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IPF-2 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 1996

Delegates finished preliminary consideration of all Secretary General's Reports, including programme elements IV, trade and environment in relation to forest products and services, and I.3, traditional forest-related knowledge. By the afternoon they had also completed programme elements III.2, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, and V.1, international organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms.

TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

NORWAY proposed: using the work of other fora as a framework for trade and environment discussions; addressing cost-internalization; and harmonizing certification with national and regional objectives. The UN ASSOCIATION OF SWEDEN said a certification system should: be practical, adaptable and voluntary; include social concerns; and have consumer confidence. IPF should investigate the ways certification could provide a tool for least developed countries to increase their competitiveness. WWF called for more emphasis on the environmental impacts of trade, the role of non-timber products, and the impact of agricultural production. Certification discussions should not focus only on major timber producers. CITIZENS' ALLIANCE FOR SAVING EARTH AND ATMOSHPERE (CASA) stated that objective certification could be difficult and urged IPF to investigate obstacles to transparency, democracy and participation. ZIMBABWE said the report should focus more on local and domestic trade, particularly ecotourism, and on the growing trade in the informal sector.

SWEDEN said certification should be a market-driven process and governments should provide a framework for discussion, but not be directly involved in implementation. BULGARIA supported the report's statements on utilization of lesser-used species, market transparency, market access and trade-induced environmental impacts, but called for more concrete proposals for IPF-3. CHILE said most states are not playing an active role in developing certification and labeling systems and insufficient attention is given to production processes and national forest policy. He noted the need to address local and national level trade. UGANDA drew attention to non-timber forest products and regional, sub-regional and domestic trade, stating that concentrating on timber plays into the hands of those who think forestry only involves timber production. The PHILIPPINES noted national examples of balancing trade and environment concerns. He called for: more research and funding for promoting lesser-used species; realignment of ODA toward developing country industries; and strengthening product research institutes.

TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE

JAPAN emphasized the role of IPF, which encompasses SFM, and requested a study of traditional knowledge (TK) related to forest management. SWITZERLAND highlighted IPF's role in helping indigenous populations, emphasizing GEF and bilateral aid for funding relevant projects. AUSTRALIA stated that IPF should not duplicate CBD, WTO or FAO, but should focus on TK related to SFM and draw upon CBD COP-3. He did not support new and additional funding.

NORWAY supported technical, technological and scientific advice on TK, and recognized linkages with CBD and GATT. UKRAINE called attention to local communities, modern science, and policy making, and called for local participation. The NETHERLANDS emphasized the cross-sectoral scope of TK, and indigenous participation in national forest planning.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA stated that IPF should examine the role of indigenous communities holistically, rather than on a piecemeal basis. MEXICO highlighted integrating local communities into sectoral planning, and mechanisms to protect IPR of communities.

CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR SFM

Jean Clement, FAO, introduced the Secretary General's Report (E/CN.17/IPF/1996/10). The report provides an overview of C&I and suggests issues for consideration.

The EU highlighted international criteria for C&I at IPF-3, suggesting a regional approach linking national with subnational and forest-management levels. He highlighted the Helsinki Process, a regional effort in Europe. The G77/CHINA underlined C&I as a "main axis" of forest management, emphasizing international cooperation. C&I should incorporate national, social and cultural circumstances, be region-specific, and be developed in a transparent and participatory way. DENMARK called for examining definitions at IPF-3, and for translating C&I to the field level.

SWEDEN suggested that IPF-3 develop a menu of indicators for nations. TURKEY stressed developing global definitions on SFM. PORTUGAL described the Helsinki Process, and emphasized implementation.

GERMANY said the next step is to develop a C&I framework as consistent as necessary and as flexible as possible to guarantee comparability while respecting differences. GHANA said SFM should encompass interests of forest dwellers. Compatible, comparable global criteria might be possible. Requiring the same in indicators is unworkable. The UK said there is much convergence on criteria, but IPF should not seek a single set of indicators.

WWF said clear definitions of forests and SFM should distinguish between forest types by function. Economic and social indicators are insufficiently developed. CANADA said it is time to achieve a common meaning of SFM. IPF should examine C&I comparability and compatibility, but should not

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dilute concepts to achieve consensus. He supported efforts for regions not already covered by C&I processes and links between C&I for similar forests in different areas. The NETHERLANDS said formulation of C&I is a national responsibility based on internationally agreed C&I.

The US said IPF should not seek agreement on global C&I. The goal is national implementation. Universal criteria would result in a lowest common denominator and an inadequate picture of SFM components. It is more useful to promote comparability between sets of C&I. MALAYSIA called for international consensus on elements of SFM. The Secretariat should examine the proliferation of SFM initiatives and the comparability and convergence of initiatives. AUSTRALIA suggested identifying unifying goals and a framework for C&I that could be applied regionally by ecological zones and by countries with common interests. He supported field testing and standardizing indicators. NORWAY said variations between ecological zones and regions require national adjustments. C&I must not seek compatibility between countries.

INDIA said it seems possible to produce globally compatible national criteria, but with independent national or subnational indicators. Universally acceptable certification is a logical outcome of C&I. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said C&I should be simple, based on best available information, and reflect specific conditions. INDONESIA said global C&I are essential if certification is to be based on comparable standards. He suggested that regionalization may lead to the development of global C&I from which national C&I may be derived.

