



SUMMARY OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: 26 MAY - 6 JUNE 2003

The third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-3) took place from 26 May - 6 June 2003, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. During the two-week meeting, delegates addressed progress in implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action related to the following substantive items: economic aspects of forests; forest health and productivity; and maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs. Also discussed at UNFF-3 were means of implementation, including finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity building for sustainable forest management, relating to the three thematic areas. Delegates also considered agenda items common to each UNFF session, including: enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination; country experiences and lessons learned; emerging issues relevant to country implementation; intersessional work, including further discussion on the *ad hoc* expert groups; monitoring, assessment and reporting; promoting public participation; national forest programmes; trade; and enabling environment.

A multi-stakeholder dialogue was held on Tuesday, 27 May. During this session, delegates heard presentations from representatives of UNFF's nine major groups on the three thematic areas. Delegates were also invited to address a set of questions prepared by the major groups, on: major group involvement in the elaboration of national forest programmes, and in the work of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; sustainable livelihoods; positive examples of cross-sectoral policy development; land tenure; non-timber values; and capacity building.

UNFF-3 adopted six resolutions 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 approved two decisions: on the voluntary reporting format; and on the terms of reference for the three *ad hoc* expert groups, a task that had been carried forward from UNFF-2. Of particular concern were the terms of reference for the *ad hoc* expert group charged with recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFF

In October 2000, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in resolution E/2000/35, established the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) as a subsidiary body 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), convened under the auspices of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. To achieve its main objective, principal functions were identified for the UNFF, namely 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 issues and emerging areas of concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner;
- enhance cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues;

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- foster international cooperation and monitor, assess and report on progress of the above functions and objectives; and
- strengthen political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The IPF/IFF processes produced a body of more than 270 Proposals for Action (PfA) towards SFM, known collectively as the IPF/IFF PfA. These proposals form the basis of the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) and Plan of Action, various themes of which are discussed at annual UNFF sessions. Country- and organization-led initiatives also contribute to the development of UNFF themes. By 2005, the UNFF will “consider with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.” It will also take steps to devise approaches towards appropriate financial and technology transfer support to enable implementation of SFM.

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, and addressed progress towards the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the duration of Bureau members' terms.

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

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 eight 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 international arrangement on forests; proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005; and other matters.

UNFF-3 REPORT

On Monday, 26 May, Pekka Patosaari, Coordinator and Head of the UNFF Secretariat, opened UNFF-3. As a first order of business, delegates elected Hossein Moeini Meybodi (Islamic Republic of Iran) as Chair of UNFF-3, and elected the UNFF-3 Bureau members: Gustavo Ainchil (Argentina), Conceição Ferreira (Portugal), Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), and Péter Csóka (Hungary). Csóka was also elected Rapporteur.

In his opening statement, Chair Meybodi underlined the UNFF's objective to provide a framework for international cooperation aimed at achieving SFM. Identifying the main tasks of UNFF-3, he stressed the importance of establishing the *ad hoc* expert groups. He then encouraged all delegates to actively engage in the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

On behalf of UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Nitin Desai, Pekka Patosaari welcomed delegates to UNFF-3. Stressing the need to translate global forest commitments into action, he said the ultimate success of the UNFF will depend on its ability to mobilize political, financial, scientific and technical support for SFM. He noted the critical role of governments, inter-governmental organizations and civil society in achieving SFM, and stressed the need for cross-sectoral policy harmonization at the national, regional and global levels.

Then speaking in his capacity as UNFF Coordinator and Head, Patosaari highlighted progress made through the CPF and country-led initiatives. He identified that assessing the progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA is one of UNFF's main challenges, and encouraged countries to submit their voluntary reports and provide feedback on the reporting process.

Hosny El-Lakany, Chair of the CPF, reaffirmed his commitment to the UNFF and outlined joint CPF/UNFF initiatives, including those pertaining to SFM funding and forest-related reporting. Welcoming the UNFF's guidance and support, he noted that the CPF network may not be capable of carrying out all the tasks it might be invited to undertake.

