

IISD Scoping for a Future Agreement on Forests Bulletin

A summary report of the Country-Led Initiative in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests: Scoping for a Future Agreement on Forests

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SUMMARY OF THE COUNTRY-LED INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: SCOPING FOR A FUTURE AGREEMENT ON FORESTS 16 - 18 NOVEMBER 2005

Over 186 experts, from 87 countries and over 20 organizations, international institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), gathered in Berlin, Germany, from 16-18 November 2005, to participate in a country-led initiative in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) on “Scoping for a Future Agreement on Forests.” Co-sponsored by the governments of Switzerland, Austria and Germany and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, the country-led initiative sought to contribute to the preparations for UNFF-6 in order to help it achieve a consensus. Participants drew from the Chair’s text of UNFF-5 to explore and develop further some of the concepts and ideas on the future of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). Participants, speaking in their personal capacities, considered three main themes: voluntary instrument, implementation, and regional activities. The outcome of the meeting was a Co-Chairs’ Report, which will be forwarded to the UNFF Secretariat prior to UNFF-6.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFF

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in October 2000 as a subsidiary body to ECOSOC 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). The principal functions of UNFF are to: facilitate implementation of forest-related agreements and foster a common understanding on sustainable forest management (SFM); provide for continued policy development and dialogue among governments, international organizations, and major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, as well as to address forest-related issues and emerging areas of concern; enhance cooperation, as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues; foster international cooperation and monitor, assess and report on progress; and strengthen political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. ECOSOC also directed that, within five years, the UNFF was “to consider with a view to recommending

to ECOSOC, and through it to the General Assembly, the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.” The IPF/IFF processes produced 270 proposals for action towards SFM, 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 have been discussed at annual UNFF sessions. Country and organization-led initiatives have also contributed to the development of UNFF themes.

UNFF ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION: The UNFF organizational session and informal consultations on the MYPOW took place from 12-16 February 2001, at UN headquarters in New York. Delegates agreed that the UNFF Secretariat would be located in New York, addressed progress towards the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) – a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats – and discussed the duration of Bureau members’ terms.

UNFF-1: The first session of UNFF took place from 11-23 June 2001, at UN headquarters in New York. Delegates adopted decisions on UNFF’s MYPOW, a plan of action for the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and UNFF’s work with the CPF. They also recommended the establishment of three *ad hoc* expert groups to provide technical advice to UNFF on: approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting (AHEG-MAR); finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (AHEG-FINTEST); and consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests (AHEG-PARAM).

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UNFF-2: UNFF-2 took place from 4-15 March 2002, at UN headquarters in New York. Delegates adopted a Ministerial Declaration and Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and 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 IAF; proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005; and other matters. Delegates discussed the terms of reference for all three *ad hoc* expert groups and decided to carry forward these discussions to UNFF-3.

UNFF-3: UNFF-3 met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26 May to 6 June 2003. UNFF-3 adopted resolutions focusing 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 finalized the terms of reference for the three *ad hoc* expert groups. A decision on the voluntary reporting format was also adopted.

UNFF AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING (AHEG-MAR): The AHEG-MAR, which convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8-12 December 2003, recommended, *inter alia*, that UNFF: urge relevant organizations to identify areas of overlap in reporting and inconsistencies in reported information; continue monitoring and assessing progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action until UNFF-5; and request more coherence and linkages between reports generated for domestic purposes and international reporting.

UNFF AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON FINANCE AND TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES (AHEG-FINTEST): The AHEG-FINTEST, which convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15-19 December 2003, recommended, *inter alia*, that: countries and CPF members facilitate the flow of information relating to EST by linking with information networks and strengthening cooperation with enterprises and public institutions using EST; countries include the promotion of private investment in national SFM financing strategies; and countries take measures to improve rent capture from forest management.

UNFF-4: UNFF-4 met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3-14 May 2004. UNFF-4 adopted resolutions on: social and cultural aspects of forests; forest-related scientific knowledge; monitoring, assessment, reporting, criteria and indicators; finance and transfer of EST; and the review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). Delegates were not able to complete and adopt resolutions on traditional forest-related knowledge and enhanced cooperation. A multistakeholder dialogue was held and delegates considered country experiences and lessons learned, with particular emphasis on a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the IAF at UNFF-5.

UNFF AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON CONSIDERATION WITH A VIEW TO RECOMMENDING THE PARAMETERS OF A MANDATE FOR DEVELOPING A LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON ALL TYPES OF FORESTS (AHEG-PARAM):

The AHEG-PARAM met from 7-10 September 2004, at UN headquarters in New York. The Expert Group: assessed existing regional and international binding and non-binding instruments and processes relevant to forests; considered reports prepared by countries, the CPF members and the UNFF Secretariat and outcomes of UNFF sessions; considered other outcomes of the IAF; reviewed relevant experiences of existing forest-related and other relevant organizations and agreements, focusing on complementarities, gaps and duplications; and adopted a report providing a range of options for the future framework to be forwarded to UNFF-5.

UNFF-5: UNFF-5 was held at UN headquarters in New York, from 16-27 May 2005. The main task before UNFF-5 was to review the effectiveness of the IAF and redesign it, if necessary. UNFF-5 was unable to reach agreement on strengthening the IAF and could not produce either a ministerial statement or a negotiated outcome. Delegates agreed, in principle, to four global goals on: significantly increasing the area of protected forests and sustainably managed forests worldwide; reversing the decline in official development assistance for SFM; reversing the loss of forest cover; and enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits. They also agreed in principle to negotiate, at some future date, the terms of reference for a voluntary code or international understanding, as well as means of implementation.

