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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 12TH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY 13-15 MARCH 1995

The 12th session of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Forestry (COFO) met at FAO headquarters in Rome from 13-16 March 1995. A meeting of national ministers responsible for forestry followed on 16-17 March 1995. COFO members discussed the role of FAO in forestry, particularly related to sustainable forest management. They considered the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM), issues of trade and environment, and a possible FAO role in the open-ended *ad hoc* intergovernmental panel on forests, proposed by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) intersessional meeting. COFO delegates also negotiated the Rome Statement on Forestry, which the ministerial meeting adopted and forwarded to CSD.

REPORT OF THE SESSION

The COFO meeting was attended by 113 States members of COFO, 17 observer States, four UN agencies, and 18 intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations. Outgoing COFO Chair, Hassan Osman Abdel Nour (Sudan), opened the meeting. Mr. H.W. Hjort, Deputy Director General of FAO, welcomed delegates, suggesting that the meeting was unique for COFO, having been preceded by consultations with representatives from the private sector and from conservation and development NGOs and that the meeting will be followed by the ministerial session. He said that FAO is providing a forum for convergence of efforts to develop criteria and indicators (C & I) for sustainable forestry, and asked delegates for their views on FAO activities related to UNCED follow-up, on the suggested CSD panel, on the trade implications of C & I, and whether the Forest Principles should evolve further.

After adoption of the agenda (COFO-95/INF. 1 - Rev. 1), Mr. John Valentine (New Zealand) was elected Chair, Mr. Abeeullah Jan (Pakistan) first Vice-Chair, and Jan Ilavsky (Slovak Republic), Rabie Fal'ah (Iran), Pedro Medrano Rojas (Chile), Moorosi Raditapole (Lesotho) and Yvan Hardy (Canada) Vice-Chairs. Mr. W.F. Sheridan (UK) was elected Rapporteur. A working group was formed, chaired by Amb. Alvaró Gurgel Alencar (Brazil), to develop the ministerial statement.

THE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTS - THE 1995 CSD REVIEW:

On Monday and Tuesday, 13-14 March, delegates discussed overall issues of forests and sustainable development, based on a set of documents: COFO-95/2 (The Management, Conservation and sustainable development of forests: major issues - preparing for CSD); COFO-95/2 - Supp.1 (Regional perspectives); COFO-95/2 - Supp.2 (Forestry initiatives related to UNCED follow-up); COFO-95/2 - Supp. 3 (Expert consultation on the harmonization of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (Rome, 13-16 February 1995) - summary report); COFO-95/2 - Supp. 4 (Assessing the advantages and disadvantages of a legally binding instrument on forests); COFO-95/2 - Supp. 5 (Meeting the private forest industry sector on UNCED follow-up (Rome, 8 March 1995) - summary report); and COFO-95/2 - Supp.6 (Meeting with NGOs on forestry (Rome, 10-11 March 1995) - summary report). (*Editor's note: These documents are available on the Linkages World Wide Web Server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>.)*

The European Union welcomed the results of the Helsinki process on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of European Forests. He recommended development of a legally binding instrument on all types of forests and pointed to the need for progress on certification of timber from sustainably managed forests. He supported establishment of an intergovernmental panel under the CSD, suggesting a joint secretariat under FAO and UNEP, with assistance from other UN agencies and the secretariats of the biodiversity and desertification conventions.

The US said FAO should continue to seek a better balance between environmental and developmental functions of forests in its programmes. He said FAO priorities should include information gathering and forest resource assessments, and that FAO should focus on technical assistance in SFM. He said development of C & I, through the various processes, had produced complementary, compatible results, but added that the different C & I processes need to be implemented, not harmonized or globalized. He supported study and exploration of certification and labeling schemes, but noted that other organizations were already working in this area so that FAO should not play a major role. He said national level C & I are not a basis for certification at the forest unit or stand level. He recommended that FAO be more open to NGO observers, and supported the proposed CSD panel as the appropriate forum for moving forward the international forest policy debate. The panel should be facilitated by the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

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(DPCSD), with FAO providing technical support in areas within its competence.

Brazil said countries should abide by the Forest Principles and relevant chapters of Agenda 21. He suggested that the Forest Principles have not yet been applied, and that it is premature to discuss a binding convention on forests. FAO should be part of the process in its recognized technical role as task manager.

Malaysia agreed with the call in COFO-95/2 for harmonization of C & I for SFM at the global level. He said that certification of timber can only be effective following establishment of internationally agreed C & I, developed through an intergovernmental process involving all stakeholders. He said any certification scheme should be: applied to all timber and timber products as well as non-timber substitutes; based on internationally agreed criteria; based on a realistic time frame for achieving SFM; and used without becoming a non-tariff trade barrier. He categorically opposed a forest protocol under the Biodiversity Treaty, noting that biodiversity conservation is only one of many forest functions. He said implementation of the Forest Principles in developing countries required transfer of environmentally sound technologies and adequate financial resources on concessional and preferential terms. He stated that the proposed CSD panel should not prejudice the need for a legally binding instrument on forests.

Canada stressed the progress of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Forests, whose proposed options and approaches are intended for potential inclusion in the proposed CSD panel's work. He noted that the various efforts to establish scientifically based C & I are key to promoting global consensus on forests. He suggested FAO could play a role in involving countries not yet participating in the process, facilitating a convergence between C & I initiatives and responding to requests from the CSD may make under the proposed intergovernmental panel. The CSD should continue to act as the primary venue for global policy discussion on forests, and its panel should be open, transparent and inclusive. FAO has an essential technical role to play supporting the policy work under the CSD panel. He said there is a need for a legally binding instrument on all forests and all forest values. He supported voluntary, non-legislated certification of forest products as a means of facilitating non-discriminatory trade.

Norway said that future activities should include all concerned countries and groups, especially indigenous peoples. He said any establishment of a legally binding instrument for forests must be done in a holistic and balanced manner through a step-by-step and non-confrontational process. He said the CSD panel proposal was a positive step toward this process. The Netherlands said FAO should take the initiative to develop terms of reference for the CSD panel in cooperation with other UN agencies. He supported the EU's recommendation to seek consensus on a step-by-step process toward a legally binding instrument. He strongly supported transparency and participation in the process, especially for indigenous and forest dwelling groups, whose presence he said had been only window dressing or forbidden in the past.