PERU stressed the need for consensus in establishing C&I. The needs of local communities beyond those necessary for survival must be reflected and the use of local knowledge should be encouraged. SWITZERLAND stated that the compatibility and comparability of various regional C&I initiatives should be further explored and that links between C&I and certification should be clarified.

COLOMBIA stated that C&I should: be simple and based on national needs; address socioeconomic factors; and facilitate national decision making. The proliferation of indicators should be discouraged until a feasibility assessment is concluded. POLAND encouraged the establishment of C&I at several levels and noted the importance of collecting and exchanging scientific data. IPF must determine whether to protect timber or forests prior to implementing certification schemes. BRAZIL stated that the development of global C&I should be gradual and acknowledge each country's unique qualities as well as the differences between natural forests and plantations. C&I should be flexible to meet changing circumstances and needs. Monitoring the field application of national C&I exceeds the scope of IPF.

MEXICO discouraged the proliferation of indicators and the imposition of global indicators at the national level. C&I should be flexible and address social, economic and biological factors. FINLAND stressed the need to recognize the links between the establishment of C&I to other IPF tasks such as reviewing forest assessments, national forest and land-use plans and international cooperation in trade. NEW ZEALAND underscored the gradual nature of C&I development and noted that meaningful results may not be immediately apparent. Comparisons and compatibilities among national C&I should be examined.

FRANCE called for a simple set of global C&I with universal applicability. IRAN stated that C&I should be developed regionally and that economic, social, legal, administrative and biological factors should be considered. JAPAN encouraged the development of a simple set of global C&I that could be used in global resource assessment.

The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT stated that C&I should be developed at the national level first and address the needs of all stakeholders. SFM should be defined in an objective and scientific context, not a political one.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE LEGAL MECHANISMS

The Secretariat introduced the report on programme element V (E/CN.17/IPF/1996/12), which provides a preliminary list of organizations and instruments, summarizes work of the interagency task force on forests and notes the Swiss/Peruvian initiative on work of international organizations, multilateral

institutions and instruments in the forest sector. A more extensive document will be prepared for IPF-3.

The G-77/CHINA said the next report should include: relevant institutions and programmes in SFM and forestry including resources available; a basis for evaluating programmes; and a description of relevant legal instruments. Activities should be country specific. Assessment of this element must be carried out at a national level. The EU said strengthening cooperation among institutions requires analysis of gaps and should lead to an explanation of relevant instruments. The Swiss/Peruvian initiative should identify options and possible conclusions.

The US said international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats should focus forest activities where they have comparative advantage. SWITZERLAND supported references to the importance of forests to environmentally sound social development. Complexity and linkages underline the need to look at organizations' strengths. She noted that the Swiss/Peruvian initiative's first meeting was held 5-7 March. PERU noted participation in the initiative, stating that it was at a preliminary stage and expected to present ideas to IPF-3.

CANADA highlighted coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of international forest-related institutions, especially governance and leadership. The document should consider: options to mobilize institutions' strengths; models in other sectors; new and innovative governance structures; and coordination of multilateral and bilateral resources. MALAYSIA said IPF-3 should look at existing institutional linkages, inadequacies and improvements, and address activities under the Forest Principles on combating deforestation, as well as IPF programme elements.

AUSTRALIA said the Swiss/Peruvian initiative must take into account specific projections and draw on a broad range of information. PAPUA NEW GUINEA called for an assessment of all UN organizations providing leadership in forestry and proposed that a comprehensive report be prepared on this issue for IPF-3. The NETHERLANDS said the World Commission on Forests could make a valuable contribution and that IPF should identify organizations for implementation.

GREECE said the tremendous interest in forests highlights IPF's leadership role and the need for coordination between different international organizations. WWF said while many supportive statements on knowledge and contributions of indigenous people have been made, the list of NGOs in the report contains no indigenous peoples' organizations. He called for their addition to the report and to the initiatives. CASA said the report does not address the role of multilateral banks or their projects. He called for input from the IPCC regarding fragile ecosystems.

MEXICO said the increased attention to forests has led to competition among international organizations. IPF presents an opportunity to scrutinize international institutions. NEW ZEALAND supported statements in the report that note the necessity of reinforcing some existing institutions and the poor coordination between many international legal agreements, which results in a fragmented conservation approach.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates and observers said varying positions on the utility of global C&I illustrate the different, sometimes contradictory objectives to which C&I might be applied. They said different countries may take similar positions for or against global C&I in pursuit of opposing goals. Some saw global C&I as necessary to achieve sustainability. Others said support for global standards aims to establish weak measures that would not prevent unsustainable practices. Still others think of C&I as a means to facilitate trade by providing a basis for common certification schemes. National C&I also provoked a range of characterizations, from a necessary protection of sovereignty to a vehicle for country-driven sustainability to an escape from global accountability.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

CO-CHAIR'S DRAFT CONCLUSIONS: Delegates are expected to consider draft conclusions on programme elements I.2, underlying causes, I.4, fragile ecosystems, I.5, countries with low forest cover and II, financial assistance and technology transfer, in an afternoon session. No morning session is scheduled.