

## Evaluation, comments and points from UNEP as regards the streamlining of forest-related reporting formats

Presented by UNEP-WCMC

### Background

1. The first meeting of the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-Related Reporting agreed that members of the Task Force should analyze the existing (and/or foreseen) questionnaires/reporting formats on forests and forest-related matters within:

| Organization | Questionnaire / Reporting format  | Source  |
|--------------|---|---|
| FAO          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed Questionnaire/Tables of Global Variables for FRA 2005</li> <li>Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (2001)</li> <li>FRA 2000 global tables</li> </ul>  | <p>e-mail of T. Vahanen, 11 December 2002</p> <p>e-mail of T. Vahanen, 11 December 2002</p> <p><a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/index.jsp?siteId=101&amp;sitetreeId=5460&amp;langId=1&amp;geoId=-1">http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/index.jsp?siteId=101&amp;sitetreeId=5460&amp;langId=1&amp;geoId=-1</a></p>  |
| ITTO         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (2002)</li> <li>Reporting formats for C &amp; I for sustainable management of natural tropical forests                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Reporting questionnaire for Indicators at the Forest Management Unit Level</li> <li>(ii) Reporting questionnaire for Indicators at the National Level</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><a href="http://www.itto.or.jp/inside/joint_forest/index.html">http://www.itto.or.jp/inside/joint_forest/index.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.itto.or.jp/inside/indicators.html">http://www.itto.or.jp/inside/indicators.html</a></p>   |
| CSD          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines for national reporting to CSD8 related to forests (2000)</li> <li>Country profile format (2002)</li> <li>Explanatory note (2002)</li> </ul>   | <p><a href="http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natinfo/guide2000/foreng.htm">http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natinfo/guide2000/foreng.htm</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natinfo/niau/csd10/cp_format_en.doc">http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natinfo/niau/csd10/cp_format_en.doc</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natinfo/niau/csd10/expnote_2002e.doc">http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natinfo/niau/csd10/expnote_2002e.doc</a></p>  |
| UNFF         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines for the preparation of voluntary national reports to the third session of the UNFF (2003) including a suggested reporting format</li> </ul>   | <p><a href="http://www.un.org/esa/forests/docs/eng_voluntary_repformat.pdf">http://www.un.org/esa/forests/docs/eng_voluntary_repformat.pdf</a></p>  |
| CBD          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Format for National Reporting on Forest Biological Diversity, Decision VI/22</li> </ul>  | <p>e-mail of M. Guariguata, 16 December 2003</p>  |
| UNFCCC       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidelines on reporting and review (annex I parties, 1999)</li> <li>Guidelines for the preparation of national communications (non-annex I parties)</li> <li>Tables of the common reporting format for reporting on land use, land-use change and forestry (2002)</li> <li>Revised 1996 IPCC guidelines for national greenhouse gas inventories</li> </ul>                                   | <p><a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/webview/common/media.jsp?mediaId=4956&amp;geoId=-1&amp;langId=1">http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/webview/common/media.jsp?mediaId=4956&amp;geoId=-1&amp;langId=1</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/webview/common/media.jsp?mediaId=4957&amp;geoId=-1&amp;langId=1">http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/webview/common/media.jsp?mediaId=4957&amp;geoId=-1&amp;langId=1</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/webview/common/media.jsp?mediaId=4959&amp;geoId=-1&amp;langId=1">http://www.fao.org/forestry/forestry2/webview/common/media.jsp?mediaId=4959&amp;geoId=-1&amp;langId=1</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gl/invs1.htm">http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/gl/invs1.htm</a></p> |

2. To facilitate this work, FAO has circulated on 11 December 2002 a list of five "points" which should be taken into account in this analysis. The task of UNEP (and FAO) in this context was to look at all the questionnaires/reporting formats. The outcome of UNEP's analysis is structured/presented in this document along the lines of the points circulated by FAO as follows:
  - Annex 1 General comments regarding the scope and user-friendliness of the questionnaires/formats
  - Annex 2 Overlaps and gaps in information requested
  - Annex 3 Suggestions for the terminology, concepts and definitions
  - Annex 4 References to existing sources of information in members own databases, reports or publications
  - Annex 5 Proposals to harmonize/streamline reporting
3. Furthermore, UNEP-WCMC has elaborated upon the feasibility of introducing/applying a modular approach<sup>1</sup> to harmonize and streamline forest-related reporting. Initial considerations in this aspect are given in Annex 6.

