



**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE UNFF COUNTRY-
LED INITIATIVE ON DECENTRALIZATION,
FEDERAL SYSTEMS IN FORESTRY AND
NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES:
27-30 APRIL 2004**

The Interlaken Workshop on Decentralization, Federal Systems in Forestry and National Forest Programmes (the Interlaken Workshop) convened in Interlaken, Switzerland from 27-30 April 2004. The Workshop was a country-led initiative, launched by Switzerland and Indonesia, in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and was conducted by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Intercooperation.

Bringing together over 150 participants representing local, state, provincial and national governments, international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, the Interlaken Workshop sought to find ways to improve the quality of "on the ground" forest-related activities and discuss questions regarding the balance between centralization and decentralization, with a special focus on problems that occur during transitional phases of the decentralization processes. The report of the Workshop will be forwarded to the fourth session of UNFF, which convenes from 3-14 May 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFF

In October 2000, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), in Resolution E/2000/35, established the UNFF as a subsidiary body with the main objective of promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The UNFF succeeded a five-year period (1995-2000) of forest policy dialogue facilitated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). To achieve its main objective, the following principal functions were identified for the UNFF: to facilitate implementation of forest-related agreements and foster a common understanding on sustainable forest management; to provide for continued policy development and dialogue among governments, international organizations, including

major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, as well as to address forest issues and emerging areas of concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner; to enhance cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues; to foster international cooperation and to monitor, assess and report on progress of the above functions and objectives; and to strengthen political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The IPF/IFF processes produced a body of more than 270 proposals for action towards sustainable forest management, known collectively as the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. These proposals are the basis for the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) and Plan of Action, various themes of which are discussed at annual UNFF sessions.

By 2005, the UNFF will consider recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. It will also take steps to devise approaches towards appropriate financial and technology transfer support to enable implementation of sustainable forest management.

UNFF MEETINGS: The UNFF organizational session and informal consultations on the MYPOW took place from 12-16 February 2001, in New York. At the organizational session, delegates agreed that the UNFF Secretariat would be located in New York. Delegates also addressed progress towards the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the duration of Bureau members' terms.

The first session of the UNFF (UNFF-1) took place from 11-23 June 2001, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates discussed and adopted decisions on the UNFF's MYPOW, a Plan of Action and the initiation of the UNFF's work with the CPF. They also recommended the establishment of three *ad hoc* expert groups to provide technical advice to the UNFF on: monitoring, assessment and reporting approaches and mechanisms; finance and transfer of environmentally sustainable technologies; and consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

UNFF-1 also invited country- and organization-led initiatives to facilitate its work. Such initiatives help build consensus and extensively discuss and analyze politically sensitive issues concerning forests.

UNFF-2 convened from 4-15 March 2002, at UN Headquarters in New York. The outcomes of UNFF-2 included a Ministerial Declaration and Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and eight decisions on: combating deforestation and forest degradation; forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems; rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover; rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests; concepts, terminology and definitions; specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests; proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005; and other matters. At UNFF-2, Switzerland, Indonesia and CIFOR announced their intention to organize a country-led initiative to facilitate international dialogue on decentralized decision-making in forestry.

UNFF-3 convened from 26 May - 6 June 2003, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. UNFF-3 adopted resolutions on: enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination; forest health and productivity; economic aspects of forests; maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs; the UNFF Trust Fund; and strengthening the Secretariat. UNFF-3 also approved decisions on the voluntary reporting format and on the terms of reference for the three *ad hoc* expert groups, a task that had been carried forward from UNFF-2.

REPORT OF THE UNFF COUNTRY-LED INITIATIVE ON DECENTRALIZATION IN FORESTRY

The Interlaken Workshop commenced with a morning plenary on Tuesday, 27 April, during which participants heard opening statements, a review of democratic decentralization in the forestry sector and presentations on the experience of Indonesia and Bolivia in decentralization. In the afternoon, participants attended parallel sessions on country experiences and thematic issues and a round table on federalism.

Participants proceeded to attend plenary sessions, four field trips to local forest areas, a round table on community issues, side events and six working groups on specific topics during the four-day workshop. Based on input from the working groups, participants drafted and revised a report of the meeting containing the outcomes of their discussions on major themes as well as recommendations, which will be forwarded to UNFF-4 at its May 2004 meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. This *Sustainable Developments* report chronologically presents the proceedings of the Interlaken Workshop, commencing with the opening statements.

OPENING STATEMENTS

On Tuesday morning, 27 April, moderator Christian Kuchli, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), welcomed participants to the Interlaken Workshop and presented the speakers of the opening session.