After welcoming delegates to Switzerland, Amb. Beat Nobs, Swiss Agency of the Environment, Forest and Landscapes, underscored the multifunctionality of forest ecosystems and the cross-sectoral character of SFM. He stressed the role of the UNFF in bringing together the different perspectives on forests, providing over-arching guidance on SFM, and coordinating the numerous institutions and processes that deal with forests.

Delegates then adopted the session's organization of work proposed by the Secretariat, and, with a minor modification, the provisional agenda (E/CN.18/2003/1), and approved all observers (E/CN.18/2003/).

UNFF-4 consisted of plenary meetings from 26 May - 2 June, 2003, with a holiday on Thursday, 29 May. On Tuesday, 3 June, delegates met briefly in Plenary to complete the open discussion on the voluntary reporting format. Delegates also met intermittently from 27 June in informal consultations to finalize the terms of reference for the *ad hoc* expert groups. From Tuesday - Thursday, 3 - 5 June, a contact group on enhanced cooperation, chaired by Hossein Moeini Meybodi (Iran), convened to work on the resolution. From 3-5 June, a working group chaired by Gustavo Ainchil (Argentina) negotiated the EAF resolution, and a working group chaired by Conceição Ferreira (Portugal) discussed the resolution on forest health and productivity. On 5 June, a working group facilitated by Gede Ngurah Swadjaya (Indonesia) discussed the Trust Fund and strengthening the Secretariat. The working groups met on Thursday night until approximately 10:45 pm at which point delegates convened one informal consultation to address all outstanding issues from the working groups. This informal consultation convened until 5:30 am on Friday, 6 June.

PRESENTATION ON NATIONAL TRENDS: On Monday afternoon, 26 May, Pekka Patosaari gave a presentation on national trends as reflected in country reports to the UNFF. He reported progress on, *inter alia*: country assessments of the IPF/IFF PfA in national contexts; the development of national forest programmes (NFPs); inter-agency cooperation; stakeholder participation; forest valuation; and the application of economic instruments for SFM. He also highlighted a decline in the relative economic importance of the forest sector, and noted increased demand for social and environmental services from forests.



OPENING STATEMENTS: Country delegations delivered their opening statements on Monday, 26 May, in which many thanked the Government of Switzerland for hosting the meeting and the UNFF Secretariat for organizing it, and congratulated UNFF Secretariat Coordinator and Head Patosaari on his appointment.

Morocco, on behalf of the G-77/China, recommended that UNFF focus on means of implementation of the IPF/IFF PFA and ways to ensure progress in delivering financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity building for SFM in developing countries. He underscored that promoting SFM through private sector activities should not come at the expense of intergovernmental partnerships between developing and developed countries. He also stressed that the G-77/China attaches significant importance to the composition of the *ad hoc* expert groups and reiterated the G-77/China's commitment to a constructive discussion at UNFF-3.

India outlined the positive domestic forestry trends and the success of joint forest management programmes. He stressed the need for universal membership in the parameters *ad hoc* expert group. Highlighting the successful forest-related outcomes of the WSSD, including forest partnerships, South Africa noted its commitment to uniting stakeholders and expressed hope that UNFF-3 would generate concrete resolutions and foster effective debate. Senegal recommended that there be African representation within the UNFF Secretariat and called for supporting participation of African countries in international forest policy processes. Indonesia said that combating illegal logging, fire prevention, resource conservation and rehabilitation, and policy decentralization are among its top priorities. Ecuador pledged its commitment to forest conservation and SFM, and noted the potential contribution of SFM to improving equity and the quality of life. He also advocated modernizing legal frameworks and alternative land use, such as ecotourism and agroforestry. Brazil outlined its efforts to implement the IPF/IFF PFA and indicated its readiness for a constructive dialogue on the issue of the *ad hoc* expert groups, noting that the parameters expert group should benefit from the work of the other two *ad hoc* expert groups.

Iran outlined the main causes of deforestation in Iran and stressed the need for greater attention to: economic and social aspects of forests; forest health and productivity; and the strengthening of participatory institutions.

