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SIMULATION HANDBOOK

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF)

United Nations Forum on Forests

Simulation Handbook

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established in 2000 by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a subsidiary body with a universal membership. It was created in response to growing international concern over deforestation, forest degradation, and the need for coordinated global action to ensure the sustainable management of the world's forests.

Forests cover approximately 31 percent of the Earth's land surface and play a critical role in sustaining life on the planet. They support biodiversity, regulate climate, protect water resources, provide livelihoods for more than 1.6 billion people, and are essential to achieving sustainable development. The work of the UNFF is grounded in the recognition that forests are not only an environmental issue, but also a social, economic, and developmental concern.

The UNFF serves as the primary global policy forum within the United Nations system dedicated to forests. It brings together all UN Member States to promote the management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to these objectives.

The Role and Mandate of the UNFF

The UNFF is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030, which provides a global framework for action and includes six Global Forest Goals, such as reversing forest loss, enhancing forest-based economic benefits, and increasing forest-related financing.

Its main functions include:

- Providing a global platform for dialogue on forest-related policies and challenges;
- Strengthening political commitment to sustainable forest management at all levels;
- Promoting coherence and coordination across the UN system on forest-related issues;
- Supporting countries in implementing sustainable forest policies and practices;
- Mobilizing financial resources and partnerships for forest conservation and restoration;
- Monitoring progress toward internationally agreed forest-related goals.

The UNFF works closely with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), which includes major international organizations such as FAO, UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, and others, ensuring that forest issues are addressed in a coordinated and integrated manner across the UN system.

Short History of UNFF Priorities

The UNFF emerged from a longer international process that began in the early 1990s, including the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992), which highlighted forests as a critical global concern. Early efforts focused on developing shared principles and voluntary frameworks rather than legally binding agreements.

Over time, the Forum's priorities evolved toward:

- Combating deforestation and forest degradation;
- Integrating forests into national development strategies;
- Recognizing the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- Linking forests to climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Supporting forest restoration and sustainable forest-based livelihoods.

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With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, forests became directly linked to multiple Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 15 (Life on Land), while also contributing to climate action (SDG 13), poverty eradication (SDG 1), and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8).

Impact of Forests and the UNFF on Our Lives

Forests affect daily life in profound and often invisible ways. They regulate rainfall, stabilize soils, filter water, absorb carbon dioxide, and provide food, medicine, energy, and materials used around the world. Healthy forests are essential for combating climate change, preventing natural disasters, and sustaining biodiversity.

Through the UNFF, governments work together to address global forest challenges that no country can solve alone. The Forum helps shape policies that influence land use, conservation strategies, climate commitments, and development planning—making it a vital institution for ensuring that forests continue to support both people and the planet for generations to come.

Main Elements of UNFF Meetings

The simulation of the ECOSOC Plenary is divided into three parts: 1) Opening Plenary, 2) Informal Consultations, and 3) Closing Plenary.

THE OPENING PLENARY OF THE COMMISSION

All of the delegates first meet together in a formal meeting to adopt the agenda and Organization of Work by consensus. Following the adoption of these two items, there will be an interactive session in with a UN expert on the agenda item that has been allocated to the UNFF.

As part of the Plenary meeting, delegates will engage in a [General Debate](#). Member States will have an opportunity to make statement representing their government's views on the agenda item titled, "[Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change](#)". Delegates can speak in their national capacity and/or on behalf of a regional or political group. Any delegate representing an individual country, regional or political group wishing to make a statement during the General Debate must subscribe to the Speakers List before the Plenary begins.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

General Discussion of Zero Draft (see definition on pg. 5)

Once the Plenary meeting is adjourned, the United Nations Forum on Forests will transition into informal consultations where they will first have an informal discussion on the Zero draft of the Resolution. This discussion should be very general in nature and focus on articulating a delegation's priorities, what paragraphs they think need to be elaborated and what paragraphs perhaps should be deleted from the text. This is not the time to propose specific amendments to the text. Before taking the floor during the General Discussion of the Zero Draft, delegates will have an opportunity to meet in their regional groups to share their perspectives on the Zero Draft to determine where their positions agree and/or disagree.

