



UNFF-3 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 4 JUNE 2003

On Wednesday, delegates met in working groups to continue negotiating resolutions on forest health and productivity (FHP), economic aspects of forests (EAF), and maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs (MFC), and convened in a contact group to discuss enhancing cooperation and policy and programme coordination. Delegates also met in two informal consultations: on reporting format, the Trust Fund and MFC; and on enhanced cooperation and FHP.

WORKING GROUP 1

FOREST HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY: Conceição Ferreira (Portugal) chaired the working group on a FHP draft resolution. The EU asked, and delegates agreed, to highlight progress monitoring and addressing air pollution and its effects on forests.

On factors affecting FHP, the G-77/CHINA called for, *inter alia*, including water cycles as a factor affecting FHP and appealed for flexibility. The EU and the US expressed a preference for including water regimes to reflect management considerations. Delegates accepted the G-77/CHINA proposal.

On addressing factors affecting FHP in an effective manner, the G-77/CHINA insisted on a reference on the need for official development assistance and reliable new and additional financial resources. CANADA, the US and the EU suggested retaining more general language to avoid duplication as this issue will be addressed by the resolution on enhanced cooperation. CANADA suggested that the language conform with the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The matter was deferred pending clarification of the WSSD wording.

Regarding the effects of climate change on forests, delegates agreed not to specify these as either positive or negative.

On the resilience to negative factors, the EU stressed the importance of site-adapted species selection. JAPAN emphasized the contribution of sustainable forest management (SFM) to the mitigation of negative factors, such as climate change. Delegates agreed that SFM contributes to healthy forests and ecosystems that are more resilient to negative factors.

On pest and disease control, the US, with the EU, MEXICO and NEW ZEALAND, stressed the importance of preventive approaches, while the G-77/CHINA stressed that these approaches should not be used as disguised trade barriers.

CANADA, stressing the importance of prevention, sympathized with the concerns of the G-77/CHINA and referred to the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

After resuming discussion on FHP in the evening, the G-77/CHINA requested, and delegates agreed, that CPF members assist countries upon request in identifying and assessing factors affecting FHP.

On preventive measures and remedial action against factors negatively affecting FHP, the G-77/CHINA requested text on support from intergovernmental organizations. The US called for

"cross-sectoral" preventive measures, and the EU, opposed by some countries, suggested text on the development of site-adapted and well-structured forest stands.

Regarding measures on pests and disease control, delegates accepted US text on consistency with relevant World Trade Organization provisions. They discussed merging paragraphs on national forest protection strategies and cooperation to address transboundary impacts of factors affecting FHP.

On information collection and dissemination, the G-77/CHINA proposed, and the EU opposed, deleting reference to cooperation in monitoring. Delegates accepted a US proposal on the usefulness of criteria and indicators (C&I) processes.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF FORESTS: Gustavo Eduardo Ainchil (Argentina) chaired the working group that considered a revised draft resolution on EAF. Delegates discussed the preamble's chapeau, which highlights lessons learned, and disagreed on whether these lessons learned represent "a range of views." SWITZERLAND, with AUSTRALIA, the EU, NORWAY and the US, emphasized the importance of including lessons learned.

On the need for an integrated approach for SFM, the G-77/CHINA stressed the recognition of religious aspects, while the EU favored spiritual aspects. The G-77/CHINA said implementation depends on financing, capacity building and transfer of environmentally sound technology (EST). The EU and the US stated this applies to all countries. On a paragraph regarding the valuation of forest goods and services, the G-77/CHINA proposed text on the importance of international assistance. CANADA, supported by the EU, stressed that international assistance should be matched by prioritizing forests in developing country national policy.

The G-77/CHINA, opposed by the EU and the US, suggested deleting a preambular paragraph on illegal harvesting and related trade, because it duplicates existing IPF/IFF proposals for action. CANADA proposed text encouraging participation in processes on forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG).

CONGO invited countries to partake in a UNFF intersessional workshop on technology transfer for SFM organized with, *inter alia*, the UNFF Secretariat and the US.

CONTACT GROUP ON ENHANCED COOPERATION

Hossein Moeini Meybodi (Iran) chaired the contact group and presented a revised draft resolution on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination. Delegates agreed to add a preambular reference to internationally-agreed development goals and the contribution of SFM to the realization of the goal of poverty alleviation. They also discussed the EU's proposed text on welcoming new forest partnerships and whether or not to refer to "the major groups," or "stakeholders," in the preambular paragraph on promoting public participation.

Regarding the recognition of the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) on the harmonization of forest-related definitions, the US suggested replacing "harmonizing" with "collecting," noting an absence of agreement on the meaning of harmonization.



Regarding preambular and operational paragraphs on the CPF, the US proposed revisions reflecting that CPF members are not international bodies, but their individual representatives. Delegates accepted G-77/CHINA proposals to delete: "informal and voluntary" as pertaining to the CPF; and "world-wide" as relating to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Delegates then discussed an operational paragraph encouraging CPF member organizations to facilitate the establishment of partnerships on implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action. The US stressed that partnerships are not only governmental, and suggested adding a reference to other relevant partners. The G-77/CHINA proposed language that partnerships should be established in accordance with criteria agreed to by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The EU and SWITZERLAND opposed this, noting the existence of partnerships unrelated to CSD resolutions.

