

Comments of Colombia to the summary of the AHEG Co-Chairs on options and building blocks for the 2017-2030 Strategic Plan of the International Arrangement of Forests

General comments

- Colombia appreciates the hard work and big efforts of the Co-Chairs and the AHEG-1 in formulating a proposal of building blocks and options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017 – 2030. Colombia also appreciates having the opportunity of submitting comments to this proposal in order to contribute to such an important process.
- Colombia reaffirms the conclusion achieved during the experts meeting last March, recognizing that the “strategic plan (SP) should provide guidance to all IAF components to promote and facilitate the implementation of SFM at the global, regional, sub regional and national level, taking into consideration to avoid introducing new obligations or “proposals for action” for countries”.
- Colombia considers that the proposal of the Co-Chairs is an excellent basis to continue the deliberations on this matter and that the summary has considered the most important elements for the formulation of the Strategic Plan.
- For Colombia it is of the utmost importance that the Strategic Plan allows a concrete a practical development of the mandate established in resolution E/RES/2015/33 “International Arrangement of Forests beyond 2025”, Title XI – Strategic Plan, paragraphs 38, 39 and 40. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to serve as a strategic framework to enhance the coherence of and guide and focus the work of the international arrangement on forests and its components. Its objective should be to provide orientation for the implementation of the UNFI.
- The Strategic Plan should must contribute in practical terms to accomplish the purpose of the IAF. Therefore, it will be very useful to have a compact and concise strategic plan that supports the implementation of actions that will have an impact at the global level, instead of an extensive document that has no possibilities of implementation.
- Forests are a strategic ecosystem for Colombia, and for this reason our country has engaged in very ambitious commitments at the international level for their conservation, the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation, the improvement of the quality of life of the communities that depend of or live in forests, and the consolidation of peace. The Strategic Plan should be a means that contribute to these goals.
- Even if the Strategic Plan should consider synergies and contributions with other related multilateral processes, the Strategic Plan should focus on the implementation of the UNFI, as well as the decisions and resolutions adopted by UNFF for almost 20 years.

- In this sense, the focus of this Strategic Plan should be, among other things, in promoting synergies with other processes that contribute to the achievement of the IAF goals, while facilitating the implementation of the UNFI.

Comments on Section I – Introduction

- Colombia fully agrees and supports the statement made in the Co-Chairs summary which states that the “UNFI sets out four shared Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and 44 national and international policies, measures and actions to implement SFM and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs”. It is key to keep in mind this statement, since the main purpose of the Strategic Plan should be to promote and facilitate the implementation of the UNFI. The GOFs should be the overarching objectives of the Strategic Plan, while all the other related goals and targets (such as the SGDs or the ABT) should be interlinked with the GOFs.
- “Contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda”: Colombia suggests to make a specific mention of the SDGs related to forests. Even if the information provided in the Co-chairs summary under this title is concise and specific, a specific mention of the SDGs could provide more clarity on the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda. Colombia identified the following SDGs according to the bullet points included in the Co-Chairs’ summary:
 - SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
 - SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
 - SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
 - SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
 - SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
 - SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
 - SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Colombia would also recommend including under this title other SDGs on which SFM depends, specifically SDG12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”.

- “Opportunities for enhanced action”: taking into account the last comment regarding the inclusion of SDG12, Colombia considers that the participation of the productive sectors in the efforts towards the achievement of sustainable development is key. Governments alone will not have the capacity to achieve all commitments related to sustainable development and SFM alone. Therefore, Colombia would suggest considering under this item the participation of the productive sectors and the mainstreaming of SFM in their planning processes and activities, as an opportunity to achieve SFM and sustainable development.

Another mention should also be included, regarding the opportunity that the Strategic Plan represents, in terms of resource mobilization. The Strategic Plan

would provide donors and other sources of financial and non-financial resources specific criteria on actions and thematic areas to which provide assistance.

Comments on Section II – IAF vision and mission statements - Options

- Even if the all the four options provided by the summary are valid, Colombia would propose modify option 1 with important elements from the other options, as follows (with track changes):

A world where forests are everywhere valued, sustainably managed, contribute to sustainable development and provide economic, social and environmental benefits for all.

