



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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UNFF-1 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 12 JUNE 2001

On the second day of UNFF-1, delegates met in Plenary and discussed the procedure for presenting proposals for decisions and resolutions, addressed concerns regarding funding for the UNFF, and delivered remarks on the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW).

PLENARY

PROCEDURE FOR PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS FOR DECISIONS AND PROPOSALS: Chair Mubarak asked delegates for suggestions on how to proceed with the presentation of proposals for decisions and resolutions. SWEDEN, on behalf of the EU, proposed that the Bureau prepare and table the first draft decisions, noting that this would ensure that negotiations proceed in a balanced and unbiased manner. The US, NEW ZEALAND, SWITZERLAND and CANADA suggested that the Bureau and/or the Secretariat prepare the first drafts of the decisions. The US noted this was the procedure followed during the IPF and IFF processes. IRAN, for the G-77/CHINA, and supported by NIGERIA, BRAZIL and CUBA, proposed that the G-77/China present the first drafts of the decisions. BRAZIL emphasized that this is the procedure used in the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly.

After holding informal discussions with interested delegations, Chair Mubarak reported agreement on the following procedure: the Bureau, with the assistance of the Secretariat and on the basis of written inputs and views expressed in Plenary, will provide the first draft decisions on the MYPOW, PoA and the initiation of work with the CPF. He noted that the deadline for written input on the MYPOW is 3:00 pm on Wednesday, and for the PoA, 10:00 am on Thursday. CANADA asked whether this procedure would set a precedent for future meetings, and Chair Mubarak responded that it would not.

UNFF FUNDING ISSUES: Ali Khamis, Chief of Economic, Social and Human Rights Service, UN Budget Division, explained implementation of budget arrangements for the UNFF. He stated that, following the adoption of ECOSOC resolution E/2000/35 in October 2000, a statement by the Secretary-General (E/2000/L.33) delineated how the UN Budget Division would proceed with its implementation. He noted that the Secretary-General's proposals for the 2002-2003 biennial budget were prepared in August 2000 while consultations on the establishment of the UNFF were ongoing and issues such as the

location of the Secretariat, the UNFF's MYPOW and the amount of funding available from other sources remained unsettled. As a result, the Budget Division was unable to ascertain the level of funding the UNFF would require.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and the G-77/CHINA requested further clarification. The US emphasized that the resolution clearly states that funding for the UNFF's activities and the Secretariat would be provided from the regular UN budget, and that the issue of supplementary funds, such as secondments, voluntary contributions and trust funds, was a separate matter. This latter point was echoed by the EU, BRAZIL and NIGERIA.

Khamis explained that the UN budget process has two steps: first, formal submission by the Secretary-General of the biennial programme budget; and second, programme budget implication (PBI) statements, which are *ad hoc* procedures designed to respond to new requirements. He said E/2000/L.33 states that the latter approach would be used to fund the UNFF. He noted that it was considered unnecessary to include funding for the UNFF for 2001 as it was generally believed that sufficient resources were already available; however, if additional resources were required, the Budget Division was prepared to ask the GA for additional funding. He added that E/2000/L.33 also notes that the issue of the UNFF Secretariat and servicing would be revisited at UNFF-1.

BRAZIL stated that by now there should be some provision available for the staff of the Secretariat. She queried whether UNFF-1 needed to state the needs of the Secretariat more specifically than was outlined in the resolution. The US reiterated that the resolution calls on the regular budget to include costs for the Secretariat for core funding, regardless of whether all costs had yet been estimated. NIGERIA underscored that the UNFF Secretariat was never intended to be funded from extra-budgetary sources. The US questioned why provisions for the UNFF Secretariat were not included in the 2002-2003 budget, and expressed confusion over how a request made a year and a quarter before the budget would be implemented could be considered extra-budgetary.

Khamis said it was understood that the Secretariat would be funded by the regular budget and that secondments were supplemental. He said that sufficient resources are available to enable the Secretariat to function in 2002-2003 once UNFF-1 adopts a draft deci-

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Rado Dimitrov <rado@iisd.org>, Laura Ivers <laurai@iisd.org>, Leila Mead <leila@iisd.org> and Kira Schmidt <kiraschmidt@earthisland.org>. The Digital Editor is Franz Dejon <franz@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Operations Manager is Marcela Rojo <marcela@iisd.org> and the On-Line Assistant is Diego Noguera <diego@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom (through the Department for International Development - DFID, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office), the European Commission (DG-ENV), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Government of Germany (through German Federal Ministry of Environment - BMU, and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation - BMZ). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2001 is provided by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Finland, the Government of Australia, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES.) The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca>. Free subscriptions available at <http://iisd.ca/enb/email.asp>. The satellite image was taken above New York ©2001 The Living Earth, Inc. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, or to arrange for reporting from your conference or workshop, send e-mail to <kimo@iisd.org>.



sion on the MYPOW or otherwise advises the Budget Division. BRAZIL noted concern over how the UNFF would make progress without a stable Secretariat, and suggested that Jag Maini, UNFF Coordinator, could assist in the development of a PBI.