Philippe Roch, SAEFL, described Switzerland's experience in decentralization of forestry, underlining the need to balance strong and clear central legislation on forestry with the empowerment of local people. Despite the lack of a global convention of forests, he noted the strong cooperation in this area and thanked Indonesia for its collaboration in the organization of the Interlaken Workshop, as well as the supporting countries and organizations.

Wahjudi Wardojo, Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia, underscored the development of national forest programmes (NFPs) as one of the most critical issues to be addressed by the UNFF. He emphasized that the challenge is to implement decentralization in a step-wise manner, from initiation to installation, consolidation and stabilization, and called for an exchange of views and cooperation to lead to practical recommendations for UNFF-4.

Albert Röstli, Canton of Bern, discussed decentralization in forestry in his Canton, highlighting the role of planted forests. He listed challenges faced by some forests of his Canton today, including under-exploitation and the poorly adapted mechanized harvesting of small-scale exploitations. He stressed the importance of forests in natural hazard protection and the need for forest management to be undertaken jointly by local people, the communes and the cantons.

Susan Braatz, on behalf of Pekka Patosaari, UNFF, highlighted country-led initiatives as a driving force in the UNFF process and their importance in advancing discussion and identifying needed action. She noted the role of decentralization in promoting sustainable management of forests and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits by, *inter alia*, broadening participation by forest dwellers and indigenous communities, recognizing local knowledge, strengthening partnerships, and promoting investment in sustainable forest management.

André Morgenthaler, Community of Interlaken, welcomed the Workshop's participants and explained the importance of forests for Interlaken's tourism sector.

David Kaimowitz, CIFOR, identified decentralization as a major trend of our time, and said the question is no longer if it should happen, but what can be done to make it work better for both people and forests. Noting that over 60 developing countries are currently involved in decentralization processes, with varying degrees of success, he stated that decentralization has become a global phenomenon and the UNFF provides an appropriate forum for its discussion.

The ensuing plenary was co-chaired by Jürgen Blaser, Intercooperation, and Wajudi Wardojo, Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia. Co-Chair Blaser presented the Interlaken Workshop's objectives, including:

- analyzing the implications of decentralization in key aspects of forest management for the development of NFPs;
- sharing experiences of countries that have decentralized their forestry systems with countries currently undergoing rapid decentralization processes;
- deriving lessons learned from countries that have implemented decentralization; and

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

- preparing reflections and proposals related to decentralization in the forestry sector and their implications on NFPs for UNFF-4.

Blaser stressed that the Interlaken Workshop was not an opportunity for negotiation but offered a forum for reflection and experience sharing. Noting that previous UNFF meetings had agreed on policy issues, he urged participants to focus on implementation of agreed objectives.

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR

On Tuesday morning, 27 April, Co-Chair Wardojo introduced Anne Larson, CIFOR, who presented on democratic decentralization in the forestry sector in Africa, Asia and Latin America. After defining decentralization and its goals, she explained that despite the claims of many governments, democratic decentralization is rarely implemented. Larson said substantial decision-making power, resources and benefits from forests are still centralized, and the local actors selected to receive new authority are neither representative nor accountable. She highlighted the importance of: central governments as effective partners; meaningful national dialogue; effective participation; accountability mechanisms; the empowerment of civil society; building on existing local institutions; and transparent management of logging contracts. She stated that democratic decentralization is not happening because of a lack of: recognition that forestry is a multi-faceted sphere; a favorable political environment; and empowerment of local actors.

PANEL: COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS AND INITIAL DISCUSSIONS

Also on Tuesday morning, 27 April, participants heard two country presentations and engaged in initial discussions. Wandojo Siswanto, Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia, presented on his country's experience with decentralization, stressing the need to harmonize government regulations and build common perceptions with local stakeholders. Among the obstacles for further decentralization that he identified were the lack of synergy between local and central government regulations, incomplete government instructions and limited institutional capacities.

Pablo Pacheco, CIFOR, presented on Bolivia's experience with decentralization. He noted that it had contributed to improved social equity in access to forest resources, reinforced sustainable practices of forest management and strengthened indigenous people's property rights. However, he underlined that key decisions on forest resource allocation and use are still made at the central level and called for: the empowerment of municipalities on questions of allocation of property rights in public forest areas, tax collection, and sanctions against forest crime; and the definition of rules and regulations for forest management. He drew attention to the importance of building horizontal systems of monitoring, supporting governments' efforts to become more transparent, accountable and participative, and building more complex systems for successful forest management.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*, the array of stakeholders with differing interests and capabilities at the local level; the important role of external actors such as NGOs, the World

Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the need for inter-sectoral cooperation; and the implications of increased globalization processes in the logging industry.

