



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 13 No. 4

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Monday, 11 March 1996

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1995/226, endorsed the recommendation of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to establish an open-ended *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) to pursue consensus and coordinated proposals for action to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. In pursuing its mandate, the IPF is expected to focus on 11 issues clustered into five interrelated categories and submit final conclusions and policy recommendations to the Commission at its fifth session in 1997.

The IPF will consider the outputs of a large number of ongoing processes and initiatives and draw upon the expertise and resources of relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system, as well as from all relevant parties, including major groups. Meetings of experts sponsored by one or more countries, international organizations and major groups will contribute to the work of the IPF. The IPF will hold a total of four meetings and, at its first session, decided that all topics should be left open for discussion during its second and third sessions, but different topics will be emphasized at each session.

The first meeting of the CSD's Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) took place in New York from 11-15 September 1995. At this meeting, delegates elected Sir Martin Holdgate (UK) as Co-Chair from developed countries and Mr. N.R. Krishnan (India) and Dr. Manuel Rodriguez (Colombia) as Co-Chairs from the G-77, with Krishnan serving as Co-Chair for the first two sessions and Rodriguez serving as Co-Chair for the final two sessions. Delegates also adopted the IPF programme of work and attempted to set the dates and venues of future meetings. Several of the issues that have typically divided North and South again proved difficult. Members of the G-77 were resistant to any proposal that could foreseeably lead to a loss of national control over forests and forest products. There was also some concern on the subject of criteria and indicators and whether proposed intersessional workshops should constitute an official part of the Panel process. Developed countries questioned the need to extend the length of meetings of the Panel and expressed serious concerns about the work of the Panel.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

SEVENTH MEETING OF THE MONTREAL PROCESS GROUP: The Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (Montreal Process) held its seventh meeting in

Auckland, New Zealand, from 30 October - 4 November 1995. This was the first meeting since the endorsement of the Santiago Declaration and the comprehensive list of criteria and indicators in February 1995.

Montreal Process countries underscored the importance of future cooperation among countries on national level implementation of criteria and indicators, particularly among neighboring countries or those with similar forest conditions. In this regard, it was agreed that each country would report on its approach to data requirements, including collection, and its approach to reporting on each indicator at the next meeting of the Montreal Process. Participants also exchanged views on the relationship between national level criteria and indicators and certification. Montreal Process countries reaffirmed that the criteria and indicators have been developed for the assessment of sustainable forest management at the national level. Australia will host the eighth meeting of the Working Group in June 1996.

INFORMAL PAN-EUROPEAN ROUND-TABLE MEETING: This meeting, which was convened in Brussels from 13-14 November 1995, was held as part of the follow-up activities to the second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forest in Europe. Participants focused on the linkages with the IPF process and the process initiated by the Ministerial Conference. The different European country initiatives that were proposed at the first sessions of these two processes were presented to the round-table participants. Potential input of the round table to the IPF was also discussed.

SWISS-PERUVIAN INITIATIVE ON FORESTS (SPIF): Peru and Switzerland are co-sponsoring a study on the work of international organizations, multilateral institutions and instruments in the forest sector. An independent international group of experts (IEG) is given the task to elaborate a study on the work carried out by international organizations and multilateral institutions and under existing legal instruments related to forest issues. The first meeting of the expert group took place in Geneva from 5-8 March 1996, co-chaired by Augusto Freyre (Peru) and Dr. Franz Schmithussen (Switzerland). The first session of the IEG was attended by experts from Australia, Belarus, Brazil, China, Ecuador, Finland, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Russia, and US as well as by three experts nominated by the NGO community from India, Peru and UK. During the first session of the IEG/SPIF experts focused their attention on the developments regarding forest issues since the UNCED and on the agenda and decisions taken by CSD and IPF. Experts discussed at length the different approaches and methodologies to be used for the preparation of the study to be submitted on Item V.1 of the IPF agenda. Part of the session was dedicated to exchange of information with some of the most relevant international organizations, multilateral institutions and conventions. A progress report will be presented to the IPF at its

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second session. The second session of the IEG/SPIF is scheduled for the last week of June 1996.

WORLD COMMISSION ON FORESTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEARING:

The first of five public hearings of the WCFSD was held in Jakarta, 3-8 March 1996. Approximately 300 groups attended from business, government sector and NGOs. The NGOs called for enhanced community control and business representatives embraced expanded dialogue on criteria and indicators.

