



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

UNFF11
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A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations
Online at <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff11/>

Vol. 13 No. 191

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Wednesday, 6 May 2015

UNFF11 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 5 MAY 2015

UNFF11 convened for its second day of deliberations on Tuesday, 5 May. During the morning, working groups (WGs) met for initial considerations on the draft Ministerial Declaration and the draft resolution on the IAF beyond 2015, which are to be introduced in plenary on Wednesday, 6 May. In the afternoon, delegates attended the multi-stakeholder dialogue, where Major Groups discussed with Member States, *inter alia*, how to improve the effectiveness of Major Groups' engagement with, and contribution to, the UNFF.

WORKING GROUPS

WG1: WG1 met to share initial thoughts on the non-paper on possible elements for inclusion in the zero draft of the Ministerial Declaration of UNFF11. Co-Chair Wu Zhimin explained that the non-paper draws on intersessional work including, *inter alia*, the independent assessment of the IAF and CLIs. Co-Chair Srećko Juričić invited delegates to discuss new and additional substantive issues to be included or emphasized.

Delegates said there is a need for introductory text communicating overarching concerns such as the "alarming" deforestation rate and policy fragmentation. They also noted a need to articulate a clear vision for the protection, restoration and sustainable management of all types of forests.

They called for wording recognizing the UNFF as a policy forum for SFM promotion, urging for the social and economic benefits of SFM for sustainable development to be highlighted. Delegates also urged including reference to environmentally sound technologies, technology transfer, science-policy dialogue, stronger governance and enforcement, and clear land tenure rights.

On financing, delegates called for strengthening national level financing for SFM. Some delegates favored stressing the need to seek funding opportunities from multiple sources, while others stressed that UNFF should mobilize funding through a global forest fund. One delegate said that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) needs to be applied appropriately.

Delegates also stressed underscoring the need for enhanced UNFF collaboration with other forest-related conventions at secretariat and national levels, while some preferred referencing the post-2015 development agenda as opposed to SDGs.

WG2: WG2 convened to discuss initial considerations on the draft resolution on the IAF beyond 2015. WG Co-Chair Heikki

Granhölm introduced the non-paper, recalling intersessional activities such as CLIs, meetings of the AHEG and an informal consultation organized by the Bureau in March 2015, which have informed the non-paper. He requested that delegates mention possible missing elements and issues to be highlighted for inclusion in the zero draft.

Delegates generally expressed their satisfaction with the non-paper as a basis for further discussion. On the IAF beyond 2015, some delegates called for extending the IAF to 2030. Many also stressed the importance of integrating the IAF into the post-2015 development agenda.

Delegates also addressed the status of UNFF beyond 2015, with some cautioning that the establishment of a standing subsidiary body or committee on implementation under the UNFF may duplicate the work of other forest-related bodies. Several delegates sought clarification regarding such a body's mandate and membership. One delegate said that the strengthening of the UNFF relies on improving the financing framework. Others cautioned that renaming UNFF without adding substance could be considered "cosmetic."

On the Forest Instrument beyond 2015, many stated that they would not reopen negotiations on its substance and would rather explore opportunities for strengthening the Forest Instrument's implementation.

Several delegates supported the call for establishing a global forest fund to catalyze implementation and financing of SFM. One delegate expressed interest in the proposal to upgrade the voluntary strategic process but said that it should not be seen as a replacement for a global forest fund. Others said they do not support establishing such a fund, noting that SFM financing should come from a range of complementary sources. They also underscored that global forest funding has increased significantly, but that many countries lack capacity to access it. The role of forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG) in mobilizing resources was also highlighted.

On monitoring, assessment and reporting, delegates were heard calling for replacing this language with reference to "follow up and review." Others urged for specific, measurable and time-bound targets for UNFF, with some suggesting this be supported by a strategic plan. Many urged strengthening the UNFF Secretariat.

Other topics addressed include: synergies among CPF members; strengthened multi-stakeholder involvement; improved support for regional and sub-regional initiatives; no further

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Lynn Finnegan, Kate Louw, Dorothy Wanja Nyingi, Ph.D., and Cleo Verkuijl. The Digital Editor is Dan Birchall. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the European Commission (DG-ENV and DG-CLIMATE), the Government of Switzerland (the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)), and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2015 is provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the Government of France, the Wallonia, Québec, and the International Organization of La Francophonie/Institute for Sustainable Development of La Francophonie (IOF/IFDD). The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, NY 10022 USA. The ENB team at the UNFF11 Session can be contacted by e-mail at <Kate@iisd.org>.



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elaboration of additional GOFs; and better addressing dryland forests and low forest cover countries in the future IAF.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

UNFF Director Sobral introduced the Note by the Secretariat on the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (E/CN.18/2015/6 and Add.1).