PARALLEL SESSIONS

On Tuesday afternoon, participants engaged in two parallel sessions, one on country experiences and one on thematic issues.

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES: Cherukat Chandrasekharan, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), chaired the session on country experiences.

Bill Ritchie, Worldforests, presented a paper on forest devolution in Scotland, outlining the "push down" of power that took place within the political context of devolution in the UK following the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and control of Scotland's forest estate passing to the Scottish Executive. He described the people's "pull down" of power and their movement to get access to forest resources. He explained how communities obtained the right to acquire ownership of land, including woodlands, and noted the establishment of over 100 community woodland organizations. He underlined the successes of this process, including achieving a better environment, gaining credibility and generating political will on the part of the national government to empower the local communities.

Oppon Sasu, Forestry Commission of Ghana, presented on decentralization of federal systems in forests and a NFP in Ghana. After describing the history of decentralization of forestry in Ghana, he listed the achievements of this process, including: the development of mechanisms to ensure that district assemblies are agents of change at the local level; the reduction of illegal activities; and the empowerment of district assemblies in decision-making, planning and execution of development projects. He said weaknesses in this process resulted from to the lack of empowerment and capacity building of local communities. Sasu underlined the importance of flexibility, transparency, good governance and equitable benefit sharing in achieving democratic decentralization.

Patrick Robinson, Intercooperation, presented on the development of community forestry in Nepal. He described the historical context of indigenous systems of forest management in Nepal, stressing that forest nationalization and the major donors' counter-productive support for reforestation had often lead to the degradation of natural forests. He said rhetorical efforts to devolve rights to manage and use forests through community forest user groups had often failed to contribute to locally driven development and the national economy. He listed the factors hampering the development of community forests, including: the lack of determined will, commitment, and coordination by and between governments and donors; power struggles; and the frequent failure to promote accountable groups that would fulfill equity requirements.

Turatbek Musuraliev, State Forest Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, described the types of forests in the Kyrgyz Republic and its forest management legislation, noting the need to reform the forestry sector through the separation of control and regulation functions from

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

economic functions, so that State forest management functions are exercised by the State Forest Service and economic functions are exercised by entities in the private sector. He called for relevant donor support and capacity building in order to develop and implement forest policy.

During the ensuing discussion, participants addressed the necessary legal framework for decentralization, the costs of achieving an equitable profit sharing situation, and the role of women in decentralization.

THEMATIC ISSUES: The session on thematic issues was chaired by David Kamowitz.

Jeffery Sayer, WWF, presented on the implications for biodiversity conservation of decentralized forest resource management. He noted a paradigm shift from conceiving of conservation as a centralized operation toward one more in line with decentralized management. He highlighted the compatibility of local management and the Convention on Biological Diversity's ecosystem approach principles and emphasized the complications that arise when there are multiple owners of landscape mosaics. He underlined that achieving democratic decentralization takes time, and requires credible and effective institutional arrangements. He said that, even though local management may not be ideal for biodiversity, it is the "least bad option".

Jesse Ribot, World Resources Institute, elaborated on the choice of institutions and powers for decentralized natural resource management. He explained that the central condition for effective decentralization is democratic representation, which he defined as consisting of downwardly accountable and responsive local authorities. Noting that local democratic institutions that are downwardly accountable are rarely empowered and that neither democratic nor accountable local institutions are chosen for decentralized forest management, he called for the forestry sector to play a role in strengthening fledgling democracies.

Merilio Morell and François Wencelius, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), presented on FAO's experience in decentralization in the forestry sector and on FAO's National Forest Programme Facility in support of decentralization. Noting the increased demand for technical assistance and the scarcity of information and knowledge for decentralizing the forestry sector, they emphasized the importance of designing institutions for local government and the preparation of programmes for implementation at the national and subnational levels.

Ian Ferguson, University of Melbourne, spoke on the pitfalls of decentralization for sustainable forest management in the Asia-Pacific region. Focusing on the complex relationships between governance, bureaucracy, markets, media and information, he noted that the forms of decentralization are many and may not conform to the normal geographic hierarchy of governance. Among the lessons learned from the case studies, he mentioned that decentralization goals need to be publicized to assist conflict resolution, that devolution works better when aimed at poverty alleviation and fuel wood supply, and that privatization is not incompatible with devolution.