- Regarding the mission statement options, Colombia is inclined to prefer option 6, considering its similarity and coherence with the purpose of the IAF as defined in resolution 2000/35, paragraph 1. Even if it is necessary to undertake reviews of the IAF, Colombia considers that it could be negative to radically modify the underlying principles of the IAF every time an assessment or review is made. For this reason, keeping coherence with resolution 2000/35 is recommended.

Comments on Section III -Strategic approach/global goals/objectives/ targets – Options

- Colombia considers that the GOFs, included in the UNFI, should be the overarching objectives of the Strategic Plan. In this regard, Colombia would prefer to keep the language “Objectives” in the title, in order to keep coherence with the language of the UNFI.
- Colombia considers that the reference to “*Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABTs), provisions of the Paris Agreement, the GEF SFM Strategy and other significant forest-related developments*”, to be incorporated as integral part of the SP. There is a multiplicity of useful references to Forest conservation and preservation, but this SP needs to be more concrete when referring to the fulfillment of the IAF mandate. The four Objectives (GOFs) are the milestone of such an SP, thus Colombia considers the above mentioned references should be incorporated in the preamble or the introductory remarks, and call on the AHEG to shrink the draft and focus the actual approach/global goals/objectives/ targets. Therefore, Colombia is of the preference to re-draft option 2.
- However, Colombia would suggest to re-draft CCS 1 and CCS 2, since the proposal is very general and therefore it would be very difficult to measure progress.
- In addition, Colombia considers that it is unnecessary to replace GOF 1 with SDG15.2, since the IAF should keep the language and commitments it has adopted through the years, even if other processes (such as the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs) are closely related.
- “Options for global targets/deliverables”:
 - Colombia is of the opinion that at this point it is very difficult to define any targets without having more clarity regarding the approach/global

goals/objectives/ targets. Colombia considers that the AHEG would be in a position to define this on a later stage.

- Nevertheless, the proposals contained in the Co-chairs' summary under Option 1 on global targets/deliverables are very useful, since the UN Statistical Commission has already delivered on the indicators for all the SDGs. This could help in formulating the indicators for the targets of the Strategic Plan. However, the AHEG should have a very careful look at the proposals presented by the Co-chairs, since the new language included could represent a whole new set of negotiations that could slow the process for the formulation of the Strategic Plan. The same applies for Option 2.
- For Colombia, it is very important to include targets with a reference to resource mobilization. Taking into account that the Strategic Plan will be ambitious, and that its implementation will require a high amount of financial and technical resources, commitments regarding ODA and other modalities of resource mobilization are needed.

Comments on Section IV – Implementation framework

- **“Actions to achieve global goals/objectives/targets/strategic approach”:**
 - Colombia fully supports the statement under this title which states that “initial actions to be considered for inclusion are the ones agreed upon in the UN Forest Instrument”. Colombia is of the opinion that the IAF has already produced a huge amount of forest policy recommendations, and therefore the Strategic Plan should focus on the implementation of such recommendations. There is no need to renegotiate or redefine the 44 national and international policies, measures and actions included in the UNFI.
 - Considering that 44 actions are many, Colombia would propose to group them into categories. This could facilitate the identification of which activities correspond to which GOF and also would help in the definition of roles and responsibilities, particularly of the CPF member organizations that would be inclined to “lead” the support in the implementation of such categories.
 - Regarding Chapter IV “*Implementation framework*”, and the “*illustrative matrix, comprised of potential goals, targets, actions, actors, means of implementation and indicators for the IAF strategic plan*”, Colombia shares the view expressed during the Tokyo meeting (March 2016). It is anticipated that indicators for measuring progress on the final targets may be drawn primarily from the SDG indicators, as well as any additional “global forest indicators” that may be agreed. Further discussion is required to differentiate indicators for targets and indicators for actions in the matrix. In that regard, indicators like “extent of forest and other wooded land”, and “Biomass stock (above ground, below ground, deadwood)” should be reinforced in the framework of the SDG’s, instead to be replaced, in order to avoid duplication or a “new beginning” to define the evaluation and monitoring methods as already established.

- **“International cooperation and means of implementation”**

- It is important to avoid a situation where GEF and UNFF could be “competing” for resources, undermining the cooperation between these two crucial scenarios at the aim to fulfill IAF overarching objectives.
- Regarding literal b, Colombia also considers that a concrete fundraising strategy should be elaborated. At least the principles and targets for the resources that could be obtained through this. The AHEG could reflect on this matter, in order to submit a “proposal of principles for a *fundraising strategy*”.