Delegates agreed on a US proposal urging governments to identify the IPP/IFF proposals for action to the governing bodies of the CPF member organizations as priority areas for actions, consistent with national priorities and the mandates of those bodies.

On the mobilization and prioritization of financial resources, CANADA and the US called for avoiding exhortatory language and proposed addressing this issue in an EAF decision, or in the resolution's preamble. The G-77/CHINA stressed the need to underline the pivotal importance of the means of implementation in the context of cooperation and other thematic areas.

In informal consultations in the evening, delegates agreed on paragraphs, *inter alia*: emphasizing the need for collaboration between the UNFF and the CSD; encouraging SFM in national poverty reduction strategies; and requesting the UNFF Secretariat to facilitate intersessional activities. The G-77/CHINA requested, and delegates accepted, that regional and sub-regional cooperation be pursued "as appropriate."

WORKING GROUP 2

MAINTAINING FOREST COVER TO MEET PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS: Peter Csoka (Hungary) chaired the working group discussing a revised resolution on MFC.

The US and the G-77/CHINA suggested working in conformity with the other working groups by reducing the preambular text to one paragraph, and focusing on country lessons learned.

The contribution of plantations to the environment and meeting present and future needs was discussed. The EU, supported by NORWAY and JAPAN and opposed by AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND and the G-77/CHINA, recognized this contribution if plantations are sustainably managed. Delegates agreed to: refer to sustainable management of plantations, but not to their responsible establishment; and delete reference to plantations' environmental contributions.

The EU, supported by AUSTRALIA and MEXICO, suggested that the resolution urge a reversal of the current deforestation trend. The G-77/CHINA suggested adding reference to NFPs and the assistance needs of developing countries. Delegates debated the need for reference to natural forests and noted the lack of concrete proposals for action in the suggested text. NEW ZEALAND, supported by the US and NORWAY, suggested moving the text to the preamble.

On the US proposal to make reference to an Internet-based clearinghouse mechanism, the G-77/CHINA, supported by NEW ZEALAND, remarked that many developing countries lack Internet access, and suggested that information also be made available in alternate ways.

On afforestation and reforestation efforts, the G-77/CHINA, supported by NEW ZEALAND and opposed by the US, asked that countries be invited, not urged, to undertake action. The G-77/CHINA, with NEW ZEALAND, asked that reference to semi-natural forests be deleted. SWITZERLAND, supported by the EU, the US and AUSTRALIA, opposed this deletion on the grounds that the majority of Europe's forests are semi-natural. The G-77/CHINA suggested adding an explanatory footnote on the meaning of the term semi-natural.

Regarding C&I, the G-77/CHINA suggested, and CANADA, the EU and AUSTRALIA opposed, text stressing that countries should integrate C&I into NFPs within their capacity on a voluntary basis, and suggested deleting references to the full range of forest values.

Delegates discussed a proposal to simplify the paragraph on cross-sectoral cooperation and, in a separate paragraph, retain the importance of MFC in contributing to poverty reduction.

The US and SWITZERLAND cautioned against focusing only on developing countries. CANADA supported, and the G-77/CHINA and NEW ZEALAND opposed, NORWAY's insistent request for a reference to biodiversity strategies, including the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. NEW ZEALAND, supported by the US but opposed by the EU, suggested adding a reference to SFM instead.

On encouraging the participation of major groups and relevant stakeholders in accordance with the national circumstances and priorities and language, delegates stressed the need for support to capacity building, particularly in developing countries. The US suggested: calling for effective FLEG as a means of MFC; promoting cooperation through the FLEG processes, WSSD partnerships, and new bilateral or regional arrangements.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING: The G-77/CHINA presented an alternative draft resolution on this issue, proposing principles to be used in preparing the UNFF-4 reporting format, including simplicity, flexibility, timely availability, and relevance to UNFF-4's thematic issues. The draft resolution urges countries and the international community to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition (CEITs) in strengthening their capacity to provide voluntary reports. Several delegates expressed concern that this proposal does not reflect lessons learned and Plenary debate.

TRUST FUND: Delegates discussed a draft resolution on the UNFF Trust Fund. One country clarified that this resolution is needed to allow earmarking of funds for travel and daily subsistence allowances (DSA). Delegates debated whether the fund should benefit only developing and least developed countries, or CEITs as well. Delegates agreed on operative text inviting donor governments, institutions and other organizations to provide contributions to the Trust Fund and recognize the need for additional resources. One country suggested text specifying that travel and DSA may be provided from funds specifically designated for this purpose.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Despite slow progress in the working groups and informal consultations, some delegates are nevertheless optimistic about agreement on the draft resolutions. Some are concerned that too much emphasis has been placed on semantic particulars, at the expense of more important substantive matters. But, as one delegate put it, now is the only time to ensure that country interests are not jeopardized in the struggle to capture meaning. Adding to the mix, it is rumored that a developing country president will make an important announcement from his capital regarding mahogany.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP 1: Delegates will convene from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm to continue their deliberations on the EAF draft resolution, and from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm to work on the draft FHP resolution.

WORKING GROUP 2: Delegates will convene from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm to continue discussing the draft resolutions on MFC and the reporting format.

CONTACT GROUP: The contact group will reconvene from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm to continue its work on the draft resolution relating to enhanced cooperation.

INFORMAL INFORMAL CONSULTATION: With a view to adopting the resolution on enhanced cooperation, this meeting will convene in the morning.