Greece, on behalf of the EU and the acceding countries, recommended that the UNFF promote and coordinate action on forest issues, and welcomed the criteria for reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests agreed upon at UNFF-2. He stressed the need for further cooperation between the UNFF and CPF and expressed hope for a positive outcome on the issue of the *ad hoc* expert groups. He also called for clear recommendations on key issues requiring political commitment, and for exploring further MAR issues. Italy drew attention to the recent MAR meeting in Viterbo, and emphasized the need to translate forest-related international documents into all languages. The Republic of Korea announced its development of a methodology to assess the social benefits of forest preservation. Norway noted that SFM is an effective means for eradicating poverty, and highlighted the importance of law enforcement and combating illegal trade. He stressed that an economically viable forest sector is necessary for SFM.

Croatia said that incorporation of the IPF/IFF PFA into national legislation is a main priority for his country, and identified voluntary certification as an important market-based tool to promote SFM. Poland said there is an urgent need to align the ecosystem

approach with SFM while maintaining forest productivity, forest services and employment opportunities. He stressed that SFM is a valuable investment that improves quality of life, and advocated international legally-binding forest-related regulations. The Russian Federation noted its consistent support for SFM principles and regional programmes, noting that many international stakeholders lack information on forest health and policy in the Russian Federation. He suggested that national reports be obligatory and encouraged more active participation in the UNFF process.

Fiji, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group, expressed support for UNFF and overviewed a regional workshop on assessing the implementation of the IPF/IFF PFA. He called for the development of an international partnership to assist the region in achieving SFM.

Australia, supported by New Zealand and Canada, called for further efforts to assess the IPF/IFF PFA in national contexts, and proposed creating regional implementation facilitation teams to foster SFM policy formulation and implementation. Switzerland said the UNFF has reached a critical phase after a decline in momentum following UNFF-2's failure to adopt the mandate for the *ad hoc* expert groups. He suggested that UNFF-3 focus on implementation, exchange of experience, and forest policy guidance, and stressed the potential role of international trade in promoting SFM.

Japan pledged its support to promote global SFM, highlighting the Asia Forest Partnership, and expressed hope that the UNFF's work will benefit from the Third World Water Forum's outcomes, which emphasized the role of forest issues in water management.

The US recommended that UNFF-3 focus on the substantive exchange of experiences in the implementation of the IPF/IFF PFA. She stressed the importance of country-led initiatives, the informal exchange of ideas during UNFF intersessional meetings, and other innovative means for advancing UNFF work. She underscored, *inter alia*, the need to increase fairness and openness in the timber trade, and commended the work of CPF member organizations, especially the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). Underscoring the need to move the UNFF into an implementation phase, Canada urged UNFF-3 to analyze the key impediments to the implementation of IPF/IFF PFA and suggested developing measurable indicators of success.

Melchiade Bukur, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), underlined the importance of afforestation and reforestation programmes and recommended that the UNFF focus on low forest cover countries (LFCCs) and degraded forests; offered support to actions to protect FHP; and called for international cooperation to address poverty as a major challenge in maintaining forest cover.

Hamdallah Zedan, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), outlined the linkages between the CBD and the UNFF, highlighting the CBD's expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity. He called for continued collaboration with the UNFF and the CPF, and the UNFF's input in achieving the CBD's target of significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

On Tuesday, 27 May, UNFF-3 engaged in a full-day multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD). The dialogue continued briefly on the morning of Wednesday, 28 May, to hear outstanding country comments. In their closing statements, many delegates expressed satisfaction with the quality of the dialogue, noting that this MSD was a notable improvement on the MSD at UNFF-2.



Chair Hossein Moeini Meybodi opened the dialogue by encouraging participants to engage in interactive discussion. Pekka Patosaari introduced a note on the MSD from the UN Secretary-General (E/CN.18/2003/2).