Moderator Lambert Okrah, Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF), for NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs), said presentations at the dialogue would be based on the discussion paper submitted by Major Groups on the future of the IAF and on the report of a Major Groups-Led Initiative (MGI) on “designing vehicles for securing means of implementation of SFM” held in March 2015 in Kathmandu, Nepal. He called on regional groups to provide their opinions on recommendations, indicate which recommendations they support and propose means for their implementation.

Joseph Cobbinah, Forestry Network of Sub-Saharan Africa, for SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES, outlined recommendations from the MGI including the need for the UNFF to: shift from negotiations of text to facilitating policy dialogue; direct more attention to integrated cross-sectoral policy development; expand GOFs to include FLEG; and set up specific WGs to ensure that momentum on decisions is maintained and emerging thematic issues are addressed.

Cécile Ndjebet, African Women’s Network for Community Management of Forests, for WOMEN, addressed the shortcomings of the current IAF. She emphasized the need to raise forests’ profile in the global agenda and create a UN body that meets regularly, maintains momentum and is responsible for coordinating all forest-related UN bodies.

Peter deMarsh, Chair of the International Family Forest Alliance, for FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS, reported on recommendations for global financial mechanisms for SFM. He likened existing forest-related funds to “trying to drive a square peg into a round hole,” saying SFM needs to be upheld as an objective in its own right. He recommended a global financial mechanism that would fulfill three key functions: play a catalytic and strategic role for SFM worldwide; provide a more comprehensive valuation of forests beyond currently-measured ecosystem services; and identify and promote new financing models.

Olivia Sanchez Badini, International Forestry Students’ Association, for CHILDREN AND YOUTH, reminded delegates that Major Groups are the “essential missing link between saying and doing.” She noted the challenges Major Groups still face when participating at international level, including: lack of participation from the private sector; lack of finance for internal capacity building; and restrictive rules of participation. She recommended that the MGPoF be recognized as the legitimate coordinating body for Major Groups in the IAF, including the UNFF and CPF.

Nigeria, for the AFRICAN GROUP, encouraged MGPoF members to improve cooperation and coordination at subregional and national levels. The EU welcomed recommendations aimed at strengthening the input of major groups into the UNFF, including allowing them to make plenary statements on all agenda items. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES, WOMEN, and FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS highlighted district, village, regional, national and international level coordination efforts. WOMEN clarified the MGPoF’s proposal for a new UN forest body, saying they envisage a leading, dedicated forestry coordination body for the UNFF to unite the fragmented policy landscape. IUFRO

drew attention to its linkages with Scientific and Technological Communities and concurred that the future IAF should strengthen the science-policy interface.

The US said the MGPoF does not require a formalized relationship with the UNFF to be effective, and encouraged exploration of MGPoF observer status at the CPF. With SWITZERLAND, she emphasized that the new IAF needs to include the participation of business and industry. The US further sought to clarify that their suggestion is for the MGPoF to collaborate with UNFF in a similar manner to the CPF. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES said “every effort” is being made to involve business and industry in the MGPoF, with NGOs adding that the UNFF needs to become more politically and economically “prominent” to attract them. MALAYSIA said there is merit in having the MGPoF as an official group but sought clarification on the financial implications. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES said there are increased efforts to raise funds to sustain the activities of the MGPoF.

SWEDEN said the future IAF will be enriched by increased formal and informal engagement of Major Groups. JAPAN noted that if a new formulation of UNFF is agreed on whereby global meetings are held biennially and regional meetings are held annually, more Major Group involvement can be expected. CAMEROON called for UNFF to promote an inclusive process that coordinates and takes into account stakeholders’ voices.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said there is a need to raise global awareness of the MGPoF. FINLAND highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder participation at country-level and in the development of country positions at UN processes.

Many panelists responded that unlike the CPF—which can receive new members—Major Groups are restricted to nine groups and have no governing structure to enable direct engagement with UNFF. FAO noted avenues for collaboration between the MGPoF and the CPF including through participation in each other’s meetings.

IN THE CORRIDORS

It was a crowded conference room as delegates and Major Groups congregated for the afternoon’s multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss Major Group involvement with, and future options for, the IAF. The good turnout, unlike previous meetings, was perceived by some as a sign of increased recognition of Major Groups’ significance.

Others suggested it could be attributed to the need to investigate further the Major Groups’ desire to have an accreditation mechanism independent of ECOSOC, which would enable easier engagement with UNFF. Some Major Group representatives opined that this sentiment is contrary to the spirit of increased engagement of Major Groups, underscoring the difficulty they have faced in receiving accreditation to attend UNFF11.

The absence of Business and Industry and Local Authorities was lamented, with a few delegates noting that this is in contrast to their engagement with other forest-related processes. Delegates were also heard wondering if this is due to UNFF and the current IAF being of lesser “interest” to them. Contemplating this, one delegate was heard saying that the current discussions on the future of the IAF provide an opportunity to encourage engagement by these two groups. Several people also acknowledged that Tuesday’s dialogue on the MGPoF’s intersessional work has provided a basis for “meaningful conversation, rather than mere country statements.”