

Summary report
Capacity-building workshop on reporting to UNFF
Co-organized jointly by UNFF Secretariat and FAO

United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya
18-20 March 2025

I. Context

The United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), organized a capacity-building workshop on capacity-building on reporting to UNFF. The workshop was organized in response to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 2024/15¹, which requested the Forum secretariat to conduct capacity-building activities, within existing resources, on facilitating the exchange of information related to monitoring, assessment and reporting on the global forest goals, and to provide assistance in preparing national reports.

II. Background

The UNFF has regularly called upon Member States to develop adequate monitoring systems, and invited international organizations, especially member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to share data and streamline reporting on forests. With the adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests (UNSPF) 2017–2030 by the UN General Assembly in 2017, the focus of monitoring and reporting to the Forum was placed on measuring the progress made in implementing the UNSPF and achieving its Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and targets.

The first round of national reporting on progress towards implementation of the UNSPF was conducted in 2019 and 2020. The submitted national reports, combined with biophysical data from Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) of FAO, published in 2020, made it possible to conduct a first assessment of the progress towards achieving the GFGs, the results of which are contained in the flagship publication “The Global Forest Goals Report 2021”.

Further to the first reporting cycle, the ECOSOC, in its resolution 2022/17², requested the Forum secretariat to prepare a road map and timeline for the next reporting cycle, in conjunction with the FAO-FRA cycle, and explore options for establishing an online reporting platform for the Forum. In response to this resolution, the secretariat at the nineteenth session of the Forum proposed the timeline for the reporting cycle 2024-2026 and informed the Forum about its exploratory work on the platform for online reporting.

In section F of resolution 2024/15, the ECOSOC endorsed the timeline for the next reporting cycle to the Forum for the period 2024–2026³. The endorsed timeline foresaw the establishment of the online reporting platform and circulation of the format for national reporting along with the explanatory notes in January 2025 with the deadline for submission of national reports by UNFF members in June 2025. Through the same resolution, the secretariat was also requested, in consultation with the

¹ <https://docs.un.org/E/RES/2024/15>

² <https://docs.un.org/E/RES/2022/17>

³ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/052/21/pdf/n2405221.pdf>

advisory group on reporting to the Forum, to make use of information in national reports toward the transparent development of a short, concise Global Forest Goals Report in close consultation with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The national reports submitted to the UNFF Secretariat are invaluable for the assessment of the progress towards implementation of the UNSPF. These reports will provide the basis for the next Global Forest Goals Report.

III. Date, Venue and Modalities

The workshop took place in person at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) from 18 to 20 March 2025. All sessions were highly interactive, with attendees actively participating and sharing their experiences, including best practices and challenges in preparing their national reports. The discussions during the workshop were conducted in English and French.

IV. Participation

This workshop was organized for the benefit of Member States representatives directly involved in preparing national reports to UNFF⁴. Participants were nominated by UNFF national focal points. Travel support was available to one participant per country. A total of 29 national participants were in attendance, representing 21 countries. The workshop also included participation of one representative from the International Union for the Conservation (IUCN). Mr. Clement Pkiyeny Ng'oriareng of Kenya and Mr. Avashoni Renny Madula of South Africa served as co-facilitators. The complete list of workshop participants is available in Annex I.

V. Workshop Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of UNFF members to track and report on progress made in the implementation of the UNSPF and achievement of its GFGs and targets. The workshop aimed to help participants gain a better understanding of the reporting process to the UNFF and the information needed to assess progress towards GFGs and targets. The participants were also informed of the links between this and other reporting processes. It is expected that the workshop will result in the timely submission of high-quality national reports to the current cycle of national reporting.

The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

- a. Provide guidance to national experts for preparation and compilation of national reports on the progress toward the implementation of the UNSPF and the GFGs, and to promote the exchange of experiences, including best practices,
- b. Familiarize national experts with the use of the online reporting platform and address any potential questions or challenges that may arise,
- c. Brief the participants on the status of other relevant work related to the Global Forest goals Report, including on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025 and the Global Core Set of forest indicators,
- d. Discuss possible ways to report on GFGs and targets with terms that do not have internationally agreed definitions, including how to report on degraded forests (GFG1).

⁴ Information on the current cycle of national reporting to UNFF is available on the UNFF website: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/index.html>

The organization of work for the workshop (Annex II) was made available to participants ahead of time, as were the Explanatory Notes on Reporting to UNFF⁵, which served as background documents for the workshop. In addition, workshop participants were asked to familiarize themselves with the online platform and format for reporting UNFF.

