

# Rough Guide

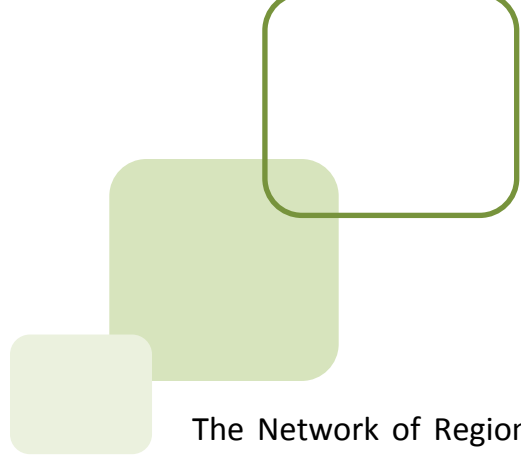
July 2011



## Forest Policy



Network of Regional Governments  
for Sustainable Development



The Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, nrg4SD is an international organisation representing namely federated states and regional governments, at the global level. The network promotes understanding, collaboration and partnerships in sustainable development and seeks greater international recognition of subnational government's important contribution towards sustainable development. A member of the Organisations des Nations Unies-Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (ORU-FOGAR), nrg4SD is the voice of ORU-FOGAR in the field of sustainable development.

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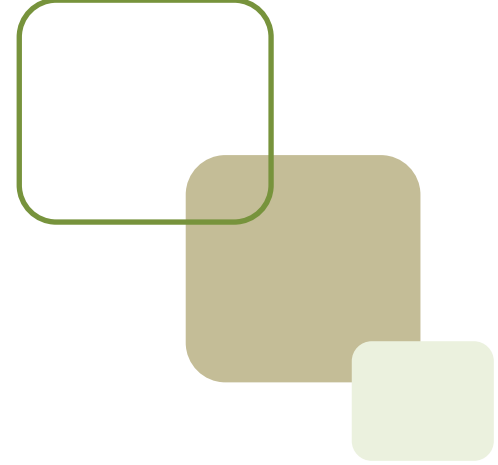


nrg4SD members interested in Forest Policy, may also find the following nrg4SD products useful:

- Forest Policy Work Programme
- Forest Policy Working Group

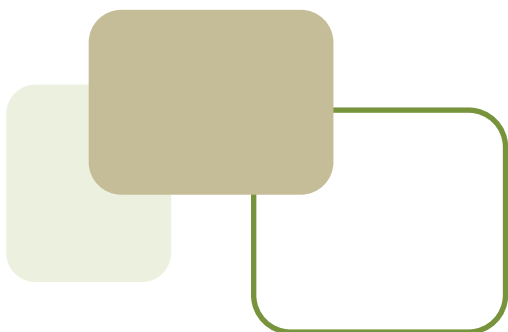
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## I. Introduction

Forests represent an important ecosystem service, supporting people livelihoods and contributing to the development of economies and societies. Forests also play a key role in tackling climate change: they are not only carbon sinks (they sequester about 15% of human-generated carbon emissions every year), but they also contribute effectively to climate change adaptation by mitigating risks from natural disasters such as floods and droughts, as well as ensure food security and human health. However, forests are threatened by overexploitation, degradation and climate change, becoming increasingly vulnerable to pests, diseases and fires.

This nrg4SD Rough Guide presents in a quick and reader-friendly manner some basic information on the role of subnational governments in Forest Policy, the main international bodies, instruments and working methods of the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

nrg4SD members may be interested in completing this background information with the Forest Policy Work Programme and Forest Policy Working Group.