Representatives from seven out of the nine Major Groups – scientific and technological communities, women, indigenous people, business and industry, farmers and small forest landowners, children and youth, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – presented on UNFF-3's three substantive areas: forest health and productivity (FHP), economic aspects of forests (EAF), and maintaining forest cover (MFC). Delegates then addressed a set of prepared questions posed by the major groups on: major group involvement in the elaboration of NFPs, and the work of CPF member organizations; sustainable livelihoods; positive examples of cross-sectoral policy development; land tenure; non-timber values; and capacity building. Case studies relating to the three substantive areas were also presented.

FOREST HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY: Alexander Buck, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), representing the scientific and technological community, elaborated on the linkages between forest health, air pollution, climate change, forest fires, invasive species, and pests and diseases.

Sandra Kesse, Green Earth Organization, representing women, stressed the need for, *inter alia*: a standardized definition of forest health; improved MAR; policy-relevant science; and utilization of local knowledge. She recommended that governments, *inter alia*, develop indicators for, and disseminate information on, FHP; foster cross-sectoral collaboration; promote technology transfer; and strengthen research capacity.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF FORESTS: James Griffith, World Business Council on Sustainable Development, representing business and industry, highlighted that all Major Groups should recognize the economic viability of forests as the key in achieving SFM. He underlined the importance of: secure property and land tenure rights; fair market conditions and reliable legal frameworks; mechanisms to compensate forest owners and local communities for the costs of providing non-marketable goods and services; and cross-sectoral strategies for SFM. Marcial Arias, Alianza Mundial de los Pueblos Indígenas y Tribales de los Bosques Tropicales, representing indigenous peoples, recommended that the UNFF and the CPF recognize, *inter alia*: indigenous peoples' rights, including land ownership rights, and the right to participate in forest-related decision making at all levels and in MAR; the provisions of the CBD, the International Labor Organization and other relevant conventions related to indigenous peoples; and the need for definitions and concepts reflecting indigenous peoples' perspectives.

Representing the farmers and small forest landowners, Esa Härmälä, Confederation of European Forest Owners, stressed the importance of scientific research and cost-benefit analyses, and said that forest-dependent people lack knowledge of policy processes and market mechanisms.

MAINTAINING FOREST COVER TO MEET PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS: Gareth Hinchley, International Forestry Students' Association, representing the children and youth, identified lessons learned during the implementation of various IPF/IFF projects, and advocated, *inter alia*: secure land tenure rights; the use of NFPs for achieving SFM; the valuation of forest goods and services; and investment in research.

Representing NGOs, Andrei Laletin, Friends of the Siberian Forests, identified key issues for MFC, and noted a lack of collabo-

ration between the forestry sector and other relevant sectors. Stressing the need for stakeholder participation in MAR, he noted weak government support for SFM, and recommended, *inter alia*, identifying barriers to cross-sectoral cooperation and assisting countries in strengthening their capacity for long-term strategic planning.

DISCUSSION: Finland stressed the need for a standard definition of forest health. Austria said there is a need to raise awareness about forest issues. Senegal stressed the negative effects of invasive species and biodiversity loss. Italy said it is necessary to integrate FHP policies with conservation. Colombia stressed the need for maintaining biodiversity, utilizing the ecosystem approach, and incorporating socioeconomic aspects into definitions of FHP.

Canada called for long-term policies for dealing with natural disasters, and said that, since the public benefits from privately-owned forests, it should contribute to forest management. Germany called for focused monitoring activities and noted the limitations of stakeholder involvement in the technical development of MAR methods. The Netherlands stressed the need for greater attention to biodiversity issues and interlinkages between climate change and FHP.

Lesotho stressed women's contributions to the forestry and agricultural sectors. Finland, supported by Austria, Norway and New Zealand, said that economic viability is a prerequisite for SFM. Norway and Canada called for more cooperation between governments and family forest owners. Belgium said that forest owners should seek interactive cooperation with society. New Zealand underscored the potential role of planted forests in achieving SFM. Peru highlighted the roles of the private sector and the state in regulating forest management, and the need for strengthening law enforcement. Iran outlined its alternative land-use management plans.

