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UNFF11 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 11 MAY 2015

UNFF11 reconvened on Monday, 11 May, to start its second week of deliberations. Delegates convened in working groups to begin the second readings of the draft ministerial declaration and draft resolution.

In WG1, delegates broke into a contact group during the mid-morning to, among other things, list overlapping issues with WG2 for the WG1 Co-Chairs' consideration. WG2 spent the morning and afternoon discussing the draft resolution, with the Secretariat encouraging those present to engage in bilateral discussions to try and reach agreement on bracketed text. A contact group was convened over lunch to try and reach consensus on language for referencing the yet-to-be-adopted post-2015 development agenda and SDGs.

WORKING GROUPS

WG1: WG1 met to begin a second reading of the ministerial declaration (E/CN.18/2015/L.1). Co-Chair Wu noted some delegates' concern that several issues in WG1 are linked to the resolution and so depend on negotiations in WG2. Wu proposed that delegates commence with the second reading while listing overlapping issues for consideration by the Co-Chairs. Delegates agreed to continue deliberations paragraph by paragraph in a contact group to resolve bracketed text. The contact group met throughout the day.

WG2: Co-Chair Granholm introduced the text containing the compilation of country inputs on the draft resolution (E/CN.18/2015/L.2) gathered during the first reading, explaining it would form the basis for considerations from Monday onwards. The UNFF Secretariat clarified that UNFF has often used the terms "sustainable management of all types of forests" and "sustainable forest management" interchangeably, for instance in Resolution E/2000/35 (Report on the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests) and UNFF10 Decision 10-2 (Dates and Venue for UNFF11).

On the **IAF beyond 2015**, there was disagreement around a proposal by delegates to refer to Resolution E/2000/35, with some noting the resolution is already mentioned in the preamble. One delegate underscored a preference for referring to "sustainable forest management," rather than "sustainable management of all types of forests" while others noted their flexibility on this issue. Some opposed reference to "trees outside of forests."

On **mobilizing resources**, it was suggested to mobilize "increased" resources specifically for developing countries.

Delegates also noted that this section should not preclude the possibility of additional resource mobilization for SFM in developed countries. There were also calls to increase references to technology dissemination and transfer.

Divergent views were heard on widening the scope of the **objectives of the future IAF**, with calls to acknowledge the role of forest instruments besides the NLBI. One delegate noted the existence of five other important instruments that should not be disregarded. Several delegates urged for deciding early on how to reference the post-2015 development agenda. Some favored retaining proposed text on enhancing cooperation and policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments as well as contributing to synergies among them.

On the **UNFF beyond 2015**, some questioned the need to refer to the UNFF supporting IAF objectives, cautioning that such text may imply that the UNFF could support other processes. Delegates also proposed text calling for promoting capacity building initiatives and the development, dissemination and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs) for SFM implementation in developing countries.

On **UNFF's core functions**, several delegates opposed reference to basing some of these functions on respect of states' sovereignty to establish their national forest policies, saying this principle is already guaranteed, and is acknowledged in the preamble's reaffirmation of the Rio Principles. Some supported including the active participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders as a core UNFF function.

Some delegates supported replacing reference to "forest-related SDGs and targets" with "contributions of forests to an eventual framework on sustainable development after 2015" given that post-2015 development agenda and SDG discussions are still ongoing.

Several delegates opposed including references to: mobilizing and channeling financial, technical, and scientific resources for SFM; and promoting capacity building initiatives and development, dissemination and transfer of ESTs. They did, however, support reference to promoting good governance at all levels.

Some highlighted that wording on strengthening political commitment should not be limited to the NLBI.

One delegate suggested including an additional paragraph on new resources for ongoing and pilot initiatives that are already yielding results. Support was expressed for references to fostering international cooperation including North-South and public-

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private partnerships, and cross-sectoral cooperation, with some wishing to add South-South and triangular cooperation.

On strengthening the **functioning of UNFF beyond 2015**, there was general support for developing a strategic plan for the period 2017-2030, but it was suggested that such a plan does not require biannual reassessment. On how best to strengthen and organize intersessional work, many supported establishing a new committee but there was discord on whether the committee should be on implementation and technical advice, or on finance, technology and policy. On the NLBI, there was also disagreement on whether to reaffirm its continued “validity” or “value.”

A contact group was convened over lunch to try and reach consensus on how to reference the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs.

In the afternoon, the UNFF11 Secretary clarified that UNFF cannot at this stage establish subcommittees or subsidiary bodies, saying this will have to await an ECOSOC decision, followed by appropriation of resources by the UNGA. He said that as such, wording on the special session proposed for early 2016 should refer to all subsidiary organs that UNFF wishes to establish during that session.

