by the principle of accountability, the fundamental requirements of which are ownership of the whole agenda by all countries, transparency and effective and efficient monitoring and review of progress.'

UNECE-FAO engagement

The UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) at their joint session "Metsä2013"¹⁴, held in December 2013 in Rovaniemi, Finland, discussed how to include forests in SDGs, highlighting the strategic importance of properly reflecting forests in the post-2015 agenda. The Committee and the Commission underscored the importance of the SDGs in raising the profile of forests, the need to reflect the multi-functionality of forests in goals and targets as well to build on global objectives for forests and existing criteria and indicators.

The meeting stressed the importance of identifying ways to properly recognise the role of forests in sustainable development and the post-2015 agenda, although not all countries were yet in a position to state how they would like to have forests treated in the SDGs. Member States considered the possible development of a forest goal, related targets and indicators and expressed a strong interest in continuing the debate among experts beyond the "Metsä2013" meeting.

¹¹ Australia is not a member of UNECE.

¹² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: *A Decent Life for all: from vision to collective action* (COM(2014) 335 final, 2 June 2014).

¹³ http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/conclusioni_post_2015.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.unece.org/forests/metsa2013.html#/> and report http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/meetings/20131209/ECE_TIM_2013_2_FO_EFC_2013_REPORT_FINAL.pdf

In that context, the Committee and the Commission requested the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section to organise a workshop in Geneva to develop ideas on how to include forests in the SDGs and to report the outcomes to the OWG. A workshop on 'Forests and Sustainable Development Goals: a regional view' was subsequently organised in two parts, the first part on 22-23 January 2014 and the second on 16 June 2014.

At the January 2014 workshop in Geneva, participants from the UNECE region exchanged ideas on how forests can be incorporated in SDGs. They agreed that integration of the benefits from trees and forests into the goals and targets is both desirable and feasible. The meeting noted that many forest related targets already prevail in international policy instruments, and the different strategies for developing forest related goals and targets:

- Stand-alone forests goal with targets and indicators. This would bring attention to the potential benefit of forests to sustainable development, and show how that potential could be realised through a balanced and holistic approach to forest management.
- Sub-goal of a natural resources or ecosystem services goal with targets and indicators. It would catalyse the necessary integration of forests and trees to related sectors, but would likely result in fewer forest-linked targets and indicators than either of the other options.
- Forest targets and indicators on forests integrated in several or most of the SDGs. This would be the most ambitious option since it would require attention to the huge potential range of benefits that the sustainable management of forests and trees can deliver across all of goals for sustainable development.

Hybrid options were also considered. The workshop identified 10 targets related to the forest sector (see next section). Experts underscored the dynamic character of the OWG process and recommended continuing this work in order to contribute to the evolving OWG process¹⁵. In particular, the workshop suggested refining targets and to identify and develop measurable indicators. The workshop outcome (Annex 3), including the proposal for the forest related thematic targets, was presented to OWG8 on 3 February 2014 in New York, which featured a wide-ranging debate on 'oceans and seas, forests and biodiversity.'

The second workshop on Forests and SDGs was held in Geneva in June 2014. Participants were informed about developments in the on-going discussions within the OWG and how forests and sustainable forest management were reflected in the most recent text emerging from those discussions. Participants reviewed targets developed so far by the OWG and considered possible forest-related indicators under those targets that are relevant to forests and SFM. As the result of the work in groups, experts developed a set of updated targets and indicators, based on existing indicators from the forest and other sectors.

The workshop outcome is provided in Annex 4. Participants agreed that:

- At least one target under the relevant SDG should focus on SFM, in order to reflect the fundamental role that it plays in sustainable development.
- Forest-related indicators should be developed for all targets with a forest component such as biodiversity, ecosystem management, production and consumption patterns, energy, food security, water and sanitation, climate, poverty eradication, gender, health, and urban development.
- Detailed datasets and indicators on forests and sustainable forest management, developed over the years by the forest sector should be properly utilized when developing target-specific forest related indicators.

The meeting acknowledged the important role played by the UNECE and FAO in collecting datasets and reporting on indicators and in contributing to the global discussion on the development of SDGs, forest related targets and indicators. Robust monitoring and assessment systems in the UNECE region

¹⁵ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/workshops/2014/SDG_Workshop_Geneva/Forests_in_SDGs_-_a_view_from_Europe_-_31_Jan_2014.pdf

allow for enhanced monitoring of SFM. The use of more detailed indicators at the regional level to support monitoring and implementation of forest related SDGs was encouraged.

The meeting also acknowledged the contribution by FAO and the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) to the SDG process, including suggestions to the OWG chairs' paper of 2 June 2014 and a proposed set of transformative forest-related targets (see next section).

The results of the workshop were forwarded to the 36th session of the UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management in Geneva from 17-18 June 2014. The recommendations as well as the report from the first and second UNECE/FAO workshop were forwarded to the bureau of the COFFI and EFC as well as to the 22nd meeting of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO)¹⁶, Rome, 23-27 June 2014, for its consideration.

The 22nd session of FAO COFO presented ten forest-related targets for consideration by the OWG (see next section), and reviewed existing forest-related instruments that can be used for developing targets and indicators for forests as part of the SDGs.

¹⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mk200e.pdf>

Integrating forests within the SDGs

Forest-related working documents and international commitments

Forests featured only under MDG7 on environmental sustainability with the proportion of land area covered by forest as one of the indicators. Until now, there has been limited achievement towards MDG7. Integrating forests within the SDGs should therefore reflect on lessons from the formulation and implementation of the MDGs. For example, the SDGs need to show greater recognition of the multi-functionality of forests and their full contributions to all three dimensions of sustainable development. They also need to better value and integrate externalities, to tackle drivers of deforestation and other systemic issues, and to ensure more focus on issues of social balance.

The Rio+20 outcome document *The Future We Want* highlighted the social, economic and environmental benefits of forests to people and the contributions of sustainable forest management to the themes and objective of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It called for enhanced efforts to achieve the sustainable management of forests, reforestation, restoration and afforestation, and efforts to effectively slow, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation. It also committed to improving the livelihoods of people and communities by creating the conditions needed for them to sustainably manage forests, including by strengthening cooperation arrangements in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity-building and governance, as well as by promoting secure land tenure.