## II. Role of subnational governments in Forest Policy

Subnational governments often have the responsibilities, tools and expertise for developing and implementing plans and strategies to promote conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks. In some countries, subnational governments have considerable, if not exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources, and there can simply be no robust forest monitoring system, effective forest related mitigation programs or reforestation action strategies without their full participation. Indeed, on occasions, forest covered areas are so vast that, without subnational governments' detailed knowledge of them and of land use changes, central governments would struggle to adequately keep track of deforestation and forest degradation, and to efficiently plan to prevent further damages in the future.

nrg4SD has established a Working Group on Forests that will be launched jointly with the Working Group on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD) on Monday 29th August 2011 at the nrg4SD General Assembly in Québec City, Canada. During the meeting, the region of Aquitaine, France, in its capacity of coordinator of

the working group on forests, will present to members the key elements of the work programme of the working group as prepared with the technical support of the nrg4SD Secretariat. The working group at the General Assembly will **develop technical discussions on how to engage with the UN Forest Forum and other relevant international entities** as well as providing an opportunity to **trigger mutual learning projects beyond the International Year of Forests.**



### III. International panorama

The issue of forests has been a priority on the international political agenda for the past 15 years. At the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, which was held in Rio, Brazil in 1992, the issue of forests was among the most controversial, polarising developing and developed countries. At the conference, negotiations resulted in the **Forest Principles**, as well as **Chapter 11 of Agenda 21: Combating Deforestation.**

#### **Forest Principles**

The **Forest Principles** is the informal name given to the ‘Non-legally binding Authoritative statement of principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests’. The document makes several recommendations for forestry and forms the basis of all later policy developments. At the Earth Summit, the negotiation of the document was complicated by demands by developing nations in the Group of 77 for increased foreign aid in order to pay for the setting aside of forest reserves. Developed nations resisted those demands, and the final document was a compromise.

#### **Agenda 21**

**Agenda 21** is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organisations of the UN System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which humans impact on the environment. For more information on Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 - Conservation & Management of Resources for Development, click [here](#).

Significant progress has been made since UNCED. The main focus within the UN has been to develop coherent policies to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

## Timeline

1995 – 1997 **Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)**

1997 – 2000 **Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)**

1995 **Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF)**

2000 **UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)**

2011 **The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)**

2007 **Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI)**

2011 **The International year for Forests**



## **IV. Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)**

The IPF/IFF represents 5 years of international forest policy dialogue. The IPF was established by the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) for 2 years (1995-97) to provide a forum for forest policy deliberations. As a result, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the IFF for 3 years (1997-2000). In 1995, an informal high level **Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF)**, made up of 8 international organisations, was created to support the IPF/IFF and to assist governments implement the proposals for action.

**The IPF/IFF Proposals for Actions give concrete indications about implementation of the Rio Forest Principles at national and regional level.**

**IPF discussed the following issues:**

- Implementing the forest-related decisions of the UN CSD at the national and international levels;
- International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer;
- Scientific research, forest assessment and the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;
- Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services;
- International organisations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms.

Following the IPF discussions, the IFF aimed at resolving several issues on which IPF had not reached consensus, such as financial resources, transfer of environmental sound technologies, and other issues left pending, including deliberations on international arrangements and mechanisms on forests.

#### **The IFF programme included the following:**

- Facilitate the implementation of the proposals for action of the IPF and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest
- Considering matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process and
- International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

#### **Outcomes of the IPF/IFF Processes:**

- Approximately 270 proposals for action, known collectively as the **IPF/IFF Proposals for Action**. These proposals provide governments, international organisations, the private sector and other major groups guidance on how to further develop, implement and coordinate national and international policies on sustainable forest management.



## **V. United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)**

ECOSOC established the **UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)** in 2000, a subsidiary body with the main objective to promote **‘the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end...’** based on the Rio Declaration, the Forest Principles, Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the IPF/IFF Processes and other key milestones of international forest policy. The UNFF was established as part of a new international arrangement on forests, to carry out the work building on the IPF and IFF processes. The UNFF, together with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) comprises what is known as the International Arrangement on Forests.