### **Action requested**

4. The CPF Task Force is invited to **EXAMINE** the outcome of the analysis carried out by UNEP-WCMC as presented in Annexes 1-6 and to **AGREE** whether and how some of the proposals should be followed up (e.g. by separate studies), in particular the proposals for:
  - a. compiling existing terminology, concepts and definitions (cf. Annex 3);
  - b. establishing a leaflet to be included in the circulation of forest-related questionnaires/reporting formats (cf. Annex 5);
  - c. 'linking' of forest-related data and information collected by different CPF members (cf. Annex 5);
  - d. investigating in more detail the feasibility and practicability of applying a modular approach in the streamlining of forest-related reporting (cf. Annex 6).

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<sup>1</sup> The concept to harmonize/streamline national reporting by defining and using 'information modules' was explained and reflected upon in UNEP-WCMC's presentation and documentation submitted to the first meeting of the CPF Task Force.

## Comments regarding the scope and user-friendliness of the questionnaires/formats

In the time available, UNEP-WCMC was not able to examine all the various questionnaires and reporting formats listed on the cover page of this document comprehensively and in a structured approach.

The following is just a compilation of points and observations made by various colleagues and experts at UNEP-WCMC when 'screening' the texts and formats. The list is not intended to be complete or all-inclusive.

### General comments

- **Reference to the CPF and CPF streamlining web portal.** Ideally, all reporting formats should include a reference and a hyperlink to the CPF portals and the information (such as reporting formats, previous national reports etc. of the various organizations) contained on this site. A standardized text to be used by all organizations could be developed by the CPF Task Force. Those existing reporting formats which cannot easily be changed/revised, such a standard text could be included in the message/letter accompanying the format.  
Alternatively, the reference to the CPF web portals could be included in a leaflet accompanying the questionnaires/reporting formats (cf. proposal in Annex 5).
- **Cross-references to forest-related data and information available/collected under the reporting to other organizations.** Such cross-references could be inserted in each format where appropriate. The proposed Questionnaire/Tables of Global Variables for FRA 2005 already include a dedicated heading "Relevance to other processes" for this.
- **Timing and synchronization of reporting.** Not all reporting formats state clearly the base/reference year or period and the interval for reporting. It would also be helpful to state when (i) the last report has been made, and how it can be accessed, (ii) the next report can be expected.
- **Links to equivalent or related information requirements.** Wherever possible, reporting formats should be adapted to include explicit links to equivalent or related information requirements within other processes.
- **Qualitative and quantitative reporting.** Streamlining of forest-related reporting has to take into account that the reporting formats of the various international organizations and conventions differ considerably in terms of what type of information is requested.

UNFF, CSD and CBD focus on qualitative information on policies, measures and activities taken at the national level, mainly in response to recommendations and decisions adopted under the various international frameworks. Country returns are mainly analyzed with a view to setting priorities at the international level for further work under the relevant organization and convention, but, by nature, do not provide information on the state of forests and on the effect of national actions and programmes. The ability to compare responses between countries is very limited. Formats are in MS WORD and require mostly narrative, 'free-text' replies.

On the other end of the spectrum, very detailed, focussed quantitative information is requested in the formats adopted under ITTO (trade) and UNFCCC (greenhouse gas). Countries are required to calculate and return numerical data, which can be used to assess the effectiveness of national and international measures and, if deemed appropriate, to establish trends over time or comparisons between countries. Formats are in MS EXCEL.

### UNFF: **Guidelines for the preparation of voluntary national reports to the third session of the UNFF (2003) including a suggested reporting format**

It is understood that the guidelines were developed on the basis of the findings and recommendations of the meeting of the national focal points on improving future national reporting to the CSD (New York, 12-13 February 2002), which, *inter alia*, called for guidelines that are flexible to allow countries to express specific

national interests and concerns but within a standardized format; are simple and streamlined (i.e., with fewer, but more clustered questions); include national impact analysis rather than just accomplishments alone; and ask for forward looking views on various actions needed to be undertaken at various levels.