The United Nations inter-agency Technical Support Team¹⁷ for the OWG produced a series of issues briefs¹⁸, with Issues Brief 25 dedicated to forests (coordinated by the UNFF Secretariat, with inputs from the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, CPF). The Issues Brief took stock of the importance of all types of forests and trees outside forests for sustainable development, the state of forests, existing forest and forest-related agreed Goals, Targets, Criteria and Indicators, and proposals for the integration of forests within the SDGs. The Issues Brief highlighted the need for integrated, cross-sectoral, cross-institutional and gender sensitive SFM from local to global levels, and the importance of a multi-sectoral enabling environment for effectively mobilising public and private financing for SFM. It concluded:

“The integration of forests into the SDGs require all environmental, economic and social dimensions of forests and trees outside forests and their contributions to sustainable development to be recognized. It is also crucial for the OWG on the SDG to take into full account the interconnections of forests with other areas such as water, energy, biodiversity, agriculture, land, and food security. Equally, it is just as important to recognize the multiple benefits and inter-relationship of these issues. To this end, the possible SDG or target on forests should be accompanied by a process of setting specific targets and indicators at the national, regional and global levels to facilitate its transformation into concrete actions at all levels. Finally, the implementation of the SDG would be greatly enhanced by identifying and linking environmental, social – including gender – and economic criteria and indicators to measure progress. This would ensure that the SDGs can make a significant contribution to implementing SFM around the world.”

The final four OWG sessions, from March to July 2014, featured debates over the specific goals and targets to be included, including debate around the inclusion of targets on forests.¹⁹ OWG 10 saw the first general debate about goals and targets. Several UNECE countries put forward suggestions:

- A goal on the sustainable management of natural resources (Canada/US/Israel and Bulgaria/Croatia)
- Promoting sustainable forest management, reversing the loss of forest cover and improving forest governance (Canada/US/Israel)

¹⁷ The TST was established pursuant to paragraph 249 of the Rio+20 outcome document and is co-chaired by UN DESA and UNDP, with more than 40 entities from the United Nations system as members.

¹⁸ <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=1554&menu=1301>

¹⁹ Information taken from Brack (2014) <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03846.pdf>

- At least halving the rate of loss of forests worldwide, and where feasible bringing it close to zero by 2020 and ending deforestation at the latest by 2030 – both through, inter alia, strengthening of forest governance frameworks, SFM, protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, the expansion of the certified forest area world-wide, and increased efforts to prevent forest degradation (France/Germany/Switzerland)
- A strengthening of forest governance frameworks, with a collective aim of halting global forest cover loss by 2030 (Italy/Turkey/Spain)

OWG 11 saw a working paper tabled, including two proposed forest-related targets within the broader 'focus area' of ecosystems and biodiversity: "By 2030, ensure sustainable management of all forests"; and "Halting deforestation and increasing reforestation by x per cent". Several UNECE countries supported or put forward suggestions:

- By 2030, ensure sustainable management of all forests (supported by France/Germany/Switzerland, US/Canada/Israel, Italy/Spain/Turkey, Montenegro/Slovenia, Croatia/Bulgaria)
- Halting deforestation and increasing reforestation by x per cent (supported by Denmark/Ireland/Norway, France/Germany/Switzerland, Australia/Netherlands/UK, US/Canada/Israel, Italy/Spain/Turkey, Poland/Romania, Croatia/Bulgaria)
- Suggested variations included reducing deforestation by x per cent and increasing appropriate reforestation and afforestation (Australia/UK/Netherlands), and strengthening forest governance frameworks and promoting SFM (France/Germany/Switzerland).
- Both Romania and Austria suggested that the protection of forest and mountain ecosystems should be added to the focus area on water and sanitation.

OWG12 and OWG13 continued to debate modifications to the formulation of the SDG framework. The final OWG proposal for SDGs, released in July 2014, has forests and their multiple functions more clearly recognised within Goal 15 and three targets. Target 15.2 represents a slight modification of the earlier draft including, most significantly, the bringing forward of the target date from 2030 to 2020.

- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forest, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- 15.1 by 2020 ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements
- 15.2 by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and increase afforestation and reforestation by x% globally
- 15.b mobilize significantly resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management, and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance sustainable forest management, including for conservation and reforestation

The multiple functions of forests is partly captured by the inclusion of sustainable management of water and ecosystem restoration including forests within Goal 6:

- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- 6.6 protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

The SG also held a Climate Summit in New York during September as a contribution towards an agreement at the Paris Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC in 2015. This resulted in the New York

Declaration on Forests²⁰, a non-legally binding political declaration endorsed by numerous governments, companies, indigenous peoples and civil society organisations. The Declaration committed to, among other outcomes, the following:

- At least half the rate of natural forest loss by 2020, and strive to end it by 2030
- Support private sector goal of eliminating deforestation from production of selected agricultural commodities by 2020
- Significantly reduce deforestation derived from other economic sectors by 2020
- Restore 150 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2020 and restore at least an additional 200 million hectares by 2030
- Support alternatives to deforestation driven by basic needs in ways that alleviate poverty and promote sustainable and equitable development
- Include ambitious, quantitative forest conservation and restoration targets for 2030 in the post-2015 global development framework
- Agree in 2015 to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as part of the post-2020 global climate change agreement

The associated voluntary Action Agenda for the New York Declaration on Forests outlines a range of opportunities to be taken by governments, companies, indigenous peoples, civil society organisations and multilateral institutions, including in the areas of: sustainable management of forests; addressing deforestation; participation and rights of indigenous peoples; land tenure and land security; assistance to smallholder farmers; alternative economic opportunities; public and private sector sustainable sourcing; deforestation-free commitments; emission reduction targets; forest governance, transparency and accountability; public awareness and support.

Forests and the need for their sustainable management feature in a number of other international commitments and initiatives (Annex 5).²¹

Proposed formulations of forest-relevant SDGs

The following sections describe various assessments and contributions from intergovernmental and international organisations with respect to forests in the formulation of goals, targets and indicators.