Delegates decided to forward the bracketed Chair's text to UNFF-6, to be held from 13-24 February 2006, at UN headquarters in New York.

REPORT OF THE COUNTRY-LED INITIATIVE

Participants at the country-led initiative (CLI) on "Scoping for a Future Agreement on Forests" convened in Plenary and working groups during the three-day meeting. The working groups addressed the three conference themes: voluntary instrument, implementation, and regionalization of the IAF. The following report of the CLI reviews its proceedings and summarizes the Co-Chairs' draft report of the meeting. This report was made available to participants on the final morning of the meeting to allow for comments. A final edited report will be available in a few weeks.

OPENING PLENARY

OPENING STATEMENTS: On Wednesday morning, 16 November, Co-Chair Mathias Schwoerer, Germany, welcomed participants and introduced Co-Chair Joseph Claude Abena, Cameroon, and UNFF-6 Chair Judith Bahemuka, Kenya.

Uschi Eid, German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, noted a lack of breakthroughs in slowing deforestation rates and in implementing SFM globally, despite a number of individual successes at the local level. She said the IAF has provided new forms of cooperation and coordination, and the country-led initiatives and expert workshops have promoted new approaches, but that political commitment has been lacking

in translating global forest dialogue into concrete implementation. She stated that Germany sees a global legal instrument as the best way forward, but noted that this workshop should bring additional clarity to the political added value of other options under discussion.

Pekka Patosaari, Director, UNFF Secretariat, stressed strengthening the high-level policy dialogue on forest issues inside and outside the UN system. He urged decisions on policy issues, such as maintaining forest cover, SFM, low-impact harvesting, restoration at the landscape level, conservation efforts, and linking forest policy to poverty reduction strategies. Patosaari noted that the UNFF is the ideal international forum to foster international cooperation and implementation of intergovernmental decisions for addressing forest and human sustainability issues. He said that negotiations at UNFF-6 will touch on many politically sensitive issues, such as working modalities, and strategic issues, such as global goals and national targets. Calling on participants to set aside “short-sighted” political gains and interests, he asked them to accept a common interpretation of SFM as a cornerstone to build future consensus in global forest policy.

Co-Chair Schworer said that the task of the meeting was to clarify items not agreed upon at UNFF-5, building on the UNFF-5 Chair’s bracketed text, and to assist governments in preparing for UNFF-6. He said the agenda had been prepared by the CLI steering group, consisting of Costa Rica, Mexico, Cameroon, the Philippines, Malaysia, India, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and the UNFF Secretariat.

One participant raised concerns about the language barrier for non-English speaking participants. He also noted that financial support for SFM in the Congo Basin is the lowest worldwide, and urged participants to address mechanisms of implementation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKING GROUP

TOPICS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS: Co-Chair Joseph Claude Abena, Cameroon, invited the authors of the background conference papers to make presentations on the three conference themes: voluntary instrument, implementation, and regionalization of the IAF.

Richard Tarasofsky, Chatham House, UK, presented the background paper on the potential role of a voluntary instrument on all types of forests. He highlighted the advantages of soft law, including flexibility, agility and quick implementation, and its disadvantages, such as being taken less seriously than hard law. He stressed that there is no set of rules that governs soft law. Drawing on an analysis of non-legally binding instruments (non-

LBI), he elaborated, *inter alia*, on their format, membership, degree of detail, implementation, types of responsibilities, and lessons learned from such instruments.

Markku Aho, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presented the background paper on linking discussion on financing with discussion on implementation, highlighting, *inter alia*, planning processes, SFM enabling conditions and resource access, structure of the new IAF and means of implementation, and compliance within a new IAF.



L-R: Markku Aho, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Andreas Obser, University of Potsdam

Andreas Obser, University of Potsdam, presented issues included in the background paper on “regionalization of the international forest policy dialogue: options for functions and structures,” including current activities, added value of regionalization, and options regarding forest policy. He clarified that regional initiatives should support a multilateral approach, noting that further analysis on costs and benefits of regionalization is required.

WORKING GROUPS

Three working groups were established to address the themes of the meeting. Working Group 1 (WG-1) focused on a voluntary instrument, Working Group 2 (WG-2) focused on means of implementation, and Working Group 3 (WG-3) focused on regionalization. Each working group was divided in two parallel groups with identical work programmes, each composed of balanced mixes of experts’ preferences and geographical origin. Each parallel group nominated a rapporteur among its participants and was moderated by professional facilitators. The working groups met on Wednesday afternoon, 16 November, and throughout Thursday, 17 November. Two informal information exchanges between parallel working groups were organized. The results and recommendations of each working group were summarized by the rapporteurs and presented in Plenary on Thursday afternoon.

This report summarizes the discussions and proceedings of the three working groups, combining discussions held in the two parallel groups for each working group.

WG-1: VOLUNTARY INSTRUMENT (CODE/GUIDELINES/UNDERSTANDING): Participants in WG-1 nominated Barbara Ruis, UNEP, and Tri Tharyat, Indonesia, as rapporteurs for the two parallel groups.

