Concept Note

Building on the nexus of forests, energy, and livelihoods to accelerate achievement of the SDGs

An event by the Bureau of the eighteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF18)

4 April 2023, 10am - 1pm EDT

CR5, UNHQ, New York | UN Web TV | Hybrid

Context and Background

1. The High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of the UN General Assembly Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Summit) will be held in September 2023 in New York. It will review SDG progress and provide policy recommendations for accelerating achievement of the SDGs. The Summit offers an opportunity to raise awareness, strengthen political commitment, and catalyze greater action on forests, especially given the critical role of forests in advancing multiple Goals and relevant global agreements, including the Paris Agreement, and the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
2. To seize the opportunity of the ongoing preparations for the SDG Summit, and considering the current global economic situation, the prospect for a global recession, and increased energy and commodity prices, the Bureau of the eighteenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF18) decided to convene this event. In preparation for the event, the UNFF Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO, IUFRO and UNDP also prepared a concise Issue Brief to inform the discussions at the event. The Issue Brief is available on the UNFF website and has also been shared with Permanent Missions, and UNFF National Focal Points.

Objectives of the event

3. The event aims to present an overview of the key global trends on forests, energy, and livelihoods, and showcase the important contributions of forests and sustainable management of forests to energy, livelihoods, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - in particular, SDG1 (on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere), SDG2 (on ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture), and SDG 7 (on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy). The event will showcase the nexus between forests and energy. This includes bioenergy, its pros and cons, and the means to address its negative impacts. It also includes the means to ensure access to efficient and clean bioenergy, while reversing deforestation, forest degradation, biodiversity loss, climate change, and improving livelihoods including reducing poverty, and promoting decent employment and health. The event will also be an occasion for sharing suggestions and proposals to move towards integrated approaches to the forests-energy-livelihoods nexus in support of the SDGs.

Modality and programme of the event

4. The event will be held in a hybrid format and broadcast live on UN WebTV. The UNFF18 Chair will preside over the event. The discussions during the event will be conducted in English only. The event will include a keynote speech, and panel discussions to be followed by interactive discussions. During the panel discussions, panelists will be invited to provide brief response to the questions by the Moderator. After each round of questions and answers, the Moderator will invite participants to share their views on the questions raised and the responses provided by the panelists. More specifically, participants are encouraged to share any suggestions and views on how to promote integrated policy actions on forests, energy, and livelihoods at the national, regional and international levels. There will be no official outcome for the event, and the Chair will make an oral summary of key points of the discussions. An oral report will be also presented by the Chair to UNFF18 in May 2023.

5. The programme of the event will be as follows:

- Welcome remarks by H.E. Ambassador Zéphyrin Maniratanga, UNFF18 Chair
- Brief introduction on the key points of the Issue Brief on Forests, Energy, and Livelihoods

  by Ms. Juliette Biao, Director, UNFF Secretariat, UN DESA
- Keynote speech by Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Panel and interactive discussions

- Moderator: Ms. Juliette Biao, Director of the UNFF Secretariat
- Panelists:
  - Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN in New York (tbc)
  - Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN in New York
  - UNFF Women Major Group
  - Dr Sherif Ayoub, Senior Director, Finance and Operations, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)
  - Dr. Nelson Grima, Project Manager, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO)
  - Ms. Françoise Van de Ven, President, International Tropical Timber Technical Association

Interactive Discussions

- Comments by Mr. Zhimin Wu, Director of FAO Forestry Division, and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)
- Wrap-up of the panel discussions by Moderator

- Closing remarks by H.E. Ambassador Zéphyrin Maniratanga, UNFF18 Chair

Participants

6. Representatives from Permanent Missions in New York, UNFF National Focal Points, member organizations of Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), regional and subregional partners, and representatives of Major Groups and civil society are invited to attend the event.

Contact Person

7. For questions related to the event, please contact Ms. Yan Lang at the UNFF Secretariat at: yan.lang@un.org.