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IPF-4 HIGHLIGHTS 14 - 17 FEBRUARY 1997

Delegates continued negotiations in two working groups and contact groups on the fourth day and interim weekend of IPF-4. Working Group I completed review of actions under underlying causes of deforestation, traditional forest-related knowledge, ecosystems affected by desertification and pollution and countries with low forest cover. Working Group II completed its initial discussion of international cooperation, technology transfer and capacity-building and information systems under financial assistance and technology transfer and began reviewing trade and environment. Contact groups on finance and nomenclature met over the weekend.

WORKING GROUP I

NATIONAL FOREST AND LAND-USE PLANS: The paragraph on national forest programmes (NFPs) was amended with language on NFPs as "important policy frameworks" with a "wide range of approaches...to be applied to national and subnational levels." Paragraphs on valuation, intersectoral NFPs and cooperation were agreed.

UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION: CANADA inserted text regarding transboundary pollution into a paragraph on international causes. The US replaced "must not" with "should not" delay action in the subparagraph on the diagnostic framework. In the subparagraph on forest cover and in the related action proposal paragraph, plantations as an "important element of SFM" and "as a complement to natural forests" replaced "by taking pressure off natural forests." The US, supported by COLOMBIA, replaced "finance" with "support" in text on convening a global workshop.

TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE: The US recommended substituting "indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles" for references to "indigenous people, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities" in subparagraphs on identifying TFRK, participation, enhancing capacity, and digital mapping. The EU urged retaining forest owners. A contact group recommended "forest-related indigenous people and other forest-dependent people embodying traditional lifestyles," which was accepted. The ALLIANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES disagreed with categorizing indigenous peoples. The UKRAINE added rehabilitation to the subparagraph on implementing forest programmes. Delegates incorporated a suggestion by the ALLIANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES that the integrity and cultural survival of forest-dependent peoples is essential.

The G-77/CHINA inserted language on experience of practical approaches to credit, rewards and benefits-sharing in text on technical guidelines on TFRK application. In a subparagraph on enhancing capacity, delegates removed "partnership." CANADA and the G-77/CHINA added "including, if appropriate" before a reference to new instruments and mechanisms in the subparagraph on incorporating TFRK.

Delegates, at BRAZIL's suggestion, requested a compilation of legislation on TFRK and benefits-sharing from the UN Secretary General, in collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) secretariat. A contact group led by AUSTRALIA proposed adding relevant international bodies, especially the CBD, to collaborate with indigenous and forest-dependent people in the subparagraph on forest biodiversity. CANADA added a subparagraph including text on decisions made in the third Conference of Parties (COP) of the CBD, particularly on Article 8(j). The G-77/CHINA added language on illegal international trafficking to a subparagraph on TFRK and intellectual property rights (IPR), which CANADA amended to refer to CBD work.

SWITZERLAND added a subparagraph encouraging pilot studies of national IPR and TFRK regimes. In the subparagraph on policy and legal frameworks, the US added "and/or other protection regimes" after IPR. The EU changed "international and national" to "appropriate" levels, and the G-77/CHINA added "equitable sharing of benefits." With GABON's support, the ALLIANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' language on the "free and informed consent of holders of TFRK" was added to the subparagraph on ways to inventory TFRK. All subparagraphs including one linking traditional knowledge and national SFM systems were agreed.

ECOSYSTEMS AFFECTED BY DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT: To a subparagraph on national and international action, the US added dryland programmes and JAPAN added reference to an integrated approach in adopting SFM. ECUADOR extended language urging establishment of protected areas to all areas affected by drought, and the US added a reference to dry subhumid areas. TURKEY added extension systems to text urging support for education, training and research. In a subparagraph on strengthening partnerships, SWITZERLAND substituted "sustainable management and regeneration of natural vegetation" for action on desertification and drought. To a subparagraph inviting the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) to research dryland trees, the G-77/CHINA added water management and delegates substituted plants for trees. All of the subparagraphs, including those on past experiences and international cooperation, were agreed.

AIR POLLUTION: The G-77/CHINA added language on strengthening international cooperation in subparagraphs on

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preventative approaches and pollution impacts. "Binding" was deleted from the subparagraph on binding agreements.

COUNTRIES WITH LOW FOREST COVER: The US added "workable definitions" of low forest cover to the FAO subparagraph. Many delegations rejected the US proposal to delete a reference to national forest estate requirements in the clause on goods and services. The EU added text on native species and avoiding natural ecosystem replacement in the clause on plantations. The G-77/CHINA inserted language on reforestation and interested parties in the clause on natural regeneration and added a reference to other international agreements in the subparagraph on protected areas. The clause on capacity-building was broadened to include "subnational levels."

