



**AFRICA FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE:
13-16 OCTOBER 2003**

The Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) Ministerial Conference took place from 13-16 October 2003, in Yaounde, Cameroon. The meeting was co-hosted by the Government of Cameroon and the World Bank. More than 300 participants from 39 countries attended the Conference, representing governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

The objectives of the conference were to: share and explore ideas on forest governance; consider priority issues, including illegal forest exploitation and associated trade in Africa; identify ways in which various stakeholders can address these issues, including partnerships between producers and consumers, donors, civil society and the private sector; and negotiate and endorse a Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan for AFLEG.

A variety of sessions were convened during the four-day Conference. Plenary sessions were held on Monday, 13 October, in which speakers made presentations on such issues as the background to AFLEG, high-forest cover and low-forest cover countries in Africa, the harnessing of natural resources for growth, forest governance and legal frameworks, information and monitoring tools, and multilateral and bilateral initiatives. The following morning, statements were made by civil society, the World Bank and other stakeholders to delegates as input for the negotiations on a Ministerial Declaration held over the next few days.

Working Groups also met on Tuesday to discuss the implications of illegal activities in the forest sector, institutional reforms and immediate strategies, marketplace and trade issues, conflict timber, illegal trade in bushmeat, and tenure and related governance issues. Open Sessions were held on Tuesday and Wednesday focusing on the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the results of AFLEG preparation workshops, the launch of the WWF Producers' Group in Africa, and the Forest Governance Learning Group. A roundtable on how to integrate the AFLEG process into existing institutional and regional frameworks also took place.

While the Working Group and Open Session meetings were underway on Tuesday and Wednesday, government delegations met in closed sessions to negotiate the wording for a Ministerial Declaration. Negotiations on the draft Declaration continued throughout Wednesday night and into Thursday morning in preparation for the review of the draft by Ministers during the Ministerial segment of the

Conference later that day. After several hours of Ministerial deliberations on Thursday afternoon, a final Declaration was adopted by acclamation in Plenary on Thursday evening.

This report provides a brief history of the AFLEG process, followed by a chronological summary of the Conference, including the presentations, discussions and outcomes of the Plenary, Working Group and Open Session meetings. The report also summarizes the final version of the Ministerial Declaration.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FLEG PROCESS

BACKGROUND: In May 1998, the G-8 launched an action programme on forests. The programme gives a high priority to eliminating illegal logging and illegal timber trade, seeks to complement actions undertaken at the regional and international levels, and affirms the G-8's commitment to identifying actions in both producer and consumer countries.

The G-8 action programme motivated a partnership on forest law enforcement for East Asia between the World Bank, the UK and the US, which led to the FLEG East Asia Ministerial Conference in September 2001. The Conference adopted a Ministerial Declaration, whereby participating countries committed themselves to, *inter alia*, intensify national efforts and strengthen bilateral, regional and multi-lateral collaboration to address forest crime and violations of forest law. The Declaration also contained a commitment to create a regional task force on FLEG to advance the Declaration's objectives. The task force held a follow-up meeting on the Declaration's implementation in Bali, Indonesia, in May 2002.

FLEG IN AFRICA: African countries have raised the issue of sustainable forest management (SFM) in various fora, including at the Yaounde Summit in 1999, where Heads of State from Western Congo Basin countries committed themselves to work together to ensure that forests remain a renewable economic resource and sources of biodiversity. Ministers from several countries in Africa subsequently expressed an interest in focusing specifically on FLEG-related issues. The AFLEG process aims to strengthen high-level commitment in Africa to build capacity for forest law enforcement, in particular relating to illegal logging and hunting, associated trade, and corruption.

The AFLEG process is part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and is intended to strengthen international and multi-stakeholder commitment. The objectives of the AFLEG process are to confirm the will and commitment of producer and consumer country governments and other stakeholders to FLEG, address the need for shared responsibility and cooperation between stakeholders, and develop a programme of action.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

In May 2002, the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) at its 32nd session adopted a decision on forest law enforcement in Africa, which calls for data collection on forests in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Congo, in order to improve forest concession management and ensure conservation in protected areas. ITTC-32 also decided to promote SFM in the Congo Basin through engaging in a World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) "Type 2" partnership, organizing a workshop to develop a regionally applied research programme, and contributing to the establishment of a regional strategy aimed at improving forest concession management.

AFLEG PRE-MINISTERIAL PLANNING MEETING: From 18-20 June 2002, the Republic of Congo hosted a preparatory meeting for the AFLEG Ministerial Conference. This event, held in Brazzaville, brought together more than 70 experts from 27 countries, representing governments, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector. Participants shared knowledge and experience on FLEG in Africa and globally, identified priority issues, and developed recommendations for a ministerial declaration on FLEG for African forests. Participants heard keynote presentations on global issues relating to FLEG, a review of the G-8's perspective, information on FLEG experiences in East Asia, and analyses of FLEG in the African context. Regional groups considered country case studies, including community forestry and law enforcement, poaching and private sector issues. Issue-based working groups also met, focusing on legal frameworks, information, conflict and post-conflict situations, capacity building, and possible elements of a Ministerial Declaration and procedures for the Ministerial Conference.

The meeting produced draft elements for an AFLEG Ministerial Declaration, including: the fair and equitable implementation of forest laws; economic incentives; reforms of land tenure, licensing, subsidies and processing capacities; immediate and coordinated national, regional and international action against breaches of forest laws, including illegal logging, illegal trade and corruption; transparency; awareness raising, particularly in conflict areas; monitoring; partnerships; conflict situations; and technological capacities and infrastructure.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

On Monday, 13 October, Madi Ali, Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Forests of Cameroon and President of the AFLEG Organizing Committee, welcomed delegates and underscored the value of international cooperation. Delegates then heard opening remarks from ministers representing a number of African countries.