- The guidelines, as well as the appended proposed reporting format, are very comprehensive, but address each matter/issue in a very general way without stipulating or providing guidance on what specific information should be provided. Some suggestion of types of information sources within-country would be helpful.
- It is useful that format builds on CSD profiles and the examples of types of actions that might correspond to the various proposals are extremely helpful.
- The guidelines do not (or not very clearly) set out a specific reference year or time period for which information should be provided.
- The format is very open and narrative in nature, giving respondents a good deal of flexibility, but making analysis potentially difficult. The proposed format focuses entirely on response, but returns will be in 'free-text' format and it can be expected that they will vary considerably in format, content and comprehensiveness, which will impede the analysis of the returns.
- Reference is made extensively to the collection of relevant data and information under CSD, but not to other CPF members or other international conventions and organizations.
- The format asks for information on 'efforts to reduce illegal trade'. Most, if not all, countries which will receive the UNFF format will be members of CITES, and therefore should have information available from their CITES focal points. A list of trees listed by CITES is attached at the end of this Annex.
- There is no separate glossary or list of definitions.

#### **FAO Proposed Questionnaire/Tables of Global Variables for FRA 2005**

- A well thought out reporting format with very clear forms. Excellent navigation within the format due to numerous (hyper-)links on all sheets, which is a useful way of making all relevant information accessible.
- The spreadsheet format of the questionnaire needs a little bit 'to get used to', in particular for users with limited experience in EXCEL. For those users, it might be helpful to further develop the 'overview' sheet into a kind of 'file map' visualizing the various links and connections between the individual sheets, i.e. similar to site maps on most web sites.
- The print default for each page should be 'A4' and not 'letter' as currently set.
- It is not quite clear whether only numerical data are required or whether respondents are also asked to provide 'free-form' text responses.
- Reference to the CPF portals and forest-related reporting schemes under other CPF members could be made on the overview sheet. It is noted that on each data sheet, it is foreseen to refer to "Relevance to other processes".
- Providing links to expanded documentation of the criteria from the sheets could be helpful.
- The space for historical compatibility is critical and excellent. Similarly, the 'Relevance to Other Processes' box should be very helpful, though links may need to be via an intermediate section on similarities and differences.
- Some of the definitions have yet to be completed – e.g. for the classes within forest characteristics.
- There is (as yet?) no reference to methodology which should be used (or has been used) in calculating the data.
- There is potential to streamline the carbon stock variable/sheet with the UNFCCC tables.

#### **ITTO Reporting questionnaire for Indicators at the Forest Management Unit Level**

- This is a long and very comprehensive questionnaire where the relationships between the questions and parameters and the criteria are very clearly stated. The sheer magnitude of the document may make it rather daunting, and (hyper-)linking among related sections (e.g. between 2.4 and 5.1) would be more helpful than just cross referencing.
- In many cases very clear guidance is given as to the likely sources or types of information needed to respond. Guidance on likely custodians of that info would be helpful.

- Suggestions about cross-sector consultation within government and extra-governmental in-country sources of information would be useful.

#### **ITTO      Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (2002)**

- Format appears to be entirely focused on trade and on wood as commodity.
- Definitions of products are very clear.
- No information about sourcing in terms of forest type or management classes.
- Ought to link to CITES reporting, but lack of species information makes this difficult.

#### **CSD      Guidelines for national reporting to CSD8 related to forests (2000)**

- Very general format, which requires information on a number of issues which are addressed in more detail in forest-related reporting and data collection schemes under other international organizations and conventions. Some of these are being referred to (e.g. those under FAO), but these references are not complete.
- Format requires narrative 'free-text' response, which means that the extent and detail of the returns will vary considerably between countries.
- Some of the information requested could be better collected by using a two (yes/no) or three tier (yes/no/a little) tick-box system, complemented, as appropriate with text box sections for further information (i.e. the system proposed for the CBD national reporting).

#### **CBD      Draft Format for National Reporting on Forest Biological Diversity, Decision VI/22**

- Format focuses entirely on response, largely at policy level. It does little to address the status and trends of forest biodiversity.
- Similar to the general national reporting under the CBD, the format of the questions is relatively straightforward and the three tier answer scheme (yes, no, a bit) enables a quick analysis of the responses with a view to identify and prioritize further forest-related work under the Convention. However, the questions are so broad that they are open to affirmative answering without any very specific assessment in mind. Narrative answers in the boxes "Further comments and additional information" will differ considerably between countries, making their analysis very difficult.
- Some guidance on the kinds of actions that would constitute progress under each heading would be useful.
- Suggestions about cross-sector consultation within government and extra-governmental in-country sources of info (and actors) could be helpful.