In one parallel group, debate ensued on the issue of a legally-binding instrument (LBI) versus a non-LBI (referred to as “voluntary instrument” in the other parallel working group). Several experts noted the lack of implementation of existing voluntary mechanisms, and doubted the added value of a new voluntary instrument, instead favoring a LBI to enhance political



L-R: Opening of the meeting: Co-Chair Joseph Claude Abena (Cameroon), Co-Chair Mathias Schworer, German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Uschi Eid, Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and Pekka Patosaari, Director of the UNFF Secretariat

commitment. Many participants stressed the importance of enhancing implementation and ensuring compliance, regardless of the instrument's status.

On the value-added benefits of a new non-LBI to the already existing IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, some developing country participants proposed focusing on financing and capacity building, with several suggesting a focus on implementation. Several participants expressed concerns over the marginal added value of a non-LBI, but one expert noted that a non-LBI could be used to address all issues of concern, including implementation and financial mechanisms.

On leveraging a high level of political commitment, one participant suggested inviting ministers to a launching conference for the negotiated instrument and, with several others, endorsed a subscription approach. A couple of experts noted that subscription would not be universal. Several participants highlighted the need for action rather than just political commitment.

On whether or not a non-LBI could create effective standards for SFM, some participants said that many standards already exist, with one suggesting criteria and indicators as a basis on which to work. Several proposed finding an alternative word for "standards," considering the specificity of the term and their inapplicability at the global level. One expert's proposal to replace the term with "common understanding," was opposed by another expert, stating that this terminology was "weak."

On the handling of technical issues such as financing and capacity building by a non-LBI, two experts proposed that technical issues be dealt with by already existing institutions, and suggested that a LBI would facilitate financial mechanisms.

In the other parallel group, participants also discussed stimulating cooperation and setting realistic political commitment levels, stating that the voluntary instrument should give political guidance and strive for an efficient financial mechanism. After discussion on the terminology used in reference to a voluntary instrument, a participant suggested focusing on its contents before naming it, and others referred to it as the "thing." Another participant pointed out the difference between wishes and expectations of a voluntary instrument. A participant outlined a UNFF document comparing options for a possible instrument, including a forest code, legal framework, global programme for action, and guidelines for SFM that would stimulate action on the ground. An expert said that the international instrument should enable developing countries to integrate SFM into their poverty reduction plans.

On Thursday morning, participants discussed treatment of technical issues by a non-LBI, such as: the importance of exploring both national and international financing mechanisms; the possibility of using the GEF for short-term funding and as a long-term forest-specific financial mechanism; and the options for a global forest fund and national forest trust funds. One participant noted that a non-LBI would have difficulty attracting financial commitments. Another participant noted the need for new and additional resources for a coherent and comprehensive approach. Upon a participant's suggestion that a specific objective

of the instrument should be to focus on capacity building, one participant noted that a non-LBI could not directly manage a capacity building program.

On maximizing compliance under a non-LBI, several participants noted the need for parameters or indicators to measure compliance, with some pointing out that such indicators already exist. Many participants noted the importance of not only monitoring compliance with SFM, but also compliance with commitments made to financing and the implementation process. On objectives and scope of the instrument, one participant highlighted a comprehensive approach, while others debated the necessity for additional guidelines. Participants highlighted the importance of matching commitment on goals with commitment on financial resources. A debate ensued on global targets and goals, with one participant saying that global targets do not take into account country-specific situations and national sovereignty, while others stated the need for time-bound targets to guide, motivate and measure progress.

On Thursday afternoon, participants listed recommendations to UNFF-6, including to: focus on implementation; build on existing arrangements, guidelines and instruments; avoid duplication and repetition; take into account national and regional needs; provide strong linkages to other forest-related instruments; increase the level of political commitment; take into account cross-sectoral aspects; enhance the role of the CPF; provide clear goals and targets; and provide innovative methods of mobilizing financing. Participants in one parallel group decided that the list should be considered a "compilation of some ideas," rather than "recommendations," to avoid negotiation of their content. One participant recommended a comprehensive framework for SFM that would consolidate current instruments, fill gaps and allow for its further elaboration. A number of participants commented that the discussion on instruments has not advanced in many years, and one participant recommended flexibility for UNFF-6 negotiations.

In the parallel working group, participants also discussed possible concrete outcomes of UNFF-6 and a possible "thing," or the hitherto undesignated instrument. Participants said that the undesignated instrument should, *inter alia*: be a compromise between a LBI and a non-LBI; have clear added value and political commitment; foster a common understanding on SFM; provide policy guidance rather than technical guidance; build on and make use of existing arrangements, regional processes and bodies; avoid duplication; and involve relevant stakeholders. Participants agreed that possible elements of the instrument could include: principles, recalling existing principles and agreements; global goals; targets; means of implementation; financial and institutional arrangements; a review mechanism; subscription; and working modalities. They speculated that UNFF-6 could have two negotiation tracks: either the outcome would be the instrument itself, or a mandate to negotiate it.

On Thursday afternoon, rapporteurs Tri Tharyat, Indonesia, and Barbara Ruis, UNEP, presented highlights of their working group discussions in Plenary, including the groups' recommendations

and ideas to be forwarded to UNFF-6. Ruis commented on the frankness of the working group discussion. There was no ensuing discussion.

WG-2: IMPLEMENTATION / MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION / REVIEW AND FEEDBACK:

Participants in WG-2 nominated Tasso Acevedo, Brazil, and Denis Andriamandroso, Madagascar, as rapporteurs for the two parallel groups.

During Wednesday afternoon, experts discussed the mission of UNFF, planning processes, enabling conditions, structure and compliance. Inquiring on whether compliance should be discussed in this working group, participants decided to retain it as a means of implementation. Participants also raised the need to identify synergies between SFM and existing poverty and biodiversity strategies.