In the ensuing discussion, participants brought up various countries' experiences with decentralization, noting that bottom-up decision making is not always possible nor desirable, and highlighting the importance of learning from experience in long-running decentralization processes in other sectors.

ROUNDTABLE ON FEDERALISM

Doris Capistrano, CIFOR, chaired the Roundtable on Federalism, which took place on Tuesday afternoon, 27 April. Arnoldo Conteras-Hermosilla, Forest Trends, presented a background paper on "Forest Governance in Federal Systems: An Overview of Experiences and Implications for Decentralization." He stated that successful decentralization depends on, *inter alia*: adequate management of cross sector linkages; harmonious decentralization in related sectors; institution building; and adequate financial resources. In most States examined, he noted: resistance to involve the private sector and civil society, insufficient involvement of local communities as legitimate participants in decentralization, and a lack of adequate resources, authority and responsibility for local communities. He stressed the importance of appropriate sharing of revenue and decision making, accountability at all levels, and appropriate participation.

Following Conteras-Hermosilla's presentation, participants heard the perspectives of six federal states on their experience in forest management. Given changing aspects in Russia's history of forestry management and governance, Natalia Malysheva, Russian Federation, underscored the need to find the right balance to achieve transparent and effective decentralization that also addresses ecological requirements. Gerald Rose, US, identified harmony of interests as essential in ensuring sustainable management of forest resources, and noted the lack of influence that communities of "place" have at the federal level in the US compared to that exercised by communities of "interests."

Vinod Bahuguna, India, called for governance and accountability at all levels, noted India's experience with re-centralization of power, and highlighted that decentralization is a long-term process. Steve Nsita, Uganda, gave an overview of the history of decentralization in Uganda, highlighting that decentralization is a governance issue and the need to overcome mistrust by local communities of central government initiatives.

Tasso Azevedo, Brazil, mentioned the development of a new national forest policy and noted that municipal governments do not have the incentives to take part in forest management, as they do not benefit from revenue activities. Willi Zimmermann, Switzerland, described the recent centralization process in his country and stressed the importance of well trained and well equipped institutions.

During the ensuing discussion, participants addressed: the need for political will; the complexity, dynamics and length of the decentralization process; the lack of resources and incentives; and the importance of capacity building.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

FIELD TRIPS

On Wednesday, 28 April, four field trips were organized to allow participants to develop a common understanding about the key issues of the Interlaken Workshop and to facilitate communication between participants. Rapporteurs for each excursion reported back to the whole group on Thursday morning, 29 April. The following summaries of the trips are based on these reports.

RUGEN-MÜRREN: FROM GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE: The moderators of this field trip were Christian KÜchli, SAEFL, and Rudolf Zumstein, Forest Service of the Canton of Bern. The topics addressed included: the role of local elite and access to resources in the decentralization of forest ownership; capacity building; the role of the forest service; and cooperative federalism.

Rapporteur Jeffery Sayer, WWF, explained that the field trip focused on the history of decentralization in the region, which he described as a complex and continuous process. He noted that there is no steady, ideal stage in decentralization, but that it is a process characterized by various levels of conflict, influenced by outside forces, where social capital, culture and “soft laws” play an important role. He mentioned new schemes for the payment of environmental services by the tourist industry in the context of changing landscape values.

BRIENTZ: COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM TO FIGHT NATURAL HAZARDS: The moderators for this field trip were Erica Zimmermann, SAEFL, and Ueli Ryter, Canton of Bern. The following topics were addressed: the integral protection against natural hazards in the Canton of Bern; Brienz Torrents, their history, the potential hazard, projects and responsibilities; and the Brienz Torrents as seen by the people directly concerned.

Rapporteur Stewart Maginnis, International Conservation Union (IUCN), described the balance between centralized technical guidance and funding and local political decision making. He stressed that there is no single template for carrying out each response action and underlined the importance of cooperation and the value of having a clear and shared sense of purpose that remains constant over time. In conclusion, he noted that decentralization is not a linear process, that financing is a key driver and that the presence of the private sector needs to be re-examined in light of federal funding shortfalls.

BOLTIGEN: ROLES OF LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE CANTONAL FOREST SERVICE: This field trip was moderated by Beat Stucki, Community of Adlemsreid, and Christian von Grünigen, Forest Service of the Canton of Bern, and dealt with the interface between the commune and the cantonal levels and the organization of the forest community of Adlemsreid. Participants addressed the following topics: organization and decision making within the community; the roles and cooperation of different actors in governance; planning and monitoring instruments of forest management; and the economic situation.