Henri Djombo, Minister of Forestry and the Environment of the Republic of Congo, outlined forest-related measures undertaken by his Government, and drew attention to his Government's aim to rehabilitate national parks and protect biodiversity. He also emphasized its commitment to a new forestry code.

Dominic Fobih, Minister of Lands and Forestry of Ghana, stressed the importance of the forestry sector for Ghana's economy. He described challenges, including low stumpage fees and reduced foreign exchange earnings from timber, and observed that industry has little incentive to improve its performance. He outlined reforms undertaken in Ghana to improve the situation, including market-based pricing, equitable benefit-sharing programmes, an increase in allowable cuts, and a national forest plantation programme.

Anselme Enerunga, Minister of Environment, Conservation of Nature, Water, and Forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo, noted that Congo Basin countries still face obstacles to sustainable forest management (SFM), including a lack of trained personnel, poor infrastructure, and inadequate funding mechanisms. He stressed the need to strengthen capacity, improve monitoring, involve local populations in management and decision making, and improve allocation of funds.

Tanyi Clarkson Mbyawor, Minister of Environment and Forests of Cameroon, underscored his country's commitment to SFM and the need to focus on methods for achieving SFM, stakeholder involvement, and political commitment at the Ministerial level.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Following the opening speeches, delegates elected by acclamation the following Conference Bureau members: Madi Ali (Cameroon) as Chair; Uganda and the US as Vice Chairs; France and Ghana as rapporteurs; the Democratic Republic of Congo and Markku Simula, World Bank consultant, as facilitators; and Jag Maini, World Bank consultant, and Emile Mkoko, Secretary General of the African Timber Organization, as negotiation facilitators.

OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS: On Monday, 13 October, Markku Simula presented an overview of the AFLEG process to Plenary. He drew attention to AFLEG's recognition that adequate legal and institutional frameworks and their effective implementation are preconditions for SFM, that law enforcement and governance are the sovereign responsibility of States, and that illegal logging and associated trade is a shared responsibility of producer and consumer countries. Simula stressed that AFLEG will not create a new international instrument, but will instead make use of and strengthen existing instruments to achieve SFM.

Wandojo Siswanto, Indonesia, presented experiences from the FLEG East Asia process, highlighting key aspects of the 2001 Bali Ministerial Declaration, including recognition that exporting and importing countries share the responsibility for combating forest crime. He reported that the East Asia FLEG Regional Task Force had identified the need for a clearinghouse mechanism for transparent reporting, and research on timber supply and demand. The Task Force had also recognized the need for a strategic framework and an information-sharing format on FLEG implementation at the national and regional levels.

Jean-Claude Nguingui, the Republic of Congo, briefed participants on the concerns high-forest cover countries have about forest governance. These concerns include: inadequate training and understanding of laws, and a lack of authority among the government agencies responsible for forest governance; lack of transparency in relevant public institutions; and socio-political instability. He noted the need for improved legal frameworks, controls and monitoring, including through partnerships and indicators, and also supported capacity building and the adoption of codes of ethics.

Noting the increasing reliance on non-wood forest products in low-forest cover countries, Lamin Bojang, the Gambia, proposed adopting an ecosystem approach to management, developing management strategies, recognizing rural communities' roles and traditional rights, addressing inconsistencies in legal frameworks, and improving inter-agency coordination.

Paul Collier, World Bank, discussed the importance of harnessing natural resources for growth, and warned that an over-dependence on natural resources increases the risks of civil war. He highlighted similarities between timber and other natural resources, such as diamonds, including their use by rebel groups to finance activities and buy arms. He also drew attention to the unique character of timber, underscoring the relative ease of harvesting forests for timber, the implications of multiple property rights, and the need for regulation and investment to ensure renewability. Regarding post-conflict policies, he emphasized that donors must act with a long-term view and cautioned that low transparency in budgets and over-exploitation of forest resources prior to the reconstruction of effective government institutions and regulatory environments often lead to criminality.

FOREST GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS: In a Plenary session held on Monday afternoon, David Kaimowitz, Center for International Forest Research, described the negative effects that forest law enforcement can have on rural livelihoods. Emphasizing that

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

small-scale logging activities are seldom harmful, he recommended focusing on major violators, and called for integrated approaches to forest law enforcement that involve communities.

Robert Kofi Bamfo, Ghana, presented his country's experience with forestry policy and institutional reform, highlighting new initiatives, including the creation of a Forestry Commission, the introduction of market-based incentives, and the lifting of bans on log exports. He concluded that improved governance is essential to encourage private sector investment in the forestry sector.

Patrice Talla, FAO, spoke about legal frameworks for FLEG. Drawing attention to the temptation for officials to become involved in illegal activities, he said forestry laws should: not be overly ambitious; have acceptable definitions; set clear objectives; include the concepts of transparency, participation and flexibility; provide for codes of conduct and mechanisms to fight corruption; and recognize local property rights.

Jean-Jacques Landrot, Interafrican Forest Industries Association, presented private sector perspectives on forest governance, calling for the creation of a working group of forest administrators, donors, advisors, and the private sector to support SFM. He said country-level committees with members representing financial, forestry, civil society, and private sector interests should also be established to implement AFLEG-related measures, and called for a working group consisting of international, private sector and other representatives to tackle conflict and post-conflict SFM issues in Liberia.

Samuel Egbe, Cameroon, provided an overview of the strengthening of forest governance and legal frameworks in his country. He reviewed new practices and approaches used in Cameroon, including land-use planning reforms, forestry planning, involvement of local communities in forest management, increased transparency, and the intensification of control and enforcement measures. He noted the Government's increased revenues from these measures and strong political will for the reforms.