#### **UNFCCC    Guidelines on reporting and review (Annex I parties, 1999)**

- Format clear. Background documentation somewhat daunting.
- The Tables would benefit from a (hyper-)link to relevant definitions and explanations, e.g. for the 'Greenhouse Gas Source and Sink Categories'. At present, it is difficult to find such definitions without going through the extensive background documentation. Any such definitions should acknowledge similarities and differences to definitions used in the forest-related reporting to other international organizations and conventions.
- It would help if respondents could be encouraged to source individual estimates rather than just fill in a general documentation box.

## CITES Tree Species

| Species                              | Appendix | Use              |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| <b>ARAUCARIACEAE</b>                 |          |                  |
| <i>Araucaria araucana</i> ** +217    | I        |                  |
| <i>Araucaria araucana</i> * -112 #1  | II       | Timber           |
| <b>BERBERIDACEAE</b>                 |          |                  |
| <i>Podophyllum hexandrum</i> =412 #2 | II       | Medicinal        |
| <b>CARYOCARACEAE</b>                 |          |                  |
| <i>Caryocar costaricense</i> #1      | II       | (Timber)         |
| <b>CUPRESSACEAE</b>                  |          |                  |
| <i>Fitzroya cupressoides</i>         | I        | Timber           |
| <i>Pilgerodendron uviferum</i>       | I        | Timber           |
| <b>JUGLANDACEAE</b>                  |          |                  |
| <i>Oreomunnea pterocarpa</i> =428 #1 | II       | (Timber)         |
| <b>LEGUMINOSAE (FABACEAE)</b>        |          |                  |
| <i>Dalbergia nigra</i>               | I        | Timber           |
| <i>Pericopsis elata</i> #5           | II       | Timber           |
| <i>Platymiscium pleiostachyum</i> #1 | II       | (Timber)         |
| <i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i> #6     | II       | Timber/Medicinal |
| <b>MAGNOLIACEAE</b>                  |          |                  |
| <i>Talauma hodgsonii</i> #1          | III      |                  |
| <b>MELIACEAE</b>                     |          |                  |
| <i>Swietenia humilis</i> #1          | II       | Timber           |
| <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>         | II       | Timber           |
| <i>Swietenia mahagoni</i> #5         | II       | Timber           |
| <b>PALMAE (ARECACEAE)</b>            |          |                  |
| <i>Chrysalidocarpus decipiens</i> #1 | II       |                  |
| <i>Neodypsis decaryi</i> #1          | II       |                  |
| <b>PINACEAE</b>                      |          |                  |
| <i>Abies guatemalensis</i>           | I        | (Timber)         |
| <b>PODOCARPACEAE</b>                 |          |                  |
| <i>Podocarpus parlatorei</i>         | I        |                  |
| <i>Podocarpus neriifolius</i> #1     | III      |                  |
| <b>ROSACEAE</b>                      |          |                  |
| <i>Prunus africana</i> #1            | II       | Timber/Medicinal |
| <b>RUBIACEAE</b>                     |          |                  |
| <i>Balmea stormiae</i>               | I        | (Timber)         |
| <b>TAXACEAE</b>                      |          |                  |
| <i>Taxus wallichiana</i> =436 #8     | II       | Medicinal        |
| <b>THYMELEACEAE (AQUILARIACEAE)</b>  |          |                  |
| <i>Aquilaria malaccensis</i> #1      | II       | Medicinal        |
| <b>ZYGOPHYLLACEAE</b>                |          |                  |
| <i>Guaiacum officinale</i> #1        | II       | Timber           |
| <i>Guaiacum sanctum</i> #1           | II       | Timber           |

### Overlaps and gaps in information requested

A major gap addressed only by the ITTO and UNFCCC questionnaires is the issue of forest types and their management, protection and conversion. This is highly relevant to biodiversity at both ecosystem and species levels. UNFCCC addresses these in a bioclimatic sense for carbon accounting, while ITTO leaves the classification scheme to the country. The approaches need somehow to be cross-referenced, perhaps by requesting description of local types in bioclimatic terms. The national classifications are the only ones that will provide insight into status and trends in “unique forest types” as discussed under both CBD and UNFF.

There is potential confusion arising from the contrast between land use (forest land) and land cover (tree cover) based data. The distinction needs to be acknowledged in supporting materials for either approach.