QUESTIONS POSED BY THE MAJOR GROUPS: On NFPs, Canada described its approaches to stakeholder involvement, including a series of national consultations and the creation of a national forest coalition.

On sustainable livelihoods, India highlighted its efforts to empower local communities and utilize economic valuations to increase the value of forest products. Senegal described its forest-related legislation and community-based management of forests. Colombia highlighted cross-sectoral cooperation and civil society's involvement in the development of forest and land-use plans. Zimbabwe described how forest concessions and utilization programmes help to ensure economic benefits for local communities. Norway outlined its efforts to enhance stakeholder participation, noting a private-sector initiative on information and competence building. IUFRO said that the development of NFPs should be a learning process characterized by public participation. The US shared its experiences in developing a nation-wide multi-stakeholder strategy for reducing fire risks. India said it created a national forestry commission to consider cross-sectoral forest-related issues. Iran stressed the role of local communities and the industrial timber sector in devising implementation strategies.

On MFC, the ITTO highlighted its projects that promote women's participation in SFM in Ghana. Finland recommended focusing on the restoration of multifunctional forest ecosystems, rather than on plantations. Chile said plantations have a number of positive effects and challenged the view that they contribute to the destruction of natural forests. Senegal added that plantations help combat desertification and biodiversity loss. The World Rainforest Movement/Friends of the Earth (FoE) stated that monocultural



plantations benefit pulp and paper industries, but have negative social and environmental consequences. New Zealand said that both natural and planted forests have important functions.

Regarding land tenure, Sweden highlighted the increasing participation of women in forest management in many countries. The Global Forest Coalition/FoE pointed out New Zealand's experience in giving land tenure to indigenous people, and said that plantations do not protect indigenous peoples' forests. The Forest Peoples' Programme/FoE noted that the quality of participation in policy formulation is of fundamental importance.

On non-timber services, the UK highlighted that their values change over time, and announced the preparation of a national report on the non-economic values of forests. The US said agroforestry activities provide important non-timber services. India said afforestation programmes contribute to recreation and employment. Brazil outlined activities that promote agroforestry by small landowners, including self-certification, and highlighted the importance of defining land-tenure rights under a national legal framework and recognizing the non-monetary aspects of poverty.

On capacity building, Australia highlighted initiatives involving indigenous peoples in developing national forest strategies. Finland, Canada and the representative of the children and youth major group stressed the need to involve youth in the global forest policy discussion and raise youth awareness of sustainability issues. The ITTO identified action-oriented programmes enhancing the SFM capacity of member countries in cooperation with the private sector and civil society.

CASE STUDIES: Alexander Buck, IUFRO, presented a case study on FHP. Describing an air pollution study, he concluded that: the area of global forests at risk from air pollution is expanding; monitoring strategies should be based on an ecocentric approach; and multidisciplinary and multitrophic research is necessary.

Sandra Kesse, Green Earth Organization, presented a case study on MFC. She noted improved farming practices through agroforestry, and identified increased forest conservation awareness; enlargement of productive forest areas; and enhanced involvement of women as the project's main achievements.

Markus Romer, WBV-Kempton, presented a case study on the role of a forest owners' association that supports the use of wood for energy production and yields regional economic benefits from forest use.

On Wednesday, 28 May, delegates completed the MSD. Ethiopia spoke of the causes and consequences of deforestation, and appealed for financial assistance to improve developing country representation at future meetings. The LFCC Secretariat highlighted its constitutional regional meeting. The US lauded the quality of this session's MSD. A Chair's Summary of the MSD (E/CN.18/2003/CRP.1) was included in the Report of the Session.

SECRETARIAT AND BUDGET (OTHER MATTERS)

On Wednesday, 28 May, UNFF Coordinator and Head Patosaari gave a presentation on the status of the Secretariat and the UNFF budget, and said activities of the Secretariat include: holding bureau meetings; participating in CPF meetings; preparing documentation for UNFF sessions; producing a newsletter; and maintaining a website. He said that US\$983,000 is available from the Trust Fund of voluntary contributions, and proposed that it be used to enhance developing country attendance at UNFF sessions. Morocco, on behalf of the G-77/China, and Senegal expressed

concern with the low participation of developing countries at UNFF-3, and called for travel assistance to ensure equitable representation.