Steven Nsita, Uganda, outlined experiences and lessons learned through forest sector reforms in Uganda, focusing on its national forestry plan. He explained that participatory reforms are necessary, while cautioning that they are costly and can only be implemented over the long-term. He also underlined the value of involving civil society, and stressed the need to build capacity in order to implement reforms effectively.

INFORMATION AND MONITORING: On Monday afternoon, Scott Poynton, Tropical Forest Trust, presented key issues for global wood markets. Noting that wood buyers now take into account environmental and social impacts, he stressed the benefits of certification schemes. Poynton said third-party verification and wood control and chain of custody systems allow producers to prove that their wood was legally obtained.

Jacqueline Van de Pol, Global Forest Watch, outlined links between information, monitoring and policy reform. She described cooperation agreements between her organization and governments to support and update geographic information systems, highlighting the benefits of digital information for controlling the implementation of management plans.

Jeanne Marie Mindja, Cameroon, introduced the Network on Forest Policies in the Congo Basin (REPOFBAC), highlighting its success in promoting information exchange between governments, and identifying priority areas for action, including forest planning, the valuation of non-wood forest products, community participation and decentralization. She said REPOFBAC could meet the information exchange needs of AFLEG, but noted the need for sustainable funding, as well as for civil society and private sector involvement.

Jeerima Djibrila, Cameroon, and Albert Barume, Global Witness, discussed partnerships and independent monitoring in Cameroon. Djibrila said an agreement signed between Cameroon and Global Witness has led to improved licensing control, tracking of logs, monitoring, tax revenue from forestry, and revenue spending. Barume highlighted success in increasing transparency and awareness-raising, and called for building capacity of local populations, extending observation work to other Congo Basin countries, and developing adequate means for forestry monitoring.

Jean-Pierre van de Weghe, Observatoire des forêts d'Afrique centrale (FORAC), explained that the FORAC programme includes an internet site for knowledge sharing on Central African forests, and addresses conservation in protected areas and exploitation in forest concessions.

MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL INITIATIVES: On Monday afternoon, Dinah Baer, White House Council on Environmental Quality, presented the US President's Initiative on Illegal Logging, launched in July 2003, stressing its focus on good governance, community-based actions, technology transfer and market forces. Noting that the US will review its relevant import laws and seek partnerships with international organizations, Baer emphasized that the US will not impose its laws on other countries, but will aim to reinforce other countries' efforts to implement their own laws.

Neil Scotland and John Bazill, European Commission, presented the EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). Scotland explained that the Commission encourages actions relating to development cooperation, timber trade, conflict timber, public procurement, private sector initiatives and investment. Bazill noted the need for stakeholder consultations and collaboration with the US.

John Hudson, UK, described a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Indonesia and the UK to address illegal logging in Indonesia. He said the MoU prompted the adoption of a timber procurement policy in the UK, the finalization of an action plan, the establishment of systems to verify the legality of wood products, and the development of a working definition of "legality" in Indonesia.

STATEMENTS TO NEGOTIATING PARTIES: In a Plenary session held on Tuesday morning, 14 October, representatives of civil society, the World Bank and other stakeholders presented delegates with their views on AFLEG as input for the negotiations on a Ministerial Declaration, which began later that day. Giuseppe Topa, World Bank, presented a summary of the AFLEG preparatory meeting held in Brazzaville, the Republic of Congo, in June 2002, recalling its main themes: information; legislative reform; law enforcement in armed conflict situations; and capacity building.

Robert Kofi Bamfo, Ghana, presented the outcomes of the Ghana National/Regional Workshop, highlighting its Declaration, which contains commitments to, *inter alia*: improve legal frameworks for resource ownership; implement market-based instruments to provide incentives for good governance, SFM and value-added processing; improve transparency and accountability by revising ineffective governance structures and mechanisms; implement forest resource allocation systems based on competitive bidding and market-based instruments; and promote participatory multi-stakeholder approaches.

Mamadou Diallo, Senegalese Association of Friends of Nature, presented the results of the West Africa Civil Society Workshop. He said the Workshop's participants had recommended: promoting alternative livelihoods; building capacities; fostering partnerships; actively deterring illegal practices; adopting best practices; expediting the decentralization process; promoting civil society participation; ensuring that the timber trade complies with international conventions; and fostering trade in SFM products. He noted that a civil society task force would be established to follow up on these recommendations and the outcomes of the AFLEG Ministerial Conference.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

Dominic Walubengo, Forest Action Network, presented the outcomes of the East Africa Civil Society Workshop, highlighting its recommendations on: revising forest laws; preparing or revising national forest management plans; preparing forest-specific management plans; building capacity; and establishing monitoring and evaluation systems.

Reporting on the Southern Africa Civil Society Workshop, Peter Gondu, Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources, said the Workshop's participants had recommended strengthening community rights, empowering local institutions, and developing *sui generis* legislation to protect indigenous knowledge and fight biopiracy. They had also supported the right of access to information and participation, and advocated strengthening mechanisms for information collection and dissemination, establishing monitoring mechanisms, and adopting measures to establish liability and punish wrongdoing.

Marthe Minko Mapangou, Education for the Protection of the Environment and Nature, reported on the Central Africa Civil Society Workshop, highlighting recommendations on transparency, good governance, proactive measures in consumer countries, and legislative reform, including the recognition of Pygmies' rights.

Daniel Ngantou, IUCN, reported on the Information and Monitoring Workshop, highlighting calls for harmonizing information systems, fostering partnerships for information gathering and dissemination, building capacities of public institutions, and updating reference maps.

