

Comparative Analysis of Forest-related Reporting to the United Nations Forum on Forests and other International Instruments and Organizations

Prepared for the Second Meeting of the CPF Task Force on Forest-Related Reporting, Cambridge, UK, 24-26 February 2003

S. Braatz, UNFF Secretariat

Introduction

This paper investigates the potential for possible streamlining of national reporting to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and other instruments and organizations, including the following:¹

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

It is a preliminary analysis intended to contribute to the work of the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-Related Reporting.

Background

The text below summarizes the decisions UNFF has made to date regarding reporting on forests to UNFF, as background to the analysis.

The scope of monitoring, assessment and reporting in UNFF and establishment of an ad-hoc expert group on the issue

At its first session, the United Nations Forum on Forests decided that its monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) function comprises the following three areas:

- Progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action,
- Progress towards sustainable management of all types of forests,
- Review of the effectiveness.

The Forum also agreed that an ad-hoc expert group (AHEG) on monitoring, assessment and reporting would be established to address this issue and to make recommendations to UNFF for its consideration. The terms of reference of the AHEG will be discussed at UNFF3, with a view to the constitution of the group and initiation of its work after the session.

¹ The Secretariat of the Convention to Combating Desertification (CCD) is also a member of the CPF Task Force. Although an analysis of the reporting requirements to the CCD was not included in this preliminary comparative analysis by the TF, it is intended that this will be done.

Reporting on progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

The Forum agreed at its first session that countries will, on a voluntary basis, report progress towards the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action (PfA) to UNFF.

At its second session, the Forum requested its secretariat to develop a suggested format to serve as a basis for countries to use and report on their implementation of the relevant IPF/IFF PfA at its third session. The format that was developed by the Secretariat requests information on the implementation of the proposals for action related to the elements under discussion at the third session of the Forum, namely: (i) economic aspects of forests, (ii) forest health and productivity, and (iii) maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs. Drawing upon the experience and lessons learned from national reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development, the UNFF Secretariat attempted to develop a simple and streamlined format, one that provides both a useful structure yet sufficient flexibility to facilitate reporting. It is significant to note that the questions were designed with the intent of drawing out the major lessons learned from countries' experiences in implementing the PfA, both to facilitate a useful discussion at the UNFF session and to identify areas in which international and regional cooperation and collaboration could assist countries' efforts. The content and format of the questions lend themselves to these objectives and are, therefore, significantly different than if the primary intent had been for countries to record that action had been taken or that progress had been made.

The Forum will be given the opportunity at UNFF3 to provide feedback on the approach and content of the reporting format. It will then decide how a suggested reporting format would be developed for the purposes of the fourth session of the Forum (probably either by the UNFF Secretariat or by the AHEG on MAR).

Reporting on progress toward sustainable forest management

UNFF has not made any decisions regarding if or how reporting on progress toward sustainable forest management would be done. At its first session, however, it did stress the importance of using criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management as a basis for reporting on sustainable forest management. It is expected that the AHEG on MAR will address the question of reporting on progress toward SFM and will develop recommendations for UNFF's consideration.

Review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (IAF)

Among other things, the review of the effectiveness of the IAF at UNFF5 will rely on information on progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA (i.e. action taken), which is one of the criteria for the review that UNFF agreed upon at its second session. Although progress toward SFM is not one of the criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the IAF, it is an overriding goal of UNFF and is an indirect means of assessing the effectiveness/positive impact of actions taken. The AHEG is expected to recommend to UNFF how the review could be carried out.

Analysis of the Potential of Streamlining of Reporting to UNFF on Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and Forest-Related Reporting to Other Instruments and Organizations

Assumptions underlying the analysis

The following analysis makes three assumptions about decisions that UNFF might make regarding monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress toward implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA, which has a bearing on the following analysis:

1) UNFF will adopt for UNFF4 the approach taken to national reporting for UNFF3: that is, to report on the IPF/IFF PfA relevant to the topics on the agenda of that session, which are: i) traditional forest-related knowledge; ii) forest-related scientific knowledge; iii) social and cultural aspects of forests; iv) monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions; and vi) criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.