The Czech Republic stressed the difficulties of countries with economies in transition in information access and institutional capacity to implement international measures. He called for more comparable rules for creating common databases and evaluating private sector forestry and state actions.

Austria said the international community should take further steps to establish a negotiating process for a legally binding agreement, first establishing the need for and feasibility of an instrument. While it is necessary to develop a more complete understanding of ecological functions of forests, he said decisions can not wait for total certainty.

The Republic of Korea said COFO should review the adequacy of the Forest Principles, noting that there is no mechanism for their

implementation. He said CSD should assume responsibility in negotiating a legally binding instrument with full participation of all groups including NGOs. South Africa did not support a legally binding agreement, because limited resources mean it would have difficulty abiding by such an agreement. Trinidad and Tobago said guidelines, frameworks, and criteria are useful, but each sovereign country must work out its own solution according to ecological, cultural and other factors. He supported the first of three options in the COFO document, that countries should work toward developing and evaluating the Forest Principles but not develop any new instrument. Sudan also supported the first option.

Finland supported a coordinated process for further consensus and implementing forestry related decisions. He said only a separate forest convention can take into account socioeconomic and environmental factors and integrate national and international resources. He endorsed FAO's activities in forest resources assessment and information, emphasized FAO's assistance toward capacity building and National Forest Action Plans and said the FAO regional forestry commissions are of ultimate importance.

The UK said the proposed CSD panel should prepare the basis for convergence of C & I initiatives, identify and commission research on forest and environmental issues, prepare the basis of certification and labeling for products from sustainable forests, consider a binding agreement and identify its elements, and consider the best way to deliver SFM and conservation.

The Center for International Forest Research (CIFOR) called for FAO to include more research in the international debate on forests, noting that CIFOR is testing C & I in the field.

Myanmar called for caution in developing a legally binding instrument, noting that legality should not be in conflict with national sovereignty over forest resources or national responsibility for their development. Indonesia proposed a discussion of non-wood forest products and said that COFO should recommend establishing an FAO advisory committee on the subject. He said the recent efforts on C & I could lead to confusion if no consensus is reached. Senegal endorsed the development of a legally binding instrument, with immediate negotiations initiated by the UN General Assembly. Colombia said C & I can not be established until a legally binding instrument is discussed, but he said they could be included under the CSD or the Biodiversity Convention.

India said that FAO should go beyond being task manager for the Forest Principles. He said all initiatives should be FAO-driven and that FAO can be a vanguard for efforts following Rio.

WWF International said there is confusion between C & I and certification. She supported certification efforts already underway by the Forest Stewardship Council. She noted that national C & I initiatives have not considered how they will contribute to SFM, but instead have been technically oriented and developed without broad participation. The World Rainforest Movement said emphasis was too great on poverty and population as causes of deforestation, with too little attention to consumerism and imposition on the rights of indigenous peoples. He noted that higher value for forest products could cause increased deforestation, and called for penalties for forest destruction as well as incentives for conservation. He said respect for indigenous and other forest communities is critical in development of any C & I, and that existing international instruments on indigenous peoples should be respected. Greenpeace International said consensus at COFO pointed to the need for a mandate and direction for FAO in technical services, information and assessments. She said DPCSD should provide the secretariat for the proposed CSD panel, because DPCSD is a neutral agency. C & I should not be forced into harmonization without testing first at national levels. She criticized the process to date because: the motivation has been to set rules for forest product trade; it has not addressed diversity in forest use and

value, and it has not been participatory. The Sierra Club, representing the Global Forest Policy Project, noted the recent FAO experts meeting's conclusion that use of indicators is premature. He questioned whether criteria can be effectively harmonized if they are only very general statements. He said FAO's organizational change is only beginning, so it is not the time for FAO to assume expanded new duties. The International Alliance of Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests said any international agreement or process must recognize self determination of indigenous peoples, their long-term presence in forests, and principles of existing indigenous peoples' declarations.

UNDP noted its work in country capacity building for national forest programmes and promised to collaborate fully with the proposed CSD intergovernmental panel. The World Bank suggested two additions to the proposed FAO agenda: direct steps for cooperation between FAO and the World Bank and other intergovernmental organizations on forest programmes; and consideration of the role of forestry in poverty reduction.

REVIEW OF FAO FIELD PROGRAMMES, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: On Tuesday and Wednesday, 14-15 March, delegates considered a review of FAO's field programmes in the medium- and long-term, based on COFO-95/3 (Programme implementation and evaluation reports), COFO-95/4 (Long and medium-term and 1996-97 priorities for forestry) and COFO-95/Inf. 6 (Summary of the proceedings of the expert consultation on non-wood forest products). Canada noted that the documents did not include means of measuring achievement. He pointed to the need for an increase in FAO's budget for forests, improved policy analysis, increased involvement of women and indigenous groups and improvement of the National Forest Action Plan process. Australia called for increased recognition of women's role in forestry, especially in community forestry. China said priority should be given to strengthening national forest departments, strengthening resources and encouraging reforestation, rational utilization of forests including non-wood products, and human resource development and training.

On Wednesday 15 March COFO also reviewed COFO-95/5 (Decisions of FAO Governing Bodies of interest to the Committee), COFO-95/6 (Recommendations of other FAO Statutory Bodies in forestry of interest to the Committee) and COFO-97/7 (Follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the eleventh session of the Committee). The Netherlands urged establishment of a center of excellence in non-wood products and the inclusion of non-wood products in national accounts. Canada emphasized the work of FAO's regional forestry commissions and urged that they be used to enhance forestry dialogue. Greece requested greater information about FAO budgets and called for enhanced public relations efforts on behalf of foresters. Gabon noted the lack of information from the African regional forestry commission. China endorsed a leading role for regional forestry commissions and said FAO should help countries in the transition from planned to market economies. Malaysia said FAO should take the lead in assisting developing countries to implement the Forest Principles and Agenda 21's forest provisions. Algeria noted that desertification and forest fires are not addressed in the documents. The US said the regional commissions should investigate scientific and technical aspects of forestry, and that FAO should provide a budget for these functions.