TRUST FUND: From Monday to Wednesday, 2-4 June, delegates informally discussed matters relating to the possibility of using the UNFF Trust Fund to support travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) of developing country participants at UNFF sessions and meetings of the *ad hoc* expert groups.

The Secretariat summarized UN General Assembly resolutions specifying that the regular budgets of UN bodies cover travel for developing country participants, but not DSA. One country speculated that it is the interpretation of these rules that has caused confusion. Questions were asked about the terms of reference (ToR) of the UNFF Trust Fund and the possibility of earmarking funds for specific purposes. The Secretariat clarified that the UNFF Trust Fund operates under the auspices of the UN General Trust Fund, which does not allow earmarking, and therefore suggested drafting a UNFF decision concerning travel and DSA.

In a final working group discussion on Thursday, 5 June, delegates discussed a draft resolution on the UNFF Trust Fund, to be forwarded to ECOSOC for adoption. There was much debate on whether support for participants from developing countries "shall" or "may" be provided from the Trust Fund. Delegates also disagreed on whether this Trust Fund should support participants from countries with economies in transition (CEITs) as well.

Several countries stressed the need to ensure that donors can designate their contributions to the Trust Fund for specific purposes. On a preambular paragraph recognizing the Trust Fund as a resource to support developing country participation, Canada supported "enhancing" participation while the G-77/China preferred "ensuring." Delegates agreed on "ensuring increased participation." The draft resolution was adopted in Plenary on Friday, 6 June.

Final Resolution: The final text, *inter alia*, decides that support to participants from developing countries, with priority to the least developed countries, as well as CEITs, may be provided from the Trust Fund for travel and DSA from funds designated for that purpose.

STRENGTHENING THE SECRETARIAT: On Thursday, 5 June, delegates discussed a draft resolution on strengthening the Secretariat through the establishment of new temporary positions. The resolution was adopted in Plenary on Friday, 6 June.

Final Resolution: The final text, *inter alia*:

- urges countries and organizations to provide voluntary extrabudgetary contributions to the Trust Fund for the purpose of strengthening the Secretariat;
- requests the Coordinator and Head of the Secretariat to expedite the work of identifying and proposing a process within the timeframe provided to the Secretariat; and
- requests the Coordinator and Head of the Secretariat to mobilize necessary human, financial and technical resources.

ENHANCED COOPERATION AND POLICY AND PROGRAMME COORDINATION

PLENARY STATEMENTS: In Plenary on Wednesday, 28 May, delegates considered a note by the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination (E/CN.18/2003/6) and a progress report on the CPF's work (E/CN.18/2003/INF/1).

Morocco, on behalf of the G-77/China, underlined the role of partnerships in achieving SFM and poverty eradication as a fore-



most challenge, and called for enhanced capacity building, technology transfer and strengthened collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Greece, on behalf of the EU and acceding countries, called for, *inter alia*, enhanced dissemination of existing information and enhanced collaboration with other relevant UN conventions and organizations.

Many delegates underscored the linkages between forest policy, SFM and poverty alleviation. Iran stressed the need for technical support to LFCCs. Egypt questioned the UNFF's effectiveness, since developing countries often lack the means to attend UNFF sessions. Senegal proposed a voluntary fund with the participation of developing countries. India stressed the need for financial resources to ensure effective cooperation. Delegates also indicated the need to respect national culture and individual countries' level of development and national policy priorities and strengthen cross-sectoral linkages at the national level.

Several delegates encouraged further cooperation and increased coordination among the UNFF and other international organizations and processes, including: the CBD, the CSD, the CCD, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the World Bank. In their statements, delegates requested CPF members to, *inter alia*:

- avoid duplication of efforts;
- advance their work under the NFP Facility;
- follow the outcomes of the WSSD relating to partnerships;
- continue work on financing before UNFF-4;
- explore opportunities available through the Millennium Development Fund; and
- assist countries in facilitating voluntary certification.