In January 2014, a joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section workshop on “Forests and Sustainable Development Goals: a regional view” identified 10 targets in three categories (Annex 3; Mayers, 2014²²):

- I. Social and cultural benefits from forests and trees are improved
 - Income and employment from forests and trees in rural areas increased
 - Rights, tenure and governance of forests strengthened
 - Food security and nutrition contribution of forests and trees enhanced
- II. Resilience and ecosystem benefits of forests are enhanced
 - Forest resources quantity increased and/or quality improved
 - Biodiversity of forests conserved and improved
 - Water quantity and quality contribution of forests enhanced
 - Climate resilience and mitigation contribution of forests strengthened
- III. Green economy contribution of forests and trees is increased
 - Energy from forest resources increased, safe and sustainable
 - Efficiency of forest resource use increased

²⁰ <http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/09/FORESTS-New-York-Declaration-on-Forests.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mk200e.pdf>

²² <http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/biores/news/forests-in-the-sustainable-development-goals>

- Investment in, and use of, products from sustainably managed forests increased

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests, under the leadership of FAO, identified ten forest-related targets for consideration²³ by the OWG in June 2014:

- All the world's forests managed sustainably
- The world's forests and tree resources improved
- Climate change mitigation benefits from forests increased
- Direct and indirect contributions of forests and trees to food security and nutrition increased
- Poverty reduced through increased income and employment from forests
- Forest-related biodiversity conserved and improved
- Fresh water supply from forest areas improved
- Resilience of people and forests against slow-onset and extreme events increased
- Contributions of forests to a green economy increased
- Increased financial resources from all sources to sustainably manage forests

Important differences from the UNECE/FAO proposed targets included specific mention of sustainable management, and no mention of energy, rights and tenure.

FAO and UNFF provided a set of transformative forest-related targets for consideration by the 13th OWG session in July and the 22nd meeting of the FAO Committee on Forests in June:

- Proposed goal 15: Enhance sustainable management of forests, mountains, land and other terrestrial ecosystems and halt all biodiversity loss
- Target 1: By 2030, ensure sustainable management of all types of forests and trees outside forests, and of mountain ecosystems
- Target 2: By 2030, reverse the loss and enhance forest cover worldwide including through increased protection, afforestation and reforestation
- Target 3: By 2030, halt the loss of all biodiversity
- Target 4: By 2030, halt and prevent land degradation, reclaim land affected by desertification and drought, and improve land productivity and soil quality

Climate Advisors analysed ways to integrate forests in the post-2015 development agenda, recommending both mainstreaming forest targets across relevant goal areas and housing forest-specific targets under a standalone natural resource management goal (Jones and Wolosin, 2014²⁴). Four forest targets under a standalone goal to promote sustainable natural resource management were recommended:

- Increase sustainable government procurement, including commodities related to deforestation, by X% relative to 2013.
- Ensure sustainable management of all forests
- Achieve near zero natural forest loss
- Agree to and mainstream a global standard for national accounting of environmental goods and services with all countries reporting on improvement

Mainstreamed targets were also recommended (with related OWG proposed goals):

- Reduce by X% the incidence of morbidity and mortality from indoor and outdoor air pollution relative to 2013 (3)
- Ensure universal access to modern energy (7)
- Ensure universal access to secure tenure for men and women, including customary rights to land and forests (5)

²³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mk200e.pdf>

²⁴ http://www.climateadvisers.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/JonesWolosin_Options-for-Integrating-Forests-into-the-Post.pdf

- Reduce by 50% post-harvest agricultural lost, marine bycatch, and food waste (2)
- Increase by X% sustainable agricultural production on smallholder farms (8)
- Reduce by X% illegal deforestation and logging relative to 2013 (16)

Analysis of integration of forests in OWG proposed SDGs

Framework for integrating forests

During 2014, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has periodically assessed the OWG proposed SDGs against core sustainable development concepts (transformative, universal and integrated nature) and criteria derived from various forest-related frameworks (sustainable forest management, sustainable landscape management, locally controlled forestry, forests in green economy). The ideal framing of forests in the SDGs was found to be an integrated approach. An integrated 'forest module' approach, with a diversity of targets that considers the enabling environment was found to improve on a more limited focus on sustainable forest management, deforestation and reforestation targets²⁵. These findings have been further endorsed by regional assessments²⁶ and various consultations. The recommended optimal framing of forests in the SDGs consists of three components:

- Inclusion of the sustainable management of forests within a land or ecosystem related goal and associated targets, in order to maintain high profile of forests
- Inclusion of outcome targets that reflect the contribution of forests and their ecosystem services to diverse development goals
- Inclusion of enabling targets that address systemic barriers to progress

These three key components are analysed below against the OWG proposed SDGs.

Sustainable forest management as an integral part of a broader land-related goal: This has been captured well in the OWG proposed SDGs, with recognition of sustainable forest management in Goal 15, and further supported by targets 15.1, 15.2 and 15b (see earlier section). Some concerns remain with target 15.2, however, regarding feasibility of halting deforestation by 2020 (in target 15.2) and clarity of definitions.

Inclusion of forest-related targets for the achievement of other development goals: Forests and their ecosystem services contribute towards targets across many goals in the OWG proposed SDGs, and their inclusion highlights the cross-sectoral nature of forests. Some examples of the direct contributions of forests to other targets include:

- 2.1 by 2030 end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- 6.1 by 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- 7.1 by 2030 ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services
- 13.1 strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- 15.5 take urgent and significant action to reduce degradation of natural habitat, halt the loss of biodiversity, and by 2020 protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

Enabling targets that address systemic barriers to progress: It is essential for the SDGs to address critical barriers to progress – the underlying causes of persistent poverty and global development challenges such as inequality, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and weak governance systems. Creating the right enabling conditions to remove barriers is a high priority from the perspective of marginalised and poor communities. Review of a selection of recognised and

²⁵ <http://pubs.iied.org/13573IIED.html?c=forest>

²⁶ Studies from Asia <http://pubs.iied.org/G03850.html?c=forest>, Africa <http://pubs.iied.org/G03874.html?c=forest> and Latin America and the Caribbean <http://pubs.iied.org/G03871.html?c=forest>

diverse forest related frameworks (sustainable forest management, sustainable landscape management, locally controlled forestry and forests in green economy) identified four broad categories of 'enabler' needed for forests to deliver sustainable development outcomes:

- Good governance and social justice: just and secure forest rights through equitable forest governance and negotiated land use planning
- Well managed multi-functional landscapes: to enhance the quality and quantity of ecosystem services, sustainable land use practices and resilience of the poor
- Fair, accessible and responsible market systems: inclusive economic opportunity and resource efficiency for all forest products and services, influenced by sustainable lifestyles and trade
- Metrics and means of implementation: to build partnerships that effectively resource and monitor progress at national and international levels

Priority target areas for forests

Consultations, surveys and regional studies were conducted by IIED between July and November 2014 to gather stakeholder perceptions on prioritising targets. These have included a meeting with Least Developed Countries, an open website survey, a public webinar and regional assessments for Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, and Africa. The results suggest the following target areas as essential for the SDGs, many (but not all) of which already feature to some extent within the OWG proposed SDGs (as illustrated by Annex 6).