On the mission of UNFF, a participant noted that “something” was needed at the international level to deal with forests as they impact global issues such as global climate change, regional climate change and desertification. Participants identified goals, and the four global goals agreed to in principle, namely: reversing deforestation; enhancing forest-based economies; increasing significantly the area of protected forest; and reversing the decline of official development assistance (ODA) for SFM.

On planning processes, participants discussed five questions on: strengthening links between SFM and other strategies; improving capacities to implement planning processes; helping countries/regions, via the UNFF, to articulate forest policies; identifying indicators that allow for monitoring; and assessing the role of regional level planning. Experts stressed, *inter alia*: good national coordination; inclusion of forestry in the development agenda; mainstreaming forest issues into public opinion; bringing forestry issues to the decision-making level; differentiation between national and international processes; translating internationally-agreed goals into national targets; institutional strengthening and training for implementation and planning; interacting with other economic sectors at early stages of planning; plans of action, guidelines and guidance of the UNFF; and joint regional projects and programmes. In terms of indicators, experts proposed: percentage of budget directly allocated to forestry protection and management; new forest areas planted; achievement of national goals and objectives; gross domestic product (GDP) as a means of allocating international funding; income from forestry revenues; and the extent of internationally relevant forested area. A participant stressed the need to ensure equity in the distribution of international funding.

On enabling conditions, one participant stressed the need to have an implementation mechanism in the UNFF to support enabling conditions at the national level. Another expert noted that the allocation of ODA is increasingly determined by recipient countries, diminishing the prospects of specifically financing SFM through ODA. An expert highlighted the importance of discussing enabling conditions at the international level. On financing, a participant suggested a tax on international trade of forest products to finance SFM. Another expert noted that financing SFM on the basis of goodwill is not sustainable. One participant underscored the need for criteria to determine how to allocate funds among recipient countries. Several

experts stressed the need to raise national financial resources to leverage international funding. A participant highlighted that the international community is not ready to pay the real costs of SFM. Another expert stressed that reconciling short-term national interests with long-term interests requires the intervention of the international community. Noting the availability of financial resources for SFM, one expert said that such investment will not occur until there is agreement on how to use it. Participants also raised the issues of public awareness and the need to stop illegal logging and illegal trade of forest products.

On Thursday morning, discussions in one parallel group addressed the structure of a new IAF. Experts addressed: the organizational structure under a new arrangement; the role of the NFP Facility, the World Bank Programme on Forests (PROFOR), the GEF, the CPF and other international bodies; and the influence of regionalization on the structure of UNFF. One expert noted that the structure of UNFF has not led to improved civil society and private sector participation.

Experts discussed recommendations on planning processes. At the national level, experts stressed, *inter alia*: the need for involving civil society and the private sector at early stages; comprehensive national inventories; developing a national agenda; and implementation. Discussion focused on the links between national planning and UNFF. Experts also discussed whether to refer to “guidance” or to the four in principle agreed “goals,” which they eventually agreed to refer to as “guidance (e.g. goals).” Participants agreed to recommend that: national planning should refer to UNFF “guidance (e.g. goals);” countries should report on “guidance (e.g. goals);” UNFF should assess progress towards “guidance (e.g. goals);” an action plan should be adopted in light of the national assessments; CPF planning should reflect the UNFF goals; and clear objectives applicable to the national level should be better publicized and disseminated.

On Thursday afternoon, experts discussed recommendations on enabling conditions. At the national level, participants stressed good governance, cross-sectoral cooperation, a good framework for investment and capacity building, information exchange, and a clearing house on capacity building. On financing, experts discussed establishing a global forest trust or fund, mobilizing private sector contributions, and possible taxing schemes as a source of revenue. Some experts said the administration of IAF should be financed by both member states and multilateral contributions. Experts recommended, *inter alia*: a global fund for IAF with already existing resources; making regional resources available to regions; endowment funds; fostering innovative financing; and establishing forums for sharing experiences and knowledge at regional and international levels. Participants also stressed the need for strong political awareness of the importance of forestry.

On structure, discussions focused on, *inter alia*, the need for a technical and scientific body, and the costs of a possible work programme or plan. Experts then recommended, *inter alia*, retaining the existing elements of the IAF, including UNFF sessions, CPF, and national focal points; and introducing new elements, including a plan of action, a SFM finance platform, a

technical and scientific body, and reporting/monitoring on global goals. Experts also discussed the integration of relevant aspects of the MDGs into UNFF.

On compliance, participants discussed the utilization of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and NFPs as tools to evaluate and monitor compliance.

On Thursday afternoon, rapporteurs Tasso Acevedo, Brazil, and Denis Andriamandroso, Madagascar, presented the conclusions of their working groups in Plenary, including the groups' recommendations and ideas to be forwarded to UNFF-6. During the ensuing discussion, one participant noted that the working group also discussed the inter-linkages between social and economic sectors and forests. He also noted the possibility of holding UNFF workshops and forums for local communities, as well as enhancing communication among communities.

WG-3: REGIONAL COMPONENT OF IAF: Participants in WG-3 nominated Sandra Ribey, Canada, and Anders Portin, Finland, as rapporteurs for the two parallel groups.

On information exchange and knowledge management, participants noted added value of enhancing common understanding, harmonization of forest policies, and facilitating feedback between global and regional arrangements. They cautioned against generalization of specific interests and increased administrative and reporting burdens.