Line by line review of Zero Draft

Following the informal discussion, delegates will meet in their regional groups to share the amendments they play to propose to the Zero draft. Following this informal discussion, the Facilitator will begin the line by line review by reading each paragraph and ask the delegates if there are any changes they wish to make to the text. There is no limit to how many amendments a delegate can propose. During this phase of the simulation, the rules of procedure will be suspended so that delegates can focus on negotiating the text. The majority of time at the conference will be spent working in Informal Consultations with the aim of reaching consensus on the text so that it can be adopted without a vote.

Amendments will be inserted into the Zero draft of the Resolution which will be displayed on a screen during the Debate of Amendments.

Main Elements of UNFF Meetings (cont.)

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS (CONT.)

Debate of Amendments

During the debate, the sponsors of each amendment will be asked to explain why they think their amendment should be included in the text. If there are no objections it is then incorporated into the Resolution. If there is an objection from one or more delegates, there must be a discussion until all delegates agree whether it should be adopted as is, revised through sub-amendments or withdrawn. The goal of the debate should be to reach consensus on the text.

If no changes are proposed to a given paragraph, it will be marked “Agreed ad ref” to indicate that the delegates have temporarily agreed to the text in that paragraph. Delegates can return to paragraphs that have been marked “Agreed ad ref” and propose changes later if they so choose.

Whenever all of the amendments in a particular paragraph have been discussed and resolved, the paragraph will be marked “Agreed ad ref”.

If there are any amendments that are contentious during informal consultations and the delegates are having difficulty reaching consensus, they should be “bracketed” or set aside for further discussion later on so that the delegates can first focus on those amendments that are easier to reach agreement on.

Roughly midway through the debate of amendments, delegates will meet again in their regional groups to review the amendments that have yet to be debated.

After going through all the amendments at least once, the delegates should return to those amendments that have been “bracketed”. The Facilitator can intervene during the Debate of Amendment and propose suggestions in an effort to help delegates reach agreement on these amendments.

After all amendments have been resolved, the Facilitator should scroll through the entire Resolution paragraph and paragraph and ask the delegates to carefully read the text to make sure there are no further objections.

If new objections are raised, these objections must be discussed until agreement has been reached and no where further changes to the text are proposed.

Consensus has been reached when every paragraph is marked “Agreed ad ref”.

CLOSING PLENARY OF THE COMMISSION

In the last phase of the simulation, all of the delegates meet together in the Closing Plenary to adopt their Resolution by consensus. After the adoption, delegates may take the floor, if they wish, to make a statement. These statements typically focus on paragraphs in the Resolution that a particular delegation would like to highlight in some way. It also provides an opportunity for delegations to indicate which paragraphs they would like to disassociate from if their government disagrees with some element in the text.

If consensus is not reached on the Resolution, the entire text will be withdrawn by the Chair.

Things to Know about the Rules of Procedure

1. When delivering a speech during the Opening or Closing Plenary, speeches cannot be interrupted. The Speakers List is followed until all speakers have had an opportunity to speak.
 2. Passing notes during Formal Meetings is not allowed.
 3. The presiding officer during meetings will never ask, "Are any points or motions on the floor?"
 4. Parliamentary points (e.g., Points of Personal Privilege, Points of Information, and Points of Inquiry) and motions (e.g., Motion for Moderated or Unmoderated Caucuses, Motion to Set Agenda, Motions to Set Speaking Time, Motion to Move to Voting Procedures, etc.) **are not allowed** during the conference. These are parliamentary rules of procedure and they are not used at the United Nations because it is not a Parliament.
 5. Delegates will not be allowed to yield their time to the Chair or another delegation.
 6. The only point that is allowed is a Point of Order, which is only to be used if a delegate feels the rules of procedure are not being followed properly.
 7. Delegates must raise a Point of Order without being prompted.
 8. The Right of Reply is allowed during the General Debate if a delegation wishes to respond to a comment made during a speech that they find offensive. Any delegation wishing to exercise their right of reply must notify the secretary of their Commission of their request. If granted by the Chair they must wait until the end of the Speakers List to reply. Each delegation can exercise their Right of Reply of maximum of two times during the General Discussion of the priority theme.
 9. During informal consultations, there will be no rules of procedure. Delegates are encouraged to work together to achieve consensus on the wording of the Resolution that is under consideration.
 10. Delegates can make a statement during the Closing Plenary to put on record any reservations they may have on the Resolution before or after action is taken.
 11. The line by line review offers an opportunity for the delegates to propose changes to the draft resolution. Delegates can indicate if they agree or disagree with the amendments that are proposed. Delegates must wait until the line by line review has been suspended or completed before they can begin debating the amendments that have been proposed.
 12. If the Committee is not able to reach consensus, the Resolution is withdrawn from consideration.
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Double Delegations: Procedures

