

Ninth meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance Bonn, Germany, 10–11 March 2015

Background paper on the 2015 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance

Proposed actions for consideration by the SCF

The SCF may wish to discuss the objective of this forum, a draft programme, the exact date of the forum, and ways to invite the experts as referred to in decision 9/CP.19 para 21.

The SCF may also wish to discuss the reporting modality for the forum, and how to ensure that the results of the forum can be discussed by the SCF prior to the COP.

I. Background

1. At COP 19, Parties requested the SCF to focus its soonest possible forum on issues related to finance for forests, including the implementation of activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.¹ At the same session, the COP requested the SCF to invite experts on the implementation of the such activities to the forum.²
2. At COP 20, Parties encouraged the SCF to continue to engage with all relevant actors working on forests in the preparation of the forum, with a view to ensuring broad participation.³ At the same session, COP invited the SCF to consider, in the context of its third forum, inter alia, decisions relevant to activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16 paragraph 70, including decisions 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17, 12/CP.17 as well as decision 9/CP.19 to 15/CP.19.⁴

II. Progress of inter-sessional work

3. At its eighth meeting, the SCF discussed the modality, scope, target audience, timeframe and possible partners and events for the third SCF forum. The Committee agreed that, as per last year's forum, it should be a two-day meeting, should include targeted guiding questions, and should use case studies to share the recent developments and lessons learned.
4. SCF agreed that the working group would work on the organization of the third forum inter-sessionally and decided to invite submissions from interested organizations on potential partnership with the SCF in the organization of the 2015 forum. Six submissions were received⁵ from international organizations, which the working group carefully considered.
5. The working group concluded that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) should be selected as the partner for the third SCF forum. If it is proven more cost effective, the forum may be approved by the secretariat to be held alongside the FAO World Forestry Congress. The Congress will be held from Monday 7 to Friday 11 in September 2015, in Durban, South Africa. It is held every six years and it brings together around 5,000 to 7,000 participants, including policy makers, private sector on both international and domestic levels, civil society and academia. For more information on the Congress please see the annex.
6. The Congress will be held in the International Convention Centre, where COP 17 was held in 2011. Budgetary implications for the venue, if the forum is held there, would be expected to be minimal as a result of the partnership. There will be an investment forum on forests in the middle of the Congress, which would be synergistic with the SCF forum.
7. The working group also proposed the Congress as a suitable event for partnering with because of its scope and theme; scale of targeted audience, including public and private actors; prominence of the event, given that

¹ Inter alia, ways and means to transfer payments for results-based actions as referred to in decision 1/CP.18, paragraph 29; and the provision of financial resources for alternative approaches.

² Decision 9/CP.19, paragraphs 20 and 21.

³ Decision 6/CP.19 paragraph 16.

⁴ Decision 6/CP.19 paragraph 17.

⁵ Submissions available at:

http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/standing_committee/items/7561.php#SCF%20Forum%20in%202015

the Congress is held every six years; neutrality as a UN organization; and strong willingness from FAO for partnership. Members noted, however, that the late timing (September) would leave the SCF with little time to consider the outcomes. A suggestion was made for secretariat staff to draft short summaries after each session of the forum, so that the forum report could be made available just after the forum.

8. The working group also agreed that SCF members should attend any relevant events prior to the forum to assist in networking and in identifying resource persons, as well as feeding into the substance of the forum. Suzanty accepted to participate in the UNFF-ESCAP Workshop on Integrating Climate and Forest Financing in Southeast Asia, to be held from 23 to 25 March 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand.

9. The working group reconfirmed the decision made at the eighth meeting of the SCF that the working paper on coherence and coordination for financing for forests will serve as an input to the third SCF forum. It also noted that inputs received on coherence and coordination for financing for forests⁶ would be useful in informing the third SCF forum. Table 1 below shows a timeline for the working paper.

Table 1: Activities/deliverables and internal timeline for the open-ended working group of the SCF

Deliverables: working paper	2015									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
Input deadline	31									
Revised working paper send to working group			2							
Guidance on how to proceed with the working paper			11							
Revised version sent to WG					1					
Comments deadline					15					
Working paper revised and sent to SCF						1				
Final background paper for the forum made public							15			

⁶ Inputs received available on the web:

< http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/standing_committee/items/7561.php#CCFF >

Annex I

Information on the 2015 World Forestry Congress

This year's theme is "Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future". It will "be a key occasion for the world's foresters and forest supporters to gather, to share their expertise and experience, and to project a new vision for the future."

It will aim to:

- "Clarify why it is so important to recognize forestry as an integral part of sustainable development – from local to national and international levels;
- Identify, analyze and raise awareness of the major issues facing the sector and propose new forms of technical, scientific and policy actions that will result in forests' greater sustainability by linking sound policy to feasible practice;
- Serve as a key venue in 2015 for the world's foresters – from decision-makers to local practitioners as well as sectoral partners – to share their knowledge and latest findings, in a forum that will allow for challenging, constructive and sometimes controversial debate, the exchange of experience and views, and the fostering of collaborative partnerships and networks; provide a global showcase for the sector's latest developments and innovations, using multi-media learning platforms to illustrate their practical applications and linkages;
- Ensure that critical issues are visibly addressed and that all key stakeholders, including young people, women and local communities, are given a platform where the voice of the constituencies they represent will be heard."⁷

The host of the Congress will be the Government of the Republic of South Africa with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) as the focal point. Technical and administrative support will be provided by the FAO Forestry Department.

⁷ Quoted from the official website of the Congress: <<http://www.fao.org/forestry/wfc/85567/en/>>