Added value regarding cooperation and participation included facilitation of civil society participation, coordination of negotiation positions, lower costs of participation, and cooperation in implementation. Participants highlighted limitations regarding countries that do not participate or are not members of regional bodies.

On national implementation, experts discussed advantages of regionalization, such as pooling scarce resources and increased community involvement, while noting limitations, such as weak links between governments and local actors. Participants also noted added value through increased cross-sectoral cooperation.

On policy risks, experts stressed that avoiding duplication of efforts should be a primary concern of regionalization. They also raised concerns about reducing policy coherence, the risk of deviating attention from the IAF, increasing process fragmentation, and local priorities suppressing global problems.

With regard to mechanisms, participants raised concerns about the lack of minimum achievable standards for regionalization, and the additional cost of regional meetings.

Experts then discussed functions and objectives of regionalization. Noting that UNFF is not responsible for implementation, several participants inquired about the objectives of regional meetings. Peter Csoka, UNFF, said regionalization should contribute to the principal functions of the UNFF. Participants discussed proposals in this regard, including linking regional and international processes, facilitating high-level commitments, regional goal setting, technology transfer and capacity building for SFM, facilitating private sector participation, and regional specification of global commitments. Participants noted that regionalization should primarily benefit countries and be a bottom-up process. They also noted that technical knowledge from the Collaborative Partnership on

Forests (CPF) should enrich the global, regional and national levels. An expert indicated that existing regional programs and mechanisms lack financial resources.

A participant suggested raising awareness through convening UNFF meetings in the UN regions. An expert from Asia reported the positive impacts observed on implementing measures to prevent the trade of endangered species in South-East Asia after the thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP-13) to the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), which was held in the region, and noted the functionality of the Asia Forest Law and Enforcement Governance Process (FLEG). A developing country expert emphasized the importance of negotiating regional issues at regional levels. A participant highlighted UNFF guidance on enhancing regional coordination, back-to-back meetings, and common agenda items among regional processes. Noting that the link between regionalization and strengthening the IAF is not yet clear, participants concluded that a formal regionalization of UNFF does not seem feasible at this time.

On Thursday morning, WG-3 resumed discussion on the functions of regionalization, building on the central themes that had emerged from Wednesday's deliberations. On facilitating cooperation, coordination, and participation through regionalization, several participants stressed enhancing civil society participation and linking stakeholder activities at all levels, through international guidelines, consultation with major groups, and formalization of major group participation at UNFF. Experts also noted ways to support regional meetings on specific issues through, among others, harmonization of national legislation, decreasing administrative burdens, and documenting and sharing best practices.

On advantages of providing a regional forum, participants emphasized cross-sectoral involvement, strengthening the negotiating power of regional groups, and identifying regional problems and introducing them to the international arena. On strengthening political commitment, they underscored the need for: stronger links to the relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and national policies; support for interregional experience sharing; and a clear recognition of the contributions of regional meetings at the international level. One expert said regional supporting mechanisms must be matched by mechanisms at the national level, and National Forest Programmes (NFP) must be a key component of regional strategies. With regard to supporting implementation, monitoring and assessment, some experts emphasized coordination of all types of actors at the regional level, whereas guidance, monitoring, expertise, and support for new initiatives should be provided at the international level.

On Thursday afternoon, WG-3 addressed mobilization of resources through strengthened regional-international linkages, options for regionalization, and recommendations to UNFF-6. On resource mobilization, experts suggested that strengthened links can, among others: foster economic support and collaboration with the private sector; improve the distribution of resources; and save resources by harmonizing the policy dialogue. Several

called for specific forest funds and funding for the organization of regional meetings. One expert said that strong political will and transparent processes can attract new funding.

On options for regionalization, several participants expressed concern about creating new regional structures, and having existing organizations convene UNFF meetings. One expert said that processes such as the FAO-Regional Forest Commissions are already linked to regional processes, while others suggested that their links with UNFF can be improved. The group noted that regional UNFF meetings are not needed to strengthen regional-international links. They also recommended that regional organizations have a guaranteed right to speak at UNFF meetings.

The group then debated whether to draft a separate recommendation on capacity building, with one participant noting that capacity is essential for all measures discussed in WG-3, while others said that concrete recommendations will depend on the character of the IAF and should be subject to a needs assessment for capacity building. They decided on a recommendation on mobilization of resources through strengthened regional-international links.

Participants decided to merge their ideas into recommendations to UNFF-6 relative to: capacity development; guidance to and from the UNFF; strengthening regional processes, including through support by the CPF; and mobilization of resources through stronger regional-international links.

The parallel working group focused more on the regional rather than international framework of regionalization, and reached similar conclusions. On functions of a regional component, it also suggested harmonizing voluntary monitoring, assessment and reporting, and that regional processes should assist countries in reporting. The parallel group also made recommendations for selection criteria for regionalization options, including: inclusive and balanced participation; cost effectiveness; political commitment; facilitation of implementation of SFM; and avoidance of duplication of work.

In Plenary, the rapporteurs Sandra Ribey, Canada, and Anders Portin, Finland, presented the outcomes of the working group and the parallel group, respectively. Both groups concluded that regionalization has more advantages than limitations, but should focus on strengthening existing regional organizations and processes rather than creating new ones. Participants noted that the creation of new regional processes is not needed.