Emmanuel Fochive, Forestry Sector Group in Cameroon, presented the conclusions of several recent multi-stakeholder meetings. The conclusions pertain to: improving forestry legislation through the revision of criteria for granting timber concessions; adopting tax incentives; defining criteria for legality; promoting good governance; improving policy coherence; adopting rules to identify conflict timber; and building the capacities of public institutions.

Mats Bååth, European Hardwood Federation, highlighted illegal logging as a pressing issue that governments must address.

BREAK-OUT WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

On Tuesday morning, 14 October, Working Groups were established to discuss pertinent FLEG issues, including: the implications of illegal activities in the forest sector, institutional reforms and immediate strategies to implement them; marketplace and trade issues; conflict timber; illegal trade in bushmeat; and tenure and related governance issues. Participants reported the outcomes of these discussions to Plenary the following day.

IMPLICATIONS OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES IN THE FOREST SECTOR, INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT THEM: Kauam Tekam, Cameroon, chaired the Working Group on implications of illegal activities in the forest sector, institutional reforms and immediate strategies for implementation.

Steven Nsita, Uganda, outlined his country's reforms in the area of forest management. He drew attention to Uganda's forest product monitoring unit, which tracks timber from the forest to the market, and Uganda's forest product licensing system.

Providing an overview of fuelwood issues, Emmanuel Pouna, Cameroon, identified the need to reduce the environmental impacts and increase the efficiency of fuelwood consumption. He called for country-specific strategies and participatory approaches to address fuelwood problems and, noting the need to manage fuelwood supply and demand, underscored the role of forestry governance.

Bihini Won wa Musiti, IUCN, discussed the importance of partnerships between NGOs and the public and private sectors. He observed that NGOs can contribute on-the-ground experience and low-cost responses, while the public sector can facilitate access to information, and the private sector can provide management and technical skills.

Mohammed Tchiwanou, Benin, outlined Benin's relevant institutional frameworks, drawing attention to the environmental implications of fuelwood exploitation, corruption issues, the impact on local communities and the rural poor, and the need to improve forestry legislation and strategies.

On Wednesday, 15 October, Kauam Tekam, Cameroon, reviewed the Working Group's conclusions. He said the Group had identified key factors for success, including transparent mechanisms for granting forest concessions, institutional support through capacity building, strengthened judicial systems and tools, mechanisms to reduce corruption, and stakeholder involvement and partnerships.

MARKETPLACE AND TRADE ISSUES: On Tuesday morning, Emmanuel Ze Meka, ITTO, chaired the Working Group on marketplace and trade issues, stressing the need to balance the positive and negative impacts of trade.

Duncan Brack, Royal Institute of International Affairs, highlighted options for international institutional mechanisms to address trade in illegally-sourced timber, underlining legal measures that can be taken in consumer countries to discourage illegal logging.

Andy Roby, UK Timber Trade Association, reviewed how importers respond to market demands for legally-produced timber, emphasizing the power of consumer preference to influence production practices. Antoine de la Rochefordière, Société Générale de Surveillance, stressed the need for independent verification of the legality of timber production, while Pierre Samson, Consultant, described technologies for log tracking.

On Wednesday morning, Ze Meka and Roby presented the Group's discussions to the Plenary, noting possible options to ensure the legality of forest products. Roby observed that participants had considered licensing to be a key measure, and stressed the need for independent verification mechanisms.

CONFLICT TIMBER: On Tuesday morning, James Gasana, Swiss Intercooperation, chaired the Working Group on conflict timber. He stressed the need to distinguish between internal and international conflicts, and highlighted conflict timber laundering as a cause for concern.

Silas Siakor, Save Our Future Foundation, spoke about timber conflict in the Liberian context, describing how logging companies and parties to a conflict often establish direct partnerships, and noting that the effectiveness of official authorities and FLEG can often be reduced. He called for a clear definition of conflict timber, sanctions for logging companies that trade in such timber, and mechanisms to prevent conflict timber from entering consumer countries' markets.

Kanu Mbizi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, outlined his country's post-conflict reconstruction efforts, highlighting the adoption of emergency plans to revitalize the forestry sector through developing a legal framework, strengthening institutions, reforming the tax system, and adopting zoning plans.

Art Blundell, UN Security Council, addressed the role of UN sanctions in conflict situations, describing the 2001 boycott against Liberia. Noting that timber provides a source of revenue to buy arms and perpetuate conflict, he stressed the recent extension of the ban to all Liberian timber products. He said exemptions to the ban were not provided for because of monitoring difficulties, and noted that conditions for lifting the sanctions include the legitimate use of timber revenues.

On Wednesday morning, Blundell reported on these discussions to Plenary. Highlighting the need for a definition of conflict timber and the issue's complexity due to sovereignty concerns, he emphasized that post-conflict situations pose serious challenges. He recommended that AFLEG decide that revenue from timber should not be used to fund conflicts.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

ILLEGAL TRADE IN BUSHMEAT: On Tuesday morning, Liz Bennet, World Conservation Society (WCS), described the growth in bushmeat trade, noting that this trade accelerates the impoverishment of local peoples, and underlining the links between bushmeat trade and timber extraction.

Paul Elkan, WCS, spoke on bushmeat trade issues in the Republic of Congo, describing its wildlife law, and highlighting the benefits of wildlife management.

Adam Matthews, The Bushmeat Campaign, stressed the need to integrate bushmeat issues in AFLEG discussions and wildlife considerations into forest management policies. Jeanne-Marie Mindja, Groupe des Amis de l'UNESCO et de l'Environnement, underlined the need for awareness raising and training.

Georges Mouncharou, Cameroon, emphasized the value of information exchange, experience-sharing and poverty reduction activities. Bonaventure Ebayi, Lusaka Agreement Task Force, stressed the need to prevent bushmeat from entering international markets and to provide alternative sources of food for local peoples.