2) “The review of progress” on the agenda of the fifth session of UNFF in 2005 will review progress in implementation of all IPF/IFF PfA. This would involve a review of progress made regarding all UNFF elements, including those addressed at the second, third and fourth sessions, and could draw upon information made available through reporting to other international instruments and organizations.

For these reasons, the analysis that follows compares reporting to UNFF on progress in implementing IPF/IFF proposals PfA (i.e. those relevant to the UNFF elements addressed at UNFF2, 3 and 4) with the reporting requirements indicated for each instrument/organization.

Overview of the relevant reporting requirements

The following reporting requirements are considered to be most relevant to reporting to UNFF on implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA:

CBD: Draft Format for the Third National Report to CBD – section on forest biological diversity (e-mail from M. Guariguata, 15/01/03)

ITTO: Reporting formats for C&I for sustainable management of natural tropical forests: reporting questionnaire for Indicators at the National Level

CSD: Guidelines for national reporting to CSD8 related to forests (2000)
Country profile format (for reporting to World Summit on Sustainable Development)

FAO: Various (see list of "Reporting requests of FAO")

Analysis of links with reporting to CBD

Reporting requirement: Draft Format for the Third National Report to CBD

Analysis: There is high potential for some streamlining between this reporting and that to UNFF on implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA. The approach of the reports are similar; they both address action taken and progress achieved in commitments made to the respective bodies. Because the IPF/IFF PfA were taken into consideration when the CBD expanded programme of work on

forest biological diversity was developed, with the intent to maximize synergies between the two instruments, the programme of work and the IPF/IFF PfA have many common objectives and activities. Annex 1 indicates the points of convergence (i.e. potential overlap) between reporting to UNFF (at UNFF2, 3 and 4) and to CBD in its third national reports.²

Geographic coverage: both global

Timing: Reporting to CBD is due in 2005, in time for presentation to COP 8 in 2006.

Proposals:

- Countries could refer to their reports submitted to UNFF 3 and 4 when similar information is called for in their reports to CBD in 2005.
- UNFF, for its fifth session in 2005 could use the national reports to CBD to supplement information provided in national reports to UNFF2, 3 and 4. However, this would require that countries submit their reports by January 2005, or it will be too late for UNFF to be able to use the information.

Analysis of links with reporting to ITTO

Reporting requirement: Reporting formats for C&I for sustainable management of natural tropical forests: reporting questionnaire for Indicators at the national level

Analysis: There are some links with reporting to UNFF, in particular as regards reporting on ITTO's indicators of criterion 1 (Enabling conditions for sustainable forest management), but also on some indicators of criterion 7 (Economic, social and cultural aspects) and of criteria 2-6. Annex 1 provides the detailed analysis. The nature of the information requested by ITTO on these points related to UNFF is slightly different from the information sought by UNFF, however. The emphasis of reporting to ITTO is on whether measures needed for SFM are in place or not. As currently designed, UNFF reporting focuses on the lessons learned and constraints encountered in taking action. ITTO reporting could provide complementary information to UNFF on progress achieved. Conversely, reporting to UNFF could provide useful information for the purposes of ITTO on why progress has not been as rapid as hoped. A more in-depth analysis of the linkages between the two reporting requirements is merited (upon examination of national reports submitted to ITTO) to determine whether there is any potential for streamlining reporting and to clarify how complementary information could be used by both bodies.

Geographic coverage: ITTO reporting is being done only by producer country members of ITTO (36 countries)

Timing: Reporting to ITTO is in progress; some countries have already submitted their reports and others are due shortly. It is too late for reporting to UNFF to be of benefit for reporting to ITTO on the short-term, however the ITTO reports may provide useful input to national reports to UNFF4 and for the overall review of progress in implementing the PfA to be carried out at UNFF5.

Proposal: The guidelines for national reporting to UNFF4 should refer to reports submitted to ITTO, indicating that countries that have already submitted relevant information to ITTO need

² It should be noted that for the purposes of this analysis, national reporting on implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action was compared with reporting to CBD on forests in the third national reports. It may be however,

not report on those points again. Similarly, an effort should be made to use all relevant information from national reports to ITTO's for the purposes of the review of the effectiveness of UNFF.