VI. Presentations and discussions

A. Opening remarks

Opening remarks were delivered in the form of a video message by Ms. Juliette Biao, Director of the UNFF Secretariat. In her message, Ms. Biao provided background information about the monitoring, assessment and reporting function under UNFF and underlined the importance of national reporting to UNFF. Ms Biao emphasized that the reports continue to be critical not only for the assessment of progress made towards achieving the global forest goals, but also timely informed decision-making. Far from a mere self-serving tool, national reporting also closes the loop and builds the link between international policy dialogue and practitioners on the ground. Ms. Biao expressed her gratitude to the experts for taking interest and attending the workshop and was confident that this capacity building workshop will lead to an increased number of good quality reports submitted to the UNFF Secretariat by the requested deadline.

B. Setting the scene

The UNFF Secretariat provided an overview of the UNFF mandate on monitoring, assessment and reporting, as well as the previous reporting cycle and the Global Forest Goals Report 2021. The Secretariat then introduced the mandate and timeline for the current reporting cycle, as well as the format and Explanatory Notes on reporting to UNFF.

C. Sharing experiences preparing the national reports to UNFF

Four countries - Ghana, China, Mexico and Kenya - shared their experiences and lessons learned related to the preparation of national reports submitted to UNFF during the last reporting cycle (2019-2020).

China provided a brief overview of the situation of the forest sector in the country and an update on the latest reported institutional and technical actions to implement the UNSPF. The last revision of the Forestry Law was done in 2019. Clear requirements have been set for the preparation, approval and implementation of forest management programs. The country is actively promoting multi-functional near-natural forest management and integrating the concept of work at a national level and promoting the establishment of forests at the national, provincial and district levels. The

⁵ The Explanatory Notes on reporting to UNFF are available in English, Spanish and French on the UNFF website: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/index.html>

importance of data, financial support and cross-sectoral cooperation was highlighted as key for reporting on forests.

Ghana has established a national system and process on reporting to UNFF. After identifying relevant stakeholders and defining the Scope & Requirements of the UNFF Report, the country followed up with data collection and compilation which was done in consultation and validation by all stakeholders involved. The best practices for effective reporting included: harmonization with other international commitments (e.g., CBD, UNFCCC, SDGs); capacity building for national teams on UNFF reporting standards; utilization of technology (GIS, satellite monitoring) for accurate data collection; and continuous stakeholder engagement beyond reporting periods.

In Kenya, the process of preparing the national report was conducted via wide consultations and included two national workshops. In addition to data from forest inventories, the national report included information from the Integrated Household Budget, Small and Micro Enterprise Sector Survey, the Integrated Health and Nutrition Survey and the Population and Housing Census. Time is required for proper consultations, synthesis and compilation of the national report. The information used for the national report to UNFF was helpful in updating policies and strategic plans and assisted in putting together the national forest status report. In addition, the gathered information provided a good reference document for other reporting processes, including reporting to Rio Conventions, AFR100, country-led initiative for landscape restoration in Africa by 2030 and the Bonn Challenge.

Mexico provided information about its extensive forest monitoring system, which includes forest and soli inventories, the satellite forest monitoring system (SAMOF) and the national monitoring, reporting and verification system and a specific legal framework. The process of preparing the national report also involves various stakeholders. However, this is a challenge which requires effective communication and coordination between different government ministries and agencies. Other challenges in the preparation of the national report included a weak analytical capacity and data availability, lack of resources and funding, time constraints and the complexity of the reporting format. The speaker recommended further simplifying reporting processes to various international forest related bodies, by streamlining of the formats, simplifying reporting templates, reducing redundancy and complexity. He also pointed out the importance of training to efficiently use reporting tools and formats, ensuring timely submissions.

D. Online platform for reporting to UNFF

A key element of the workshop was the session on the online reporting platform to UNFF, which is an innovation in the current reporting cycle. The UNFF Secretariat first provided an overview of the criteria used in the selection of the chosen software and the development of the online format, taking into account available resources, as well as the benefits and expected impact of the transition to online reporting. The Secretariat then conducted a demonstration of the platform and provided recommendations for best results, in addition to answering questions from participants. Special emphasis was placed on the recommended practices for effective collaboration among teams, to avoid data loss and ensure effective integration of all inputs. The demonstration was followed by a

practical session in which participants worked independently on their national reports via the online platform.