I. Good governance and social justice

- Equitable rights to control, own and access land, property and natural resources
- Inclusive decision-making processes and equal opportunities
- Accountability and transparency

II. Well managed multi-functional landscapes

- Sustainable management of forests and other natural resources
- Sustainable agriculture and food systems, and integrated water management
- Inclusive and integrated land use planning

III. Fair, accessible and responsible market systems

- Support for small enterprises and producer organisations
- Access to markets and product diversification
- Sustainable practices and reporting

IV. Metrics and means of implementation

- Financial resourcing and incentives
- Knowledge sharing and inter-agency coordination
- Broader measures of progress beyond GDP in national accounting

Positive progress

The final formulation of the OWG proposal for SDGs includes several positive changes with respect to forests (Milledge, 2014²⁷):

- Specific mention of forests within goal 15 and inclusion of restoration and afforestation alongside sustainable management, reforestation and halting deforestation within target 15.2, as well as maintenance of a focus on incentives and financing within target 15b

²⁷ <http://pubs.iied.org/G03839.html>

- Inclusion of sustainable management of water within goal 6, inclusion of restoration including forests within target 6.6, and local community participation in target 6b, reflecting the need for integrated water resource management
- Equal control included alongside rights, access and ownership with regards to land, property and natural resources, in targets 1.4 and 5a
- Explicit recognition of indigenous peoples within targets 2.3 and 4.5
- Inclusion of sustainable food production systems alongside resilient agricultural practices within target 2.4

The OWG proposal for SDGs also includes a range of target combinations that may improve its transformative nature, by addressing key drivers such as security of rights, access and control, reducing inequalities, promoting life-long education and training, and broader measures of progress beyond GDP in national accounting (Milledge *et al.*, 2014²⁸).

Addressing gaps and challenges

Review of the OWG proposal for SDGs also reveals outstanding issues from a forest perspective. Missing issues considered high priority during consultations include the strengthening of forest and farm producer organisation (within target 2.3), and land use planning. Other issues that warrant closer attention include recognising 'small forest holders' alongside family farmers, pastoralists and fishers (within target 2.3), and free, prior and informed consent (within target 16.7). Government policymakers and negotiators need to acknowledge the importance of these issues and seek their incorporation into the goal framework without necessarily opening up the OWG proposal for SDGs to renegotiation.

Another identified challenge is the need for stronger commitment on agriculture drivers of deforestation, building on the UN Climate Summit New York Declaration on Forests. Existing targets do incorporate elements of sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices (target 2.4), sustainable corporate practices, public procurement policy and informing lifestyle choices (targets 12.6, 12.7 and 12.8). However, the goal framework should include more ambition to stop agricultural commodities driving deforestation, which again may be achieved without opening up the OWG proposal for SDGs to renegotiation.

Countries need to maintain and increase efforts, including national coordination related to the OWG and the UN General Assembly, to ensure:

- Adequate consideration and visibility of forests and their contributions to the three pillars of sustainable development in the post-2015 development agenda
- Promoting the inclusion of targets and indicators that recognize the multi-functionality of forests and their full contribution to the three pillars of sustainable development
- Adequate attention to priority enabling conditions to address systemic drivers

²⁸ <http://pubs.iied.org/17248IIED.html?c=forest>

Future implementation of SDGs

Accountability mechanisms

An interactive dialogue was organized by the President of the General Assembly on 1 May 2014 on 'Elements for a Monitoring and Accountability Framework for the post-2015 Development Agenda', where the Secretary-General requested the UN Regional Commissions to organize regional meetings to solicit views and options on monitoring and accountability. Five regional consultations took place during August and September 2014, with the UNECE regional consultation taking place in Geneva, Switzerland on 15-16 September.

Among the main messages²⁹ emerging from the five regional consultations was that the monitoring and accountability framework should be an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda. Accountability should apply equally to developed and developing nations, and be understood as a participatory and inclusive process, which envisages cooperation and interactive dialogue between multiple stakeholders.

The regional consultations recognised the national level as the backbone of an accountability framework, given the nature of most commitments and need for state-led review tools and mechanisms. However, it was highlighted the need for greater recognition of the potential role of private sector in strengthening accountability, the need for more systematic involvement of civil society, and to strengthen countries' capabilities to generate, process and disseminate quality, disaggregated data.

Given the fact that SDGs are not legally binding instruments, creating and promoting a collaborative environment towards SDG achievement and implementation are critical to their success. The consultations recognised the critical role for a regional monitoring and accountability framework since countries within regions share common experiences and challenges, and the potential for a regional dimension to build trust among countries by encouraging the sharing of information, knowledge and experiences, strengthening of respective capabilities and defining coherent regional policies and approaches.

The UN Regional Commissions were called upon to support the development of effective regional monitoring frameworks while linking national and global efforts, as well as to provide a platform for collective multi-stakeholder review of regional progress on the post-2015 development agenda, based on national assessments of progress. Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, convened by the Regional Commissions with regional and other partners, were recognized as inclusive evolving regional platforms for monitoring and accountability, while complementing national efforts and supporting regular assessment at the global level.

The regional consultations also affirmed that it is important to build on existing mechanisms and successful experiences. In the UNECE region, a solid set of institutions and mechanisms exists, with mandates and data capacity to review and monitor socio-economic and environmental developments as well as democratic governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The aim should be to integrate these existing mechanisms rather than create new structures. There are well-established reporting and accountability frameworks for UNECE legal instruments and reviews of national performance in different policy areas relevant for SDGs. Experience with the Environmental Performance Reviews shows that regular monitoring of recommendations to improve performance in different policy areas can lead to strong results. UNECE plays a role in the measurement of sustainability, both concerning the development of methodologies and international standards and strengthening of national statistical capacities for monitoring. This work is performed in cooperation with partners including other regional organizations and civil society.

Numerous forest-related frameworks exist that include potential indicators for monitoring SDGs (Annex 7). However, the level of implementation and data accuracy are not well understood.

The second UNECE/FAO workshop on forests and SDGs in June 2014 acknowledged the important role played by the UNECE and FAO in collecting datasets and reporting on indicators as well as in

²⁹ <http://www.regionalcommissions.org/finalsynthreportoct14.pdf>

contributing to the global discussion on the development of forest related SDGs, targets and indicators. The UNECE and FAO already have an extensive system of monitoring and evaluation of all aspects related to the state of forests, forest resources, forest functions and services and sustainable forest management (SDG 15). The section works with partners in countries, international organisations and the scientific community in order to collect information according to agreed standards and rules; improve the quality of the information, notably by ensuring international comparability; store; disseminate and analyse the information; and help countries to strengthen their capacity in this area. The work comprises the following programme elements:

- Collecting, validating and disseminating information according to the criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management
- Regional contribution to FAO Global Forest Resource Assessment
- Implementing sustainable forest management through support to countries for the development of national systems for forest monitoring
- Improving information on forest types
- Reporting on and analysis of the state of forests in the UNECE region
- Monitoring and analysing forest ownership and tenure

Results from the above work are periodically published. They are available at the website and communicated when appropriate to countries on an individual basis. These results provide a scientific, non-biased system of accountability measures and are of precise relevance for the implementation of the forest related SDGs that have been suggested by the OWG work.

