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UNFF-2 HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 8 MARCH 2002

On Friday, UNFF-2 delegates met in Working Group I to discuss rehabilitation and conservation strategies for low forest cover countries (LFCCs); rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and promotion of natural and planted forests; enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination; and proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005. Delegates also engaged in informal consultations on preparations for the high-level ministerial segment.

WORKING GROUP I

Rehabilitation and Conservation Strategies for LFCCs: Bai-Mass Taal, UNEP, introduced the Secretary-General's Report on Progress in implementation of rehabilitation and conservation strategies for LFCCs (E/CN.18/2002/7). The G-77/CHINA expressed dissatisfaction with the extent of donor support for rehabilitation and conservation in LFCCs, and stressed the need for a definition of "low forest cover," emphasizing that forests play a subsistence role in many LFCCs. She advocated support for the Tehran Process and implementation of its strategy and plan of action. The EU said rehabilitation and conservation are important for sustainable development and are best enhanced through coordinated efforts of national programmes, cross-sectoral plans, and biodiversity strategies. CANADA welcomed information exchange on LFCC issues and described its development efforts to promote forest growth in LFCCs, notably in the Sahel. The US said afforestation is one option for increasing forest cover in LFCCs, but stressed that not all planted forests are alike, highlighting the range of species, species mixtures and management options as key variables determining the various costs and benefits of planted forests.

SENEGAL stressed the need for capacity building to address the relationship between domestic forestry and relevant international frameworks and conventions. He underscored that poverty, forest fires, refugees, conflict and population pressure impede implementation of rehabilitation and conservation strategies for LFCCs. PAPUA NEW GUINEA said plantations are used to increase forest cover in highly populated areas. GREENPEACE highlighted the cross-cutting nature of trade liberalization and UNFF activities, and recommended that the UNFF urge the World Trade Organization (WTO) to support certification in trade rules, and seek observer status at the WTO.

Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded Lands and the Promotion of Natural and Planted Forests: Michael Martin, FAO, introduced the Secretary-General's Report on this item (E/CN.18/2002/3). The G-77/CHINA stressed the importance of monitoring systems and, with the EU, underscored the ecosystem approach. The

EU and others emphasized the cross-sectoral nature of rehabilitation and restoration, and highlighted its role in poverty reduction. The EU also emphasized the role of planted forests and, with NEW ZEALAND, stressed that they should not be expanded at the expense of local communities or biodiverse habitats. MALAYSIA highlighted the role of planted forests in relieving pressure on natural forests, and called for an enabling environment at the international level, including a global forest fund. The US underscored the role of trees outside forests and advocated an adaptive management approach. INDONESIA emphasized afforestation and community forestry development. CANADA highlighted the importance of effective monitoring systems. BENIN stressed the importance of capacity building and traditional knowledge, and THAILAND noted degradation as a stumbling block in achieving SFM. COLOMBIA called for ongoing monitoring of restoration efforts, and AUSTRALIA advocated supportive legislation and taxation schemes as incentives for the private sector.

BRAZIL highlighted the economic benefits of private sector afforestation, and noted financial constraints in achieving restoration goals. COSTA RICA stressed the important role of women in achieving SFM. JAPAN underlined the growing importance of planted and secondary forests, and supported developing management guidelines. PORTUGAL noted that significant challenges remain regarding restoration, and advocated a participatory, bottom-up approach. IRAN highlighted land degradation as a major threat to sustainable development and called for additional financial resources to address the issue. The GLOBAL FOREST COALITION stressed that plantations of exotic tree species in developing countries will not relieve pressure on natural forests.

Enhanced Cooperation and Policy and Programme Coordination: Hosni El-Lakany, Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), presented Secretary-General's Note on this item (E/CN.18/2002/2), which provides a progress report on the CPF's work. He said that the CPF had agreed on its working modalities, including a focal agency system that would coordinate the activities of the CPF members. SENEGAL said the CPF should ensure that all countries receive pertinent information from the CPF, not just those with adequate resources. The US inquired about the logistical management of the CPF. El-Lakany explained that the CPF is an informal information-sharing body and would be formalized in the future. JAPAN, supported by MALAYSIA, said the duplication of work among CPF members should be avoided. The EU stated that cooperation between the UNFF and the CPF is crucial and that a national forest programme is the most reliable framework for coordinating implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

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Proposed Revisions to the Medium-Term Plan for 2002-2005:

Jag Maini, Head of the UNFF Secretariat, presented the Note by the Secretariat on Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (E/CN.18/2002/CRP.1), explaining that it proposes to include in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs a new sub-programme entitled "Sustainable Forest Development" in the medium-term plan for 2002-2005 as a result of the establishment of the UNFF. The US requested that the title of sub-programme be changed to "Sustainable Forest Management."