DISCUSSION OF THE CO-CHAIRS' DRAFT REPORT

On Friday morning, participants met in Plenary to discuss the draft Co-Chairs' report, which had been distributed earlier in the morning. Peter Mayer, International Union of Forest Research Organizations, explained that the report was based on the work of the six working groups and their results presented in Plenary, and was finalized by a drafting group composed of himself, the groups' rapporteurs, and the Co-Chairs. He introduced the structure of the report, noting that it consisted of sections on the three themes discussed, and an additional section listing issues common to all themes. Co-Chair Mathias Schwoerer, Germany, invited participants' comments to help finalize the text.

Modesto Fernández, Cuba, and Hadil da Rocha Vianna, Brazil, raised concerns about including all ideas expressed in the working groups along with the report. Da Rocha Vianna also requested introductory text stating that the report is the responsibility of the drafting committee and, with Jan McAlpine, US, that it does not represent all participants' views. Denyse Rousseau, Canada, further requested clarifying language on the non-LBI text to illustrate a lack of consensus on this matter.

On recommendations on a non-LBI to UNFF-6, Fernandez and McAlpine requested the addition of text on making available means of implementation for SFM. Da Rocha Vianna called for text on taking into account the regional economic, social, and environmental priorities and specificities. Patrick Verkooijen, the Netherlands, called for the addition of language on subscription to a new non-LBI.

On implementation and means of implementation, Mohamed Abdi, Somalia, and Alix Michel Jean Max Dimitri Norris, Haiti, called for language linking SFM with poverty and development issues when addressing synergies in the planning process. On indicators for monitoring resource flows to SFM, Souleymane Gueye, Senegal, called for the addition of "extent of forest resources managed sustainably." On enabling conditions at the national level, an expert from the ASEAN secretariat noted that NFPs could assist in mobilizing financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building. On recommendations on enabling conditions, Franz Perrez, Switzerland, with Tasso Aceveda, Brazil, requested reference to providing compensation for preserving natural forests rather than "giving benefits." Markku Aho, Finland, asked for additional text stating that a financial framework for SFM could expand on the work of international financing institutions, as well as build upon the NFP facility and PROFOR to focus on resource mobilization. On compliance an expert from the ASEAN Secretariat recommended language on a peer review process.

On regionalization, Charlotte Cudby, New Zealand, said there was no consensus on text stating that regional UNFF discussion would not improve what is currently happening at the regional level and would duplicate mechanisms already in place. Many participants questioned text on the creation of new regional processes, with Sandra Ribey, Canada, and Rosalia Arteaga, OTCA, recalling working group conclusions that no new UNFF regional processes should be created. Jerilyn Levi, US, recalled that a consensus was not reached on this matter.



Participants in Plenary discussion of the Co-Chairs' draft report

On recommendations on regionalization, participants debated language on the need for regional UNFF meetings. Cudby stated that there had been no consensus on how the UNFF would link into existing regional processes, while Ribey preferred retaining the notion that regional UNFF meetings were not needed. Co-Chair Shwoerer said the language in the final text will be “softened.”

On cross-cutting issues among the three themes, McAlpine and Knut Øistad, Norway, requested changes to strengthen language within the text. McAlpine further suggested text on identifying the need to advance beyond the *status quo* and, with Fernández, on improving financial resources as well as access to them. Fernández requested the addition of text on improving means of implementation.

CLOSING CEREMONY

Co-Chair Schwoerer invited final speeches immediately following the Plenary discussion of the Co-Chairs’ draft text.

Judith Bahemuka, UNFF-6 Chair, highlighted that the deliberations had been instructive and constructive, and said the conclusions and recommendations from the meeting will positively impact the outcome of UNFF-6. She noted the role of forests as a source for income, food, energy needs, and shelter, particularly among the poor, using the example of women in Kenya depending on forests for their daily needs. Bahemuka underscored that linking forests with human livelihoods is the very essence of SFM, and that poverty eradication and sustainable development are at the heart of SFM. She said the outstanding issues in SFM are, *inter alia*, financing, defining global goals, negotiating for “the thing” or instrument, monitoring, and promoting better international collaboration. She appealed to participants to start raising the awareness of stakeholders in their respective countries and organizations on the importance of participating and providing national input to the process. She noted the need to keep the momentum and positive spirit of the meeting, and said that agreement on the bracketed chair’s text from UNFF-5 will be the first step towards a global SFM framework.



Judith Bahemuka, UNFF-6 Chair

Franz Perrez, Swiss Agency of the Environment, Forests and Landscape, stressed the importance of the country-led initiative and the benefits of having such meetings. He thanked participants for their committed efforts and the organizers for their professionalism and very efficient organization.

Co-Chair Schwoerer closed the meeting at 12:23 pm.

CO-CHAIRS’ DRAFT REPORT

The Co-Chairs’ draft report provides a summary of the major elements, ideas, suggestions and recommendations discussed in all six working groups. This summary of the draft report does not reflect comments made during Friday’s Plenary, which the Co-Chairs said would be included in the final version.

NON-LBI: The draft report outlines that the discussion on a non-LBI should not prejudice the opinion of those participants that favor an LBI. The draft text also acknowledges, *inter alia*, discussions of various possible forms of a non-LBI, a non-LBI’s added value, and expectations of non-LBIs.

