



UNFF-4 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2004

On Wednesday morning, delegates convened in parallel working groups to continue negotiating Vice-Chair's draft texts on traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK) and on enhanced cooperation. In the afternoon, the working groups negotiated texts on monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) and criteria and indicators (C&I) and on the social and cultural aspects of forests (SCAF).

WORKING GROUP I

TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE:

Vice-Chair Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa) continued discussion on the revised Vice-Chair's draft text on TFRK. The EU asked that the text refer to indigenous and local communities throughout.

In a preambular paragraph on country experiences, the G-77/CHINA called for effective documentation. The US asked for reference to the rights and interests of indigenous and local communities. CANADA, opposed by the US and the G-77/CHINA, asked to delete the word "rights." AUSTRALIA proposed stating that "countries can benefit from the exploration and sharing" of TFRK. On the involvement of TFRK holders in sustainable forest management (SFM) decisions, the US proposed adding "agreement by the holders." On the role of international organizations, the G-77/CHINA, opposed by CANADA, asked that specific international organizations not be listed.

Delegates then considered the operative paragraphs. On country actions, CANADA proposed replacing the list of actions with a reference to "a wide range of mechanisms including access to, and protection of, TFRK." The US insisted on retaining the list of actions, and proposed that national concerns be accommodated by adding "as determined by the country itself." She further suggested adding that country actions occur "in consultation with indigenous groups and local communities," and that national legislation should also aim at facilitating access. The G-77/CHINA opposed references to facilitating access, and suggested including the addition of "the development of *sui generis* systems." She then proposed deleting the next paragraph on TFRK protection systems.

On benefit sharing, the G-77/CHINA suggested referring to traditional forest-related "practices and genetic resources." The US recommended deleting the reference to the relevant Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) decision. Delegates agreed to refer to: the original holders of TFRK throughout the resolution; "effective participation of indigenous and local communities" in the integration of TFRK, national forest programmes (NFPs) and education; and TFRK already in the public domain in relation to education and scientific knowledge. On the Collaborative Partnership on Forests' (CPF) support to national actions, the G-77/CHINA recommended it be provided upon request to countries where TFRK holders reside. The US suggested referring to "collaboration with indigenous and local communities," noting that communities often reside on both sides of an international border.

On TFRK's link to scientific knowledge and on TFRK documentation, the G-77/CHINA suggested referring to the need to respect the laws of countries where the holders of TFRK reside. On TFRK documentation, the EU added a reference to effective participation of local and indigenous communities. The G-77/CHINA suggested text on developing methods of documenting TFRK in consultation with, and with the consent of, local and indigenous communities. On financial and technical support, CANADA suggested text on support to developing countries, as well as indigenous and local community-led initiatives, in consultation with their national governments, for the incorporation of TFRK into their SFM plans.

Delegates then debated the G-77/CHINA proposal to delete a paragraph on cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization, the CBD and the FAO. The US and MEXICO suggested that it be retained with amendments.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FORESTS:

Delegates debated the G-77/CHINA proposal to delete a paragraph on participation of all relevant stakeholders, agreeing on a reference to the relevant stakeholders "within a country". They decided to continue informal deliberations on proposed deletions of operational paragraphs on the linkages between SFM and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and on an appropriate national framework on benefit sharing.

On social impact assessment, delegates rejected the EU's reference to the Akwé:Kon Voluntary Guidelines on impact assessment, and bracketed a US amendment on the need for flexibility to respond to local situations.

On financial and technical support, the G-77/CHINA asked to delete references to social and cultural aspects. The EU suggested retaining it or moving it to the draft text on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (FINTEST). The US, opposed by the G-77/CHINA and MEXICO, asked to emphasize the capacities of women. The G-77/CHINA, opposed by NEW ZEALAND and the US, asked to delete the paragraph on the role of the private sector. The EU asked that it be moved to the draft text on FINTEST. The EU proposed to directly encourage the private sector to take into account the social and cultural aspects of forests. NEW ZEALAND opposed this and said that promoting the role of the private sector in SFM should be left to countries. She agreed to delete references to the regulatory environment. The G-77/CHINA, opposed by the US and CANADA, asked to include references to international obligations or delete the paragraph.

On all stakeholders' involvement in decision-making, delegates debated the US proposal on stakeholders' participation in the development of legislation. This proposal was opposed by the G-77/CHINA. The G-77/CHINA also objected to the text on fire management as only one aspect of SFM, while the US called for retaining it as a way to incorporate a practical recommendation into the resolution. Delegates also debated a paragraph on decentralization, with SWITZERLAND requesting a reference on devolution and on further exploring decentralization to help address more effectively social and cultural concerns. The G-77/CHINA objected to the reference to devolution and proposed deleting this paragraph, unless a compromise formulation were to be developed. Deliberations on the outstanding issues were continued in informal-informal consultations.

**WORKING GROUP II**

ENHANCED COOPERATION: Working Group II considered a revised Vice-Chair's draft text on enhanced cooperation and policy and program coordination.

The G-77/CHINA, with AUSTRALIA, proposed a single preambular paragraph taking note of views on enhanced cooperation. The EU, NEW ZEALAND, and SWITZERLAND agreed to the new preamble on the condition that it retain a reference to the CBD ecosystem approach. The G-77/CHINA opposed the specific reference, and the text remained bracketed.

The G-77/CHINA also proposed a consolidated new operative paragraph inviting CPF members to cooperate in implementing national forest programmes and strategies, including Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action. All agreed to SWITZERLAND'S proposal to focus on achieving SFM.

NORWAY, the US, SWITZERLAND, and NEW ZEALAND called for retaining reference to the private sector. The G-77/CHINA opposed specifying particular sectors, and suggested that all relevant stakeholders be mentioned instead. The reference to the private sector was bracketed.