Some indicators, especially those concerning poverty reduction and contributions to food security and nutrition, are more difficult to measure and there will be a need to develop new indicators and explore new means of measurement. It is important that the development of indicators not only focus on the state of forest resources and sustainable forest management, but also cover the necessary enabling conditions for forests to deliver sustainable development outcomes (see priority target areas for forests described above) as well as screening indicators from an equity standpoint.

Policy coherence

There is a need to better link parallel, but related, international processes, for example in relation to the SDGs, UNFCCC, Financing for Development, International Arrangement on Forests and Convention on Biological Diversity. In-country coordination amongst negotiators (and policymakers and advisors) of different international processes needs strengthening to ensure synergies and consistency.

Policy trade-offs inevitably exist and need to be identified and carefully evaluated. For example, in relation to food security, economic growth, industrialisation and ecosystems. Another area of likely trade-off affecting land use, particularly in Africa, revolves around the global projections and international commitments with regards to food production, consumption, forest management and climate mitigation. While the SDG framework itself may not necessarily resolve policy trade-offs or achieve policy synergies, the post-2015 agenda should ensure stakeholders understand and optimally manage the linkages between goal areas and among different targets.

Annexes

Annex 1 Sustainable Development Goals proposed by UN OWG

- Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Annex 2 UNECE members' statements during OWG10 and OWG11

Netherlands/United Kingdom/(Australia) stated a preference for the integration of natural resource issues across goals and targets (notably food, energy, water), and inclusion of a goal that promotes good governance and the sustainable management of environment and natural resources within an integrated land and seascape approach. The following targets were proposed:

- Increase the proportion of legally certified renewable resource based-commodities in the market
- Ensure effective mechanisms are in place to safeguard ecosystems, species and genetic diversity
- Reduce deforestation by X% and increase appropriate reforestation and afforestation
- Improve soil quality, and combat land degradation and desertification
- Ensure inclusion of indigenous and local communities in decision-making and promote the use of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples

Croatia/Bulgaria proposed a stand-alone goal on the sustainable management of natural resources, relying on the existing goals defined by global legal instruments and with specific targets in the areas of:

- Sustainable forest management including reducing deforestation, soil erosion and combating desertification
- Safeguarding ecosystems and biodiversity
- Awareness raising, education for creating a culture of sustainable lifestyles
- Sustainable government procurement and sustainable tourism
- Enhancing the reporting on corporate social and environmental responsibility

US/Canada/Israel proposed a goal and associated targets on the sustainable management of natural resources as a high priority, additional to the integration of targets related to efficient and sustainable natural resource use and sustainable consumption and production patterns. High priority target areas included:

- Halt the loss, degradation, or fragmentation of all biodiversity, especially in the most biologically diverse ecosystems, and reverse the decline of populations of threatened and endangered species
- Reversing the loss of forest cover worldwide
- Improving soil quality, reducing soil erosion by x tons and combating desertification
- Integration of sustainable natural resource management, ecosystems, and biodiversity into development planning and decision-making at different levels
- Development and use of high quality, timely, disaggregated data
- Inclusion of indigenous and local communities in decision-making

Norway/Denmark/Ireland emphasised the importance of sustainable management and use of ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources, and highlighted the following areas:

- Sustainable use of ecosystems
- Sustainable management of all forests and mountain ecosystems, halting deforestation and increasing reforestation
- Including indigenous peoples and local communities, and not just in decision making and natural resources management.
- Wealth accounting and valuation of biodiversity and ecosystems in relevant national strategies and national accounts

Finland supported a stand-alone goal, 'Ensure sustainable management of natural resources and productive, healthy and resilient ecosystems and biodiversity'.

- Governance, including clear ownership and tenure rights
- Ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction
- Sustainable management of all forests, sustainable management of mountain ecosystems, and halting deforestation

France/Germany/Switzerland³⁰ emphasised the need to better highlight the benefits for society and economy from ecosystem services, and proposed targets covering the following:

- At least halving the rate of loss of forests worldwide and increasing reforestation
- Strengthen forest governance frameworks
- Sustainable forest management of all types of forests and mountain ecosystems
- Expansion of the global certified forest area
- Restore ecosystems and to strengthen resilience to natural disasters
- Managing cropland area in a sustainable manner by 2020 also to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable land use and biodiversity management
- Integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services' values into development and poverty reduction strategies

Greece highlighted possible areas that could be considered as targets to include:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem services appropriately valued and taken into account
- Sustainable management of forests, including of mountain ecosystems

Italy/Spain/Turkey highlighted the cross-cutting need to preserve the natural capital that represents the irreplaceable resource base for economic and social development, and recommended addition of targets to cover:

- By 2020, strengthening forest governance frameworks, expansion of the global certified forest area, and halting the global forest cover loss by 2030
- Achieving a land-degradation-neutral world and mitigating the effects of desertification and drought
- Conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems
- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources
- Establishment and management of protected areas
- Social and cultural benefits from forests, mountains and trees
- Resilience and ecosystem benefits of forests and mountains

Montenegro/Slovenia recommended the following:

- Halting deforestation and forest degradation and on ensuring sustainable management of forests
- Forests included in the goal on water and sanitation among water-linked ecosystems
- Valuation of ecosystem services needs as an integral part of the future SDG agenda
- Mountain ecosystems – sustainable tourism and social inclusion
- Sustainable financing of protected natural areas

Poland/Romania highlighted how many economic sectors depend on biodiversity and ecosystems, and the following focus and action areas:

³⁰ The Swiss government agreed the Swiss Position on a Framework for Sustainable Development Post-2015 in late June 2014. It states that biodiversity and forests should be formulated as stand-alone goals as well as be integrated in each relevant goal in the form of concrete targets particularly in possible goals on “Food Security and Nutrition for All through Sustainable Agri-food Systems”, “A Water-secure World”, “Sustainable Consumption and Production”, “Sustainable Cities/Infrastructure”, “Universal Access to Sustainable Energy”, “Sustainable Growth and the Green Economy, Employment and Decent Work for All”. https://www.eda.admin.ch/etc/medialib/downloads/post.par.0022.file.tmp/swiss%20position%20post-2015_fc_june%202013.pdf