The draft report recommends, *inter alia*, to: acknowledge that a strong non-LBI could constitute a middle ground for countries in favor or against a LBI; provide policy rather than technical guidelines; set clear, quantifiable SFM goals and targets; create prominent understanding of SFM; provide linkages with other forest-related instruments; avoid duplication and counteract fragmentation; make use of regional processes and bodies; consider regional needs and specificities; ensure effective implementation and compliance; strengthen collaboration with the CPF and enhance its role; link the sustainable development agenda and achievement of the MDGs; involve all stakeholders; strengthen coordination and international cooperation; and consider financial and institutional arrangements, working modalities and a review mechanism.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MEANS OF

IMPLEMENTATION: Regarding implementation of SFM, the draft report summarizes discussions on planning processes, enabling conditions, IAF structure, reporting, compliance and the regional level.

On planning processes, the draft report suggests: integration of forest policies into national development strategies with the help of UNFF and CPF, potentially within the framework of a UNFF Action Plan; and development of a framework for a UNFF Action Plan that is more focused and simpler than the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. It also suggests implementation of the Action Plan in the following possible sequence: 1) national planning based on UNFF guidelines and/or goals; 2) country reporting based on UNFF guidelines and/or goals; 3) UNFF assessment of progress towards the Action Plan; and 4) adaptation of the Action Plan based on national experiences.

On enabling conditions, the draft report refers to the national level, capacity building and financial resources. At the national level, the report identifies, *inter alia*, the importance of political stability, good governance, and cross-sectoral cooperation. On capacity building, the report considers existing activities as effective and it identifies improvement areas, including: expansion of best practice exchanges, field trips, technical cooperation programs, NFP Facility, and PROFOR; and creation of a possible clearing house within the UNFF. On financial resources, the draft report suggests: strengthening framework conditions; enhancing communication of incentives to provide funding and investment in the forest sector; using international resources to leverage and complement national resources; and achieving a more equitable distribution of resources among countries based on indicators. The draft text states that a financial mechanism based on a global tax on international trade of forest products was considered during discussions. The draft report recommends, *inter alia*: establishing a global trust fund that could bundle existing and additional funding streams; developing incentives for SFM public-private partnership frameworks and providing conditions for investments; building incentives to

reinvest forest gains on a long-term basis; fostering innovative financing of sustainable production of forest goods and services; and developing a financial framework for SFM, based on the NFP Facility and PROFOR, focusing on national resource mobilization, community finance, international public finance, private sector investment and payments for environmental services.

On structure, the draft report states that there was consensus to retain the existing elements of the IAF structure. The report stresses the importance of a mechanism to link UNFF recommendations to the CPF, and to promote synchronization of forest-related work of international organizations. The draft report recommends establishing, *inter alia*: a UNFF plan of action, which would also be implemented through CPF; a SFM financial framework; a technical/scientific body under UNFF; and reporting and monitoring on global goals.

On compliance, and the regional level, the draft report discusses issues such as: basing national reporting on global goals and/or UNFF guidance; considering compliance in terms of both donors and implementers; and promoting regional information sharing, strategy development, and institutional structures.

REGIONALIZATION: Regarding regionalization, the draft report says that experts share the view that regional processes would complement, and not substitute for, the international level. The report also says that “it was felt” that no new regional process should be created. It states that UNFF discussions would not improve what is currently happening at the regional level and would be a duplication of mechanisms already in place.

The draft report identifies resource constraints related to regional processes such as: extra reporting burden; high costs associated with attending meetings; and the need to capture funds from the UN and other sources.

Regarding regionalization, the draft report summarizes discussions on: advantages and limitations of regional processes; principles and functions of the regional component; and structures and roles of regionalization.

Within the discussion on advantages and limitations of regional processes, the draft report categorizes them into: information exchange/knowledge management; cooperation and participation; implementation at the national level; and strengthening an IAF.

On exchange/knowledge management, the draft text outlines possible advantages including: common understanding of issues; harmonization between regional and national stakeholders; and developing regional approaches and policies for common regional problems and cultural/language similarities. Possible limitations include: increased administrative and reporting burden; generalization of specific problems; and language barriers.

On cooperation and participation, the text emphasizes possible advantages including, *inter alia*: involvement and participation of major groups; lower costs of participation in the region; wider participation from a greater range of countries; and facilitating a common position among countries. Possible limitations include: lack of capacity for major groups to act quickly, and lack of full country participation.

On implementation at the national level, the draft text highlights possible advantages including: increased commitment at the country level; pooling of scarce resources; exchange of experiences and lessons learned; and better technical and political knowledge of conditions in the regions. Possible limitations include the voluntary nature of country participation and the lack of efficient links between government and relevant stakeholders.

On strengthening an IAF, the draft text underscores possible advantages including, *inter alia*: higher-level political commitment on national, regional and international levels; catalyzing the work of the CPF at the regional level; and better integration of existing regional approaches and policies. Limitations include, *inter alia*: decreasing importance of forests on the global policy agenda; deviating attention from the IAF; fragmentation of global discussions; and risk of excluding CPF participation due to lack of resources.

On possible principles and functions of the regional component, the draft text identifies principles including: global policy can help formulate regional policy and vice-versa; global policy can help implementation of regional strategies at a country level and vice-versa; technical support from CPF members must reach the regional level; and countries must benefit from regionalization. Possible functions of the regional component included, *inter alia*: networking and information exchange; enhanced implementation, coordination and monitoring assessment and reporting; facilitating increased stakeholder participation; and attracting financing through cooperation and partnerships.

The draft report identifies possible structures and roles of regionalization. It identifies possible options with regard to regionalization such as holding global meetings in regions, and regional UNFF meetings in cooperation with UN Regional Economic Commissions and FAO Regional Forestry. The draft report lists eleven criteria that could be used on deciding on regionalization options. The draft text suggests further linkages between regional processes and both the CPF and IAF.