On Wednesday morning, Bennet reported to Plenary on the outcomes of the Working Group meeting. Observing that there are two sides to the issue, she said some people depend on bushmeat for their livelihoods, but many animal species are under pressure from hunting. She reported that the Working Group had called for country-specific solutions that respect sovereignty. She also highlighted participants' support for capacity building, awareness raising, independent monitoring, strong wildlife policies, and the inclusion of wildlife planning in forest concessions.

TENURE AND RELATED GOVERNANCE ISSUES: On Tuesday afternoon, Liz Alden Wily, UK, discussed forest governance and lessons learned from Eastern and Southern Africa. Highlighting the emergence of community-based governance models, she said community forestry is leading the way in forestry governance.

Tshepo Malatji, South Africa, described his country's 1998 National Forests Act, which he said promotes community forestry. He highlighted enforcement challenges, such as a lack of capacity to train forest officers, and said regulations and systems for administration and enforcement were needed. He emphasized that legislation must be applied fairly.

Wale Adeleke, WWF, discussed public/private sector co-management of forests and forest governance, stating that governments find it increasingly difficult to manage forests themselves. He identified a number of challenges for co-management, including a lack of political will to give responsibility to communities.

Dominic Walubengo, Forest Action Network, briefly discussed the impacts of recent changes in the Kenyan Government and its new constitution on the forest sector. He informed participants that a proposed forest bill would provide for extensive stakeholder participation in forest management, including forest management by NGOs.

On Wednesday morning, Jane Bryden, UK, summarized the outcomes of the Working Group, noting that forest governance reforms are becoming widespread in Africa and that participatory community-based forestry management has an important role to play in these reforms. She reported that the group had agreed on the importance of consistent enforcement, flexibility, capacity building, decentralization, democracy, and political will as key elements for success.

OPEN SESSIONS

Open Sessions were held on Tuesday and Wednesday, focusing on the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the results of AFLEG preparation workshops, the launch of the WWF Producers' Group in Africa, and the Forest Governance Learning Group. A roundtable on how to integrate the AFLEG process into existing institutional and regional frameworks was also held.

CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP: On Tuesday afternoon, Henri Djombo, Minister of Forestry and the Environment of the Republic of Congo, introduced the Open Session on the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP).

David Kaueper, US, highlighted progress on the CBFP, including the adoption of the Sub-regional Convergence Plan by the Conference of Ministers in Charge of Forests in Central Africa (COMIFAC).

Massudi Mayan'kenda, COMIFAC, explained that COMIFAC is a high-level forum for cooperation and decision making on forest management in Central Africa, which coordinates sub-regional forest strategies and monitors the implementation of international instruments relevant to the Congo Basin.

Pape Djiby Koné, FAO, outlined technical support provided by FAO to the Convergence Plan. Jacqueline Van de Pol, Global Forest Watch, presented the CBFP website, outlining its content, including a calendar of events and a list of partners and activities.

Noting the development of an inventory of projects underway in the Congo Basin, Kaueper highlighted those projects related to capacity building, protected areas, community-based forest programmes, SFM, and forest policy and governance.

During the ensuing discussion, one delegate criticized the lack of gender balance in this and other structures like COMIFAC. The US noted that, when forming the partnership, not as many local NGOs had been involved as the organizers would have liked, and anticipated engaging more NGOs in the future. Asserting the roles of states and COMIFAC, Tanyi Clarkson Mbyawor, Minister of Environment and Forests of Cameroon, emphasized his country's commitment to the CBFP and to working with NGOs.

LAUNCH OF THE WWF PRODUCERS' GROUP IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA: On Wednesday morning, WWF launched its Producers' Group in West and Central Africa. Noting the increasing demand for certified timber and the obstacles faced by companies in West and Central African countries wishing to produce certifiable timber, Laurent Some, WWF, explained that the WWF Producers' Group is a partnership between the private sector and other stakeholders that aims to improve SFM practices in the region.

Wale Adeleke, WWF, gave an overview of the development of the Group and Emmanuel Heuse and Bruno O'Heix, WWF, outlined the demand for certified timber. Clotilde Ngombe, World Bank, noted that the Producers Group can contribute to the attainment of SFM and certification targets.

Participants then discussed various relevant issues, including the need for minimum requirements for SFM, the concept of community forest, the mutual recognition of various certification schemes, and the development of a pan-African harmonized certification scheme.

FOREST GOVERNANCE LEARNING GROUP: On Wednesday morning, Adolfo Bila, Eduardo Mondlane University, outlined Mozambique's experience with forest legal reform and governance. He explained that the new legislation resulted from a participatory process, that it provides local communities with free access to forests, and that it returns 20% of logging fees to those communities. He also noted that the legislation reduces logging fees for locally-processed timber. Highlighting lessons learned, he stressed the need for institutional reform at all levels to implement the legislation, and the role of NGOs in facilitating implementation at the local level. Bila noted that communities are often not aware of their rights.

James Mayers, International Institute for Environment and Development, introduced the Forest Governance Learning Group, an alliance of independent agencies working on forest governance issues in Western and Southern Africa. Emphasizing that control of and access to forests and natural resources are among the most pressing governance issues in rural Africa, he said forestry can contribute to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability, but only with good forest governance. He

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

identified key governance challenges, including tackling the effects of illegal logging on livelihoods, incorporating forestry considerations into poverty reduction strategies, and ensuring the sustainability and equity of forest privatization and decentralization. Mayers indicated that, in its first year, the Forest Governance Learning Group will conduct in-country policy research on illegal and corrupt forestry practices, as well as in-country reviews of governance practices for national forest programmes (NFPs), poverty strategies and decentralization.

INFORMAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON HOW TO INTEGRATE THE AFLEG PROCESS INTO EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS: On Wednesday afternoon, Markku Simula introduced the roundtable discussion on how to integrate the AFLEG process into existing institutional and regional frameworks.

