



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM IFF-3 WEDNESDAY, 5 MAY 1999

On the third day of IFF-3, WG1 met throughout the day to discuss forest research, promoting and facilitating implementation, forest-related work of international and regional organizations and a Chairman's Report on monitoring progress in implementation. WG2 convened in the morning to address assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of forest cover in environmentally critical areas. Contact groups on trade and environment and transfer of ESTs also continued deliberations.

### WORKING GROUP 1

Jeff Sayer, CIFOR, provided further overview of the Secretary-General's report on forest research (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/11), underscoring the importance of developing a network of research information systems. The G-77/CHINA lamented the fact that most internationally funded research is not compatible with local country needs. The G-77/CHINA, NAMIBIA, CHINA, GHANA and the AFRICAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES emphasized the need to develop capacity at the national level. The EU suggested that research should not be restricted to the forest sector and requested ITFF cooperation in support of research. CANADA did not support the CGIAR model, but, with AUSTRALIA, endorsed a global forest information service and sought inclusion of forest research in any future international mechanism or arrangement. NEW ZEALAND advocated the development of a network of research organizations and supported the CGIAR model. NIGERIA encouraged private sector and government collaboration on forest research. AUSTRALIA supported a global information service.

The US, along with CANADA, NEW ZEALAND and others, suggested that forest research go beyond the CIFOR mandate. SOBREVIVENCIA noted a need for, *inter alia*, greater access to forest research information and global information systems; development assistance for governments, NGOs and universities; local community participation; and recognition of TFRK. Co-Chair Asadi opened discussion on forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments, noting that discussion on this topic at IFF-2 ended with clean text. Jaime Hurtubia, UNEP, referred to the additional set of recommendations included in the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/15). NORWAY indicated that no single institution has the mandate to deal with forests and sought clarification on the report's reference to a forum to continue dialogue beyond the IFF. Hurtubia responded that the concept of a new forum was just one of many suggestions.

Co-Chair Asadi introduced the Secretariat's note on promoting and facilitating implementation of IPF proposals for action (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/2) and the work of IFF-2 on this topic (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/14). The EU said the IPF proposals should decrease fragmentation of the international forest regime and assist countries in placing their forest sectors within the context of sustainable development. The G-77/CHINA emphasized that resources, human and otherwise, are needed for implementation and called upon the international community to recognize its responsibilities in this regard. JAPAN highlighted the International Workshop on Model Forests hosted by Japan in March 1999. FINLAND noted its experience and lessons learned in developing a NFP. The US highlighted its initial assessment of IPF proposal implementation and national application of the criteria and indicator (C&I) process. CHINA cautioned against taking a step back and emphasized the need to ensure that all countries implement the IPF proposals.

Co-Chair Asadi opened the discussion on the Chairman's Report on monitoring progress in implementation. The EU, AUSTRALIA, CANADA and the US expressed concern over the number of new proposals. The EU said the proposals were too weak and did not identify actors. AUSTRALIA sought reference to reporting progress on the implementation of IPF proposals for action. The G-77/CHINA called for a contact group to address concerns about the proposals. CANADA provided text on reporting guidelines for IFF-4. AUSTRALIA, supported by BRAZIL, suggested a proposal for a reporting system, calling for description of: national processes to assess IPF proposals; major agencies, organizations and groups involved in implementation of the proposals; and new activities that facilitate the implementation of IPF proposals. JAPAN sought reference to the ITTO in the chapeau to the proposals. The EU encouraged voluntary reporting to the CSD in 2002. In a conclusion on mechanisms for reviewing, monitoring and reporting, the EU, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA and the US supported including reference to the importance of C&I. CHILE and MALAYSIA questioned these modifications, noting they would affect the interpretation of the conclusion. CANADA and the EU suggested modifying a proposal on access to information to include greater stakeholder involvement. BRAZIL opposed, stating it is premature to discuss actors. AUSTRALIA underscored the need to further consolidate the draft proposals.

### WORKING GROUP 2

Hosny El-Lakany, FAO, introduced the Secretary-General's report on assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of forest cover in environmentally critical areas (E/



CN.17/IFF/1999/9). The G-77/CHINA, NAMIBIA, BRAZIL, CANADA and NORWAY criticized the report's lack of concrete rehabilitation measures and action-oriented proposals. The EU urged the FAO to take the lead in collecting and disseminating information to aid national and regional processes. AUSTRIA emphasized the development of international strategies to monitor and combat local and transboundary air pollution. EGYPT appealed to international organizations for aid to help developing countries expand forest-covered areas.