### Suggestions for the terminology, concepts and definitions

Most, if not all, CPF members have adopted some kind of guidance, reference material and/or definitions in support of their existing forest-related reporting schemes, however:

- all could do with guidance on likely custodians of information/data;
- also helpful would be guidance on internal consistency/constraints to clarify definitions. In other words, it would help to explain which subsets should add up to 100% of land area, 100% of forest cover, etc.;
- somehow the difference between land use and land cover based data in supporting carbon accounting needs to be made absolutely clear in FAO, UNFCCC and other materials;
- the UNFCCC formats should clearly refer to forests when listing ecosystems (they mostly just list climatic characteristics for tropics, which could be misleading).

It is recognized that harmonization of terminology, concepts and definitions between different conventions and organizations might in certain cases not be appropriate, in particular where the meaning of terms and wording have been defined in the light of the specific mandate of the convention/organization concerned. Even in cases where harmonization would seem necessary and beneficial, it might require a large effort and lengthy international deliberations.

The CPF Task Force might therefore consider to address this matter in a step-wise approach as follows:

#### **Step 1:      *Compilation of existing terminology, concepts and definitions***

Such a compilation of existing terminology, concepts and definitions related to forests would need, in the first instance, only few resources and could be carried out relatively quickly on the basis of the following considerations:

- all terminology, concepts and definitions adopted under each of the CPF members are compiled in alphabetical order into one file. All terminology, concepts and definitions should be reflected unaltered and unchanged, and with clearly stating the source reference. Whether this file should be a database, or a WORD, EXCEL or PDF document will depend, *inter alia*, on how the file should be made accessible and/or distributed (i.e. via the internet, in hard copy and/or on CD ROM, downloadable or not, etc.). WORD and EXCEL files might provide less facilities but are more user friendly, in particular for users in developing countries;
- internal cross-references could be inserted to draw the attention of the user to other, similar or related terminology, concepts and definitions. In digital versions, hyperlinks would ease the navigation within the compilation and could also be used to provide links e.g. to the CPF web portal and the relevant web sites of CPF members;
- there would be a need to maintain this compilation on a regular basis, taking into account any new or revised terminology, concepts and definitions agreed by CPF members.

Such a compilation of existing terminology, concepts and definitions has obvious benefits for national focal/contact points and policy makers. In addition, the compilation might help CPF members and other international organizations when revising existing, or defining new, forest-related terminology, concepts and definitions.

#### **Step 2:      *Harmonization of specific terminology, concepts and definitions***

It can be expected that the experience gained and lessons learned in the establishment and use of this compilation will over time highlight those terminology, concepts and definitions which would benefit from defining an international standard applicable across the various conventions and organizations. Thus, the resource intensive and lengthy process of negotiating such standards will be focussed on only those terminology, concepts and definitions where there is a clear and user-driven need.

**References to existing sources of information in members own databases, reports or publications**

Note should be taken of many global remote-sensing based data sets on forest cover and of efforts to agree global ecosystems maps under the Millennium Assessment (MA) and other processes. While these are not appropriate for generating national reports, they can be used to inform them.

Introductory materials for all processes should contain reference to the types of national and regional institutions and networks likely to hold appropriate data and expertise and to the importance of wide consultation of these sources.

UNEP and UNEP-WCMC maintains relevant data on species and ecosystems, trade in endangered species and protected areas.

## Proposals to harmonize/streamline reporting

### "Streamlining" Leaflet

In addition to the proposals made in the other Annexes of this document, UNEP-WCMC would like the CPF Task Force to consider the production of a "Streamlining" leaflet as a first step to increase the streamlining of forest-related reporting.

The suggestion is to develop a leaflet within the CPF Task Force, which, following adoption by the CPF, could be included by CPF members in their future circulation of forest-related questionnaires and reporting formats. A first draft example for such a leaflet is included in this Annex. Please note that this is just a quickly produced example, the design, layout and content are subject to further discussion and agreement within the CPF (Task Force) framework.