In this simulation, two students will be assigned to represent the same country forming what is called as a double delegation. While this arrangement allows for collaboration and shared responsibility, it also requires a high level of coordination and discipline.

General Principle

A double delegation must always speak and act as one voice. At the United Nations, a Member State is represented by a single official position, even when multiple diplomats are present. The same principle applies in the simulation. Internal discussion and disagreement may occur privately, but they must never be expressed publicly during formal proceedings.

What This Means in Practice

General Debate or General Discussion

- Only one delegate from each double delegation may take the floor during the General Debate or General Discussion of the Zero Draft that follows.
- The statement must reflect a single, unified national position agreed upon by both delegates.
- Delegations may divide preparation responsibilities, but public representation must be singular.

Communication with Chairs and Head Delegates

- All messages (written or electronic) sent to the Chair, Head Delegate, or Secretariat must reflect the joint position of both delegates. Double delegations must coordinate before submitting Amendments, Requests, or Objections.
- Conflicting or uncoordinated messages from the same country may be treated as procedural errors and may be disregarded.

Double Delegations: Procedures (cont.)

Submission of Amendments

- Double delegations must jointly agree on which amendments are submitted on behalf of their country.
- Delegates may take turns submitting amendments, but each submission must reflect the agreed position of both delegates.
- Amendments submitted without internal agreement may be ruled out of order.

Debate on Amendments

- During debate on a specific amendment, only one delegate may argue on behalf of the country.
- Delegates may alternate speaking roles across different amendments, but both delegates may not speak on the same amendment at the same time.
- In smaller-group negotiations where multiple amendments are being debated simultaneously, each delegate may participate in a different group.
- In all cases, coordination of positions is essential, and both delegates remain responsible for ensuring consistency.

Statements After Adoption

- If statements are permitted after the adoption of a resolution or outcome document (e.g., explanations of position), the same procedures apply:
- Only one delegate may speak on behalf of the country.
- The statement must reflect the jointly agreed position of both delegates.

Internal Coordination

- Delegates in a double delegation are strongly encouraged to:
- Divide research and drafting tasks strategically,
- Consult frequently during negotiations,
- Agree in advance on priorities, red lines, and acceptable compromises.
- Internal disagreement is a normal part of diplomacy—but it must never appear in formal debate, written submissions, or procedural exchanges.

Key Reminder

- Double delegations mirror real-world diplomatic practice, where multiple officials represent a single national position. Success depends not on speaking more often, but on effective

Terms used in the simulation of the UNFF

1. **Bureau:** refers to the Chair and Vice-Chair who are officials elected by the Functional Commissions to preside over meetings.
2. **Facilitator:** The Facilitator is responsible for presiding over the informal consultations and has the responsibility of helping the delegates reach consensus on the text of the draft Resolution.
3. **Paragraphs:** Model UN conferences around the world are used to referring to the clauses or sub-clauses of a resolution or Resolution. At the United Nations, these are referred to as paragraphs and sub-paragraphs.
4. **Zero draft:** Zero draft: A zero draft is the first working version of an outcome document used to begin negotiations. It is not a final text, and it is not expected to reflect the views of all delegations. Instead, it serves as a starting point for discussion. Some ECOSOC Functional Commissions rely on beginning with an outcome document that has been written by the substantive office in the UN Secretariat who has an expertise on the agenda item that is being discussed. The “zero draft”, is submitted to the delegates on behalf of the Chair. In the case of the UNFF, the zero draft is written by the United Nations Populations Division.
5. **Consensus:** Consensus occurs when all of the delegations in a Committee reach agreement on the wording of every paragraph in a draft Resolution and are ready to adopt it without voting on it. This is the goal of the negotiation process.
6. **Disassociate:** When consensus has been reached and the Resolution is adopted without a vote, any delegate is given the opportunity to make a statement about any reservations they may have about particular paragraphs that are included in the Resolution. It is possible to agree to adopt the Resolution without a vote and still have elements within it that a delegation is not entirely pleased with. When this occurs, a delegate can take that floor after the Resolution have been adopted to indicate that their government wishes to disassociate itself from a particular paragraph.