On language concerning the participation of Major Groups, the UNFF11 Secretary stated that although the UNCSD is now defunct, there is no legal impediment to referring to previous UNCSD resolutions. However, he noted that, for the sake of precision, reiterating relevant provisions in the current text would be more appropriate.

On **catalyzing implementation and financing**, there was discord about whether to refer to “upgrading” or “enhancing the capacity of” the facilitative process. One delegate cautioned against creating new functions for a process that is not delivering on its existing functions. Another proposed referring to the future facilitative process as the “UNFF/Global clearinghouse on SFM financing.” One delegate stressed their delegation “is not ready to go along” with reference to finances being provided on a voluntary basis. There was some support for recognizing that the financing landscape for forests has evolved considerably.

Significant support was expressed for including a paragraph on upgrading the facilitative process in order to assist countries’ access to existing and emerging forest-related funds. Some support was also expressed for referencing LFCCs and countries facing challenges such as dust storms in the context of financial support, though it was noted this may need to be aligned with existing resolutions.

Some delegates opposed the preconditions listed in the text for mobilizing funds. They also suggested text specifying that developed countries mobilize funds to assist developing countries to implement the NLBI as follows: US\$150 million annually for a voluntary global forest fund; and US\$15 million annually, through an upgraded facilitative process, for submissions of strategies, programmes and projects to the GEF, GCF and others.

The Secretariat said establishing a trust fund is the prerogative of the SG and that Member States can provide guidance on this. He recalled the UNFF10 resolution (E/CN.18/2013/18), which highlights the need to support developing countries’ participation at UNFF meetings and calls on the Secretariat to support meetings and intersessional work. He noted however that the resolution lacks specific terms of reference on how the funds should be used.

Some delegates opposed requesting the GEF to: expand existing programmes that engage with and fund SFM; and enhance the accessibility of funds by seconding staff to support the upgraded facilitative process. Others noted that the GEF has

already allocated a quarter of its funds to forest-related projects and that requesting dedicated funding for forests may jeopardize this opportunity.

The section on **monitoring, assessment and reporting** was deferred to allow a report back from the contact group that met over lunch.

On the **Secretariat’s role** in servicing and supporting the Forum and intersessional activities, some delegates said it would be more useful to list the functions of the Secretariat rather than specific activities, since the latter are potentially inexhaustible. Delegates also agreed to defer all discussions on tasks referencing the post-2015 development agenda, pending the outcome of the lunchtime contact group.

On the **core functions of the CPF**, some were not ready to negotiate specifics of the text. While there were many suggestions and disagreements on how best to frame the CPF’s functions, a number recognized the “useful” work the CPF is already undertaking, urging language to invite it to continue with this. Some felt it would be better for the CPF to decide its own working modalities. It was also suggested that a more flexible approach to achieving the CPF’s functions would be preferable, given each member organization has different internal structures and rules.

On **regional/subregional involvement**, one delegate proposed a paragraph inviting Member States to voluntarily establish regional and sub-regional processes for forest policy development, dialogue and coordination to promote SFM. They explained that existing mechanisms might not address SFM, but another delegate opposed the paragraph, saying the UNFF should not create duplicate platforms.

Several delegates favored deleting a paragraph requesting the UNFF Secretariat to consult with UN regional commissions and FAO forestry commissions on other means to enhance collaboration between the UNFF and these organizations.

On **Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement**, views were split on whether to mention the need for the UNFF to promote transparency and implementation by enhancing partnership with Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders at the international level. Delegates discussed whether it was more appropriate to “urge,” “invite,” “request” or “recommend” Member States and the Secretariat to take actions in this regard.

Reporting back from the lunchtime contact group, the Co-Facilitators explained that consensus was emerging to separate text on the following: monitoring, assessment and reporting on the IAF and the NLBI; and possible contributions of the IAF to follow-up on the post-2015 development agenda. They noted that the latter could be worded so as not to prejudge the outcome of the post-2015 development agenda discussions.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As the second week of UNFF11 deliberations began, delegates showed renewed energy, having had productive regional consultations over the weekend, allowing them to “launch into their work” come Monday morning. Numerous delegates observed that this could be the reason for WG1’s increased attendance. Concern was evident, however, when delegates in WG1 broke into a contact group to resolve bracketed text, because, as one seasoned delegate could be heard saying, a number of contentious issues were reliant on decisions taken in WG2. Another delegate countered, saying that the ministerial declaration should be considered independently and outstanding matters be first resolved in WG1. This back-and-forth prompted one delegate to observe: “Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?”