The practical considerations and advantages of such a leaflet are as follows:

- The leaflet would **not** form part of the actual questionnaire/reporting format, which would remain unchanged and as agreed by the governing bodies of the relevant organization.
- The inclusion of the leaflet in the circulation of the questionnaire/reporting format could be done via a hard copy (if circulation is by mail) or by attaching a separate file (if circulation is via electronic means).
- The costs of having a leaflet designed professionally (following agreement on layout and content) are small. The PR department of UNEP-WCMC estimates the costs to be about £ 500, if produced in-house.
- Paper versions of the leaflets could be produced by each Secretariat if and when circulating new questionnaires/reporting formats. Alternatively, a certain amount of leaflets could be produced centrally, with each relevant CPF Task Force member organization receiving a certain number of leaflets.
- The leaflet could easily be maintained and up-dated, if and when necessary, within the CPF (Task Force) framework. Such up-dates could e.g. include references to any other outputs and products resulting from the work of the CPF Task Force.
- For practicality reasons, the current very long name of the internet link/shortcut to the CPF Streamlining Portal might have to be changed and shortened.
- The leaflet would have a wide distribution, reaching a large number of national focal/contact points in each member country of the relevant conventions and organizations. This means that those who are actually involved in completing the relevant questionnaires/reporting formats are made aware of the work of the CPF Task Force and where to find helpful information.
- The leaflet would be a first, concrete and highly 'visible' output of the work of the CPF Task Force.

### 'Linking' of forest-related data and information collected by different CPF members

Currently, the data and information returned by countries in response to questionnaires and reporting formats sent out is (mostly) being analyzed separately within each CPF member. If this analysis includes comparative overviews and trends between countries and/or over time, these are most likely limited to the data and information collected under the same reporting scheme in previous years. Some conventions/organizations do compile data and information collected in the different reporting schemes under their auspices to produce general overview publications, e.g. the FAO "Yearbook of Forest Products", which is a compilation of statistical data on basic forest products for all countries and territories of the world (presumably all these data are being collected under FAO?).

While most of the work of the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-Related Reporting is to look into potential ways of creating, establishing and implementing such 'links' in present and future reporting on forests, it might be worthwhile (and indeed easier) to investigate, in the first instance, the feasibility and practicality of how such 'links' could be developed on the basis of existing/published data, information and reports.

UNEP-WCMC has looked into this matter for some time from the perspective of 'linking' and bringing together a broader array of biodiversity-related data and information, e.g. via using a combination of modular and virtual reporting. We see the work of CPF and the CPF Task Force as an opportunity to investigate this in more detail, using forests as an exemplary, good defined sector, which involves a manageable number of reporting schemes and relevant international conventions and organizations.

The ultimate aim of such a study would be to test whether with modern IT tools it would be possible to create a system, whereby with minimal administrative effort, data and information from existing national reports could be linked to create, on a country-by-country basis, a comprehensive and easily accessible/usable reference to their national forests.

Although this proposal would have to be further discussed with colleagues and experts within the CPF Task Force framework, UNEP-WCMC has compiled some initial considerations which could be taken into account in further deliberations:

- the primary target and user group for such a product would be (i) the national focal/contact points responsible for reporting and implementing each of the relevant conventions/organizations and (ii) policy makers at the national and international level;
- although the actual 'linking' process might involve the application of sophisticated IT tools and methods, the end product should be in a format that is accessible to all, regardless of their computer capacities and skills. It might therefore be advisable to have any such end product in form of a MS WORD and/or MS EXCEL format;
- taking into account the difference between existing forest-related data (e.g. quantitative, numerical data collected under FAO, ITTO, UNFCCC etc., mostly in form of EXCEL spreadsheets) and forest-related information (information in text form, e.g. as collected by CBD, CSD etc. with WORD templates), it might be necessary to consider establishing this comprehensive reference in two volumes, i.e. a text volume (in WORD) accompanied by a data volume (with tables and spreadsheets in EXCEL);
- the volume(s) could be made available on the CPF web portal on a country-by-country basis;
- experiences gained and lessons learned from the study of evaluating the possibilities of 'linking' existing forest-related data and information could be transferred and taken into account in the further streamlining work of the CPF Task Force;
- the proposed work would be mutually supportive to similar work/projects foreseen under the EMG Harmonization Action Plan and the UNEP harmonization programme.



# Collaborative Partnership on Forests

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) is an interagency partnership to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and its member countries.



Global Environment Facility



World Agroforestry Centre  
TRANSFORMING LIVES AND LANDSCAPES



It aims to foster increased cooperation and coordination on forests and to promote sustainable management of all types of forests.

## Dear Colleague !

Attached you will find a format which kindly asks you to provide data and information on the forests in your country.