- Promoting sustainable management of ecosystems, including land, forests, oceans and mountains
- Sustainable management of all forests and mountain ecosystems, halting deforestation and increasing reforestation
- Restoring degraded forest ecosystems and increasing area of protected forests
- Achieving a land degradation neutral world
- Protecting of the rights of indigenous and local communities as well as their inclusion in decision making as regards forests and other cultural and natural assets

Sweden supported the inclusion of targets on:

- Sustainable management of forests, and globally halting deforestation and increasing reforestation
- Ensuring Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services
- Promote economic incentives for sustainable management of natural resources, including investments in environmental friendly technology, innovations and elimination of subsidies harmful for the environment and the climate

Annex 3 Report of first UNECE workshop on SDGs and forests

22-23 January 2014

Target the forests! Forests in Sustainable Development Goals – a view from Europe

A view drawn from a meeting of Europe-based experts in Geneva, 22-23 January, convened by the Economic Commission for Europe – Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, and the Food and Agriculture Organization – European Forestry Commission.

Why forests matter for SDGs

Forests make big targets – for both good and bad. Planting trees, or cutting down forests, has major consequences. If we manage forests well they will give us goods and services that we cannot live without. If forests disappear we lose any prospect of sustainable development. Forests and trees are rooted in life and livelihoods. They can be grown, improved and looked after – they are renewable. It would be hard to find a simpler and more universal way of changing the world for the better than by planting and managing trees.

How forest targets can be incorporated in SDGs

Full integration of the benefits of trees and forests in the SDGs is both desirable and feasible. Aspirations for trees and forests can be both universal and differentiated to local circumstance. Many forest related targets already prevail in international policy instruments, the main ones being: Rio conventions; forest sector instruments; food and agriculture goals and challenge targets; and trade and economic development conventions and initiatives. There is thus much good work already done, much to build on in considering the following main three options:

- Stand-alone forests Goal with targets and indicators. This would bring very useful attention to the massive potential benefit of forests for sustainable development, and show how that potential can be realised through a balanced and holistic approach.
- Sub-goal of a natural resources or ecosystem services Goal with targets and indicators. This would catalyse the necessary integration of forests and trees with related sectors, but would likely result in fewer forest-linked targets and indicators than either of the other options.
- Forest targets and indicators in several or most of the SDGs. This is the most ambitious option since it requires attention to the huge potential benefits that management of forests and trees can deliver to a full range of goals for sustainable development.

Hybrid options are also imaginable, and perhaps likely. All these options should be considered carefully in the SDG development process. The renewable, manageable, multifunctional nature of forests and trees means that all of these options are valid - and the following suggested targets and indicators can be integrated into the SDG framework whichever option is chosen.

10 key targets for forest and trees in SDGs

Strong evidence and public opinion in a wide range of countries worldwide, and substantial existing levels of international agreement, suggests that 10 key targets – here arranged in three groups – can be justified and incorporated into the SDGs (See Figure 1). These targets will need to be further developed to be specific, time-bound and measurable. The meeting in Geneva did not discuss or develop indicators for these targets, but two tentative examples of the kinds of indicators that may be needed are also offered under each target below:

Social and cultural benefits from forests and trees improved

1. Income and employment from forests and trees in rural areas increased

- \$/household from forest products and services, disaggregated by gender
- Number of jobs and \$ wages paid in forest resource production and management

2. Rights, tenure and governance of forests strengthened

- % secure local land and resource tenure
- % forest products from legal and sustainable sources

3. Food security and nutrition contribution of forests and trees enhanced

- % of households with access to nutritious forest foods and woodfuel
- % change in adoption of tree-based agricultural and soil conserving practices

Resilience and ecosystem benefits of forests enhanced

4. Forest resources quantity increased and/or quality improved

- Hectares under approved forest management plans
- m3 and quality/composition of trees outside forests

5. Biodiversity of forests conserved and improved

- Hectares under protection and management for optimising biodiversity
- % change in number/area of in situ and ex situ conservation of forest genetic resources

6. Water quantity and quality contribution of forests enhanced

- % change in water quality and quantity in and from forest areas
- Hectares of forests contributing to management for watershed conservation

7. Climate resilience and mitigation contribution of forests strengthened

- % change in forest management and trees in farming systems for climate adaptation
- % change in carbon stocks in forest and tree biomass and forest soil

Green economy contribution of forests and trees increased

8. Energy from forest resources increased, safe and sustainable

- % of forest biomass in total energy supply
- % change in safety and efficiency in forest biomass energy

9. Efficiency of forest resource use increased

- % change in efficiency of production and processing of wood and non-wood products
- % change in efficiency of use of wood and paper products

10. Investment in, and use of, products from sustainably managed forests increased

- \$ value change in investments in sustainably managed trees and forests
- \$ value change of exports and imports from sources verified as legal and sustainable

Key elements in the process needed from now on

During 2014, the process of developing the SDGs will likely see many twists and turns - even before the intergovernmental negotiations and, with luck, the sign-off by heads of state in late 2015. The meeting in Geneva did not discuss this process in detail but two areas in particular seem to need increased attention through specific initiatives:

- Dialogue with less clearly-heard voices and geographies. Targeted multi-stakeholder dialogue is needed, involving particular mixes of existing SDG framework 'insiders', with other relevant sectors, disciplines and major groups, and both public and private sector actors – in Africa, South Asia and Latin America in particular.
- Strengthen country capacity to define what to build on and how. Substantial efforts will be needed to develop capacity to adapt and apply the SDG framework in ways that are driven by national priorities, experience and the building blocks available. Initial consideration of the practicalities of SDG implementation could usefully help shape the framework itself.

In conclusion, it is hoped that these actions proceed not through 'special pleading' for forests, but by demonstrating and developing understanding of how trees and forests can be best incorporated in the SDG framework, and how that can stimulate action.