COFO FINAL REPORT: Delegates adopted the COFO report (COFO-95/REP) during an evening session Wednesday 15 March and in a session just prior to the ministerial meeting on Thursday 16 March. The report recommends that FAO should respond positively to the CSD intersessional recommendation to establish an intergovernmental panel under the aegis of CSD, and that FAO should be prepared to participate in the process. A specific reference to that participation "possibly in a secretariat capacity"

was deleted from the first draft of the report after Australia, Brazil and Malaysia objected. The report states that FAO should continue to work closely and build partnerships with other international organizations and agencies and should continue to work in an open and transparent manner with private forest industry sector and NGOs.

The report notes that some delegations expressed support for a legally binding instrument, and that others thought it premature or undesirable. Considering the difference of views, COFO agreed the way forward should be based on consensus-building in a step-by-step process.

After considerable debate on specific language, a paragraph on broadening participation calls for involvement of indigenous and local communities, the private sector and NGOs in the planning, design and implementation of programmes and policies relating to sustainable forest management and utilization. It also refers to the need to consider gender issues.

The report discusses C & I as part of the need to define basic principles of SFM, notes some delegations' concerns about premature attempts at harmonization and requests that FAO promote exchange of information, research results, data and experience between the various initiatives and among countries that have not been part of the processes. It recognized that policies and actions on formulation of C & I at the national level are the responsibility of sovereign nations but that international action could provide guidance and catalyze action. Testing and demonstration are to be carried out with close involvement of all concerned, and FAO should assist countries. The meeting recognized the need for complementarity between C & I at national and, where relevant, forest management unit levels. It points to the contribution indicators at these levels could make in clarifying environment and trade issues, including incentive systems and forest product certification. The report states the need to prevent environmental policies from serving as disguised trade barriers and recognizes certification as a potential means of promoting trade in products from sustainably managed forests, with some delegations calling for assurance that certification not be used as a non-tariff trade barrier.

The report recommends increasing FAO's forestry budget, and requests FAO to concentrate on areas in which it has a comparative advantage, including analysis and dissemination of data and information, policy advice, coordination, advocacy and technical assistance. Other priorities include the Global Forest Resources Assessment, technical information for UNCED follow-up and C & I development, community forestry programmes and National Forestry Action Plans as a vehicle for capacity building. It gives special priority to FAO's CSD task manager role for forestry and in support of a potential intergovernmental panel on forests.

WORKING GROUP ON A MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON FORESTS

The working group on a ministerial statement met throughout the week, during both the COFO and ministerial meetings. Discussions in the group began with a draft statement distributed by FAO prior to the meeting. The Latin American and Caribbean group proposed an alternative, and by Tuesday, the EU and JUSCANZ groups had also submitted drafts. Amb. Gurgel held discussions on the various drafts Tuesday afternoon.

The main issues in dispute were the role of FAO, particularly relative to the proposed CSD intergovernmental panel on forests, whether the statement would make specific recommendations on terms of reference for the CSD panel, the strength of any reference or recommendation on a legally binding instrument, and whether the document would be titled a commitment, a consensus, a declaration or a statement.

The EU argued strongly that the document should endorse a strong leadership role for FAO and should call for negotiations on a legally binding agreement. Its draft contained specific instructions for the CSD panel's work, including preparing for a consensus on C & I, developing the basis of a framework for timber certification, and examining the need for and feasibility of a legally binding instrument and its elements. The EU text called for FAO to be part of a joint effort to establish the intergovernmental panel.

The JUSCANZ statement called for demonstration and testing of C & I, dialogue on trade and environment, work toward non-discriminatory trade in forest products, and a review of existing international organizations and agreements. Its section on an FAO contribution suggested identifying FAO forest priorities and strengths, development of common definitions, data collection and reporting for C & I, improved utilization of regional commissions and cooperation with other organizations. Its message to CSD welcomed the intergovernmental panel, forwarded the ministerial document to CSD and noted FAO's priorities and strengths.

The Latin American group's text, called The Rome Consensus on Forestry, recommended that further efforts be made to ensure the foundations laid by UNCED are rendered solid enough to build upon. It said that what is needed is a determination to achieve the objectives so far agreed upon. It called on FAO to continue to muster its technical expertise and to cooperate closely with the CSD. The text expressed support for the proposed CSD intergovernmental panel to provide an assessment of actions already taken to fulfill the commitments and responsibilities arising from the Rio Conference.

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE ROME STATEMENT ON FORESTRY

In informal discussions on Tuesday, a developing country said sections of the proposal defining responsibilities of the CSD panel were problematic, especially regarding a legally binding instrument. A developed country delegate said a weak or overly general statement could undermine the credibility of ministers and the FAO and could question the utility of the meeting. He asked whether delegates were willing to commit FAO forestry suicide, and warned that if issues where consensus did not exist were not dealt with here, they would be addressed elsewhere. A developing country regional group expressed concern at the omission of difficulties since Rio and the need to support national forest programmes. The first developing country mentioned above said the elements should include continued work on the Forest Principles, development, application and convergence of C & I, non-discriminatory trade, financial resources and transfer of technology, capacity building for developing countries and a concerted effort in the greening of the world. He said the CSD panel would have to be addressed at the CSD meeting, but that the group could send a message. Wednesday the Chair formed a small contact group including representatives from the regional groups. The contact group met Wednesday and Thursday, producing a new draft Thursday morning titled The Rome Statement on Forestry. It included a series of priorities from the ministerial meeting, and a statement that regarding the controversial idea of a legally binding instrument on forests, the way forward should be based on consensus-building in a step-by-step process. On the CSD panel, the draft utilized language from the COFO report, recommending that the FAO should respond positively and be prepared to participate.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR FORESTRY 16-17 MARCH 1995

The first meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry was held in Rome at FAO Headquarters from 16-17 March 1995, immediately following the Twelfth Session of the Committee on Forestry. Following opening remarks from the Director General of FAO, Mr. Jacques Diouf, and the election of officers, the meeting heard statements from several dozen ministers, two UN agencies, and NGOs. In parallel to the Plenary session, a drafting group met non-stop throughout the first day, late into the night and earnestly during the following morning to finalize a declaration that was approved by the Ministers at mid-day.