Analysis of links with reporting to CSD

Reporting requirements:

Guidelines for national reporting to CSD8 related to forests (2000)

Country profile format (for reporting to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002)

Analysis: There are close links between reporting to CSD and UNFF, as to be expected as CSD is the framework body for UNFF. Reporting to CSD8 reflects issues discussed and commitments made by IPF and IFF, whereas reporting to WSSD provides an overall view of developments in the forest sector contributing to progress toward sustainable forest management.

Geographic coverage: global

Timing: 2000 and 2002, respectively. No decision has been made about future reporting under the CSD process.

Proposal: The information provided for these two reports provide useful input for reporting to UNFF. Potential of streamlining reporting to UNFF and CSD is very high. Consideration should be made of using reporting to UNFF as the basis for extracting information for the purposes of CSD reporting, thus eliminating the need for countries to report again to CSD on forests.

Analysis of links with reporting to CSD

Reporting to FAO: Relevant reports listed in the document "Reporting Requests by FAO," as follows:

- i) Country reporting to Regional Forestry Commissions (RFC): National reports to RFC have been very similar in approach to that used by UNFF, in that reporting has focused on recent developments in the country's forest sector (institutional and policy changes, new initiatives related to forest management; regional and international cooperation, etc.). There is good potential for linking reporting to RFC more closely to reporting to UNFF and perhaps for streamlining reporting to RFC. This should be explored.
- ii) FAOLEX: While this database on forest-related legislation does not directly serve the needs of national reporting to UNFF (which asks how developments in forest legislation is providing enhanced support for SFM), it does represent a valuable repository of information upon which an analysis of trends in legislation can be made.
- iii) Lists of focal points: The reporting format for UNFF3 asks for the names, title and contact information for i) the Head of Forestry and ii) UNFF national focal point for the country. This could be a permanent feature of national reports to UNFF. The information provided to UNFF can contribute to FAO list of focal points. The potential to coordinate the collection and dissemination of focal point information should be investigated.

Analysis of Linkages Between Other Forest-related Reporting and Reporting to UNFF on Progress toward Sustainable Forest Management

As indicated above, UNFF has not made any decision regarding reporting to UNFF on progress toward sustainable forest management, but recognizes criteria and indicators for SFM as a valuable basis for monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress toward SFM. For this reason, an analysis of reporting to regional and international C&I processes and collection of information relevant to indicators of SFM – and possible harmonization and streamlining, is useful for UNFF MAR purposes.

The following reporting requirements addressed in this report are particularly relevant:

UNFCCC: Guidelines on reporting and review (annex I parties, 1999); Guidelines for the preparation of national communications (non-annex I parties); Tables of the common reporting format for reporting on land use, land-use change and forestry (2002), and Revised 1996 IPCC guidelines for national greenhouse gas inventories

FAO: Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA)

ITTO: Reporting formats for C&I for sustainable management of natural tropical forests: reporting questionnaire for Indicators at the National Level

(Other information is also relevant, including the forest products data collected through the joint forest products questionnaire and information gathered by FAO on various forest-related topics.)

Most of the information collected by these bodies is of a quantitative nature. Much of it relates to forest resources and the attributes that contribute to environmental, economic and social benefits.

Harmonization of data and information across these and other sources of forest-related information, will assist with assessing progress toward sustainable forest management for international purposes, including for UNFF. Having a common understanding of the forest-related definitions used for the collection of this information is essential to any effort to harmonize information and streamline reporting.