Annex 4 Report of second UNECE workshop on SDGs and forests

16 June 2014

1. The second workshop on Forest and SDGs took place in Geneva on 16 June 2014. Participants in the workshop were informed of developments in the ongoing discussions within the Open Working Group in New York on the Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, on how forests and sustainable forest management are currently reflected in text emerging from those discussions. This meeting was organized as a follow up to the first meeting on Forests and SDGs, which took place in Geneva in 22-23 January 2014 (Results are contained in Annex I).
2. Participants reviewed targets developed so far and considered possible forest-related indicators under those targets that are relevant to forests and SFM. Annex II contains a summary of those discussions, which might be helpful to better understand the linkages between broader targets and the contribution that forests make to sustainable development in specific areas.
3. Participants agreed that:
 - i. It is essential that at least one target under the relevant sustainable development goal(s) focuses on Sustainable Forest Management, in order to reflect the fundamental role that SFM plays for and in sustainable development.
 - ii. Forest-related indicators should be developed for all targets with a forest component. These include targets related to: biodiversity and ecosystem management, production and consumption patterns, energy, food security, water and sanitation, climate, poverty eradication, gender, health, cities and urban development.
 - iii. Over the years the forest sector has produced detailed datasets and indicators on forests and sustainable forest management and these information should be properly utilized when developing target-specific forest related indicators. Some of these indicators are contained in Annex III.
4. With reference to item iii, the meeting acknowledged the important role played by UNECE/FAO in collecting datasets and reporting on indicators and in contributing to the global discussion on the development of SDGs, forest related targets and indicators. The availability of more detailed indicators for the UNECE region, supported by the existing well developed and advanced monitoring and assessment system, allows for a better, more targeted and comprehensive monitoring of SFM. The use of a more detailed set of indicators at the regional level to support the monitoring and implementation of forest related SDG targets should be considered.
5. Participants appreciated and discussed the contribution by FAO and UNFF to the SDG process, including their current suggestion to the OWG co-chairs' paper of 2 June 2014 (Annex IV) and a proposed set of transformative forest-related targets (Annex V). The meeting suggested to annex those contributions to this report as they can assist current discussions in different forest related processes such as the next meeting of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) to take place in Rome from 23 to 27 June 2014, as well as the next round of the OWG discussions to take place in New York in July 2014.
6. Participants agreed to forward the results of the Second Workshop on Forests and SDGs to the 36th discussion of the UNECE-FAO Working Party on Forests Statistics, Economics and Management to take place in Geneva on the following day (17-18 June 2014) for its consideration and action. They suggested that the Working Party considers and discusses the recommendations above and forwards the results of the discussion as well as the report of the second UNECE-FAO Workshop on Forest and ADGs to the FAO Committee on Forestry (23-27 June, Rome) for its consideration.

Annex 5 International commitments and initiatives featuring forests

Forest sector instruments

- Global Objectives on Forests (to reverse the loss of forest cover, enhance forest-based benefits, increase protected and other areas of sustainably managed forests, and increase financial resources for SFM), the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (Forest Instrument) and the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management (SFM) agreed by UNFF
- The International Tropical Timber Agreement and the Criteria and Indicators (C&I) of SFM and Strategic Priorities of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO);
- C&I of Forest Europe
- Montreal Process and its C&I;
- FAO's Zero Illegal Deforestation initiative.

UNCED and the Rio Conventions

- Agenda 21 including its Forest Principles
- Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including four targets related to forests:
 - Aichi Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced
 - Aichi Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity
 - Aichi Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable
 - Aichi Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and decisions on REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing removals and forest carbon stocks)
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification and its concept of a land-degradation neutral world, embraced at Rio+20

Food, agriculture and land

- UN Zero Hunger Challenge
- FAO's Global Goals and Strategic Objectives
- Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration and related Bonn Challenge to restore degraded and deforested land

Trade and economic development

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
- Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) of the European Union
- UNEP Green Economy Initiative
- 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production adopted at Rio+20

Annex 6 Perceived priority targets from OWG proposal for SDGs

(a) 'SDG forest module' results of global consultations and surveys, July-August 2014

Proposed Targets	Proposed Goals																Impl
	Poverty 1	Food 2	Health 3	Educ 4	Gender 5	Water 6	Energy 7	Growth 8	Indust 9	Equality 10	Cities 11	C&P 12	Climate 13	Seas 14	Land 15	Gov 16	
1	Eradicate extreme poverty	End hunger, access to food				Universal and equitable access to water	Universal access to energy						Resilience and adaptive capacity		Conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems		Domestic resource mobilisation
2								Diversification, technological upgrading, innovation		Social, economic and political inclusion		Sustainable management and efficient use of NRs			Sustainable management of forests, restoration, afforestation, reforestation		
3		Agricultural productivity/incomes of small-scale incl. land access						Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises	Small-scale industrial and other enterprises	Equal opportunity, reduced inequality							Additional financial resources
4	Equal rights, access, ownership and control	Sustainable food production systems and resilient agriculture		Skills for employment, jobs, entrepreneurship													
5					Women's participation, equal opportunity	Integrated water resources management									Biodiv.	Reduce corruption and bribery	
6												Sustainable company practices and reporting				Effective, accountable institutions	Regional and international cooperation, knowledge
7																Responsive, inclusive, participatory decision-making	
8																	
9																	
10																	
11																	
12																	
13																	
14																	
15																	
16																	
17																	
18																	
19																	Measuring progress beyond GDP
a				Women's equal rights													
b								Technology development, research and innovation							Resources for forest management		
c		Food commodity markets, information															

