



United Nations Forum on Forests 12th Session (UNFF 12) Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group statement on Monitoring, assessment and reporting

Delivered by the International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA), May 3rd, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

The Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group supports the proposed improved format for voluntary reporting by Governments to the UNFF. Furthermore, the concept of Voluntary National Contributions is a constructive and innovative addition to the reporting system and should be seen as a means to raise the level of policy commitment towards the International Arrangement of Forests (IAF)/UNFF process.

However, it should be anticipated that following the adoption of the improved reporting system, the quality and quantity of national reports will improve so that the reports will provide a sound basis to monitor and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the process in implementing the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The proposed starting point for submissions of reports in 2019 would allow the required time to arrive at a core set of global forest indicators. The work done by experts at the Organisation Lead Initiative (OLI) in Rome in November 2016, the expert meeting in Brasilia in February 2017 and the continued work by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) Task Force are valuable contributions to that end, in the run-up to the Global Expert Meeting in Finland in June 2017.

Global forest goal 1 has a specific target of increasing the forest area by 3 per cent worldwide. In that regard, already by 2020 a number of measures should be carried out in order to reach the 3 per cent target by 2030. It should be emphasized in this regard, that legislative, institutional, financial and technical / scientific actions need to address the specific needs and improve the capacities of farmers and small forest landowners, in order for countries to reach such goals and targets in their prevailing circumstances.

The challenge of establishing verifiable baselines for such goals and targets, in particular with regard to communities of farmers' and small forest landowners' lands and territories, are great but so are also the potentials of engagement of those communities in implementing such goals and targets. If such goals and targets are aimed at increasing forest areas owned or managed by these communities, they will be highly motivated to contribute to the achievement of such targets and at the same time, improve their livelihoods and eradicate poverty. According to available information that needs to be verified by countries, the absolute area and the proportion of forest lands owned and/or managed by private and community entities is steadily increasing. In that regard, it should be necessary to disaggregate global data more accurately to inform on the quantity and quality of such a fundamental structural change and its implications, including gender-specific disaggregation.

The goals and targets for Global Forest Goal 2 (GFG2), in particular the target on increasing the access of small-scale forest enterprises to financial services and affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets, is extremely valid and should be seen as a pre-requisite of reaching several other goals and targets. In some cases, a policy shift in favour of small farmers and producer organizations is needed as there is a lack of verifiable baseline information on the extent to which small enterprises, farmers and producer organizations have gained access to the required services. The inclusion of this specific target in the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), as well as all other targets, should lead to setting baselines in UNFF member countries and by relevant institutions and authorities, and to compiling data and information in a disaggregated way so that trends and achievements in reaching these targets can be documented and verified over long reporting cycles. The representative organizations of small forest enterprises and producers need to be engaged in this work as such reporting is focusing on their constituencies.

Therefore, the importance of engaging relevant stakeholders, local communities and indigenous peoples in policies and programmes in order to effect governance frameworks that will efficiently implement the global forest goals and targets. To have sound information and verification systems in place for data compilation and reporting is a pre-requisite for monitoring and assessment, for evaluation of effects and impacts. We are convinced by experience that early engagement of relevant stakeholders in such work is a recipe for success.

Mr. Chairman, in this brief statement, some key issues have been touched upon initially. The Farmers and Small Forest Landowners Major Group looks forward to further opportunities to engage in this important work in collaboration with governments and Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) member organizations.