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Dear colleague,

As you know, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) stresses a healthy interaction with relevant regional and subregional entities. Thus it sets a particular focus on the role of regional collaboration and partnerships in sustainable forest management. In this context, during its Eighth Session, UNFF reiterated the invitation for regional and subregional entities to contribute to the international forest policy discussions through sharing of regional perspectives, approaches and experiences. In this regard, today I am writing to: (i) update you on the latest developments regarding UNFF, and (ii) request your valuable input to its Ninth Session (UNFF9), which will take place in New York from 24 January to 4 February 2011.

As you are no doubt aware, the Forum held a Special Session of the UNFF9 on 30 October 2009, which adopted an important Resolution on the Means of Implementation for Sustainable Forest Management (forest financing). Accordingly, the Forum established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing (AHEG) to meet before UNFF9 and before the Tenth Session of the Forum - UNFF10, as well as a Facilitative Process. In its recent meeting, the UNFF9 Bureau decided that the first meeting of AHEG would be held from 13-17 September 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya. The UNFF9 Bureau also endorsed the UNFF Strategic Work Plan on Forest Financing, as the basis for planning for the UNFF work on forest financing starting from now until UNFF10 in 2013. In addition, the Secretariat has launched the Facilitative Process through a series of analytical studies on forest finance in Low Forest Cover Countries - LFCCs and Small Island Developing States - SIDS, as the initial work.

The four-year UNFF work on forest financing is a unique opportunity for key actors, including forest-related regional processes, to play an active role in shaping global policy-setting on forest financing, including through informing and engaging Member States in the related events and meetings, including in the AHEG-1. Regional processes are key organizations that can provide valuable input on forest financing strategies/ programs/ actions, experiences and needs, and help to identify the key challenges and opportunities for forest financing within and among countries in the regions.

In this context, I am writing to invite your active participation and involvement in the first meeting of the AHEG as well as the entire UNFF forest financing process.

In regard to the Ninth Session of the Forum (UNFF9), it will have a High-level Segment, which will be held on 2 and 3 February 2011. In addition, it will:

- Assess overall progress made on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests;
- Focus on an overall theme of "Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication"; and
- Launch the International Year of Forests (IYF 2011).

The High-level Segment is particularly important and relevant due to its timing relative to other high-level conferences and summits, in particular. It will take place soon after the General Assembly High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and precede the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012.

As far as the International Year of Forests 2011 goes, its launch will take place during UNFF9, and will feature a series of high-level events, including panel discussions, media activities, issuance of a UN commemorative stamp series for the International Year of Forests, and other public events currently under consideration.

The Secretariat wishes all regional groups to participate at the highest level in the international launch events at UNFF9. Regional groups are also invited to use these events as an opportunity to announce actions in implementing the International Year of Forests.

Finally, as you know, the Secretary-General's report on regional and subregional submissions is prepared for each UNFF session and, in order to provide the highest possible quality report, we would like to build on the considerable expertise of your organization.

To facilitate inputs, we have prepared a note (attached to this letter) which highlights aspects you may wish to consider related to the themes of our Ninth Session, as well as to the International Year of Forests 2011. I encourage you to review the note, and to consider referring to it, when preparing your input.

We would be most grateful if you could send your inputs to Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill (tavora-jainchill@un.org, fax: + 1 917-367-3186) by **30 June 2010**. We would also appreciate it if you could identify and inform us of a focal point in your organization, with whom we may coordinate on this matter.

We look forward to your active participation in the preparations for the Ninth Session of the UNFF and for the International Year of Forests 2011.

Yours sincerely,



Jan. L. McAlpine
Director
UN Forum on Forests Secretariat