THE ROME STATEMENT ON FORESTRY

The Rome Statement on Forestry recognized the action taken at all levels through national forest programmes, various initiatives and international cooperation, but called for further enhancements of national capabilities and international cooperation and coordination. It reaffirmed a holistic approach to forests and a determination to attain the objectives from UNCED in the shortest time possible, while pursuing a balanced approach between the environmental and developmental functions of forests. The ministers emphasized the need for cross-sectoral approaches and effective and coherent national forest action plans, as well as efforts toward the greening of the world and combating desertification. Further, they underlined the need for action to: develop and apply criteria and indicators for sustainable management of all types of forests; enhance international cooperation; properly value the multiple benefits of forests; promote non-discriminatory trade in forest products; and recognize the benefits of greater participation and transparency in all matters related to forests. Regarding a legally-binding instrument on forests, they considered that the way forward should be based on a consensus-building step-by-step process. They called on FAO to muster its technical expertise to advise and cooperate with countries in developing their capacity in the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, taking an integrated approach. The meeting, "trusts that the UN Commission on Sustainable Development will, at its third session, show significant progress in discharging its functions as the political body mandated to review and promote the implementation of UNCED's decisions in the field of forests in their entirety. In this connection, the Meeting welcomed the proposal to consider the establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental panel on forests, under the aegis of the CSD, to provide an assessment of action already undertaken to combat deforestation and forest degradation and to promote management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, including environmental and socio-economic impacts; and against that background to propose actions for further action. The Meeting recommended that FAO should respond positively to that proposal and be prepared to participate in this process." Finally, the Minister's requested that the Chair of the Ministerial session should transmit the statement to the CSD during its April 1995 discussions on sectoral issues and, subsequently, to the High-Level Segment of the CSD.

REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL SESSION

FAO: The Director-General of FAO, Jacques Diouf, welcomed the Ministers and introduced the new head of the Forestry Department, Mr. David Harcharik. He recognized the range of recent forest-related initiatives but noted that they should be placed

in a proper framework. He said that the Ministerial meeting was an adequate forum since they were the highest governmental authority and are entrusted with the responsibility to commit governments in international discussions on forestry. He considered it important that this group meet regularly. Diouf called the major challenge to sustain the multiple functions of forests and trees, including to protect the soil and water base for agriculture and, therefore for food security. FAO is calling for a new "green revolution", learning from mistakes in the past to adapt scientifically and make it more compatible with ecological balance and address issues of social equity. He said that FAO's programmes would improve coordination between sectors in order to pursue consistent approaches. Diouf said that FAO is under renewal, becoming more efficient, consolidating field operation, decentralizing, investing in communication technologies to facilitate access to information and strengthening partnerships with other institutions, the private sector, IGOs, NGOs, donors and the World Bank on the basis of respective comparative advantages. FAO has increased its financial commitment to forestry by 2% during the 1994-1995 biennium. On post-UNCED forestry, he noted areas where less progress had been made including: insufficient consensus on forest issues; slow progress towards agreement on attributes of sustainable forest management and associated criteria and indicators for measuring progress towards its achievement; continued use of environment-related unilateral restriction on international trade in forest products; and lack of clear position on whether the Forest Principles should remain as they are or evolve further. Regarding cooperation with the CSD, he noted the recommendation of the *Ad-Hoc* Intersessional Working Group of the CSD but asked Ministers to consider the implications of this recommendation on agency responsibilities, particularly in regard to substituting the CSD for mandates entrusted by Member States to the agencies. He hoped that the Ministers would provide guidance to FAO and orient the review and decisions of the CSD in the right direction.

The meeting elected the Chair, Mr. John Falloon, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Racing of New Zealand, and the Vice-Chairs. Falloon proposed that the NGOs allowed to attend the COFO be invited to attend the Ministerial session. This was adopted without debate. The Chair then proposed that Ministers would table copies of their speeches allowing time to engage in a discussion on achieving a result of the conference. He proposed the establishment of a working group that would work in parallel to the Plenary to draft a statement that would give clear guidance to the CSD at its Third Session. The meeting then heard a report from Mr. Valentine (New Zealand), Chair of the COFO, which summarized the Twelfth Session of the Committee. (see above).

PRIVATE SECTOR: Bo Wergens, Chair of the Swedish Forest Industries Association, spoke on behalf of the private forest industry sector. He reported on the meeting held the previous week between the private sector and FAO, noting that they are committed to helping FAO carry out its work related to the Forest Principles and endorsed FAO's role as task manager. He called for a study of supply trends through 2010. Certification is a market tool to promote sustainable forest management, but it should be practical, transparent, verifiable, measurable, agreed on a voluntary basis and applied at the local level. He said that non-discriminatory trade policies are necessary to achieve sustainable forest management and that the forest industry is the driving force in giving value added to forest lands by applying sustainable forestry.

NGOs: Miguel Lovera (IUCN Netherlands), speaking on behalf of a variety of national and international NGOs, expressed concern that high-level FAO policy decisions have, in some cases, undermined effective on-the-ground NGO-FAO collaboration and that FAO has failed to build a broad-based consultative mechanism on forestry issues, in some countries, at the local level. Combating deforestation requires a resolution of conflicts of interests in favor

of marginalized groups and through the full recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to their territories. He noted elements from the report on the Meeting with NGOs on Forestry, held in Rome on 10-11 March 1995 (COFO-95/2 Supp. 6) that decision-making on forests in the CSD process should not be the responsibility of any single UN agency and that the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) should be the focal point for coordinating a working panel on forests. Lovera expressed concern that FAO was seeking a mandate to harmonize the criteria and indicators processes and the possible development of a forest convention based on this harmonization. NGOs strongly opposed the idea that Minister's might recommend delegating the responsibility of resolving forest product trade and environment issues to WTO, ITTO and FAO since GATT and WTO have no record of allowing NGO and other major groups' participation.