El Haji Sene, FAO, drew participants' attention to the World Forestry Congress and the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission as important FAO initiatives.

Outlining the ITTO's efforts to combat illegal logging, Emmanuel Ze Meka, ITTO, noted that illegal logging undermines the competitiveness of forestry companies. Highlighting that the ITTO is well-suited to address illegal logging because its membership consists of both producer and consumer countries, he underscored the ITTO's commitment to help its member countries achieve SFM.

Daniel Ngantou, Conference on Central African Moist-Forest Ecosystems (CEFDHAC), noted that CEFDHAC can contribute to the implementation of the AFLEG Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan, and the distribution of relevant information to civil society. He supported the development of regional action plans for every region in Central Africa.

Jean-Pierre van de Weghe, Observatoire des forêts d'Afrique centrale (FORAC), presented the FORAC initiative, including a website and databases to provide tools for assessing the state of forests in Africa. Noting FORAC's role in creating networks and monitoring forest-related activities, he said the initiative can play a leading role in the AFLEG process.

Emile Kisamo, Lusaka Agreement Task Force, reviewed the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, and its activities aimed at eliminating illegal trade in forest products. He stressed the Task Force's role in coordinating measures to fight environmental crime, and its willingness to form partnerships with the AFLEG process.

Emile Mkoko, African Timber Organization, outlined the Organization's aim to coordinate action to ensure the optimal use and conservation of forest resources through SFM. He said achievements include the classification of timber species, the development of criteria and indicators for SFM, and the adoption of plans for tropical timber exploitation.

During the ensuing discussion, a representative from Indonesia highlighted the country's experiences since the 2001 East Asia FLEG Ministerial Conference, including the integration of other sectors into forestry management. Regarding illegal logging, he called for the strong and continued commitment of all stakeholders, and the engagement of trading partners. An NGO representative underscored the readiness of civil society to assist governments to build capacity for law enforcement. Another participant said some countries face "draconian" World Bank policies. A private sector representative asked the FAO and ITTO for guidance on how they would prefer to see forest revenue used, and said tax pressures had hindered the ability to distribute revenues to communities. El Haji Sene stressed the need for a mechanism to ensure that communities benefit from revenues.

Summarizing the discussion, Simula drew attention to participants' comments emphasizing the need for strong political will and continued commitment, the internalization of AFLEG principles at all levels, increased coherence and complementarity, and effective cross-border

cooperation. Noting the limited focus on law enforcement during the roundtable discussion, he suggested delegating some responsibilities for implementation to subregional bodies, and increasing cooperation with NGOs and the private sector.

In a Plenary session held on Thursday morning, El Haji Sene summarized the roundtable discussion, drawing attention to the need for a sustained commitment to good governance, stakeholder involvement, SFM strategies at various levels, strengthened laws and regulations, transparency, capacity building, synergies and regional cross-border cooperation, and international collaboration and partnerships.

MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

On Thursday, 16 October, Ministers arrived to discuss the draft negotiating text of the Ministerial Declaration, and the AFLEG Ministerial Segment was officially opened.

OPENING CEREMONY: Amougou Mana, Cameroon, welcomed delegates to Yaounde, noting that the choice of the city to host the AFLEG Ministerial Conference was testimony to its social and political stability, and Cameroon's efforts to address illegal forest exploitation and enforce forest laws.

Odin Knudsen, World Bank, commended African countries for their participation in the Conference. He underscored the role of the AFLEG process in protecting biodiversity, preserving poor people's livelihoods, and mitigating climate change. Knudsen stressed that donors can no longer provide funds to countries that misuse their resources, and said good governance and sustainable resource management have become necessary conditions for donor support. Acknowledging the need for policies that take into account countries' specificities and needs, he said the AFLEG Ministerial Declaration should reflect partnerships between all stakeholders, and their mutual financial and political responsibilities.

Henri Djombo, Minister of Forestry and the Environment of the Republic of Congo, underlined problems associated with inadequate forest policies, low capacities of enforcement authorities, unsustainable private sector practices, and poverty. Noting that both consumers and producers share responsibility for poor forest management, Djombo said AFLEG provides an opportunity to tackle these issues. He highlighted the significance of the Congo Basin and the actions taken by Central African states to promote SFM, and noted that African states should not be singled out or penalized by other states for low levels of forest management. He stressed the need for regional action on SFM and international support to assist in these efforts.

Peter Mafany Musongue, Prime Minister of Cameroon, emphasized the need for coherent and harmonized legislation and the significance of AFLEG to stimulate the international commitment to ensure SFM. He noted the need for policy and institutional reforms, equitable distribution of revenues from forest resources, a network of protected areas, effective zoning regulations, and civil society involvement in these processes. Stressing the need to ensure that future generations are not deprived of the benefits provided by forests, Musongue underlined the importance of strategic regional efforts and highlighted the sub-regional work that has been carried out in Central Africa. He said forest policies must address poverty reduction priorities and climate change concerns, but noted that developing countries have the right to use their own forests as they deem appropriate.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS: Underscoring the importance of forests for poverty reduction, Helder dos Santos Felix Monteiro Muteia, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Mozambique, highlighted the need to provide public access to forests and drew attention to the issues of deforestation, climate change, forest fires, pests, disease, and alien invasive species. Identifying the need to increase investment in the forest sector and trade in forest products, Minister Muteia called for enabling conditions for private sector participation. He also called for harmonized approaches to SFM, and for forest law enforcement that

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

makes the best use of available financial and technical resources. Minister Muteia concluded by emphasizing opportunities for cooperation among African countries on FLEG.