The draft text summarizes discussion on how regionalization could increase the mobilization of both information and financial resources, such as raising the political commitment for forests and enhancing public-private cooperation.

The draft report recommends: strengthening the link between the regional and international level; having meaningful participation of regional intergovernmental organizations in UNFF meetings; and, noting that no overall consensus was reached on this topic, rotating global UNFF meetings in UN regions.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: The draft report identifies issues that cut across the IAF, *inter alia*: enhancing political support, and raising awareness for forests; improving access to financial resources; avoiding duplication on the content and mechanisms; using existing structures and mechanisms; considering regional needs and specificities; and increasing scientific, technical and capacity development support.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

EUROPE AND NORTH ASIA FOREST LAW

ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE MINISTERIAL

MEETING: This meeting will convene from 22-25 November 2005, in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation. The meeting will contribute to the initiation of a Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) process for Europe and North Asia (ENA). For more information, contact: Nalin Kishor; tel: +1-202-473-8672; fax: +1-202-522-1142; e-mail: ena-fleg@worldbank.org; Internet: <http://www.worldbank.org/enafleg>

ASIA-EUROPE ENVIRONMENT FORUM

CONFERENCE: This conference will take place from 23-25 November 2005, in Jakarta, Indonesia. This Forum will take as its theme, "1/3 of Our Planet: What Can Asia and Europe Do for Sustainable Development?" The Forum will include a number of special events, such as a Workshop on Planet, People, and Profit: Fostering Sustainable Development and Addressing Climate Change through the Clean Development Mechanism. Other events will focus on the Millennium Development Goals, partnerships, financing and business opportunities, chemicals and waste, and sustainable urban transport. For more information, contact: Asia-Europe Environment Forum Secretariat; tel: +65-6874-9707; fax: +65-6872-1207; e-mail: env@asef.org; Internet: <http://asef.on2web.com/subSite/env/default.asp>

CONFERENCE ON FRONTIERS IN FOREST

INFORMATION: This conference is scheduled to take place from 5-7 December 2005, in Oxford, UK. This conference will examine the key frontiers in four thematic areas: global needs for forest-related information; information access for development; new publishing paradigms; and the impacts of changing technologies. For more information, contact: Roger Mills, Conference Secretary; tel: +44-1865-275080; fax: +44-1865-275095; e-mail: roger.mills@ouls.ox.ac.uk; Internet: <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/users/millsr/isbes/forestry.htm>

UN CONFERENCE FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO ITTA, 1994, FOURTH

PART: The Fourth Part of the UN Conference on the Renegotiation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 will convene from 16-27 January 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates will meet to discuss outstanding issues of scope and finance for the new Agreement. For more information, contact: UNCTAD Secretariat, Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach Service; tel: +41-22-917-5809; fax: +41-22-917-0056; e-mail: correspondence@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?intItemID=3323&lang=1>

SIXTH UN FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF-6): UNFF-6 will be held from 13-24 February 2006, at UN headquarters in New York. This meeting will seek to reach conclusion on issues that were unresolved at UNFF-5. 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>

15TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION (AFWC):

The 15th Session of the AFWC will convene in Maputo, Mozambique, 29 March-

1 April 2006. Participants will attend a special session on the implementation of sustainable forest management in Africa. For more information contact: Pape Djiby Koné; e-mail: pape.kone@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/31088/en>

21ST SESSION OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY

COMMISSION: The 21st session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission will convene in Dehradun, India, 17-21 April 2006. Participants will attend a special session titled *Towards sustainable forest management in the Asia-Pacific*. For more information contact: Mr Patrick Durst; e-mail: patrick.durst@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/31093/en>

INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL FOREST INVESTMENT

FORUM: This Forum will be held from 25-27 April 2006, in a location to be determined. The Forum will be interactive, with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Forest Trends, the Katoomba Group, Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda, and four branches of the Mexican Environment Ministry bringing together a wide range of stakeholders that can facilitate, access and operate mechanisms for increased investment in natural forest-based enterprises, including community enterprises. For more information, contact: Paul Vantomme, ITTO Assistant Director for Forest Industry; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: vantomme@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

33RD SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN FORESTRY

COMMISSION (EFC): The 33rd session of the EFC will convene in Bratislava, Slovakia, from 23-26 May 2006. For more information contact: Kit Prins; e-mail: christofer.prins@unece.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/31096/en>

ITTC-40: The 40th session of the ITTC and associated sessions of the Committees will convene from 29 May-2 June 2006, in Mérida, Mexico. For more information, contact: Manoel Sobral Filho, ITTO Executive Director; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itto@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

17TH SESSION OF THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY

COMMISSION (NEFC): The 17th Session of the NEFC will take place in Larnaca, Cyprus, 5-9 June 2006. Participants will attend a special session on implementing sustainable forest management in the Near East. For more information contact: Hassan Osman Abdel Nour; e-mail: hassan.abdelnour@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/31113/en>

24TH SESSION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION (LACFC):

The 24th Session of the LACFC will be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 26-30 June 2006. Participants will attend a special session on implementing SFM in Latin America and the Caribbean. For more information, contact: Carlos Marx R. Carneiro; e-mail: carlos.carneiro@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/31107/en>

23RD SESSION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FOREST

COMMISSION (NAFC): The 23rd session of the NAFC will be held in British Columbia, Canada, in October 2006. For more information, contact: Douglas Kneeland; e-mail: douglas.kneeland@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/31118/en>