Before completing the questionnaire, you may want to consider the following:

- It is most likely that in previous years, your country has already reported forest-related data and information to a number of international conventions and organizations such as:

*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*

*Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

*Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)*

*International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)*

*United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)*

*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*

*United Nation Forum on Forests (UNFF)*

You might find the data and information contained in previous national reports helpful in providing the information requested herein.

- Information about the forest-related reporting as well as links to the national reports submitted by countries to the above mentioned international conventions and organizations are available from the CPF Streamlining Portal on the Internet under:

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/cpf/index.jsp?geoId=0&langId=1&siteId=2261>

Thank you for your attention.

*The CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-Related Reporting*

## Considerations for introducing/applying a modular approach to streamline forest-related reporting

It might be too premature to think about developing a complete modular structure for the forest-related reporting, but the CPF Task Force might wish to note some initial considerations along this line which are based on the experiences gained by UNEP in previous and ongoing harmonization work, in particular under the current UNEP-facilitated harmonization pilot projects.

### Step 1 Identification of a suitable 'base' format

As a first step, it would be necessary to identify the most suitable reporting format, which could be used (and expanded, as necessary) by including all or parts of other formats. There are several factors/criteria which have to be taken into account in choosing this 'base' format, *inter alia*:

- comprehensiveness, i.e. does the format cover most, if not all, the aspects and information requirements of other formats, be it in more general terms;
- applicability to individual countries, i.e. the base format should apply to a large number of countries (i.e. most, if not all, countries addressed by the other formats);
- 'age' and frequency of reporting, i.e. for how long have data sets and information been collected using the base (or similar) format. Well established reporting schemes might be better suited for providing a 'base' format, as it is most likely that (i) national contact/focal points are familiar with the reporting and relevant information management procedures are in place at the national level, (ii) there are historic data sets and information available.

Although the diversity and heterogeneity of data and information required in the existing formats of CPF members makes the choice of a 'base' format not easy, the **FAO FRA reporting** could be considered as a suitable base format, fulfilling most of the above factors/criteria. Further study will have to show whether the FRA Global Tables would be suitable to be extended in order to cover the forest-related reporting and information requirements under other CPF members.

### Step 2 Identification of coverage, overlap and gap analysis in reporting themes

Having identified a suitable 'base' format, a more in-depth analysis has to be carried out to what extent the base format covers the content of other forest-related reporting schemes and where there are overlaps and gaps.

#### *Example*

Attached is a Table which demonstrates this step on the example of applying a modular approach to the national reporting under the five global biodiversity-related conventions (CBD, CITES, CMS, Ramsar and WHO). Under the Indonesian pilot project, the CBD national reporting format was chosen as the 'base' format. On a case by case basis, experts judged whether a specific reporting theme addressed in the CBD format was also addressed or covered by the reporting formats of the other conventions. In addition, a gap analysis was carried out, identifying those themes for which other conventions required information, but which were not covered by the CBD.

### Step 3 Design of a modular framework and identification of information packages/modules

On the basis of step 2, a modular framework can be designed by identifying and defining a series of information packages/modules with the following main characteristics:

- each information package or module is discreet, unique and complementary (non-overlapping), so that information is compiled only once (ideally from one source) and in one consistent format;
- the sum of all packages/modules responds to all the relevant international reporting requirements. Some of the packages/modules may serve the needs of more than one (or all) reporting requirements; some are relevant to only one and there used only once.

In practice, the identification of information packages/modules will be guided by the reporting themes compiled in step 2. Some of these reporting themes may already constitute an information package/module, but in most cases they will have to be further sub-divided in order to establish discreet, unique and complementary (non-overlapping) modules.

#### **Step 4 Identification and mapping of institutional sources of information**

The modular approach requires that in each country the national agency responsible for development and update of each information packet/module is clearly specified. Information packets should ideally be produced in a cycle that suits national requirements and is in harmony with the internationally agreed reporting cycles, whereby a compilation of the appropriate information packets would be submitted in response to the reporting requirement under a given international agreement.

The main responsibility for identifying and mapping institutional sources of information, and for the effective management of this information, lies with individual countries. However, taking into account the relative narrow focus of forest-related reporting, which involves only a number of national authorities, the CPF might be able to support countries, e.g. by compiling administrative information on the national agency or institution and the national focal/contact point(s) responsible for forest-related reporting to the various CPF members. Making an overview of this administrative information available on the internet (e.g. on the CPF web site) would greatly assist those who fill in the questionnaires, i.e. they would know who to contact to get required and additional data and information.