Terms not used in the simulation of the UNFF

1. **Dais:** This term is not used at the UN and is therefore not a part of the terminology of the in this simulation. The proper term to use when referring to the officials presiding over a meeting is the Bureau.
2. **Honourable Delegates or Honourable Chair:** Delegates should not begin their statements with the words “Honorable delegates” or “Honorable Chair.” These terms are used in a Parliament and since the UN is not a Parliament it is not appropriate to use them during the simulation of UN meetings. When a delegate is given the floor to make a statement during the General Discussion, delegates should begin by saying “Thank you Mr/Madame Chair.” Statements are always addressed to the presiding officer not to the delegates.
3. **House:** In some conferences, the person presiding over a meeting might say, “Will the House come to order” if the delegates are making too much noise. Again, since the UN is not a Parliament, it is inappropriate to refer to ECOSOC as the “House” when addressing delegates.
4. **Friendly and Unfriendly amendments:** Delegates are expected to work together to find solutions related to the priority theme. Therefore, these terms are not used at the UN and do not apply the negotiation process in this simulation which focuses on reaching consensus among all delegates.
5. **Moderated and Unmoderated Caucuses:** These terms do not exist at the UN. What does exist are different types of informal consultations which are similar in some respects but differ in other respects.
6. **Clauses:** Model UN conferences around the world refer to the paragraphs in an outcome document like a resolution or Resolution as “clauses”. This term is not used at the UN. In contrast, the editorial guidelines at the UN refer to the sections of an outcome document as paragraphs or sub-paragraphs if they follow a chapeau (see next section on Resolution).

Notes on a UNFF Resolution

Every resolution is divided into two sections that consist of preambular and the operative paragraphs. Preambular paragraphs begin with a word or phrase in the present participle (e.g., *Reaffirming*, *Recalling*) and always ends with comma. Preambular paragraphs are not numbered.

Operative paragraphs begin with a word or phrase in the present tense (e.g., *Requests*, *Encourages*) and always end with a semi-colon except for the last operative paragraph that ends with a period.

The words or phrases used to begin a paragraph are always italicized and never underlined.

The preambular paragraphs set the stage and context for the operative section.

The best way to learn about how to write a good resolution is to study and compare them. Here are some tips about what goes into a good resolution.

TYPE AND ORDER OF CONTENT TO INCLUDE IN THE PREAMBLE WITH EXAMPLES FOR EACH

When reading this section, please keep in mind that the aim is to give you an idea of the range of content that could be included in a resolution and does not mean that this content is always included in a resolution. It also aims to serve as a guideline on how to decide the order in which to include content when drafting a resolution or merging content from different resolutions on the same agenda item.

The preamble usually begins by reaffirming the recommendations made in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action which are foundational outcome documents that later resolutions on this always reference and build upon and other relevant meetings, conferences or summits:

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000, by which it established the international arrangement on forests,

If the same verb (i.e., *Recalling*) is used twice in a row to begin a paragraph, the second time it is used, the word 'also' is added and italicized.

If the same verb is used three times in a row to begin a paragraph, the third time it is used, the word further is added and italicized (e.g., *Recalling further*):

Notes on a UNFF Resolution (cont.)

Recalling also the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,¹ and recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”,²

Recalling further its resolution 2006/49 of 28 July 2006 and United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 10/2 of 19 April 2013,³ providing for the review in 2015 of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, including its scope and its preparatory process,

The preamble, as demonstrated above, is also a place where Member States would mention or recall past resolutions that are linked to the topic.