Koos Richelle, European Commission, noted that African governments are working to improve peoples' livelihoods and protect forests, but identified the urgent need for political will and improved forest governance to eliminate illegal logging and corruption. He recommended learning from successful African examples while implementing AFLEG initiatives. Stressing that it is not enough to focus on producer countries, Richelle drew attention to the EU's new Action Plan for FLEGT. He expressed the hope that the AFLEG Ministerial Conference would mark the start of progress to build partnerships between Africa and the EU, and welcomed cooperation with other major consumers of African forest products.

Kahinda Otafire, Minister of Water, Lands and Environment in Uganda, expressed his Government's strong support for the AFLEG process. He highlighted the importance of forests for livelihoods, sustainable and responsible forest management, and stakeholder involvement, especially of local communities.

Jeffrey Burnam, US State Department, described US forest conservation activities, including the CBFP and the President's Initiative on Illegal Logging and associated trade. Noting that FLEG is the foundation for forest management and that forest resources have global significance, he said the US can provide Africa with technical assistance for, *inter alia*, capacity building, landscape planning, community involvement and satellite imaging.

Suzanne Ogo-Waffa, Secretary of State for Fisheries, Natural Resources and the Environment of the Gambia, highlighted the reliance of communities on forests for income, employment, food, and medicines, and stressed her country's policy and legislative reforms. She said a paradigm shift was necessary to involve major stakeholders in forest management.

Denys Gauer, Ambassador for Environment of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said national and regional forest programmes allow for more consistent implementation and closer monitoring, and highlighted the need to focus on management issues, promote cooperation between producers and consumers, strengthen enforcement, and increase transparency to benefit local communities. He expressed France's readiness to take part in regional and international activities to address forestry issues.

Gareth Thomas, UK Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for International Development, stressed that capacity strengthening and institutional change are key factors in addressing illegal logging. He noted that community involvement and empowerment are the foundations for better governance and, drawing attention to a Memorandum of Understanding between Indonesia and the UK, stressed the need for bilateral and regional initiatives.

Jeanne Françoise Bertschi, Consulate General of Switzerland, highlighted the negative impacts of illegal forest activities and associated trade. She stressed that: producer and consumer countries must work together; existing national laws must be enforced, while staying in compliance with World Trade Organization rules; and the implementation of FLEG rules must be coordinated with the people responsible for SFM.

NGO STATEMENTS: Adolphe Muley, Réseau des Associations Pygmées, on behalf of high-forest cover countries, outlined the importance of promoting transparency through public participation, and access to information and an effective justice system. She underscored the need for legislative reforms to protect the rights of local peoples, strategic planning, wildlife plans, and the use of action plans with clear targets and timeframes. Regarding governance issues, Muley highlighted the various roles of NGOs and emphasized the importance of the rule of law. She stressed the value of monitoring conflict timber and the

need to ban access to public funding to those that have violated forestry laws. Muley also emphasized the value of having independent observers in each state and setting up databanks on forest exploitation activities.

Lovemore Simwanda, Environmental Conservation Association of Zambia, on behalf of low-forest cover countries, noted the participation of 70 low-forest cover country civil society groups in the AFLEG preparatory process. He listed a number of recommendations, including the need to develop country-specific mechanisms to fight corruption in the forestry sector, increase recognition of the forestry sector's contribution to the economy, strengthen the capacity of forest departments and civil society organizations in policy development processes and implementation, impose sanctions against those in contravention of forest laws, and reimburse local communities with a portion of forest revenues. Simwanda urged G-8 countries to ensure that forest products entering international markets come from legal sources and sustainably-managed forests, and to reject forest products from conflict areas. He highlighted civil society's willingness to assist governments in raising awareness, conducting case studies, and using tools such as certification.

PRIVATE SECTOR STATEMENTS: Wa Mathurin, Groupement Filière Bois Cameroun, outlined private sector forestry activities in Cameroon, noting that his country has a comprehensive set of regulatory instruments and that significant reforms have been undertaken to strengthen forest law enforcement. He suggested that the private sector in Cameroon has been unjustly criticized for its forestry practices, and stated that efforts have been taken to improve these practices, with the filing of forestry management plans, mechanisms for improving the traceability of timber and the use of independent observers. He outlined private sector recommendations to: establish, in every country, a working group of forestry and finance officials, the international community and the private sector, to identify barriers and promote SFM; and appoint independent observers and create a steering committee to determine terms of reference for implementation of governance measures.

Jean-Jacques Landrot, Interafrican Forest Industries Association, underscored the need to respect producer countries' sovereignty over their resources, while stressing the role of the private sector in creating the social and economic conditions for sustainable development through the creation of jobs. He supported genuine cooperation with NGOs and called for the strengthening of trade unions, as they represent public interests.

CLOSING CEREMONY: Dominic Fobih, Minister of Lands and Forestry of Ghana, presented the Ministerial Declaration, which had been discussed in closed negotiations during the previous two days. The Declaration was adopted by acclamation and standing ovation.

Noting the diversity of interests among the participants present, Tanyi Clarkson Mbyawor, Minister of Environment and Forests of Cameroon, thanked everyone for their spirit of cooperation and their consensual approach, as well as for their efforts to overcome the obstacles to achieving sustainable development and SFM for the benefit of all. He drew attention to the need for follow-up mechanisms, capacity building for all actors, participatory, integrated approaches and financial support. Mbyawor underscored the political commitment to manage natural resources with transparency and good governance, and invited NGOs, civil society and the private sector to be involved in the Declaration's implementation. The meeting was gavelled to a close at 8:44 pm.