## Example for a modular reporting structure

(source: Draft Report on Pilot Testing the Modular Reporting Model for Indonesia, January 2003)

| Module number | Reporting theme  | CBD | Ramsar | WHC | CITES |
|---------------|--|-----|--------|-----|-------|
| 1             | <b>ECOSYSTEM OVERVIEWS</b>   |     |        |     |       |
|               | 1.1 Biodiversity of inland water ecosystems  | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 1.2 Marine and coastal biodiversity  | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 1.3 Agricultural biodiversity  | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 1.4 Forest biodiversity  | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 1.5 Biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands  | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 1.6 Biodiversity of mountain ecosystems  | √   |        |     |       |
| 2             | <b>INSTITUTIONAL DETAILS AND ARRANGEMENTS</b>  |     |        |     |       |
|               | 2.1 Convention Focal Points  | √   | √      | √   | √     |
|               | 2.2 Coordinating mechanism(s)  |     |        |     |       |
|               | 2.2.1 Administrative processes   | √   | √      | √   |       |
|               | 2.2.2 Non-governmental consultative processes  | √   | √      |     |       |
|               | 2.2.3 Information management   | √   |        |     |       |
| 3             | <b>COOPERATION</b>   |     |        |     |       |
|               | 2.1 General cooperation – global and regional  | √   | √      | √   |       |
|               | 3.2 Trans-boundary cooperation   | √   | √      |     |       |
|               | 3.3 Technical and scientific cooperation   | √   | √      | √   |       |
| 4             | <b>GENERAL MEASURES FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE</b>   |     |        |     |       |
|               | 4.1 Strategies, policies and programmes  | √   | √      | √   |       |
|               | 4.2 Integration of conservation and sustainable use into sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes and policies | √   | √      | √   |       |
| 5             | <b>IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING</b>   |     |        |     |       |
|               | 5.1 Identification   |     |        |     |       |
|               | 5.1.1 Taxonomy   | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 5.1.2 Indicators and rapid assessments   | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 5.1.3 Inventory  | √   | √      | √   |       |
|               | 5.2 Monitoring   | √   | √      |     |       |
| 6             | <b>IN SITU CONSERVATION</b>  |     |        |     |       |
|               | 6.1 General <i>in situ</i> conservation measures   | √   |        | √   |       |
|               | 6.2 Systems of protected and special areas   | √   | √      | √   |       |
|               | 6.3 Restoration & rehabilitation of ecosystems and threatened species/populations                            | √   | √      |     |       |
|               | 6.4 Management of living modified organisms  | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 6.5 Invasive species   | √   | √      |     |       |
|               | 6.6 Knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities                                 | √   | √      |     |       |
| 7             | <b>EX SITU CONSERVATION</b>  | √   |        |     |       |
| 8             | <b>SUSTAINABLE USE</b>   | √   | √      |     | √     |
| 9             | <b>INCENTIVE MEASURES</b>  | √   |        |     |       |
| 10            | <b>RESEARCH AND TRAINING</b>   |     |        |     |       |
|               | 10.1 Research  | √   |        | √   |       |
|               | 10.2 Training  | √   | √      | √   |       |
| 11            | <b>COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS</b>   | √   | √      | √   |       |
| 12            | <b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MINIMIZING ADVERSE IMPACTS</b>  |     |        |     |       |
|               | 12.1 Impact assessments procedures   | √   | √      |     |       |
|               | 12.2 Transboundary impacts –see module 3.2   | √   | √      |     |       |
|               | 12.3 Emergency responses   | √   |        |     |       |
|               | 12.4 Liability and redress   | √   |        |     |       |
| 13            | <b>ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES</b>   | √   |        |     |       |
| 14            | <b>ACCESS TO AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY</b>  | √   |        |     |       |
| 15            | <b>EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION</b>   | √   | √      |     |       |
| 16            | <b>BIOTECHNOLOGY AND DISTRIBUTION OF ITS BENEFITS</b>  | √   |        |     |       |
| 17            | <b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>   |     |        |     |       |
|               | 17.1 Annual and additional contributions   | √   | √      | √   |       |
|               | 17.2 National financing  | √   | √      | √   |       |
|               | 17.3 Financial mechanism   | √   |        |     |       |