Rapporteur Vinod Bahuguna, Ministry of Environment and Forests of India, presented on the role of local community organizations and the cantonal forest service. He described traditional communities’ rights of

use and democratic organizations, and noted that traditional communities and forest rangers should be given more responsibilities, such as that of granting hunting permits, and that forest decentralization needs strategy and commitment from government agencies in funding and technical support.

EMMENTAL FARM FORESTS: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATELY OWNED FORESTS: The moderators of this field trip were Jürgen Blaser, Intercooperation, and Walter Marti, Forest Service of the Canton of Bern. The topics addressed included: emerging issues relating to private forest ownership; the role and responsibilities of a forest division in private forests; timber wealth; and regional management plans.

Rapporteur Jill Blockhus, World Bank, explained that small forest plots have serious social and economic implications. She added that low revenue generated by these plots results in timber being undervalued and underused, and that over-stocking leads to insufficient natural regeneration of these forests. She said regional management plans were an encouraging approach for the future and stressed the importance of trust and cooperation between private owners and forest rangers, as well as the consensual decision making process that derives from their relationship.

COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE

On Thursday morning, 29 April, Chair Doris Capistrano introduced the Community Round Table as one presenting “the view from below” and as an attempt to make issues more concrete.

Arvind Khare, Forest Trends, presented on community issues in decentralization, emphasizing that local communities are both the owners of a majority of forests and the largest investors in forest resource management. Noting the continuous struggle by local communities against usurpation of resources since colonial times and the tension between external forces and self-generated community efforts, he pointed to a possible window of opportunity in the increased demand for certified forest products and attention to sustainable forest management. He called for secure tenure, secure fiscal revenue and taxation, and control over decision making and access to markets in order to ensure a meaningful integration of communities in forest management resources.

Hannah Wittman, Cornell University, with Silvel Elias, San Carlos University, Guatemala, presented on the recent decentralization process in Guatemala and its impact on local communities, focusing on the conflict between traditional community management practices and technical management criteria of State forest projects. She called for *inter alia*, formal participation in forest policy decision making by local management groups and the development of governmental sanction policies.

Witness Kozanayi, CIFOR, with Stephen Hlambela, Zimbabwe Farmers Union, described the success of some communities’ initiative to do their own land use planning in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe after a long process of appealing to ever higher levels of government. He stressed that success depends on salience of the issue to the

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

communities and on communities forcing accountability. He concluded that communities need support from the same external entities from which they are trying to wrestle power and that decentralization in one area can lead to more leverage in others.

Adolino Saway, Local Government Unit of the Philippines, with Felix Mirasol, Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines, presented on decentralizing protected area management in the Philippines. They found that its shortfalls include: a lack of collaboration between and overlapping responsibilities among agencies; under representation of local communities on the protected area management board; and the risk of abuse by educated members of local groups. Saway said effective participation of local stakeholders, capacity development and sensitivity to local specificities are key to effective decentralization.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*: the reluctance of central powers to transfer financial and fiscal control; the conflict and overlap of the responsibilities of various institutions; capacity development and its sensitivity to local culture; markets as a driving force for greater equity; how to make taxation workable on the equity front; whether protected areas should be part of the debate on decentralization; and gender implications in choosing local groups to transfer power to.

SIDE EVENTS

On Thursday night, 29 April, side events convened on “CIS & Eastern Countries: Exchange of Issues Relating to Decentralization” and “Planning and Implementing National Forest Programmes in Africa: Lessons Learnt and Best Practice.” *Sustainable Developments* covered the CIS & Eastern Countries event, during which participants agreed that forest reform issues should be tackled in a broader cross-sectoral context and that success of these reforms would be based on, *inter alia*: political consensus; willingness of national governments to cooperate with regional and local authorities; clear, equal division of responsibilities; financial resources; and a clear system of accountability.

WORKING GROUPS AND MEETING REPORT

On Thursday morning, 29 April, prior to breaking into six working groups, Pekka Patosaari, UNFF, commended the work of this country-led initiative and highlighted key aspects of the upcoming UNFF-4, including the regional panel discussions, the multi-stakeholder dialogue, the reports of the expert groups, and the introduction of five building blocks for the fifth session of UNFF.