The UNFF1 Report outlined the UNFF **Plan of Action** and the first **Multi-Year**

**Programme of Work from 2001 – 2005.** The Forum feeds into broader global environment and development processes with inputs such as the UNFF Ministerial Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Forum has universal membership, and is composed of all Member States of the UN and specialised agencies. The UNFF is guided by a **Bureau** and serviced by a compact **secretariat**, which also serves as a secretariat for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

### **Global objectives on Forests**

In 2006, the UNFF agreed on four shared Global Objectives on Forests, providing clear guidance on the future work of the international arrangement on forests. The objectives seek to:

- Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management (SFM), including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;
- Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people;
- Significantly increase the area of sustainably managed forests, including protected forests, and the proportion of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests;
- Reverse the decline in official development assistance (ODA) for sustainable forest management and mobilise significantly-increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

### **To achieve the objectives of UNFF, the principal functions are the following:**

- To facilitate implementation of forest-related agreements and foster a common understanding on sustainable forest management;
- To provide for continued policy development and dialogue among Governments, international organisations, including major groups, as well as to address forest issues and emerging areas of concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner;
- To enhance cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues and foster international cooperation and monitor, assess and report on progress of the above functions and objectives;
- To strengthen political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;
- Enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to the

implementation of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

- Encourage and assist countries, including those with low forest cover, to develop and implement forest conservation and rehabilitation strategies, increase the area of forests under sustainable management and reduce forest degradation and the loss of forest cover in order to maintain and improve their forest resources with a view to enhancing the benefits of forests to meet present and future needs, in particular the needs of indigenous peoples and local communities whose livelihoods depend on forests
- Strengthen interaction between the UNFF and relevant regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes, with participation of major groups, and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum.



## **VI. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI)**

### **The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)**

**The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)** was established in April 2001, following the recommendation of ECOSOC. This innovative partnership of 14 major forest-related international organisations, institutions and convention secretariats, works to **support the work of the UNFF and its member countries** and to **foster increased cooperation and coordination on forests**. It is comprised of 14 international organisations which can be found **here**.

#### **The CPF aims to:**

- **Increase collaboration** CPF members share their experiences and build on them to produce new benefits for their respective constituencies. Joint initiatives and other collaboration activities are supported by voluntary contribution of the participating members.
- **Assist countries** Increasingly CPF members work together in projects and mobilise resources supporting countries to achieve their forest related goals and supporting implementation of sustainable forest management.
- **Support international dialogue** CPF provides major inputs to UNFF and other important international forest dialogues, including the conventions on climate

change (UNFCCC), biodiversity (CBD) and desertification (UNCCD). It produces **joint statements** and papers on key forest issues on the international agenda.

- **Formation and working modalities** ECOSOC in its resolution to found UNFF, invited the heads of relevant UN, international and regional bodies to form a collaborative partnership on forests. The CPF is chaired by FAO and is serviced by the UNFF Secretariat. The CPF usually convenes to discuss strategic areas of coordination between CPF members and to work towards a better coherence between countries, in conjunction with major events; to keep travel costs low and make efficient use of staff time. The **Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework**, produced annually, represents the Partnership's work plan and its progress report.

For more information, go to the [CPF website](#).

### **Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI)**

Following intense negotiations, the Seventh Session of the Forum adopted the landmark **Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests** on 28 April 2007. The instrument is considered a milestone, as it is the first time Member States have agreed to an international instrument for sustainable forest management.

The instrument is expected to have a major impact on international cooperation and national action to reduce deforestation, prevent forest degradation, promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce poverty for all forest-dependent peoples. The NLBI was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2007.



### **VII. UN International Year of Forests, 2011**

The UN declared 2011 as the **International Year of Forests** to raise awareness and strengthen the sustainable forest management (SFM), conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations. The following resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly.