STATEMENTS ON THE MYPOW: The EU emphasized that the selection of thematic topics for each UNFF session should not limit the scope of discussions. Regarding monitoring, assessment and reporting, he suggested that reports be presented and discussed at each UNFF session. Regarding *ad hoc* working groups, he proposed the establishment of one on developing a harmonized reporting system at UNFF-1, one on finance at UNFF-2, and another on the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework by UNFF-3.

BURKINA FASO highlighted efforts underway to implement a national plan to combat desertification and deforestation, and called for international support to this end.

MALAYSIA supported assigning a thematic focus to each session, but said that trade, finance and technology transfer should be cross-cutting issues to be addressed at each session. Remarking that a ministerial segment is insufficient to ensure political will, she suggested that countries commit to attaining a minimum level of forest cover and begin deliberations on a legal framework as early as possible. She emphasized the importance of forests' non-timber functions, and remarked that the international community should provide financing to maintain them. Regarding causes of forest degradation, she drew attention to the role of investors and conditionalities imposed by multi-lateral organizations in national economic crises. On illegal logging, she said they were not opposed to discussing it. However, she emphasized that it must be studied in a holistic manner, taking into consideration factors outside the forestry sector and national borders.

BRAZIL called for discussion at each session on elements pending from the IPF/IFF process -- technology transfer, finance and trade. She supported substantial intersessional work in expert groups and reiterated that the PoA should be adopted during UNFF-1, approved by ministers at UNFF-2, and prepared as input for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

SWITZERLAND stressed that implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action will be carried out primarily by countries, emphasized that the UNFF must focus on a limited number of tasks to make solid accomplishments, and supported focusing on one central theme at each meeting.

INDONESIA said the UNFF's key focus should be implementing and enhancing international cooperation on the provision of financial resources and technology transfer, and underscored the need to establish an expert group to consider mechanisms and strategies for technology transfer and finance.

NIGERIA stressed the importance of capacity building, finance and technology transfer as means of implementation, and proposed establishing *ad hoc* working groups on these issues. He said that the issue of a legally-binding instrument should only be taken up after evaluation of the UNFF's work. THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA described the PoA as a long-term goal that need not be completed by 2005, and suggested holding the ministerial meeting at UNFF-3. GABON said SFM is a component of poverty reduction and proposed establishing working groups on cooperation, technology transfer and finance. GUATEMALA stressed the need to concentrate on feasible tasks, and emphasized that poverty is a constraint to implementation.

NEW ZEALAND said that a uniform PoA for all countries is not appropriate, as countries are at different stages of implementation and have different priorities. He noted the need for discussing new and emerging issues, receiving input by researchers and stakeholders, and implementing policies that ensure adequate returns on investment.

Regarding monitoring and assessment, he said comparisons should be made between different time periods for each country and not between countries. He supported postponing the issue of a legal framework until UNFF-4.

The US submitted a proposed schedule for the three intermediate UNFF sessions. She noted the possibility for intersessional work, and for including NGO and private sector efforts in the PoA. She emphasized that the goal is implementation by countries, and that international actions by the CPF and UNFF should be merely in support of national policies. She said countries should set their own targets, goals and timetables, and report on a voluntary basis, by thematic areas. She stated that monitoring and assessment should be in the PoA, should target both national policies and actions by multilateral actors including NGOs, and be based on criteria and indicators for SFM. She stressed that financing should be provided primarily at a country level, and that it is too early to reach conclusions about needs on a global level.

NORWAY said the next three UNFF sessions should include presentations of national and regional experiences in implementation, including successes and challenges. He said multi-stakeholder dialogues and work with the CPF should be addressed at all sessions, and that the PoA should be presented to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. He noted forest biodiversity was on the agenda for COP-6 of the CBD, and hoped a report from the CBD would be presented to the UNFF to facilitate discussion of, *inter alia*, forest biodiversity and traditional forest-related knowledge. He supported convening expert groups in preparation for discussions on finance at UNFF-2 and the parameters for developing a legal framework at UNFF-5, and said reporting should be a primary issue at UNFF-4.

PERU said implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action required a favorable international context, and supported inclusion of cross-cutting issues at each session. AUSTRALIA emphasized feedback in the MYPOW, drawing on country and regional experiences in implementing proposals for action. He suggested a ministerial meeting at UNFF-6 instead of UNFF-5. He emphasized, *inter alia*, multi-stakeholder dialogue, inclusion of the private sector in expert working groups and country-led initiatives, and said monitoring, assessment and reporting should be related to the themes of each session.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates were lamenting that the UNFF seems to be stumbling out of the starting gate. Instead of engaging in substantive debate on its agenda items, discussions got bogged down in organizational matters such as how to proceed with the presentation of decisions and resolutions and funding for the UNFF Secretariat. A number of delegates viewed these as simply inevitable growing pains for the new body, while others regretted that these issues were not dealt with earlier at the organizational session, particularly since the Forum will only meet once a year and they are eager to get down to the business of implementation.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary will convene in Conference Room 1 at 10:00 am and delegates will continue to deliver remarks on the MYPOW. It is expected that Plenary will adjourn early to allow time for delegations to prepare written proposals for the draft decision on the MYPOW for submission to the Bureau by the 3:00 pm deadline. Delegates may also e-mail their submissions to the Secretariat at the following addresses: maini@un.org; joshi@un.org; and hurtubia@un.org.