



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM IPF-3 THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 1996

Working Group I met in the morning to continue discussions on criteria and indicators. In the afternoon, Working Group I considered underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and Working Group II discussed fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and the impact of airborne pollution on forests.

### WORKING GROUP I

Working Group I continued discussions on programme element III.2 (criteria and indicators). ITALY, supported by GERMANY, called for flexibility in the formulation of criteria and indicators (C&I) for SFM. The US supported efforts toward national C&I, but noted the need for cooperation at the subnational level and expressed reservations about global C&I. JAPAN proposed three categories for SFM criteria and called for multiple stakeholder participation. He questioned the possibility of achieving SFM at the management-unit level. A global set of indicators should not be used for cross-country comparison. GERMANY supported development of global indicators and harmonization of terms and concepts, including between C&I and other concepts such as code of practice or performance standards.

COLOMBIA called for ranking minimum and maximum levels of SFM attainment, harmonization of data collection methods and consideration of financial mechanisms. He noted the importance and measurability of socio-economic indicators. Noting that only a small set of C&I are universally applicable, CIFOR said C&I should be developed as a "tool box" to meet changing needs and conditions. Scientific capacity must be increased at national and local levels to properly develop and implement C&I. SWITZERLAND, with MALAYSIA, sought consensus on key concepts, terms and definitions and mutual recognition of initiatives such as FRA 2000. MALAYSIA supported an international set of indicators. TURKEY supported the core criteria but noted difficulties in implementation. Cooperation is needed on technology transfer.

The UK said C&I should be implemented now without further refinement. Application should be flexible to account for diverging needs. INDIA said C&I should be more specific for application at the national and forest management unit levels. Donor agencies should support holistic initiatives, not only management activities. UNESCO sought field studies to test C&I and indicated that the world network of biosphere reserves may be an appropriate venue. FRANCE encouraged wider participation of countries not yet involved and more attention to water quality assessment.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA said sufficient guidelines exist for governments to develop and apply their own C&I. BRAZIL stated that the report exceeds the IPF mandate and fails to emphasize the international cooperation needed to allow all developing countries to participate in C&I initiatives. The G-77/CHINA stated that more work needs to be done on C&I within the framework of sustainable development. He stressed that specificity should not be traded for universality and that diffusion of information on C&I should be incorporated. AUSTRIA recalled IPF-2's unanimous support for expanding C&I and stressed the indivisibility of SFM and C&I. NEW ZEALAND urged continuing the momentum on C&I and sought consensus on terms. He stressed that the set of C&I together define SFM, and selectively removing elements lessens their effectiveness. The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT distinguished national level C&I and certification of individual forest management units, and said harmonization of C&I is premature. He urged caution on the issue of mutual recognition between initiatives.

CUBA emphasized that C&I have to be flexible for diverse environmental and socio-economic conditions in different countries. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA stressed the need to avoid market distortions that may result from certification. CANADA stated that because many countries are not yet involved in the process of developing C&I, it would be premature to identify a comprehensive set of C&I at the global level. Further efforts are needed to clarify C&I at the national and forest management unit levels. Cultural and social C&I are as important and easily comparable as biological and physical C&I. INDONESIA supports harmonization and standardization of terms relating to SFM. CHINA stated that FAO should continue to involve countries and regions that have not yet gotten involved in C&I, but developing countries should be assisted with participation in development and implementation of C&I. PORTUGAL noted that the use of C&I within a proper policy framework adds to the performance of national forest policies. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted the difficulties associated with harmonizing criteria.

DENMARK supported a core set of global criteria and the inclusion of C&I in NFPs. UGANDA emphasized the importance of harmonization and convergence of C&I developed nationally. POLAND said the development of C&I should be decentralized and their implementation flexible. MEXICO called for the prioritization of proposed actions, stating all countries may not be able to undertake all actions. International support is needed for the development and implementation of national C&I.

Ralph Schmidt (UNDP) introduced the Secretary-General's report on underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation (E/CN.17/IPF/1996/15). The G77/CHINA, with COLOMBIA, CHINA, MALI and the PHILIPPINES, noted the

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lack of proposals to address social and economic factors and dissimilarities between deforestation and degradation, and, with the EU, BRAZIL and CHINA, emphasized historical lessons. The EU, with the NETHERLANDS and FINLAND, noted unplanned causes of deforestation and forest degradation (D&FD), supporting further analysis of international causes. NORWAY noted that national policy frameworks must adhere to similar principles in all countries. CHINA called for voluntary diagnostic frameworks. MALI, with UGANDA and ZIMBABWE, stressed energy needs as a cause of D&FD, and, with CAMEROON and INDIA, called for poverty alleviation. INDIA noted that deforestation can physically transcend political boundaries.

SOUTH AFRICA supported the establishment of a diagnostic framework and, with JAPAN, the strengthening of links between programme elements. ECUADOR encouraged international support for testing of a diagnostic framework and, with GABON, increased attention to the effects of oil prospecting and consumption. NEW ZEALAND noted the role of plantation forests in mitigating forest degradation and encouraged their use. The US sought characterization of long-term trends in consumption and production of forests and forest products.