#### **Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 83rd plenary meeting, 20 December 2006**

1. *'Decides* to declare 2011 the International Year of Forests'
2. *Requests* the secretariat of the UNFF of ECOSOC, to serve as the focal point for the implementation of the Year, in collaboration with Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and international, regional and sub-regional organisations and

processes as well as relevant major groups;

3. *Invites*, in particular, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN, as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, within its mandate, to support the implementation of the Year;

4. *Calls* upon Governments, relevant regional and international organisations, and major groups to support activities related to the Year, inter alia, through voluntary contributions, and to link their relevant activities to the Year;

5. *Encourages* voluntary partnerships among Member States, international organisations and major groups to facilitate and promote activities related to the Year at the local and national levels, including by creating national committees or designating focal points in their respective countries;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the state of preparations for the Year;



## **VIII. Forest Policy and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

### **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD)**

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD) was inspired by the world community's growing commitment to sustainable development. It represents a dramatic step forward in the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN CBD established seven thematic programmes of work which correspond to some of the major biomes on the planet. Each programme establishes a vision for, and basic principles to guide future work. They also set key issues for consideration, identify potential outputs, and suggest a timetable and means for achieving these. One of the thematic programmes is **Forest Biodiversity**.

**Forest biological diversity** is a broad term referring to all the life forms found within forested areas and the ecological roles they perform. As such, forest biological diversity encompasses not just trees but the multitude of plants, animals and micro-organisms that inhabit forest areas and their associated genetic diversity.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) recently estimated that about 13 million hectares of the world's forests are lost due to deforestation each year. In the past, timber production was seen as the dominant function of forests. Yet, in recent years this perception has shifted to a more multi-functional and balanced view. Other forest functions and services, such as recreation, biological diversity, maintenance of ecosystem services and the mitigation of climate change, are now recognised as part of the importance of forests and have become integral components of sustainable forest management. **Forest biological diversity is increasingly recognised as both a complex and unique element.**

The UN CBD addresses forests directly through the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity. The work programme constitutes a broad set of goals, objectives and activities aimed at the conservation of forest biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable use of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest genetic resources.

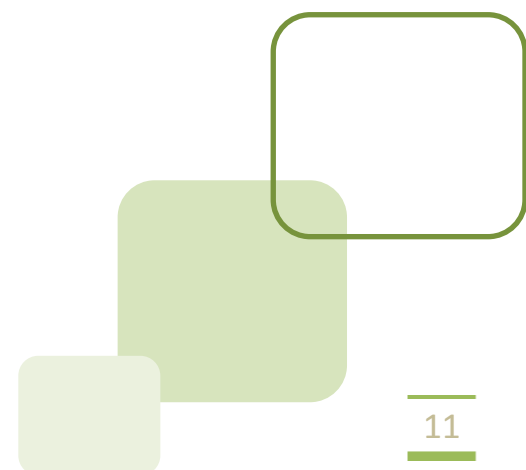
The programme of work on forest biodiversity consists of three elements:

- (i) conservation, sustainable use, and benefit-sharing
- (ii) institutional and socio-economic enabling environment
- (iii) knowledge, assessment, and monitoring.

### **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty aimed at stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

The topic of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) in developing countries was first introduced at the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to UNFCCC in Montreal in December 2005. Reducing and/or preventing deforestation is an important mitigation option as the release of carbon as emissions into the atmosphere is prevented.





## IX. European Union (EU) Forest Policy

Forests cover about a third of the EU land area and roughly 30% of the world's land area. In the EU, the responsibility for forest policy falls on individual Member States. Yet, there is a long tradition by the EU of supporting forest-related activities such as sustainable forest management in cooperation with Member States.

### Timeline

1995 The **Thomas Report** of the environmental committee of the European Parliament gave a series of recommendations for the development of a EU Forest Policy.

1995 The European Commission presented a **Communication on a Forestry Strategy for the EU**

1998 The EU Council adopted a **Resolution on a Forestry Strategy** for the EU. This document is considered to be the basic political charter for Community involvement in forest issues. It puts forward as its overall principles the application of sustainable forest management and the multifunctional role of forests.

2005 The Commission presented to the Council and the European Parliament a **Communication** reporting on the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy accompanied by a detailed **Staff Working Document**

2006 The Commission presented a proposal for an EU Action Plan on Forestry.

Forest policies in the EU cover a wide range of areas from biodiversity and climate change to rural development and forest management, protection and sustainability. The formulation of forest policies in the competence of the Member States within a clearly defined framework of established ownership rights and with a long history of national and regional laws and regulations based on long term planning.