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION: The Declaration's preamble recognizes the biodiversity of Africa's forest ecosystems and the importance of forests for the livelihoods of African people, especially the poor. It recognizes the complexity of social issues, particularly poverty, contributing to the weakening of government capacities. In the Declaration, the Ministers state their awareness of the responsibility to both present and future generations and acknowledge the rights of local

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

peoples and civil society to participate when addressing forest issues. The need for capacity building, partnership building, transparency, monitoring, and international cooperation are also stressed. The Ministers state that problems associated with conflict timber must be addressed and problems of illegal exploitation of forest resources and associated trade are the shared responsibility of producer and consumer states.

The Declaration underlines the need for institutional and policy reforms relating to FLEG, declaring the Ministers' intention to, *inter alia*:

- mobilize financial resources for FLEG;
- promote and finance economic opportunities for communities dependent on forest resources to reduce illegal activities;
- promote cooperation between law enforcement agencies within and among countries;
- strengthen capacities;
- involve stakeholders, including local communities, in decision making;
- promote public access to information on parks, protected areas, concessions and other forested areas;
- raise awareness of the harmful impacts of illegal logging and associated trade;
- advance the implementation of the AFLEG objectives within NEPAD and other processes;
- address the re-establishment of good governance in post-conflict situations;
- explore means of demonstrating the legality and sustainability of forest products;
- establish and strengthen laws for hunting and bushmeat trade, including support for independent monitors;
- integrate FLEG into NFPs;
- work through subregional and regional task forces on FLEG;
- invite the World Bank to finance, within six months, a meeting of regional representatives of the AFLEG process, in the margins of a forest-related meeting, and decide on the next steps for the follow-up implementation process;
- review the implementation of the actions associated with the Declaration by the end of 2006; and
- invite other countries of Africa and other regions of the world to join the Declaration.

The Declaration concludes with an indicative list of actions, focusing on national level implementation, legislation and policy reform, capacity building, information, law enforcement and monitoring, wildlife resources, forest management practices, financing, and markets and trade.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

FOREST FISCAL SYSTEM REFORM WORKSHOP: This workshop, to be held from 19-21 October 2003 at World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC, will include discussions and an exchange of experiences and knowledge on fiscal reforms related to forestry. For more information, contact: John Spears, World Bank; tel: 1-202-458-1542; e-mail: jspears@worldbank.org; Internet: <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/ardext.nsf/14ByDocName/EventsUpcomingEvents-ForestFiscalSystems>

FOREST INVESTMENT FORUM: This Forum will be held from 22-23 October 2003 at World Bank Headquarters, and is being hosted by the World Bank (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and WWF, with support from Forest Trends and PROFOR. The meeting's main objective is to explore how the sponsoring organizations could help to create enabling environments for private sector investment by companies and financial institutions committed to socially, environmentally and economically sustainable management of forest resources in

sustainable forestry and forest industry projects. For more information, contact: John Spears, World Bank; tel: 1-202-458-1542; e-mail: jspears@worldbank.org; Internet: <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/ardext.nsf/14ByDocName/ForestInvestmentForumOctober22-232003>

CONGRESS ON GLOBALIZATION, LOCALIZATION AND TROPICAL FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

The Congress on Globalization, Localization and Tropical Forest Management will meet from 22-23 October 2003 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. For more information, contact: Mirjam Ros-Tonen, University of Amsterdam; tel: +844-825-9267; fax: +844-825-7495; e-mail: weitzel@undp.org.vn; Internet: <http://www.undp.org.vn/mlist/envirovlc/012003/post73.htm>

ITTC-35 AND ITTA PREPCOM-2: The Thirty-Fifth session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-35) will be held from 3-8 November 2003 in Yokohama, Japan, followed by the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Renegotiation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, from 10-12 November 2003. For more information, contact: Alastair Sarre, ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: editor@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL CODES OF PRACTICE FOR FOREST HARVESTING - ISSUES AND OPTIONS:

The International Expert Meeting on the Development and Implementation of National Codes of Practice for Forest Harvesting - Issues and Options, will convene from 17-20 November 2003 in Kisarazu City, Japan. For more information, contact: Yuji Imaizumi, International Forestry Cooperation Office; e-mail: yuuji_imaizumi@nm.maff.go.jp; Internet: <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/iufro/secure/nb-practicecodes-harvesting.htm>

INTERNATIONAL TEAK CONFERENCE 2003: The International Conference on Quality Timber Product of Teak from Sustainably Managed Forests will be held from 2-5 December 2003 in Peechi, India. For more information, contact: K. M. Bhat, International Teak Conference 2003; tel: +91-487-269-9037; fax: +91-487-269-9249; e-mail: kmbhat@kfri.org; Internet: <http://www.kfri.org/html/k0500frm.htm>

SIMFOR 2004: The Third International Symposium on Sustainable Management Of Forest Resources (SIMFOR 2004), organized by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), will be held from 21-23 April 2004 in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. For more information, contact: Fernando Hernandez Martinez; tel: +53-82-779363; fax: +53-82-779353; e-mail: fhernandez@af.upr.edu.cu; Internet: <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/>

UNFF-4: The Fourth Meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-4) will convene from 3-14 May 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Mia Söderlund, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: unff@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session-intro.html>

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON LEGAL ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN FOREST SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

This Symposium, organized by IUFRO, will be held on 1 June 2004, in Brasov, Romania. For more information, contact: Peter Herbst; tel: +43-4242-52471; fax: +43-4242-264048; e-mail: hp@net4you.co.at; Internet: <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/>

ITTC-36 AND THE UN CONFERENCE (FIRST PART) FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO THE ITTA, 1994:

The thirty-sixth session of the International Tropical Timber Council will take place from 20-23 July 2004, in Switzerland. The meeting will be followed by the United Nations Conference (first part) for the negotiation of a Successor Agreement to the ITTA, 1994, from 26-30 July 2004, in Geneva. For more information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: ittc@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>