DOCUMENTATION FOR IPF-2

The following is a list of the documents that have been prepared for the second session of the IPF, according to the five categories of issues to be considered by the IPF:

CATEGORY I: Implementation of forest-related decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at the national and international levels, including an examination of sectoral and cross-sectoral linkages

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/8, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element I.1: Progress through national forest and land use plans. This report contains a general overview of the issue, describes the planning context for national forestry programmes, followed by a description of achievements and lessons learned. It mentions the activities planned in preparation for the substantive discussion at the third session of the Panel, and makes suggestions for the initial discussion by the IPF.

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/2, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element I.2: Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation. This report describes the kinds of change that are now affecting the quantity and condition of all types of forests. It identifies the causes of any detrimental changes, analyzes why it is so difficult to implement sustainable forest management and recommends ways in which all of these may be improved.

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/9, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element I.3: Traditional Forest Related Knowledge. This report provides a general overview of the issue, followed by a short update of the current status and a description of the range of considerations involved in preparing for the substantive discussion of this programme element at the third session of the Panel.

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/3, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element I.4: Fragile ecosystems affected by desertification; and the impact of air-borne pollution on forests. Part one deals with the experience with afforestation, reforestation and the restoration of forest systems, particularly in countries with fragile ecosystems and those affected by desertification and/or drought. Part two presents a synthesis of the impact of air-borne pollutants on forests — in particular those in central and eastern Europe. Part three suggests items to be discussed by the Panel.

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/4, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element I.5: The needs and requirements of countries with low forest cover. This report considers what is meant by low forest cover, explores the reasons for low forest coverage and attempts to identify low-forested developed and developing countries based on current global statistics. It presents an overview of the current status of forest resources and values, and identifies gaps in the information available and sets out options for promoting the security of forest goods and services in low-forested countries.

CATEGORY II: International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer for sustainable forest management

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/5, Report of the Secretary-General on Category II: International Cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer for sustainable forest management. This report provides updated information and a preliminary analysis

of the situation and outlook on financing and technology for forestry development with particular reference to international cooperation. It examines investment in forestry, financing forestry development, acquisition of technology, development assistance, innovations in fund mobilization and options for consideration by the Panel.

CATEGORY III: Scientific research, forest assessment and development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/6, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element III.1(a): Assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests. The report suggests that high priority be given to capacity building with focus on development of national strategies for the management of forests. Priority should be given to environmental parameters, including biological diversity, soil and water conservation and vegetation degradation; cooperation with other organizations; and efforts to harmonize concepts, terminology, definitions and classifications.

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/7, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element III.1(b): Methodologies for proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests. The report reviews a number of valuation techniques including market prices, efficiency (or shadow) prices, hedonic pricing method, travel cost method, production function approach, related goods approaches, constructed market techniques and cost-based valuation.

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/10, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element III.2: Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. This report examines basic principles, common denominators and comparability of the criteria and indicators presently under development and testing by the ITTO and within the Helsinki, Montreal, Tarapoto and Dry Zone Africa processes. The report underlines the need for increased, inter-sectoral linkages and improved information exchange to clarify and promote issues underlying the emerging, broadened concept of sustainability in forestry development.

CATEGORY IV: Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/11, Report of the Secretary-General on Category IV: Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services. This report examines the current status and pattern of international trade in forest products, including: wood and non-wood forest products; forest services; promotion of lesser use species; increasing market transparency; market access; the types of trade-induced environmental impacts; the feasibility of "full cost internalization;" and certification of origin from sustainably managed forests. The second part of the paper addresses financing and technology, including investment patterns and their influence on trade.

CATEGORY V: International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/12, Report of the Secretary-General on Programme Element V.1: International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms. This report lists UN organizations, other international organizations and institutions that deal with forests, as well as existing legal instruments and existing reviews. In preparation for the third session of the IPF, the Secretary-General will examine existing instruments and institutions and identify institutional linkages and cooperation, gaps, areas requiring enhancement, as well as any areas of duplication.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

IPF: The IPF will begin its second session today at 10:00 am at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. After adopting its agenda and hearing introductory statements from the Co-Chairs and others the panel should move to Item 2 of its provisional agenda, Consideration of Programme Elements for Initial Discussion, specifically elements I.1 and I.3.