Conclusions

- 1) There appears to be potential for some streamlining of reporting to UNFF on progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action with reporting to CBD and ITTO, and any future reporting on forests to CSD. Timing of reporting, however, poses some constraints to streamlining, however, opportunities exist for drawing upon information from reports to other instruments and organizations for supplementary or complementary information.
- 2) Data collected for UNFCCC's national greenhouse inventories and national communications, and reporting on land use, land-use change and forestry, and much of the information collected for for FAO's FRA, and ITTO's national criteria and indicators of SFM is highly quantitative in nature and is more directly relevant to UNFF's MAR function related to progress toward SFM.
- 3) The types of information collected varies considerably among and within reporting requirements. For the purposes of further TF analysis, it would be useful to distinguish these types of information collected. Three types are identified, as follows:

- Forest products (production, consumption and trade (quantity and value)
 - Forest resources and resource use
 - Enabling environment for SFM (policies, legislation, institutional framework, programmes) – and covering two types of reporting: i) actions taken, and ii) lessons learned
- Information on the first two are highly quantitative in nature, whereas in the case of the third, it relates to action taken is tends to be more descriptive.

Recommendations

1) Three regional and international C&I processes are at the stage of reporting; in addition to reporting to ITTO addressed here, countries are reporting to the Pan-European and Montreal C&I processes. It would be useful to involve these two other processes to participate in the work of the Task Force as relates to looking at information harmonization, streamlining reporting and including their national reports on the Reporting Portal.

2) Now that the TF's initial analysis has indicated areas of reporting common to the various TF members, it would be useful to work in smaller groups to carry out further analysis of streamlining and information sharing possibilities were potential exist, namely, between:

- UNFF, CBD and ITTO on "qualitative" information (ie related to an "enabling environment for SFM"
- FAO, UNFCCC, ITTO on forest resource and resource use data

(Work on forest products has already been accomplished through the joint forest sector questionnaire. One consideration might be to looking into including data related to nonn-wood forest products in the questionnaire, rather than having a separate data collection effort by FAO.)

3) The UNFF Secretariat should work with the CSD Secretariat to explore the potential for streamlining reporting on forests to CSD, with the possibility of using reporting to UNFF for this purpose.

4) The TF might consider supporting the continuation of the work on forest-related definitions begun by FAO, UNFCCC and other partners, by stimulating follow-on work to improve understanding of or harmonizing the definitions that specifically relate to forest-related reporting addressed by the TF. This would be done with a view to improving comparability of information and streamlining reporting.

5) Coordinate information collection and dissemination of the forest-related focal points (done by FAO and UNFF Secretariat).

Comparative Analysis of National Reporting to UNFF, CBD and ITTO

National reporting to UNFF on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action (PfA)	CBD Questionnaire on Forests (for Third National Reports)	ITTO's reporting questionnaire for indicators of SFM at national level
UNFF 3: May 2003		
1. General questions: Provide additional or new information further to that provided in your reports to CSD on:		
1.1 Assessment (i.e. of relevance, priority, implementation status, planned actions) of IPF/IFF PfA in national context		Cr1-1
1.2 Development and implementation of your national forest programme (or similar policy framework for forests)		Cr1-1
1.3 Mechanisms or initiatives to facilitate stakeholder participation in forest sector planning		Cr1-8
2. Economic aspects of forests: provide information on i) activities undertaken, ii) progress made, iii) lessons learned iv) constraints encountered (financial, technological, capacity), v) initiatives planned; and vi) role of enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination to facilitate progress in:		
2.1 Valuation of forest goods and services		Cr7-1
2.2 Amount, scope or quality of market data and information for wood and non-wood forest products and substitutes		Cr7-2 Cr7-3
2.3 Use of economic and policy instruments to facilitate progress toward SFM (e.g. improved tax policies and forest revenue collection systems)	542	Cr1-3
3.1 Efforts to reduce negative impacts of trade		--
3.2 Participation in forest certification and labeling schemes and work toward mutual recognition and comparability of such schemes		--
3.3 Efforts to reduce illegal trade in wood or non-wood forest products		Cr1-1 Cr1-7
4. Forest health and productivity: If relevant, provide information on recent national strategies or programmes to minimize damaging air pollution. Indicate if your country is involved in any international cooperation efforts at strengthening scientific knowledge, increasing information access or reducing impacts of long-range air pollution on forests.	537	Cr3-1
5. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs: Indicate progress made and lessons learned in efforts to harmonize or make compatible policy frameworks in your country (e.g. nfp, NBSAPs, NAP) that collectively address the full range of forest values	532 535 541	Cr1-1
6. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs, cont.: Provide information on recent efforts to assess long-term trends in national supply and demand for forest products and services and whether your nfp (or similar policy framework) takes into consideration future needs for forest goods and services. Provide information on how enhanced cooperation at regional and international levels, including through UNFF, could facilitate implementation.	541 539	Cr1-1 Cr1-7
7. Provide any additional relevant information or emerging issues related to: i) economic aspects of forests; ii) forest health and productivity, and iii) maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs.	537	Cr3 Cr7

