

IFFA’s work shows how forest smallholders/family forest owners play an essential role in collaboration with other Major Groups when national Governments strive towards more sustainable development and forest management

The 13th Session of the UN Forum on Forests was held at the UN headquarters in New York May 7-11. This was the first UNFF meeting after the adoption of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017 – 2030. The UNSPF aims to advance sustainable management of forests around the world through enhanced collaboration and synergies among UN bodies, governments, and partners and provides a framework for forest-related contributions from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

During the meeting IFFA’s representatives Mr. Pentti Linnamaa and Mr. Peter deMarsh gave statements on how small forest landowners’ sustainable forest management achieves multiple SDG’s simultaneously, and should be an important focus in efforts to raise public awareness of the importance of sfm. Peter’s statement that underlined that small holders and forest owners demonstrate compatibility between conservation and timber production was picked up by IISD Reporting Service in the Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

IFFAs had also given its input to the Major Groups’ efforts to highlight their importance in helping achieve the goals of the UNSPF at a meeting in Nairobi Kenya 20-21 November 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to identify priority actions for Major Groups’ contribution to implementation of the UNSPF and develop a work plan to carry these out. 25 representatives from 13 countries representing Women, Youth, Indigenous Peoples, Environmental Groups, Scientific Research Institutions, and Forest Smallholders and Communities Major Groups and 7 United Nations accredited officers took part to the meeting.

Ms. Cécile Ndjebet presented results of this meeting to the Session in New York. In the presentation , she showed how for Major Groups, goals to reverse deforestation, improve livelihoods, increase the area of protected forests, and increase the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests are all part of a single challenge that requires an integrated approach/strategy. She presented the Major Groups’ 7 priority areas that should be pursued to achieve sustainable forest management globally, nationally and locally:

Ivar, please remove the Table and just list the 7 priorities (but leave out the GFGs).

Priority Areas	GFGs
1. Role of women and girls in sustainable forest management	2, 3, 5
2. Contribution of forests to poverty eradication and livelihoods, with a focus on environmentally sound and innovative technology to improve efficiency	2, 3, 4
3. Capacity building to mobilize and access funds	4
4. Major Groups coordination and partnerships	1, 5, 6
5. Indigenous peoples, small holder farmers, and community forest management in value-added forest production and processing	4, 5, 6
6. Land tenure, land ownership and civil society involvement in forest decision making	2, 5, 6
7. Research and forest-related education, training and extension	2, 4, 5

The main types of interventions through which we can add value to the efforts of governments, private sector and other major players: localization of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests and translation of global UNFF decisions to the people on the ground, publicity and advocacy, mobilizing our constituencies for action, and cooperating with governments, the private sector and other major players to achieve mutual accountability for commitments made and statements of intent in the UNSPF and the Agenda 2030.

Several government delegations expressed strong support for smallholders and highlighted their importance (the statement from the German delegation was especially strong). This was also noted by the UNFF secretariat in the final draft of the Omnibus resolution at the conclusion of the Session. These two paragraphs from the resolution can be seen as a clear signal that the voice of IFFA together with other Major Groups was heard during the meeting:

“6. *Reaffirms* that the effective implementation of sustainable forest management depends on the contributions of all relevant stakeholders, including forest owners, indigenous peoples and local communities, local authorities, the private sector, including small, medium and large forest-based enterprises, non-governmental organizations, women, children and youth, and scientific, academic and philanthropic organizations at all levels;”

“23. *Welcomes* also the joint workplan developed by major groups to accelerate achievement of the GFGs and the complementary workplan developed by the Children and Youth Major Group and invites major groups to inform the Forum at its 14th session on progress made in implementing their workplans, and also invites Members in a position to do to support MGs in this regard,