In addition, the preamble also highlights important elements associated with the topic that typically begin with the verbs such as **Noting**, **Recognizing**, **Bearing in mind** or **Acknowledging**:

Noting the contributions made by countries, organizations and other stakeholders to the review of the international arrangement on forests, including the views submitted by Member States of the Forum and major groups

Acknowledging the progress made by countries and stakeholders towards sustainable forest management,

Recognizing the achievements of the international arrangement on forests since its inception, in particular the adoption by the General Assembly of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests,³

Finally, the preambular paragraphs also draw attention to the concerns Member States have about the topic:

Expressing concern about continued deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the slow rate of afforestation and forest cover recovery and reforestation, and the resulting adverse impact on economies, the environment, including biological diversity, and the livelihoods of at least a billion people and their cultural heritage,

CONTENT TO BE INCLUDED IN OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS WITH EXAMPLES

The operative paragraphs should consist of recommended actions that Member States want different stakeholders (e.g., Member States, regional, subregional and non-governmental partners, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, Global Environment Facility and the Secretariat of the Forum) to take to combat deforestation and forest degradation.

¹ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

² General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

³ General Assembly resolution 62/98, annex.

Notes on a UNFF Resolution (cont.)

CONTENT TO BE INCLUDED IN OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS WITH EXAMPLES (CONT.)

Since ECOSOC resolutions are only recommendations and there is no way to enforce them. As a result operative paragraphs typically begin with the verbs, *Decides*, *Encourages*, *Urges*, *Invites*, *Calls upon*, or *Requests*:

16. *Decides*:

(a) To invite Member States to continue to monitor and assess progress towards implementing sustainable forest management, including the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the global objectives on forests, and to submit on a voluntary basis national progress reports to the Forum;

(b) To note the ongoing efforts of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members and other relevant entities and processes to work jointly to further streamline and harmonize reporting, reduce reporting burdens and synchronize data collection, taking into account the collaborative forest resources questionnaire developed as part of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015, in order to foster synergy and coherence;

The verb *Decides* is often used to introduce a list of recommended actions. When this occurs, each subparagraph begins with 'To' followed by a verb in the present tense (e.g., review, assess, etc.). But it can also be used to begin a new paragraph:

38. *Decides* that the Forum should develop a concise strategic plan for the period 2017–2030 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;

39. *Also decides* that the strategic plan should be aligned with the objectives of the international arrangement on forests and should incorporate a mission and vision, the global objectives on forests and the forest-related aspects of the post-2015 development agenda;

Please note that when a verb is repeated more than once in the operative section, the second time the verb is used, "also" appears before the verb (e.g., *Also decides*) and the third time it appears "further" appears before the verb (e.g., *Further decides*).

Other verbs, such as *Encourages* or *Invites*, can also be used to introduce a list:

22. *Encourages* the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations:

(a) To strengthen the Partnership by formalizing its working modalities, including through consideration of a multilateral memorandum of understanding, and by developing procedures for its effective functioning and operation;

(b) To identify ways to stimulate broader participation by existing member organizations;

Notes on a UNFF Resolution (cont.)

CONTENT TO BE INCLUDED IN OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS WITH EXAMPLES (CONT.)

Notice in the above example that the chapeau which introduces the list identifies the stakeholder (i.e., the Collaborative Partnership on Forests) that the lists of actions is addressed to.

Here is one more example:

15. **Invites** the Global Environment Facility to consider:

(a) Options for establishing a new focal area on forests during the next replenishment of the Facility and continuing to seek to improve existing forest finance modalities;

(b) Designating among its staff a liaison to serve as a link between the Forum and the Facility, in order to facilitate access to funding for sustainable forest management;

There are two things to notice in this last example. First, the chapeau addresses the list of actions to a different entity (i.e., the Global Environment Facility) and the verb 'to' is included in the chapeau. In the previous example where the chapeau used the word '**Encourages**', each subparagraph began with the word 'To' spelled with a capital letter. You can follow either format.

Finally, these verbs, like the verb '**Decides**', can be simply used to begin a new paragraph:

28. **Invites** Member States to consider, on a voluntary basis and as appropriate, establishing or strengthening regional and subregional processes or platforms for forest policy development;

A list of terms commonly used terms in UNFF resolutions will be posted on the WIMUN NY 2026 website along with the Study Guide and Annotated Bibliography.