8. Describe process of preparing the report, including extent of stakeholder participation, and the lessons learned.		Cr1-7
UNFF 4: 2004		
Traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK): i) enhance capacity of indigenous people to identify and promote application of TFRK; ii) develop and implement national policies and legislation to maintain, protect and apply TFRK and ensure the equitable sharing of related benefits; iii) promote research, networks and training related to TFRK		Cr7-6 Cr7-16
Forest-related scientific knowledge: i) strengthen forest research by formulating national policies, programmes and strategies and by coordinating the implementation of research programmes; ii) mobilize resources, foster partnerships, build capacity and strengthen research institutions, networks and consortia for forest research at local, national and international levels; iii) strengthen linkages between forest science and forest policy and planning processes; enhance widespread access to forest research and information systems, iv) extend research into forest inventory and monitoring techniques, including developing methodologies for valuation of all forest goods and services.		Cr1-2 Cr1-4 Cr1-6
Social and cultural aspects: i) implement policies to secure land tenure and achieve equitable sharing of benefits from SFM by local communities, forest owners and indigenous people; ii) integrate forest issues into poverty alleviation and food security strategies; iii) improve the collection and exchange of information on all forest values, including social aspects	540 543	Cr7-6 Cr7-8 Cr7-10 Cr7-16
Criteria and indicators of SFM: i) further develop and promote the use of C&I for SFM and support efforts to harmonize associated concepts and definitions; ii) encourage the further development of biodiversity indicators that are complementary to existing forest C&I.		
Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions: i) develop harmonized, cost-effective, comprehensive national reporting formats and data systems incorporating relevant C&I for SFM; ii) prepare national information on SFM, including forest resource assessments and statistics on forest products and services; iii) further develop global forest resource assessments; iv) monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of national forest programmes; v) develop global guidelines for national interpretation and implementation of IUCN categories of protected areas and contribute to a global and regional assessment of the status of protected areas.	547	Cr1-7 Cr4-1
UNFF 2: March 2002		
Combating deforestation and forest degradation: i) analyze underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation; ii) develop and implement policies and strategies, inside and outside the sector, to combat deforestation and forest degradation; iii) raise awareness of the issues related to deforestation and forest degradation	537 542 543	Cr1-1 Cr1-9 Cr2-5
Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems: i) develop and implement appropriate planning and management strategies for protection and conservation of the full range of forest values on an ecosystem basis within and outside protected areas; ii) develop and implement partnerships in planning and management of forest conservation areas; iii) enhance financing to support forest conservation; iv) improve methods to assess the effectiveness of protected areas and their management; v) establish transboundary conservation areas.	534 536	Cr5-7 Cr5-1 Cr4-10 Cr4-4 Cr7-18
Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover: i) establish and manage plantations to enhance the production of forest goods and services; ii) promote research into the rehabilitation and extension of dryland forests; iii) consider the needs of developing and low forest cover and support their forest programmes; iv) address dryland forest issues at the international, national and local levels; v) develop and support partnerships, including with indigenous and local communities, to reduce pressure on dryland forests and promote their sustainable management and rehabilitation	538	Cr6-6 Cr7-18
Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded land and promotion of natural and planted forests: i) enhance	538	Cr2-5

reforestation, afforestation, forest conservation and forest restoration, including through the establishment and management of planted forests and trees outside forests; ii) raise awareness of the contribution of planted and natural forests in the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests in environmentally critical areas.		
Concepts, terminology and definitions: i) develop global guidelines for national interpretation and implementation of IUCN categories of protected areas; ii) work for a common understanding of forest-related definitions, including of low forest cover and to improve forest resource assessments	544	