NEW ZEALAND highlighted recommendations from the Experts Meeting on Planted Forests held in Chile, including raising awareness on planted forests and encouraging low forest cover countries to cultivate planted forests. BRAZIL called for a recommendation addressing financial aspects of rehabilitation. The US urged further elaboration and clarification of the IPF proposals, encouraging: greater cooperation among relevant international organizations and conventions; further development and implementation of C&L; partnership approaches among countries, local communities and the private sector; and greater use of environmentally sensitive and adaptive silvicultural practices. CHINA called for technical and financial assistance.

CANADA emphasized: the potential of analogforestry, agroforestry and silvopastoral systems; biological and quantitative assessments; and socioeconomic data on people's attitudes towards forests and forest-related goods and services. He also supported proposals that go beyond assessment – monitoring – networking approaches to include quantifying the magnitude of the problem and the amount of investment required for rehabilitation. CANADA and NORWAY hoped the upcoming meeting on low forest cover in Iran would provide an opportunity to address the issues in more detail. DENMARK said planted forests must fulfill SFM criteria and stressed the use of environmental impact assessments before planting. NORWAY underscored the importance of addressing the concerns of impoverished people living in cold mountainous areas. ECUADOR called attention to particular issues associated with cloud forests in mountainous areas. CHILE stressed that IGOs, NGOs and donor governments must consider present day conditions in developing countries when recommending strategies and solutions. NAMIBIA called for efforts to address causes of forest loss and degradation, highlighting the development of alternatives to trees, for the purposes of fuelwood and building materials.

#### **CONTACT GROUPS**

**TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT:** The contact group on trade and environment, chaired by Don Wijaywardana (New Zealand), met throughout the day. The group reached consensus on some key issues, but bracketed text remained prominent. On some issues, the group agreed to cross-reference IPF proposals to avoid duplication. Regarding a proposed paragraph on the impact of trade on SFM, the group concurred on text stating that trade liberalization: adds value to the resource and has the potential to promote economic development, contribute to poverty alleviation and reduce environmental degradation, provided it is accompanied by sound environmental and social policies; and must not undermine environmental and health standards. The group did not reach consensus on text regarding government efforts to reduce and eliminate tariffs. Some delegates argued that dealing with tariffs was beyond the competence of the IFF and could prejudice the outcome of the WTO millenium round discussions. There was disagreement on proposed text

emphasizing that special attention be given to non-tariff barriers, trade restrictions and trade-related subsidies that constrain market access to forest products.

Regarding reference to consumers, many delegates supported text stating that a better understanding of the relationship between trade and environment could impact consumer choices regarding forest products. Some also underscored the importance of better informed producer decisions. One delegate questioned why the consumer issue was being addressed within the trade and environment discussion. The issue was left for further discussion.

Regarding certification and labeling (C&L) schemes, delegates agreed that more practical experience and time are necessary to assess their effectiveness. Some delegates remarked that C&L schemes could lead to obstacles to market access. On WTO agreements, particularly the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, as useful references for C&L schemes, many delegates questioned the relevance of the WTO to voluntary C&L schemes. Others said the reference was useful and relevant. No agreement was reached on this issue. One delegate questioned whether the IFF should deal with C&L at all. Delegates agreed to include text on further cooperation towards achieving comparability and considering equivalency of C&L schemes and to delete text on mutual recognition between schemes.

**TRANSFER OF ESTs:** The contact group was chaired by Ralph Roberts (Canada). Several developing countries called for more direct government involvement in engaging the private sector in the transfer of ESTs and underscored the need for increased flows from developed to developing countries. Many developed countries rejected these requests and stressed actions by developing countries and South-South cooperation as complementary to North-South transfers. They stressed the use of existing funds and mechanisms in delivering assistance to developing countries.

Many developed country delegates preferred more concise language, avoiding redundancy and overlap with the IPF proposals for action. Developing countries preferred more specific language explicitly committing countries to action. Several items remained in brackets because of differences, such as the inclusion of the term forest biological resources. Many developed countries opposed language that would indicate or imply a need for new financial commitments or the establishment of new institutions.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Following the side event on the Costa Rica-Canada Initiative, a number of delegates reflected a sense that the push for a new legally binding instrument on forests was losing momentum. Some early supporters of a forest convention were now looking more closely at alternatives.

#### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**PLENARY:** Plenary will convene at 10:00 am to begin general discussions on international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (Category III).

**WG1:** WG1 will convene at 3:00 pm to discuss revised conclusions and proposals on issues previously discussed at IFF-3.

**CONTACT GROUPS:** The contact group on trade and environment will meet at 3:00 pm in Salle XXIV. The contact group on transfer of ESTs will reconvene at 3:00 pm in Salle XXV.