(Editor's note: Despite the best intentions of the Chair, many Ministers could not resist the temptation to read from prepared speeches. The following are highlights taken from some of both the delivered statements and tabled texts.)

THAILAND: The Minister praised efforts of the global community in seeking sustainable forest management and noted that problems cannot be resolved on an *ad hoc* basis or isolated from other socio-economic problems. He urged the World Bank to speed up funding mechanisms and urged the international partners to help countries with national forest action plans (NFAPs).

HUNGARY: The Minister said that FAO should quickly implement the recommendations of COFO and that both the Helsinki and Strasbourg Ministerial Conferences correctly determined the necessary first steps for implementing the forest principles. He called attention to FAO's coordinating role.

JAPAN: Yoshio Yatsu, Vice-Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries acknowledged that the CSD Intersessional decision to establish an open-ended inter-governmental panel reflects the strong interest of the international community toward the forestry issues. Effective measures with the best present knowledge need to be carried out on the ground while discussion on future directions takes place. He recommended testing of a conceptual framework of sustainable forest management in a demonstration project by FAO in collaboration with ITTO, UNDP and UNDP.

FRANCE: Speaking on behalf of the EU, France said it is important that the discussions on forests at the CSD be held at the highest level, where it will be decided if a real global partnership for forests is initiated. The EU has undertaken concrete action in the form of criteria and indicators. It is indispensable to start the process of harmonization of criteria and indicators, based on the convergence of initiatives. Timber certification should be regarded as an important instrument for sustainable forest management. The EU feels an indispensable need to examine the feasibility of a legally-binding instrument on forests that would guarantee a holistic approach and that this process should occur within the aegis of the CSD. FAO should help to set up this panel and contribute.

INDIA: Kamal Nath, India's Minister of the Environment, said that forests are more than mere carbon sinks but are interwoven into the lives of people. He noted India's initiatives including the first ministerial conference from developing countries, that produced the Delhi Declaration, as well as hosting with FAO and the UK a national workshop that resulted in producing a national reporting framework for the CSD. He said he looked to FAO to play its rightful role and that if we have to change its mandate, let us do it, since forests can not be just and adjunct to agriculture. He stressed the vital importance of non-wood forest products and offered to host a center for forestry research.

MALAYSIA: Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, Minister of Primary Industries of Malaysia, urged the delegates not to posture but adopt any necessary paradigm shifts to ensure prioritized action to put the global agenda on track by forging a clear consensus to facilitate decision-making at the upcoming CSD. We should focus on the need to implement existing commitments. The links between trade and deforestation should be discarded since 83% of tropical deforestation is for fuel and other non-industrial uses. Poverty eradication and better farming practices should be given high priority in multi-sectoral solutions to deforestation. Global action should be predicated on an equitable, holistic approach covering all types of forests. He outlined a set of principles for the ongoing international processes, including balance between environmental protection and the need for development and sustainable use, the sovereign right of nations to utilize their resources to promote balanced sustainable development and the urgent need for a forum for internationally agreed criteria and indicators covering all types of forests. Regarding FAO he said that the organization may need a paradigm shift to keep its role as the lead UN agency for forestry including strengthening its Forestry Department, rectify the problem of forestry being treated as an adjunct to food and agriculture and prove its ability to provide new leadership and expertise. The ball is in FAO's court.

PAKISTAN: The Minister commended FAO for keeping up momentum on the process. He said that what is needed is sincere commitment, firm conviction and willingness to share resources with those who have little but deserve more.

ALGERIA: In a time of major political and social changes, resource allocations have been committed to meeting basic needs and this has hurt forest development. Financial assistance is needed in transition from state managed to market economy in protecting forest lands.

MYANMAR: The multifunctional role of all types of forests should be recognized. Myanmar has only received support from UNDP of late and he said that environmental concerns should transcend politics.

MACEDONIA: The Minister noted that Macedonia has over 900,000 hectares of forest that are in the process of being privatized. The three year drought has damaged forests. He said that in Macedonia there is a saying, "If you like to destroy the population, destroy their forests first."

CANADA: Anne McLellan, Minister of Natural Resources reported on the outcome of the Montreal Process and successes in Canada, including the formulation of a national forest strategy, the establishment of ten model forests and the nearly completed national criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. She noted the various initiatives and said that the momentum must continue. Regarding the importance of developing a global framework for sustainable development she said: that FAO has a role to play in assisting the development of criteria and indicators; the process of developing these should include more countries; there is a need for greater international consensus on voluntary, non-legislated schemes for certification of forest products; national forestry action plans are valuable and the processes should be open and inclusive; there is a need for reliable and timely information on the state of forests to help guide policy; and, there should be more coordination between UN agencies in shared leadership on forest issues. Canada supports the establishment of the CSD panel as an important body that can help bring together a number of separate regional and global initiatives in a cohesive and coordinated international approach to further the forest dialogue.

FINLAND: The Minister highlighted the outcomes of the Helsinki Ministerial Conference the follow-up meetings. Finland supports the establishment of the CSD panel, saying that it should make use of an existing post-UNCED foundation and be open to

further contributions from possible new initiatives from individual governments. Finland supports the establishment of a global convention on forests in order to help mobilize and integrate both national and international resources for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. FAO has a role to play in the CSD panel and simultaneously the increased openness and transparency in the work of FAO should be further encouraged. The international community should take advantage of FAO's expertise in global forest resource assessment and national capacity building. The regional forestry commissions should be strengthened.

PORTUGAL: The representative mentioned the role Portugal had played in the Helsinki Process. Portugal fully supports the development of an international process for full convergence of the criteria and indicators on all types of forests.