E. Update on the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2025

FAO provided an update on the status of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025⁶. The country reporting process has been completed and currently the FRA team is in the process of drafting the main report, which is planned for release in October 2025. Following the request from COFO, countries will soon be able to provide voluntary updates for specific FRA variables. An expression of interest in providing a voluntary update was received from 60 countries or territories. The process of voluntary updates started in March 2025 and the updates are expected to be published in 2025/2026. The speaker also provided an update on the global remote sensing survey, which constitutes a part of the FRA 2025 process. An important element of this process is training. FAO organized 15 workshops in 2024 for national experts involved in remote sensing and analyzing of samples. More training workshops are planned in 2025.

Participants also heard an update about the recent work related to forest degradation, including the establishment of a task force on this topic. The Task Force aims to develop a proposal for defining forest degradation, as a part of the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) process. This process will involve consultations with member states and experts on defining forest degradation, it will examine the core components of relevant international definitions for forest degradation and evaluate the key elements that might be included in a definition of forest degradation.

F. Work in groups

To increase the interaction and experience-sharing between participants, a part of the workshop was conducted in small working groups. The groups discussions were guided by specific questions, and groups were instructed to choose two GFGs on which to focus their discussion. The key elements of the discussions are summarized below:

- *What are the main stakeholders that need to be consulted? What kind of engagement mechanisms exist?*

The process of preparing a national report should be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders to the extent possible. The main stakeholders shall include ministries/departments and agencies responsible for forests or/and that related to the forestry, environment, natural resources, climate change, as well as local governments, national and sub-national authorities and national statistical offices. Correspondents should seek to involve the private sector (timber and wood industries, agriculture/ agroforestry, CSR) and, if possible, the NGOs and local communities.

As for engagement mechanisms, several options were proposed, including meeting platforms, consultation in person and online with other agencies, specifically established regarding policy and governance mechanisms (in accordance with the national forest policies, law and legislation).

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/>

- *What are the main sources of data/ information that should be consulted? How do you obtain access to these sources?*

The groups identified the following institutions and platforms as the main data sources: National Forest Inventories (data and figures) and relevant actions and activities related to forestry, climate change, carbon (reforestation, restoration and afforestation activities), relevant governmental websites, desk officers, national libraries (annual reports), subscriptions, online tools (e.g. geoportal). Appropriate protocols should be established for data sharing, including formal requests through letters, subscriptions, letters to the informants, interviews and licenses to online portal/systems.

- *Which are the main challenges in reporting on these two GFGs? How could these challenges be overcome?*

The most common challenges mentioned by the participants included: lack of statistical data for certain goals and targets; lack of data sharing arrangements between different governmental agencies and focal points; lack of definitions (e.g.: defining the forest-dependent populations); as well as difficulties to authenticate and validate data from private institutions. The private sector, in general, is reluctant to share data on forest products.

Some mentioned lengthy data collection procedures. Difficulties in assessing the full value of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and ecosystem services is seen as a big problem contributing to a low economic importance of forest sector in some countries. Collaboration between relevant ministries, departments and institutions is lagging and often caused by lack of financial resources dedicated for cross-sectoral cooperation.

Some of the key strategies to overcome the challenges included: (i) establishing formal data-sharing agreements, especially with private companies; (ii) facilitating inter-ministerial/inter-institutional meetings/dialogues, (iii) mobilizing financial resources from partners to support the collection of data related to reporting, (iv) establishing a single platform to reduce the reporting burden requested by different stakeholders.

The official communication requests and providing incentives are important specifically for bringing in the private sector and other non-state institutions on board. Increasing financial and technical resources (secure long-term funding), for example by leveraging international funding sources (GEF, FAO, CPF), were seen as a prerequisite for successful international reporting on forests by many.

G. Progress on the Global Core Set of Forest related indicators (GCS)

FAO provided an update on work on the global core set of forest-related indicators, which is conducted within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Joint Initiative on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting⁷. The initiative is focused on harmonizing reporting on forest resources and their management and using reports for various processes and conventions. Its aims are to improve the

⁷ <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/initiatives/streamlining-forest-related-reporting/en>

coverage, quality and transparency of forest related data and information and to reduce the forest-related reporting burden of countries.