Although the Treaties for the EU make no provision for a common forest policy, there is a long history of EU measures supporting certain forest-related activities, coordinated with Member States mainly through the **Standing Forestry Committee**.

**However forests are affected by a broad array of EU policies** and initiatives arising from diverse EU sectoral policies. For several decades, environmental forest

functions have attracted increasing attention mainly in relation to the protection of biodiversity and, more recently, in the context of climate change impacts and policies. In public perception, apart from the traditional production of wood and other forest products, forests are increasingly valued for their role as public amenities, biodiversity reservoirs, regulators of climate and local weather, sources of clean water, protection against natural disasters and renewable energy sources.

### **European Union and International processes**

The Directorate General for the Environment in the European Commission also helps to ensure that coherent positions on forests are taken in different international processes such as the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD)** and the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.

The European Commission also participates in the bi-annual **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** Committee on Forests which decides FAO's work programme on forests. FAO is responsible for global forest databases and produces technical publications on forest resources such as *State of the world's forests (2005)* as well as providing technical assistance to FAO members.

Based in Geneva, the Timber Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) facilitate policy development on Forests in the UNECE region and works together with the FAO Regional Commission for Europe.

### **International Policy Development**

In addition to international environmental policies, international forest policy work interacts with many sectors in which the Commission is active such as: trade and environment discussions; international aspects of forest certification and green procurement; economic and development cooperation including the Tropical Forest budget line; forests and conflict issues; forest industry/ trade Corporate Responsibility.





## **X. Some key Forest Related events in 2011**

**January 24-February 4 - Ninth Session of the UNFF/ Launch of the International Year of Forests 2011, UNFF Secretariat, New York**

**February 2 - World Wetlands Day**

**February 21-25 - 26th Session of the UNEP Governing Council Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Nairobi, Kenya**

**March 7-8 - 2nd PrepCom for UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) Division for Sustainable Development, UNHQ, New York**

**March 22 - World Water Day**

**April 21 - Earth Day**

**May 2-13 - CSD 19 - Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) Division for Sustainable Development UNHQ, New York**

**May 22 - International Day for Biological Diversity: Biodiversity and Forests**

**June - Environment Week**

**June 5 - World Environment Day, UNEP**

**June 17 - World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, UNCCD Secretariat**

**July - UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC Secretariat UNHQ, New York**

**September - 66th Session of the UN General Assembly, UNHQ, New York**

**October - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CBD Secretariat**

**October 9 - World Habitat Day**

**October 10-21 - UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP 10**

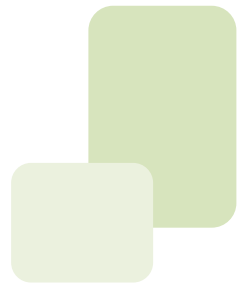
**October 16 - World Food Day**

**November 28-December 9 - 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 17) and seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 7), UNFCCC Secretariat Johannesburg, South Africa**

**4 December 2011 - Forest Day, Durban, South Africa**



## XI. Sources for More Information



**United Nations UN**

United Nations Forum on Forests *UNFF*  
International Year of Forests 2011  
Forest principles  
UN CBD

**European Union EU**

DG Environment - Forests  
Other EU forest-related websites



# North and South Subnational Governments committed to Sustainable Development

The **Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, nrg4SD** works tirelessly to champion the work of subnational governments on sustainable development, including climate action. International organisation representing subnational governments (namely federated states and regional governments) at the global level; nrg4SD promotes understanding, partnerships and projects in sustainable development and seeks greater international recognition of the important contribution of subnational governments towards sustainable development. Member of the Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (FOGAR), nrg4SD is the voice of FOGAR in the field of sustainable development.



[www.nrg4sd.org](http://www.nrg4sd.org)

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