BRAZIL: Dr. Gustavo Krause, Minister of the Environment, Water Resources and the Environment, noted the development of Brazil's forest policy. He said that the rate of Amazon deforestation had been reduced by 50%. He praised the Forest Principles and called their implementation a considerable challenge. The debate on forests cannot overshadow the equally important analysis of other trans-sectoral issues such as the urban environment, the need for changes in consumption and production patterns and the transfer of new and additional resources and the access to environmentally sound technologies. There is no consensus yet on the opportunity for starting now a negotiation toward a legally binding instrument on forests. Brazil supports and encourages the establishment of an Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, subordinate to the CSD. Among the panels' tasks should be: reviewing the scientific and technical questions; accessing actions already taken; and harmonizing the various efforts for the definition of criteria and indicators. FAO should: contribute, with UNEP and UNDP, to the work of the CSD; publish transparent and reliable data on environmental issues related to forests; establish agreements with national and regional bodies; identify financial resources to foster research and produce technical studies on the relationship between forests and other issues related to sustainable development.

UNITED KINGDOM: The representative noted the UK's commitment to UNCED and the forest principles through its participation in the Helsinki Ministerial Conference, the UK policies and actions for sustainable forest management and their role in the Indo-British Workshop. The UK supports setting up the CSD Panel, which should work in a pragmatic, non-confrontational and transparent way, supported by FAO and UNEP. He made suggestions for important issues to be included in the panel's mandate, including: review of progress of the Forest Principles; bringing together work on criteria and indicators; certification and labeling of wood products; identify further action including - but not prejudging - the possibility of a legally binding instrument.

INDONESIA: The Minister of Forestry of Indonesia spoke of his country's forest policy, including the development of large scale plantation forest as an alternative to reduce pressure on natural forests as well improving timber harvesting and log conversion efficiencies. Developing countries should have better access to financial flows, environmentally sound technology and markets. He called for more science-based initiatives that draw on the outcome of the CIFOR/Indonesia dialogue, held in Bali in December 1994. We need to provide advice to the CSD, emphasizing the importance of benefit sharing and mutual responsibility.

AUSTRALIA: The Australian Minister for Resources hoped that the meeting would build on consensus achieved to date in developing FAO's contribution to the CSD and shaping and enhancing FAO's efforts and activities on forests. He urged FAO to

widen the participation of relevant agencies and NGOs in its deliberations and consultations at all levels including the ministerial meetings. Australia participated in the Montreal Process and is encouraged by the potential for the CSD to consider this work and promote harmonization between the existing sets of criteria and indicators. Australia would consider hosting an international meeting to discuss certification and labeling.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: Dr. K. Rowley, Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fishery Resources expressed disappointment at the response for financial support to TFAP/NFAP and other national initiatives. Criteria and indicators should be tested at the national level. It is premature to tamper with the Forest Principles and Trinidad and Tobago does not support the revival of a legally binding instrument on forests at this time. They support the establishment of the CSD Panel on Forests and that FAO would provide technical support. FAO should not be intimidated by NGOs that have trouble accepting the inherent value of a structured process and widened participation must be very clear and only arrived at after appropriate consultation. FAO should increase its field programmes, particularly in the implementation of TFAP/NFAP.

NORWAY: The Norwegian Minister of Agriculture, Ms. Gunhild Øyangen, said that future activities should be coordinated through a process ensuring participation of all countries concerned and all stakeholders including indigenous peoples, women, the private sector and NGOs. Interlinkages should be taken into account between sustainable forest management and poverty, population, economic policies, biological diversity and climate change. Norway supports the establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental panel under the aegis of the CSD, to work in a transparent manner, drawing on the expertise of UN and other organizations, the secretariats of relevant conventions, the private sector and other interest groups. FAO should develop the global forest resource assessment into a continuous process and highlight the importance of forests through full valuation of all goods and services derived from them.

SWEDEN: The representative of Sweden said that it is now time to translate the Forest Principles into action. The causes of deforestation are found outside the forest sector, in population and trade. Sweden hopes that the panel created at CSD will be action oriented and will identify causes of deforestation, ways to implement national action plans and ways to strengthen action at the national level. The FAO Forest Department should focus on information gathering, capacity building, policy formulation and support for national forest action plans.

US: The representative of the US Department of Agriculture said that they are committed to sustainable forest management in the US by the year 2000. She said that the US uses ecosystem management on federal lands with full recognition of the social and economic functions of forests. The intergovernmental panel is a potentially effective forum to explore the issues of timber certification and global criteria and indicators and would be less time consuming than starting a negotiating process. The US supports FAO taking a role as requested by the CSD.

CHINA: Developed countries have not been provided the resources and transfer of technology and this has left them with considerable challenges. Developed countries must be held responsible for forest exploitation and they are obliged to pay and to provide technical assistance. FAO should play a pivotal role.

FIJI: The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, Ratu Ovini Bokini, highlighted Fiji's initiatives toward sustainable forest management and acknowledged the support and assistance that his country has received from FAO in the past. He urged FAO to support to the South Pacific Forestry Development Programme.

BURKINA FASO: The Minister of Burkina Faso urged the international community to launch an effort to stop the process of deforestation in the Sahel.

CUBA: The representative of Cuba said that the need for scientific and technical input cannot be underestimated and that FAO should continue to provide training. Regarding criteria and indicators, the representative noted that they should take into account the priorities and economic growth and ecological sustainability of developing countries. He added that it is necessary to stimulate growth in official aid to development of the forest sector.

MALAWI: K. K. Chambalo, Minister of Natural Resources of Malawi, spoke of Malawi's achievements including the Malawi Environmental Action Plan, the Environmental Monitoring Programme and the national forestry policy review. He supports FAO's initiative to open an office to strengthen its obligations in the Eastern-Southern Africa Sub-Region.

PHILIPPINES: The Minister said that more attention needs to be given to the cross-sectoral issues, such as population and consumption and production. All the financial recommendation made in Rio need to be implemented. The developed countries benefited from the destruction of the developing country lands and now must assist them. Timber certification at the local level should be encouraged but not at the national or international level. The Philippines supports the role of FAO as the major task manager for forest-related activities.