Most of the 21 forest-related indicators in the global core set have already been established, and data are collected and reported on in the Global Forest Resources Assessment. The indicators support and are already used in the assessment of progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets. In particular, goals 1 and 3 and all their associated targets have benefited from the set and the supplementary data provided by the Assessment. However, for the indicators classified as tier 3 and 2, most of which are socioeconomic, to become operational, more data and further work on concepts and the methodology are needed. Some work has been recently done by FAO and progress has been made on indicator 10, on the wood-based energy share of total final energy consumption and indicator 12, on employment related to the forest sector and further progress has also been made on indicator 13, on the number of forest dependent people in extreme poverty.

Following the presentation, the UNFFS representative clarified the connection between the GCS and the reporting to UNFF. Each of the indicators of the set addresses specific target of the UNSPF. The relationship is explained in the Global Forest Goal Report 2021⁸ – in which references are made to specific targets and indicators.

H. Reporting on the Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs), as a means to accelerate implementation of UNSPF and achievement of GFGs and forest-related SDGs

The UNFF Secretariat delivered a presentation on Voluntary National Contributions. The UNSPF states that Member States may, on a voluntary basis, determine their contributions towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, taking into account their national circumstances, policies, priorities, capacities, levels of development and forest conditions. As of today, 28 countries have submitted their VNCs to the UNFFS⁹.

The online reporting platform contains a question on VNC. Countries which submitted their VNCs are asked to provide a brief description of progress made and information on the internal timeframe for their achievement. Several countries present at the workshop: Botswana, China, Ghana, Japan, Malawi – provided updates on the implementation of their VNCs, while several others signaled their interest to submit VNCs.

I. Use of the information submitted in national reports

The information submitted to the UNFFS via national reports will serve as the foundation for the next Global Forest Goals Report, planned for release in May 2026, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2024/15. Additional data for preparation of the Global Forest Goals Report will be drawn mainly from the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025. The analysis of data from these sources will be conducted in close consultation with the Advisory Group on reporting to UNFF. The scope of the publication will be global, and it will be focused on the progress made

⁸ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/outreach/global-forests-goal-report-2021/index.html>

⁹ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/vncls/index.html>

towards the achievement of the global forest goals and targets. While the availability of adequate resources remains a barrier, the UNFFS will work on turning this publication into a communication tool to showcase progress towards the Global Forest Goals.

In the ensuing discussion, participants encouraged better dissemination of the report, e.g. among high level officials, to raise awareness about what has been achieved under the guidance of the UNSPF. The publication can help address some of the challenges and instigate the inter-departmental coordination and engagement of stakeholders addressed within the Working Groups during the workshop, by demonstrating the use of submitted information and promoting forestry best practices from specific countries.

J. Closure

Following the conclusion of the presentations, the organizers, facilitators and participants expressed their satisfaction with the discussions that took place during the workshop. The sharing of experiences and brainstorming within the working groups on strategies to overcome some of the challenges anticipated in the compilation of national reports were considered as highlighted as especially useful and thought-provoking. The UNFF Secretariat stressed that it is available to respond to requests for support and guidance in the compilation of national reports, especially as relates to the use of the online reporting platform, in the remaining period until the deadline of 30 June 2025. The UNFF Secretariat thanked all participants and further noted that it looks forward to receiving national report submissions from all the countries represented, if possible, well in advance of the deadline.

Annex I: List of participants

Country / Organization	Name	Title	Role
Kenya	Mr. Ng'oriareng Clement Pkiyeny	Senior Deputy Conservator of Forests	Participant / Co-Facilitator
South Africa	Mr. Avhashoni Renny Madula	Director, Forestry Policy and Sector Coordination (UNFF National Focal Point) (Member of the Advisory Group on Reporting to UNFF)	Participant / Co-Facilitator
Botswana	Mr. Keletso SEABO	Principal Forest and Range Resources Officer	Participant
Burundi	Mr. Pacifique ININHAZWE	Chef du Parc National de la Ruzizi and UNFF National Focal Point	Participant
China	Ms. Xiaohong ZHANG	Programme Officer, International Cooperation Center, National Forestry and Grassland Administration	Participant
China	Ms. Lei Jingpin	Prof. Sustainable Forest Management	Participant
Colombia	Mr. Ruben Dario GUERRERO USEDA	Advisor, Directorate of Forests, Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Services of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Participant
Comoros	Mr. Issouf Miradji AMBADI	UNFF National Focal Point	Participant
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. LOUKOU Koffi Maxime	Head of the Geographic Information System and Sustainable Forest Management Department	Participant
Djibouti	Mr. Abdoulsamad Said Arreh	UNFF National Focal Point	Participant
Ghana	Mr. Joseph Yaw APPIAH-GYAPONG	Manager, Donor Relations & Projects at the Forestry Commission	Participant
IUCN	Ms. Paula Prist	Senior Programme Officer	Participant
Jamaica	Ms. Sandre Tash-Ann BARRETT	Director, Corporate Planning and Enterprise Risk Management	Participant
Japan	Ms. Akiko Tabata	International Forestry Cooperation Office, Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan	Participant
Kenya	Mr. Peter Kamau	Assistant Director, Kenya Forest Service	Participant
Country / Organization	Name	Title	Role
Kenya	Ms. Alice Katunge	GIS & RS Officer	Participant
Kenya	Ms. Carolyne Wangeci	Senior GIS Officer	Participant
Kenya	Ms. Eunice Maina	GIS & RS Officer	Participant