WORKING GROUPS AND REPORT DRAFTING: Participants then convened in Working Groups as follows:

- Working Group I: Allocation of roles and responsibilities and coordination at different levels and across sectors (Chair Dedi Masykur Riyadi, Rapporteur Anne Larson)
- Working Group II: Maintaining ecosystem functions, sustaining forest productivity, and appropriate application of knowledge and technology (Chair Gijsbertus van Tol, Rapporteur Stewart

Maginnins)

- Working Group III: Policy, regulatory frameworks, equitable benefit sharing (Chair Jesse Ribot, Rapporteur Laura Ivers)
- Working Group IV: Financial incentives, promoting investment, private sector partnership (Chair Jim Douglas, Rapporteur Hilmar Stetter)
- Working Group V: Participation, conflict and multi-stakeholder processes (Chair Yam Malla, Rapporteur Wil de Jong)
- Working Group VI: Capacity building, technical and information support (Chair Franz Schmithüsen, Rapporteur Ravi Prabhu)

The discussions of the Working Groups proceeded smoothly, in a spirit of collaboration and consensus and no salient controversial issue emerged.

On Friday morning, 30 April, the Working Groups reviewed and commented on a preliminary, unedited Draft Meeting Report that had been developed by the Chairs and Rapporteurs the previous evening and which contained sections on: Introduction and Background; Overview of Sessions (Thematic Issues, Country Cases, Community Panel, Decentralization in Countries in Transition, Highlights from Excursions); Major Themes; Conclusions and Reflections; Recommendations for the Consideration of UNFF; and two Annexes (Interlaken Workshop Agenda and Decentralization, Deconcentration, and Devolution, What do they Mean?). The Working Groups’ discussions were summarized under the sections “Major Themes” and “Conclusions and Reflections.”

On Friday 30 April, in an afternoon plenary chaired by Jagmohan Maini, Intercooperation, participants carried out a second review of the Unedited Draft Meeting Report. They endorsed without discussion the Introduction and Background and Overview of Sessions sections, and made minor editorial changes to the other sections. During discussion of the recommendations, participants agreed to further define subsidiarity, add language on cross-sectoral partnerships, and cluster recommendations wherever possible. The following summaries review the “Major Themes,” “Conclusions and Reflections” and “Recommendations for the Consideration of the UNFF” sections of the meeting report.

MEETING REPORT: Major Themes, Conclusions and Reflections: On allocation of roles and responsibilities and coordination at different levels and across sectors, the Interlaken Workshop recognized that:

- decentralization in forestry may depend on a basic national consensus regarding decentralization in general;
- forest sector decentralization must take into account other related sectors and activities;
- decentralization is a tool, a process that aims to increase equity, efficiency and democracy, improved forest management, and sustainability; and
- NFPs, transparency, stable and democratic institutions, and broad-based agreements through stakeholder processes are key to stability, especially in transition periods.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

The Interlaken Workshop also formulated guidelines for the implementation of decentralization, noting that it requires, *inter alia*: a clear legal framework; accountability at all levels; representative and democratic institutions; a general national forestry strategy; incentives and enforceable rules; monitoring and evaluation; resources and training; transparent horizontal and vertical information flows; increased coordination and trust among different levels and sectors; and improved economic situations for local peoples, especially marginalized groups such as women.

On policy, regulatory frameworks and equitable benefit sharing, the Interlaken Workshop recognized that the two overarching goals for decentralization are sustainability and equitable self determination. To achieve these two goals, the Interlaken Workshop identified the following key elements:

- minimum standards set at appropriate levels, including on compensation to local populations when forests are reserved for other purposes, such as national parks;
- bodies representative of and accountable to local populations who hold significant functions and powers, and promote equitable distribution of benefits;
- incentives to motivate local engagement and adequate financial means;
- security of resource access and the predictability of the legal environment; and
- public debate and inclusive policy making, including measures for capacity and institution strengthening at all levels, local empowerment and mechanisms for conflict resolution.

On participation, conflict and multi-stakeholder processes, the Interlaken Workshop recognized that:

- the diversity of the world's forests makes standardized solutions impossible and there is no single template for decentralization;
- enabling legislation should set umbrella goals, leaving the specific implementation to lower levels, and should include adequate funding mechanisms;
- capacity building is needed at all levels, especially for youth;
- the community should focus on access to information, self-monitoring, facilitation and collective action; and
- policymakers should focus on greater flexibility and respect for the knowledge of the populace.

Based on these recognitions, the Interlaken Workshop suggested the following actions:

- developing or clarifying land use policies with stakeholder involvement;
- promptly and widely disseminating new legislation and policies, improving information, information sharing and training, and ensuring effective capacity building at all levels;
- taking into account the diversity of conditions in developing solutions and learning from successes and failures;
- strengthening local capacity for monitoring and evaluation;
- analyzing and addressing structural inequities; and
- developing and promoting specific silvicultural practices that favor

multiple product production.