The US proposed a paragraph encouraging the World Bank (WB) and other international organizations to support concrete country actions to foster stable and transparent national institutions. CANADA concurred, but suggested an alternative reference to fostering a greater private sector role in SFM. The paragraph remained bracketed.

Regarding the inclusion of the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in CPF programmes, the G-77/CHINA, supported by NORWAY, proposed text leaving the task to CPF members' governing bodies, while the US stressed that countries should communicate their priorities to CPF members. CHILE underscored the need to address systemic dimensions of forestry by stressing CPF work.

Regarding mainstreaming SFM in poverty reduction strategies, the G-77/CHINA called for copying a paragraph from a decision adopted at UNFF-3. The US and the EU objected to reiterating previous UNFF decisions.

The G-77/CHINA requested the deletion of a paragraph urging countries to use SFM to implement the CBD ecosystem approach. CHINA said the ecosystem approach is a scientific tool for implementing SFM, not vice versa. NEW ZEALAND, the US, the EU, and SWITZERLAND insisted on retaining the reference.

CANADA and SWITZERLAND supported text inviting the Rio convention secretariats to inform UNFF-5 of planned joint activities, and stressed that the preparation and results of a recent synergies meeting in Viterbo were not sufficiently communicated to UNFF. The G-77/CHINA suggested referring to all relevant organizations and bracketed the text.

On transmitting information to the CBD, delegates agreed on language that gives a mandate to the UNFF Secretariat, with reference to a relevant UNFF-3 resolution.

On addressing the Global Environment Facility (GEF), SWITZERLAND, with the EU, and opposed by the G-77/CHINA, proposed adding "integrated" projects in accordance with the GEF's project preferences. The G-77/CHINA and NEW ZEALAND called for inviting the GEF to give "special" consideration to financing SFM projects. Both "integrated" and "special" remain bracketed.

On WB support, the US proposed text urging the WB to support countries in incorporating SFM into their poverty reduction strategies. The EU suggested calling for countries to include SFM as a principal element of their poverty reduction strategies, in accordance with official development assistance requirements. The G-77/CHINA rejected this reference to conditionality relating to the transfer of resources.

Delegates accepted a G-77/CHINA proposal to standardize references to "multilateral development goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration." The US proposed text requesting the Secretariat to compile experiences presented at UNFF-4 and post the compilation on the website. Vice-Chair I. Gede Ngurah Swadjaya (Indonesia) said that discussion on this Vice-Chair's draft text would resume in the evening.

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING AND CRITERIA AND INDICATORS: Working Group II continued discussions on a Vice-Chair's draft text on MAR and C&I.

On making information from national reports available to international fora, the EU, supported by NEW ZEALAND, the US and CANADA, and opposed by the G-77/CHINA, supported keeping the reference to the seven thematic elements of SFM. The reference was bracketed.

On harmonizing definitions, the US proposed inviting countries as well as CPF members, to harmonize definitions and suggested doing so by also convening expert consultations. Delegates agreed, upon request by CHILE and CONGO, to make explicit reference to FAO in addition to other CPF members and countries.

NEW ZEALAND proposed text on CPF work to link C&I and certification. CHILE firmly opposed any reference to certification, noting that certification is at an early stage of development and application, and NEW ZEALAND withdrew its proposal. Delegates accepted with minor amendments a paragraph on establishing national focal points and enhancing internal coordination among them. On synchronizing forest-related reporting, the US clarified that international bodies should all request information from countries at the same time. On using C&I, CANADA, with the US, proposed text inviting C&I processes to offer non-member states observer status and share with them information on the benefits of C&I.

On carrying out research on indicators, delegates agreed to a G-77/CHINA proposal to remove the specific list of indicators and include CANADA's text on giving special attention to those indicators that are difficult to assess.

On utilizing C&I as the basis for MAR, Vice-Chair Stephanie Caswell (US) proposed adding a reference to developing indicator sets. CHILE requested bracketing the paragraph until further consultation with the G-77/CHINA.

Delegates decided to delete several paragraphs and relegate these to discussions on the Vice-Chair's draft text on the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (REIAF). The US proposed urging academic communities and professional societies to incorporate the concepts of SFM, MAR, and C&I in school curricula at all levels.

On a paragraph requesting the Secretariat to prepare a global review of progress towards SFM as a contribution to UNFF-5, CANADA said the review is separate from REIAF and that both should be prepared for UNFF-5. The EU stressed the SFM review should be prepared in consultation with C&I processes. Vice-Chair Caswell suspended discussion on outstanding issues and said that discussions would resume in the evening.

IN THE CORRIDORS

According to some observers, the decisions currently under negotiation at UNFF-4 are of marginal consequence to the actual implementation of SFM. While noting that UNFF has made a worthwhile contribution to forest policy development, insofar as it has allowed for productive discussions and networking within the forest policy community over the last four years, many are saying that the forest community must now begin thinking very seriously and strategically about how it can benefit the sustainable development objectives. Some have said that such thinking is unlikely to occur within the existing structure of UNFF and point to the value of bringing together a group of forest and conservation experts, independent of the *ad hoc* expert group that will meet in September, to chart out what the post-UNFF order might look like.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: Delegates will convene in Salle XVIII from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm to negotiate a Vice-Chair's draft text on forest-related scientific knowledge, and from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm to continue work on the Vice-Chair's draft text on TFRK.

WORKING GROUP II: Delegates will convene in Salle XVII from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm to negotiate the Vice-Chair's draft text on MAR, C&I and the *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on MAR, and from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm to work on the Vice-Chair's draft text on REIAF.