The NETHERLANDS called for determination of desired forest covers. IUCN noted many ongoing local initiatives and called for reestablishing community control over forests. KENYA called for a flexible diagnostic framework and capacity-building assistance and rejected efforts to compare case study results. The PHILIPPINES emphasized natural causes of forest destruction. UGANDA, with ZIMBABWE, called for balanced treatment of developed and developing countries and said actions can precede studies. ZIMBABWE called for diagnostic frameworks to address implementation strategies and financing requirements. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH highlighted their holistic study on consumption and production patterns. FUNDACION NATURA said international causes of deforestation such as poverty, transboundary pollution and consumption patterns must be addressed.

## **WORKING GROUP II**

Jean Clement (FAO) introduced the Secretary-General's report on programme element I.4, fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and the impact of airborne pollution on forests (E/CN.17/IPF/1996/17). The report proposes formulating explicit national forest policies that address dryland concerns. It also calls for emissions reduction, periodic assessment of airborne pollutants, research and rehabilitation of affected areas. PORTUGAL and SENEGAL presented results from an expert meeting on rehabilitation of degraded forest ecosystems hosted by Cape Verde, Senegal, Portugal and the FAO. The EU, with AUSTRALIA, supported the proposal to form explicit national policies. He noted links to the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and supported the proposals for action on air pollution. GREECE, PORTUGAL and ITALY said Mediterranean forests are very susceptible to forest fires. TURKEY noted the upcoming World Forestry Congress in Antalya, Turkey in 1997. CHINA proposed references to international cooperation and the financial needs of developing countries. GERMANY said strategies on desertification should be integrated within the framework of existing forest and land use programmes. He called for strengthening community-based organizations. FRANCE said the report's proposals on preventative and restorative measures represented a balanced approach. He said countries should not resign themselves to pollution but should address the causes. The US noted that the proposed formulation of guidelines for conservation and environmental management of plantations is premature. CANADA said national forestry action programmes provide the best framework to address reforestation and afforestation by providing cross-sectoral linkages, participation of stakeholders, policy and legislative reviews and institutional strengthening.

An NGO representative asserted that poor resource management is not always caused by lack of education but by

lack of alternatives. She urged governments to use exotic species only as a last resort and assess effects on local ecosystems. IUCN recommended that bilateral and multilateral agencies and government planners shift investment emphasis away from plantations toward helping governments improve communities' tenure rights. AUSTRIA said international strategies should be developed to reduce nitrogen compound emissions and monitor heavy metals and air pollutants. DENMARK stated that providing financial means and setting up incentives for private owners will not ensure successful afforestation efforts. JAPAN emphasized the need for region-wide forest monitoring systems and the testing and application of the critical load approach. An East Asian Acid Rain Monitoring Network will be established by the year 2000.

Bai-Mass Taal (UNEP) presented the Secretary-General's report on programme element I.5, needs and requirements of countries with low forest cover (E/CN.17/IPF/1996/18). The report states that any area with 20% minimum cover in developed countries, and 10% within developing countries, constitutes a forest. It defines countries with low forest cover as those in which the lack of forests is damaging to ecological processes. SOUTH AFRICA suggested extending the report's definition of low forest cover to include countries in which the lack of forests has resulted in an unfulfilled national demand for forest products. INDONESIA said the report does not differentiate approaches for low and high income countries. Low income, low forest cover countries should receive increased assistance and technology transfer.

UKRAINE stated that large parts of the Ukrainian forest have been removed from economic activity due to the Chernobyl accident. She sought international assistance and technology transfer. CHINA proposed references to international cooperation and technology transfer. AUSTRALIA said that low forest cover is only a crude criterion for allocating forest funding, and that high forest cover countries are also at risk without SFM. The report does not reflect that low forest cover is a naturally occurring circumstance in many countries. The EU called for special attention to the needs of least developed countries with low forest cover. The US questioned the report's differential definition of low forest cover and suggested a universal definition. He said the proposals for action could benefit from increased flexibility.

JAPAN said the report does not classify causes for low forest cover and highlighted the importance of sharing experiences. URUGUAY characterized the definition as arbitrary and said a better gauge was needed to reflect the relationship between ecosystems. The NETHERLANDS emphasized the importance of restricted forest areas. A NGO representative contested the proposal to increase plantation cover without assessing associated financial, socio-cultural and environmental costs. Means to reduce demand for pulp and paper should be explored, particularly in Northern countries with excessive consumption of these products.

## **IN THE CORRIDORS**

In the words of one delegate, "Friday will start the ball rolling." Will it roll into a world convention on forests? Questions abound regarding whether the Northern and Southern camps will consolidate their positions or whether regional groupings will take unified positions. Some predict initial statements at the day-long Plenary on programme element V, beginning a new and probably lengthy phase in global forestry efforts. A wide spectrum of views is known to exist; the minimum "fall back" in case of total disagreement will probably be a continuation of an IPF-style dialogue.

## **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**Plenary:** Plenary will convene at 10:00 am in Room XIX to discuss programme elements V.1 (international organizations and multilateral institutions) and V.2 (legal mechanisms).