The subparagraph on greening the world was agreed after insertion of US language on expanding forest cover. The subparagraph on forest partnerships was deleted. The G-77/CHINA added text on the "provision of financial resources" in the subparagraph on international cooperation.

WORKING GROUP II

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: On coordination of activities and instruments, the G-77/CHINA and CANADA rejected a US proposal to delete the entire subparagraph. JAPAN and the US added the CCD and the ITTO, respectively, to the list of organizations. The subparagraph was accepted.

On provision of information, the US and the G-77/CHINA requested clarification of who should provide information and to whom. This paragraph was left pending research into the text's origins.

On indicators for evaluating programmes supported by international cooperation, there was discussion of the "adequacy" of programmes and whether exploration of indicators is "a priority activity." This wording was eventually accepted. GABON recommended language from IPF-3 on the adequacy of resources mobilized, or alternatively, with the US, deletion of the subparagraph. The language was referred to the G-77/CHINA for consultations.

As proposed by the G-77/CHINA, delegates transferred a subparagraph on mandatory coordination among UN organizations to programme element V.1.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND CAPACITY-BUILDING: The G-77/CHINA proposed new language on promoting, facilitating and financing access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms. BRAZIL preferred similar language taken from the Forest Principles. The text was referred to the G-77/CHINA for further consultations.

To a subparagraph on identification of national technological requirements, the G-77/CHINA added "capabilities." On cooperation in technology transfer, the US added "partnerships" to a list of avenues for cooperation and requested deletion of a general reference to related work being conducted by the CBD COP. CANADA suggested specifying the clearinghouse mechanism of the CBD. With a minor amendment, the general reference was retained. The PHILIPPINES proposed "strengthening" North-South cooperation.

On national capacity-building, SWITZERLAND added language on adapting technologies to national and local conditions and on their dissemination. PAPUA NEW GUINEA added "implementation" to capacity-building in development of NFPs.

Based on a suggestion by the ALLIANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, the EU proposed a new subparagraph on supporting indigenous people, local communities and other forest-dependent communities by funding SFM projects and capacity-building and supporting their participation in forest policy dialogue and

planning. This proposal was accepted after minor amendments by the US, VENEZUELA and the G-77/CHINA. Delegates accepted a G-77/CHINA proposal on inventories of most appropriate technologies and most effective methods in technology transfer. Proposals by MEXICO on benefit-sharing and compensation to local and indigenous communities for technologies developed by these groups and by the G-77/CHINA on regional research and extension centers were agreed but referred to Working Group I.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS: The EU proposed replacing a reference to "new and additional financial resources" with "domestic and external public funding." The G-77/CHINA supported the EU's proposal only as an addition to "new and additional." This subparagraph was deferred to the contact group.

MARKET ACCESS: On effects of trade measures, the EU opposed JAPAN's proposed language on environmental measures' effects on trade. The G-77/CHINA added "economic" to the "impacts" affecting "forest goods and services." SWITZERLAND changed "trade" to "trade-related" measures.

JAPAN recommended adding measures to improve transparency in text on improving market access. The EU, supported by JAPAN, proposed reducing barriers to trade rather than specifying "tariff and non-tariff" barriers. With the support of several delegations, the US recommended not restricting the proposed action to WTO members. The US also proposed replacing references to mutually supportive trade and environment policies and to conflict between forest-product trade measures and WTO rules with "assisting countries to generate resources to support SFM," but many countries objected. The G-77/CHINA recommended language "ensuring that environmental concerns do not lead to disguised non-tariff barriers to trade." The subparagraph was submitted to the contact group. Discussion of voluntary codes of conduct was deferred pending a Secretariat's text on a related subparagraph.

SWITZERLAND, the EU, the US and others proposed considering a subparagraph on an agreement on trade in forest products under programme element V and deleting the subparagraph on bans and boycotts. On bans and boycotts, the G-77/CHINA proposed adding reference to the Forest Principles. On the agreement on trade in forest products, the G-77/CHINA, with BRAZIL, added language on extending the ITTA's Objective 2000. Discussion on these subparagraphs was referred to a contact group.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Two contact groups met over the weekend. One group, chaired by Australia, focused on nomenclature for: defining national forest programmes; references to groups included in language on participation; and whether to replace "management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests" with "SFM." A second group, chaired by Canada, considered several subparagraphs on financial assistance and also were expected to address unresolved issues on market access under programme element IV (trade and environment).

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: Working Group I will meet in Conference Room 1 to consider conclusions under programme elements I.4 (ecosystems affected by desertification and pollution) and I.5 (countries with low forest cover) and begin negotiating programme element III (assessment, research, valuation and criteria and indicators).

WORKING GROUP II: Working Group II will meet in Conference Room 2 to resume discussion of programme element IV (trade and environment).

Look for the Contact Groups' conclusions and revised proposals for action on a number of issues.