The Interlaken Workshop also suggested solutions to conflicts caused by unequal access to resources, inequitable sharing of benefits and elite capture.

On financial incentives, promoting investment and private sector partnership, the Interlaken Workshop recognized that:

- decentralization processes must be financially sound to be sustainable, and governments should carefully evaluate costs and benefits;
- depending on conditions within the country, measures to improve the investment climate include providing opportunities for negotiation and consultation, clarifying roles and responsibilities, removing financial disincentives and providing incentives, including for payment of environmental services, avoiding excessive fragmentation, and minimizing risk;
- governments should, *inter alia*, facilitate access to credit and markets, provide grants for forest management, guarantee agreements, reduce barriers to trade and encourage foreign investment;
- the costs and benefits of decentralization are not well quantified, but the transition to decentralization is likely to be costly; and
- governments, possibly with external financial assistance, should make adequate provisions to finance the transition and provide funds for, *inter alia*, strengthening capacity, monitoring and evaluation, and regulation.

Based on these recognitions, the Interlaken Workshop invited CPF members to:

- assess costs and benefits of decentralization, as well as the effectiveness of financial measures of two or three country case studies; and
- develop a diagnostic tool to assist concerned stakeholders, indicating institutional, financial and social issues that need to be addressed to facilitate build-up of a consensus on forestry decentralization.

On capacity building, technical skills and information, the Interlaken Workshop recognized that:

- capacity building is a process of empowerment and is a crucial element of successful decentralization;
- the needs for capacity building, technical skills and information sharing benefits are likely to be varied, but resources and commitment will be necessary at national and local levels;
- when operating at the level of organizations, capacity building should make cultures more supportive of decentralization;
- when at the level of individuals, capacity building will focus more on skills and attitudes, building on existing knowledge and cultures;
- political will is critical to the success of capacity building;
- greatest support is likely to be needed by, *inter alia*: local government units; local communities and user groups; NGOs; central governments; parliamentarians, forest owners, association and industry; and universities and training institutions; and
- these groups would require support in the following areas: articulation of interests and responsibilities; planning; implementation,

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

coordination and networking; negotiation and conflict management; monitoring and adaptation of plans; financial management and accounting, especially with respect to benefit sharing; and participatory processes.

On maintaining ecosystem functions, sustaining forest productivity, and appropriate application of knowledge and technology, the Interlaken Workshop recognized that:

- special measures are needed to ensure that national and global values are maintained in decentralized systems;
- decentralized systems are well adapted to traditional knowledge and culture, upon which management must draw since they are often better fitted to local conditions;
- there are limits to decentralization with regard to formal protected areas; and
- central institutions will often be needed to assure that decentralization does not lead to fragmented and dysfunctional landscapes.

The Interlaken Workshop noted that, to guard against potential negative impacts, the following principles should be observed:

- traditional communal forest management systems should provide the basis for decentralization whenever possible;
- markets for environmental services (particularly water protection, climate change and biodiversity) need to be developed, based on secure property rights;
- centralized approaches to protected areas should target sites of national importance and local opportunity costs should be compensated;
- additional ecological values should be conserved at the landscape level through decentralized multifunctional management systems;
- central institutions should use participatory processes in establishing the limits of decentralization; and
- with the right incentives and property rights, decentralized systems will tend to favor biologically diverse and locally adapted restoration of degraded lands, in contrast to economies of scale that often lead to excessively uniform approaches.

The Interlaken Workshop also reached a series of conclusions and reflections, noting that decentralization initiatives in the forestry sector would need to recognize that, *inter alia*:

- decentralization is a complex and dynamic process that shall take into account the characteristics of each country and that can be carried out gradually;
- many countries have not yet reached a form of decentralization that truly empowers local communities or local governments;
- decentralization in forestry is influenced by other related policy areas;
- there is no consensus on the possible role of the private sector in decentralization;
- decentralization can spell significant environmental problems but also produce sustainable environmental benefits when properly implemented; and
- workshops, partnerships and programmes are means to share infor-

mation and experience on decentralization.

Participants also recognized that the following elements are key for achieving democratic decentralization:

- consultative, consensus-building processes among various interest groups resulting in a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and authority;
- information flows, transparency and accountability at various levels;
- appropriate political conditions and provision of financial and technical resources;
- attention to gender considerations or other equity concerns; and
- monitoring and learning from experience.