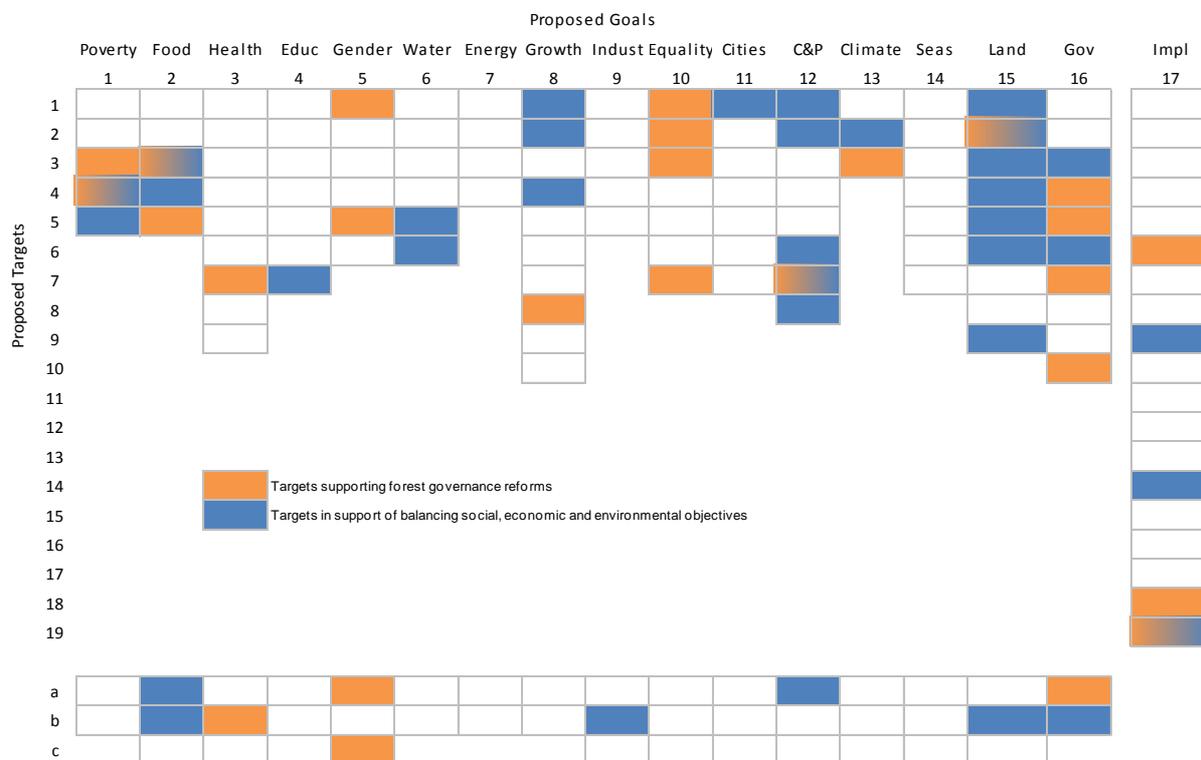
KEY:
 Direct contributions of forests to sustainable development outcomes
 Targets that provide necessary enabling conditions

Perceived priority targets for forests
 High (Yellow)
 Low (Light Green)

Source: Milledge (2014) <http://pubs.iied.org/G03839.html>

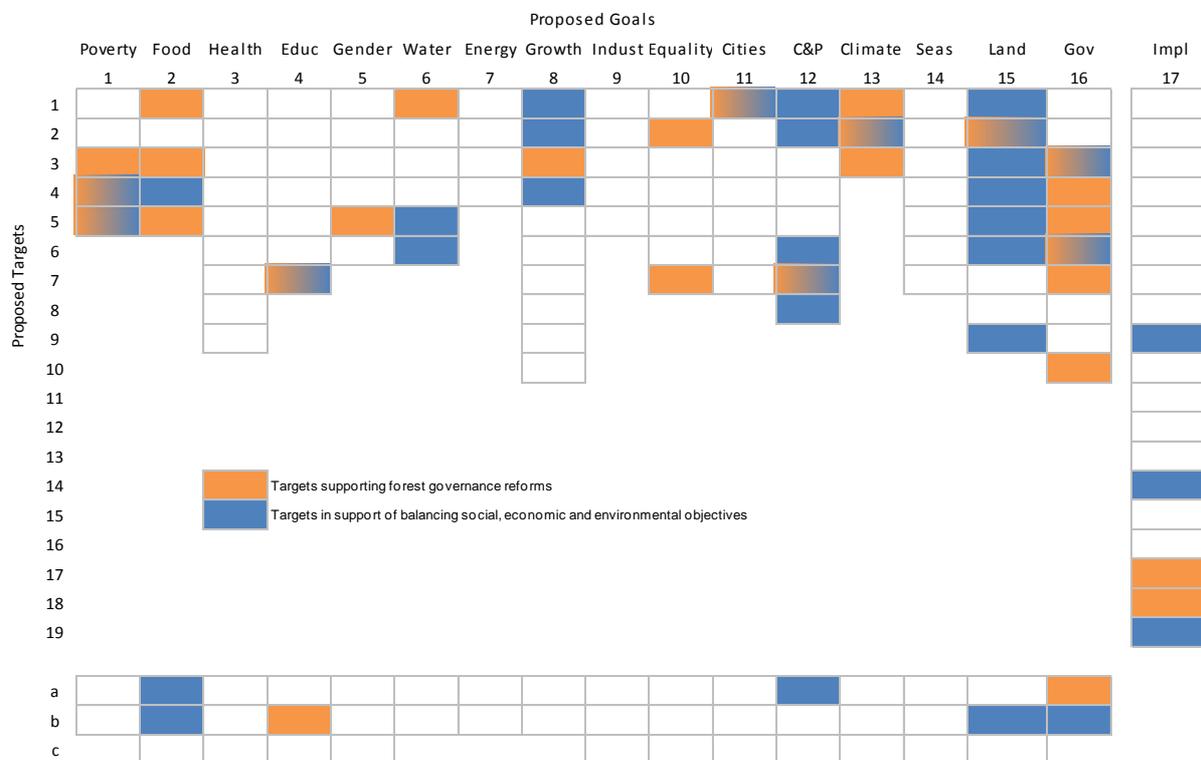


(b) Asia priority targets from OWG proposal for SDGs



Source: McNally (2014) <http://pubs.iied.org/G03850.html>

(c) Latin America & Caribbean priority targets from OWG proposal for SDGs



Source: Pasos (2014) <http://pubs.iied.org/G03871.html?c=forest>

Annex 7 Forest-related frameworks containing indicators

Improved Pan-European Criteria and Indicators (2002)
Montréal Process Criteria and Indicators for Temperate and Boreal Forests (2007)
The Tarapoto Process for Amazonia (1995)
Lepaterique Process for Central America (1997)
Dry Forests of South Asia (2000)
The Dry Zone Africa Process (1995)
The Near East Process (1996)
Revised ITTO C&I for the sustainable management of tropical forests (2005)
Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 - National Enquiry
CPF paper: Forest related targets and indicators for the sustainable development goals
Forests in Sustainable Development Goals – a view from Europe
Measuring progress of the forest sector towards a Green Economy (2014)
CIFOR'S generic list of Principles, Criteria and Indicators (as of May 1998)

This paper was produced in preparation for the 72nd session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Forests and Forest Industry held in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation, 18-21 November 2014, where discussions covered the role of forests in the post-2015 agenda. The paper was compiled from existing literature and describes the progress of work by the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section on forests in the post-2015 agenda in the UNECE region. It outlines the political process related to the development of the SDGs and the outcomes of the workshop on 'Forests and Sustainable Development Goals: a regional view'. The paper also summarises relevant analytical work conducted to date, and existing systems of monitoring and evaluation of all aspects related to the state of forests, forest resources, forest services and sustainable forest management, and the outlook for the goals framework, implementation and accountability from the perspective of forests.



Project Materials

Forestry

Keywords:

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Post-2015 agenda, Good governance



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