

Distinguished Experts,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to UN Headquarters and to this first meeting of the UNFF open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group. As the AHEG Co-Chairs said, your discussions will shape a new path for the International Arrangement on Forests. By developing proposals for IAF Strategic Plan until 2030, you will be building the foundation for the future of international forest policy.

As input to your deliberations, 22 Member States and 12 organizations and Major Groups submitted their views and proposals. These submissions were posted on the UNFF website

As you may know, the discussions on the modalities for the 2030 Agenda are still ongoing. Later this week, on 28 April, informal consultations among Member States and stakeholders will take place on the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Last month, the UN Statistical Commission agreed on a set of 230 global indicators as a framework for reviewing progress on the SDGs. Two indicators specifically mention forests but many more can be disaggregated for forests.

It is clear that for a substantial number of indicators, including some of the forest-related ones, there are no established methodologies and standards for data collection. It is thus evident that work on SDG indicators will continue. In this regard, on 29 April, we will host an expert meeting organized by FAO, to further advance work on SFM and forest related indicators for the SDGs.

A second major development is the Paris Agreement, adopted by the UNFCCC parties in December 2015 and signed by 175