Recommendations for the Consideration of UNFF: The Interlaken Workshop recommended that the UNFF:

- develop a common understanding of the concepts and definitions to facilitate dialogue on decentralization in the forestry sector;
- promote the dissemination of appropriate information to enhance understanding of forestry decentralization processes;
- formulate approaches that maintain protected areas while enabling traditional use by local people and forest dwellers;
- develop principles of subsidiarity for forest management and use;
- develop principles to guide institutional choice for equitable representation;
- promote the valuation of and compensation for forest environmental services, including through market mechanisms;
- analyze the implications of decentralization for the development of NFPs and identify strategies that allow such programmes to address decentralization;
- call on the FAO and World Bank to help countries integrate undergoing decentralization processes into their NFPs by developing appropriate guidelines;
- strengthen stakeholders' capacity, particularly at the local level, through methods that build upon and increase the knowledge of all stakeholders; and
- promote partnership among various stakeholders and sectors for human and institutional capacity building and the involvement of NGOs and other major groups as equal partners in planning, monitoring and implementation activities.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday afternoon, 30 April, Jürgen Blaser chaired the closing Plenary and thanked the rapporteurs and organizers of the Interlaken Workshop. Dedi Masykur Riyadi, Ministry of National Development Planning of Indonesia, thanked the government of Switzerland for organizing the Interlaken Workshop and praised its spirit of consensus and burden sharing. Susan Braatz, UNFF, thanked the governments of Switzerland and Indonesia, CIFOR and Intercooperation for organizing the Interlaken Workshop, which she said had been fruitful. Franz Perrez, SAEFL, stated that the Interlaken Workshop had been rich and stimulating and called for follow up at all levels. The Workshop closed at 4:40 pm.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE UNFF-5

UNFF-4: The Fourth Session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF-4) will convene from 3-14 May 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland. It will address, *inter alia*, progress in implementation, forest-related knowledge, social and cultural aspects of forests, and means of implementation. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: barsk-rundquist@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

THIRD SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: The third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous People will take place from 10-21 May 2004, in New York, US. The special theme of the session is indigenous women. For more information, contact: Yao Ngoran, NGO Unit, UN Division for Social Policy and Development; tel: +1-212-963-3175; fax: +1-212-963-3062; email: ngoran@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGIES (RENEWABLES 2004): Renewables 2004 will be held from 1-4 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany. It will consider, *inter alia*, financing and market development, formation of enabling political framework conditions, and capacity building. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the International Conference for Renewable Energies; tel: +49-6196-794404; fax: +49-6196-794405; e-mail: info@renewables2004.de; Internet: <http://www.renewables2004.de>

THE EFFECTS OF FOREST CERTIFICATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND EMERGING ECONOMIES: A SYMPOSIUM: This symposium will be held from 10-11 June 2004, at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, US. For more information, contact: Elizabeth Gordon, symposium coordinator Yale Program on Forest Certification; tel: +1-203-432-30-34; fax: +1-203-432-00-26; email: elizabeth.gordon@yale.edu; Internet: <http://www.yale.edu/forestcertification/symposium>

TWENTIETH SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO THE UNFCCC: The Twentieth Sessions the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will convene from 16-25 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://unfccc.int/sessions/sb20/index.html>

ITTC-36: The Thirty-Sixth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-36) and Associated Sessions of the Committees will take place from 20-23 July 2004, in Interlaken, Switzerland. For more information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itc@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

NEGOTIATIONS OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO ITTA, 1994: The negotiations of a successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994, will be held from 26-30 July 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland, following ITTC-36. For more information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itc@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

SECOND WORLD WIDE SYMPOSIUM ON GENDER AND FORESTRY: This symposium, organized by the Gender and Forestry Research Group of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), will be held from 1-10 August 2004, in Arusha, Tanzania. For more information, contact: Ann Merete Furuberg, Hedmark University College, Koppang, Norway; tel: +47-90-163092; fax: +47-62-945753; email: merete.furuberg@hedmark-f.kommune.no

UNFF AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON CONSIDERATION OF A LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON ALL TYPES OF FORESTS: The Ad Hoc Expert Group of the UNFF on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests will meet from 6-10 September 2004, in New York, US. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3263; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: barsk-rundquist@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC: The Tenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will meet from 29 November to 10 December 2004, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

ITTC-37: The Thirty-Seventh Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) and Associated Sessions of the Committees will convene from 13-18 December, 2004 in Yokohama, Japan. For more information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itc@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

UNFF-5: The fifth and last mandated session of the UN Forum on Forests is expected to convene in May 2005 (exact dates to be determined) in New York, US. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: barsk-rundquist@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>