IRAN: The representative said that decisions that are taken here should be implemented and not depend on decisions at other meetings.

UGANDA: The Minister of natural Resources, B.K. L. Mulondo of Uganda said that timber from Uganda forests can be said to be from sustainably managed forest sources. The refugee problem results in deforestation and he requested UNHCR to consider the deforestation problem from refugees along side other needs.

CROATIA: Mr. Ivica Gasi, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry noted his country's readiness to implement sustainable management and forest protection measures by signing the Strasbourg and Helsinki Resolutions.

THE NETHERLANDS: The representative urged the group to focus on areas of agreement. NFAPs are the most appropriate tools in the planning process leading towards forest development. He hoped that UNDP and FAO would maintain their commitment to, and responsibility for, NFAP by strengthening the existing structures. The CSD panel should consist of government representatives with a little help from our friends the NGOs. One option for the panel would be a legally binding instrument on Forests. Governments are being overtaken by private initiatives regarding certification systems.

TANZANIA: The Minister for Tourism, Natural Resources and Environment supported FAO to work closely and build partnerships with other international organizations and agencies. He supported the idea that a legally binding instrument on forests be based on consensus-building in a step-by-step process.

VENEZUELA: Amb. Fernando Gerbasi, Representative of Venezuela to FAO, spoke on his country's efforts in sustainable forest management. He said that international cooperation is essential for Venezuela's national strategies in implementation of national forestry programmes. He said new additional financial resources and the provision of technologies on favorable terms is essential.

POLAND: Andrzej Szujecki, Undersecretary of State from the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry of Poland, spoke on recent national initiatives including

the Law of Forests, the Programme of the Polish Policy for Sustainable Forest Management Development, the establishment of a new Forest Center for Environmental Education, seven Forest Promotion Complexes and expanded research.

CYPRUS: Amb. Fotis G. Poulides spoke on Cyprus' forests and his country's programme of sustainable forest management. The Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment has started taking steps towards the preparation of a national plan within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Programme.

DENMARK: The representative welcomed and supported the recommendation of the CSD Intersessional Working Group on Sectoral Issues to establish an open-ended, intergovernmental panel on forests. FAO should play an important role in cooperation with other UN organizations, secretariats of international conventions dealing with forest-related issues and other relevant organizations, including NGOs.

SOUTH AFRICA: The Minister said that South Africa was looking for regional cooperation on forest plantation development and needed assistance in arid zone forestry. He offered South Africa's expertise and research in eucalyptus plantations.

CZECH REPUBLIC: The representative agreed that certification could be used as a marketing tool but should not be used as a basis for trade discrimination.

ECUADOR: The representative said that Ecuador is working on the accounting and monitoring of natural resources and that it is a good idea to continue development indicators at the national level. He requested modification of World Bank policies on reforestation of tropical forests.

UNEP: UNEP's representative said that UNEP would assist FAO to support and backstop the work of the proposed CSD panel. The UNEP Governing Council would be asked to work with FAO and others to work with others in cooperation with the CSD body.

WWF: The representative of WWF said that we need to look at what international agreements address the forest to see if they are being implemented. WWF endorses the establishment of the proposed CSD panel, but only if it is: more than a "talk-shop"; addresses the issues; and is participatory and open. Certification should be voluntary and independent.

ITTO: Dr. B.C.Y. Freezailah, Executive Director of the ITTO spoke of the directions ITTO is taking and said that the task of forestry development is so immense that we cannot predetermine or restrict the number of actors who should be mobilized for action on forestry. We should not discourage the intensifying pace of negotiations and information exchange since they have incremental value and facilitate broad participation in decision-making. He spoke of the newly agreed ITTA and that it has been open for signature since 1 April 1994 and hoped that it would come into force on 1 September 1995. 54 States have ratified the Agreement. ITTO has joined with FAO to initiate a process of creating a forum of experts to seek convergence of the processes to formulate global criteria for sustainable management of all types of forests. On the issue of resources, he asked the group to encourage the work of the Eminent Person's Group.

NEW ZEALAND: The Chair, John Falloon, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Racing of New Zealand, spoke briefly and tabled his speech. He spoke of his country's forestry experience, the New Zealand Forest Code of Practice and the voluntary agreement between commercial forest and forestry organizations and conservation groups. New Zealand has been active in the South Pacific Forum, bilateral assistance, the Montreal Process and ITTO. He supported the conclusion of the CSD Intersessional meeting and said that the Ministers could help to identify areas where FAO might be asked to play a role, recognizing that the Ministers should not preempt the CSD.

CSD: Chair of the CSD, Dr. Klaus Töpfer was not able to attend the meeting due to pressing commitments in Germany. He sent his statement, which was tabled. In it he mentioned the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group relating to Forests. He listed the possible elements of a mandate for the panel, including: creation of the basis for a global agreement on criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of all forests based on the convergence of the existing initiatives; the preparation of the basis for an international framework for the certification of timber from sustainably managed sources; assessment of ways to mobilize financial resources; identify priority areas for action; and the examination of the need for and the feasibility of a legally binding instrument on all types of forests, including the identification of possible elements of such a legally binding instrument. He said that "shared leadership" is needed and that this meeting should express the strong commitment of FAO to be part of this.

CLOSING OF THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

The Chair introduced the final statement, which had been prepared by the working group, saying that it had been circulated to the regional groups for final additions or corrections. The Brazilian Chair of the working group presented the statement, noting that it represented a long, open-ended negotiating process with a large group. The text represents a solid agreement that benefited from the participation of many ministers. Minister Falloon introduced two last minute changes to the text: a reinforcement of FAO as the taskmanager in the UN system for forests and requested that Falloon personally take this statement to the CSD and High-Level Segment. The Statement was adopted without discussion and the meeting was adjourned.

IN THE CORRIDORS

A theme underlying many of the discussions in the corridors and within the negotiations at the COFO and ministerial meetings was that FAO needs to continue its internal reforms. FAO hosted the world's forestry ministers with hopes of getting an endorsement that: FAO is the appropriate forum for policy and strategy decisions on global forestry issues; that within the UN system it is the competent agency on all matters related to forestry; and that COFO is the intergovernmental body with responsibility to deal with technical forestry issues at the world level. The message the meeting delivered to FAO was much more restricted.