Kenya	Ms. Josphine Njui	Geodatabase Officer	Participant
Kenya	Mr. Peter Sirayo	Conservator of Forests	Participant
Madagascar	Mr. Eric Olivier RABENASOLO SOLOFONIAINA	Water and Forests Engineer, Technical Support Officer of the General Directorate, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Participant
Malawi	Ms. Patricia Evidence MASUPAYI	Deputy Director of Forestry, Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change, and UNFF National Focal Point	Participant
Malaysia	Ms. IQTIE QAMAR LAILA BINTI MOHD GANI	Senior Assistant Director of international Affairs, Forestry Department	Participant
Mexico	Mr. Jose Armando ALANIS DE LA ROSA	Gerente de Sistema Nacional de Monitoreo Forestal	Participant
Pakistan	Ms. Parveen EJAZ	Deputy Director, Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination	Participant
Philippines	Ms. Ma. Carmina CANUA	Chief, Forest Plans and Standards Section, FMB, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)	Participant
Philippines	Ms. Claudett M Endozo	Senior forest management specialist	Participant
Seychelles	Mr. Michel John QUILINDO	Head of Forestry Section, Biodiversity Conservation and Management Division Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment	Participant
Sudan	Ms. MADENA MOHAMED AHAMED ELBASHIR	Forests National Corporation (FNC)	Participant
Uganda	Mr. Issa Katwesige	Assistant Commissioner, Planning and Development, Forest Sector Support Department, Ministry of Water and Environment	Participant
UNFFS	Mr. Tomasz Juszcak	Programme Management Officer	Organizer / Presenter
UNFFS	Ms. Nadine Souto	Associate Programme Officer	Organizer / Presenter
FAO	Mr. Anssi Pekkarinen	Senior Forestry Officer	Organizer / Presenter

Annex II: Organization of work

Time/Day	Tuesday, 18 March	Wednesday, 19 March	Thursday, 20 March
9:00-12:00	<p>1. Opening remarks by UNFFS <i>Meeting objectives and expected outcomes</i></p> <p>2. Introduction of participants</p> <p>3. Setting the scene <i>Mandate, UNSPF/Reporting</i> <i>Overview of the reporting format and the Explanatory Notes</i></p> <p>4. Sharing experiences preparing the national reports to UNFF</p> <p><i>Overall process, data sources, stakeholders involved, main data gaps any other challenges (presentations will be followed by interactive discussion)</i></p>	<p>5. An update on the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025</p> <p><i>Presentation of recent work to advance data collection on forest degradation and employment in forestry sector</i></p>	<p>7. Progress on Global Core Set of Forest related Indicators</p> <p>8. Reporting on the VNC's, as a means to accelerate implementation of UNSPF and achievement of GFGs and forest-related SDGs</p> <p>9. Use of the information submitted in national reports <i>The plans for the next Global Forest Goals Report for release in May 2026</i></p> <p>10. Other matters</p> <p>11. Closure</p>
		<p>6. Work in Groups¹</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>WG1 <i>(GFGs 1-3)</i></td> <td>WG2 <i>(GFGs 4-6)</i></td> </tr> </table>	
WG1 <i>(GFGs 1-3)</i>	WG2 <i>(GFGs 4-6)</i>		
12:00-2:00	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
2:00-5:00	<p>4. Online platform for reporting (UNFFS)</p> <p><i>Demonstration of the use of the online platform</i> <i>Practicing the use of the online platform by participants</i></p>	<p>WG1 <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>WG2 <i>(continued)</i></p>
		<p><i>Recap of the key points of the discussions of the WGs</i></p>	