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

Preparations for the High-Level Ministerial Segment: Ositaadinma Anaedu (Nigeria) chaired informal consultations on a draft UNFF ministerial message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Many delegations called for a shorter, more inspiring and action-oriented message. Developing country delegates suggested restructuring the paragraphs to emphasize, *inter alia*: the Forest Principles and progress achieved since UNCED, particularly in developing countries; the IPF/IFF proposals for action; and means of implementation. Delegates suggested that the message be transmitted not only to the WSSD, but also to other fora, including the CPF, the UNFF and the CBD, and suggested amending the title to reflect this.

On links between social, economic and environmental well-being and the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, one delegate added cultural well-being. Developing country delegates opposed language stating that forests are a national security issue associated with the right to socioeconomic development for many countries. One country proposed that forests be considered a global security issue.

Delegates discussed deleting some or all of the first eight paragraphs. One country proposed adding a reference to the alarming rate of deforestation and forest degradation and a commitment to reverse this trend. On language referring to the Forest Principle on the sovereign right of States to utilize, manage and develop their forests in accordance with their development needs, delegates debated whether to quote the Principle directly or paraphrase it, or refer to the Principles generally. Regarding cross-sectoral solutions, developing countries proposed adding text on forests as an important part of economic development, particularly planted forests. A developed country delegate suggested alternate text stating that, *inter alia*, policies and approaches in all sectors should be developed taking into consideration their cross-sectoral impacts.

On reconciling diverse economic, environmental and social concerns, developing countries proposed adding commercial and cultural concerns. A group of developed countries recommended adding that management of the world's forests is the responsibility of diverse public and private owners, managers, and other stakeholders. On financing for SFM, one group of countries suggested specifying that "national and international" public and private sources of funding, "as well as international trade," have complementary roles. They also added language stressing that ODA is required if developing countries are to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including on SFM, and urging developed countries to fulfill their ODA commitments. A developed country delegate proposed language recognizing the contribution of trade to SFM, while another stressed that financing at all levels to implement the proposals for action is an important factor in achieving UNFF objectives.

On the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, developing countries proposed reference to unsustainable consumption and production and the lack of international cooperation, while a group of developed countries proposed reference to linkages between forests, poverty, governance and law enforcement. One developed country delegation proposed stating that progress has been made, but much work remains. A group of developed countries proposed text affirming ministers' commitment to national implementation of the

IPF/IFF proposals for action. On strengthening cooperation on finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs), and capacity building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including LFCCs, some countries opposed the reference to LFCCs.

On welcoming the UNFF as the permanent intergovernmental forum for forest policy deliberations, some countries strongly supported, and others opposed, referring to it as "permanent." A group of developed countries proposed text stressing the need for cross-sectoral cooperation and coherence among CPF members, regional processes, and governments. A group of developed countries proposed text on committing to make the UNFF a success in accordance with the criteria to be adopted at this session. One country added language affirming political will to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action and calling on the CPF member organizations to facilitate, coordinate and support country implementation of the proposals for action. Regarding the work of the CBD on forest biological diversity, developing countries proposed deleting references to forest biological diversity, while others recommended sending a stronger message to the CBD and calling for cooperation between the CBD and the UNFF. A group of developed countries proposed new paragraphs on, *inter alia*, action on the ground, and working with stakeholders to identify action-oriented initiatives to strengthen implementation. Developing countries added text to strengthen political commitment and promote international cooperation for SFM, taking into account related economic and commercial aspects.

On specific suggestions to the WSSD, one developed country proposed highlighting the multiple benefits of forests, and strengthening linkages with other sectors. Other proposals included: building and expanding on public-private partnerships to implement programmes, policies and practices, including forest law enforcement; recognizing the need for enhanced political commitment to achieve SFM; deleting reference to launching a global initiative to rehabilitate and restore degraded forests; and enhancing implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and reporting. Developing countries proposed, *inter alia*: highlighting the multiple "functions" of forests, rather than "benefits," including planted forests; urging developed countries to fulfill their ODA commitments; calling for action to address biopiracy, unsustainable timber harvesting, forest law enforcement, and associated illegal trade; voluntary partnerships to address the needs of those suffering from the highest rates of deforestation; and strengthening international cooperation on finance, transfer of ESTs, trade and capacity building.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Feelings of frustration prevailed in the corridors on Friday over the lack of progress on the ministerial message due to the large number of textual proposals and the fact that actual negotiations have not yet begun. Stressing that it would be an embarrassment not to complete, let alone agree on, a draft message before the arrival of ministers on Wednesday, some suggested that postponing work on the terms of reference for the expert groups was a wise decision. Others said that this could obstruct the whole UNFF process, as expert groups were supposed to begin their work immediately following UNFF-2. Concerned that the first week did not result in much progress, delegates hoped for a much more focused second week of UNFF-2, but feared long hours and a difficult road ahead.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Delegates are expected to meet in a brief Plenary at 10:00 am, in a room to be announced, to review progress on the work of UNFF-2 and decide on the organization of work for the day. It is expected that they will engage in informal consultations on a compilation text of the ministerial message to WSSD in the morning, and on the *ad hoc* expert groups in the afternoon.