Delegates often spoke of the need to focus on the organization's strengths before extending its mission or adding additional responsibilities. Delegates and observers also repeatedly criticized FAO's record on participation and called for improvement in involvement of women, indigenous peoples, NGOs and the private sector. Some developing countries praised FAO's measures to provide national level assistance, but they expressed limited support in negotiations on the ministerial declaration for extending FAO's responsibilities. The emphatic suggestion by some developed countries that FAO's experience and resources were necessary to carry forest policy forward did not overcome delegates' or ministers' reservations. Despite attempts to give FAO lead authority in the next steps on forest policy, stronger language on the FAO role in some early drafts was quickly removed. The final ministerial statement supports FAO's technical expertise and activities, but it also explicitly recognizes the CSD's role in political review of UNCED-related forest issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CSD AD HOC OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SECTORAL ISSUES ON FORESTS 27 FEBRUARY - 3 MARCH 1995

(Editor's Note: This segment is adapted from the Earth Negotiations Bulletin report of the Intersessional Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues (Vol. 5 No. 27), written by Pamela Chasek, Ph.D., Langston James Goree VI (Kimo) and Wagaki Mwangi.)

The Commission on Sustainable Development's Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues opened on Monday, 27 February 1995. During the course of the week, delegates discussed the six reports of the Secretary-General on the sectoral issues that will be considered by the CSD at its third session in April 1995. These include: integrated management of land resources, forests, combating desertification, sustainable mountain development, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and biological diversity. During the first two days, delegates discussed the reports prepared by the Secretary-General. The latter three days were spent discussing the draft report of the Working Group. By the conclusion of the week, delegates adopted their report, including a series of recommendations to present to the CSD. Paragraphs 11-22 of this report relate to forests.

Chapter 11 — Forests: The proposals in this section were the results of negotiations within a Contact Group chaired by Amb. Bo Kjellén (Sweden). Paragraph 18 recognizes the need for the CSD to promote the efforts of Chapter 11 and the Forest Principles, within the work of other UN agencies. If further options are to be considered, the preference is for an intergovernmental process. Paragraph 19 recognizes that addressing forest issues will require an discussing cross-sectoral issues such as poverty, population growth, consumption and production patterns, and trade issues, as well as unsustainable policies related to agriculture, energy and trade. Paragraph 20 welcomes the progress by countries, and calls for further concrete action, some of which are outlined in the

FOREST POLICY MATERIALS ON THE INTERNET

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has developed an electronic clearinghouse on the Internet for information related to the international forest policy debate. *Linkages: A Multimedia Resource for Environment and Development Policy Makers* contains original documents from many of the recent forest initiatives, summaries from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* and links that lead across the network to other on-line forest policy resources. *Linkages* also includes comprehensive electronic holdings on other issue areas, including the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Desertification, the Habitat II, Straddling Fish Stocks and Fourth Women's Conference and the emerging international debate on sustainable production and consumption. For further information on how to access this free service and the several flavors in which the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is delivered electronically, send e-mail to <enb@igc.apc.org>.

Secretary-General's report. In this connection, it requests the CSD to consider an intergovernmental panel on forests, under its aegis, which is open, transparent and has a participatory approach, to assess work already done and to propose further action, while drawing upon the expertise of relevant agencies and organizations. Paragraph 22 states that the CSD will determine the mandate and operational modalities for the proposed panel, and suggested that the terms of reference be drawn from elements in the Forest Principles, Agenda 21, other forest-related international initiatives, some of which are contained in Annex I. The panel will provide a progress report to the fourth session of the CSD and its conclusions to the fifth session.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN THE COMING MONTH

FAO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE: The FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) will meet from 27-31 March 1995 in Rome. The FAO representatives will report on the CSD ad hoc open-ended intersessional meeting on sectoral issues and the Committee is also expected to discuss UNCED follow-up and the issue of animal genetic resources. For more information, contact Richard Lydiker, Director of FAO's Information Division, at +39-6-5225-3510.

THIRD SESSION OF THE CSD: The third session of the CSD will meet from 11-28 April 1995, at UN Headquarters in New York. Focus will be on the following cross-sectoral components of Agenda 21: Chapters 3 (poverty); 5 (demographics); 8 (integrating environment and development in decision-making); 16 (biotechnology); 22-32 (major groups); and 40 (information). Financial resources and mechanisms (Chapter 33) and the chapters on transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity building (34), science (35) and education (36) will also be discussed. The sectoral cluster for this session includes: Chapters 10 (land management); 11 (forests); 12 (desertification and drought); 13 (mountains); 14 (sustainable agriculture); 15 (biological diversity); and the Forest Principles.

According to CSD Chair Klaus Töpfer's briefing on 10 March 1995, the Prime Minister of Norway and the Presidents of the Philippines and the Czech Republic have been invited to speak at the opening session on 11 April. The new Bureau will also be elected that morning. In the afternoon, there will be the presentation of the results of the ad hoc working group on finance, followed by a panel discussion, which will hopefully include three finance ministers, an NGO representative, a CEO of an international company and an official of the Bretton Woods system. On 12 April, there will be a presentation of the work of the ad hoc working group on sectoral issues, followed by another panel discussion. Members of the panel will include the Chairs of the FAO Committees on Forests and Agriculture, the commissioner of the EU responsible for agriculture, the president of the Farmers Association and another NGO representative. On Wednesday afternoon and Thursday, the CSD will discuss trade and environment and changing consumption patterns.

On Monday, 17 April, discussion will focus on education, science, transfer of technology and capacity building. On 18-19 April, there will be exchanges of national experiences. There will also be presentations on local experiences, including officials from at least eight cities. There will then be four days of negotiations (20-25 April) before the High-Level Segment starts on Wednesday, 26 April. During the High-Level Segment there will be two panel discussions: employment and sustainable development on 26 April and mass media and sustainable development on 27 April.