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) called for a review of cooperation efforts at UNFF-4.

PANEL DISCUSSION: During a panel discussion on Friday, 30 May, delegates heard presentations on regional initiatives relating to enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including on: regional experiences in the Amazon basin; Central American approaches to SFM; and regional cooperation initiatives related to SFM in Europe.

Delegates highlighted a number of regional initiatives, including the Asia Forest Partnership, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Congo Basin Initiative, and Pan-European cooperation on SFM in CEITs.

NEGOTIATIONS: A draft resolution on enhanced cooperation was discussed in a series of contact group meetings and informal consultations chaired by Hossein Moeini Meybodi from Tuesday to Thursday, 3-5 June.

Regarding controversial language on the need for the means of implementation, the G-77/China stressed the need to underline the pivotal importance of the issue in the context of all UNFF thematic areas, while many delegates called for avoiding reiteration of the existing IPF/IFF PfA. Delegates agreed to address this issue in the working group on EAF.

On the reference to the CBD, Switzerland and Greece, on behalf of the EU and accession countries, supported language strongly encouraging cooperation with the CBD, in order to respond to a relevant CBD decision, while other delegates cautioned against favoring the CBD over other conventions. On the CPF, delegates agreed with the US proposal for a text stressing the need for the strategic actions by countries to ensure that the implementation of IFF/IPF proposals for action is given priority in the CPF governing bodies. On the establishment of partnerships on

implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action, the G-77/China proposed stressing that they should be established in accordance with criteria agreed to by the CSD, while other delegates stressed that some partnerships are unrelated to CSD resolutions. Delegates adopted a draft resolution in Plenary on Friday, 6 June.

Final Resolution: In the resolution, the UNFF notes with appreciation voluntarily undertaken forest partnership initiatives, taking into account the relevant decision of the CSD. It also notes with appreciation the decision of the CBD COP regarding the mutual supportiveness of the IPF/IFF PfA and CBD expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity.

The UNFF, *inter alia*:

- invites CPF members to continue their work and efforts to streamline forest-related reporting, and encourages them to take concrete steps towards the establishment of partnerships with the governments and other relevant stakeholders;
- urges the governments to identify IPF/IFF PfA to governing bodies of CPF members as priority areas of action;
- calls upon donors, countries, international financial institutions, and CPF members, to advance the implementation of IPF/IFF PfA in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of technology and capacity building, including the mobilization and prioritization of financial resources and allocation of official development assistance (ODA) in support of SFM;
- requests the UNFF Secretariat to collaborate with relevant organizations, institutions and instruments to improve information exchange and cooperation;
- welcomes the request of the CBD to work collaboratively on issues of common interest and requests the Coordinator of the UNFF Secretariat to reflect IPF/IFF/UNFF experiences in SFM at relevant CBD meetings;
- invites UNFF and CPF members to provide their views by the end of February 2004 to the Secretariat and requests the UNFF to submit a compilation of these views to UNFF-4;
- invites the Global Environment Facility to give consideration to financing forest-related projects;
- emphasizes the necessity to continue collaboration with the CSD and other relevant ECOSOC commissions;
- encourages countries to mainstream SFM into their national poverty reduction strategies and national development programmes;
- invites representatives of various regional institutions, bodies and processes to participate in the UNFF's discussions and encourages further cooperation on SFM at subregional and regional levels; and
- requests the UNFF Secretariat to facilitate intersessional activities.

FOREST HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

PLENARY STATEMENTS: On Wednesday, 28 May, Tiina Vähänen, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), presented the Secretary-General's report on FHP (E/CN.18/2003/5). Highlighting ongoing international programmes to reduce air pollution, she called for harmonized monitoring and reporting methods, and stressed the importance of, *inter alia*: preventive approaches in dealing with emerging threats; mitigation of the effects of climate change; regional collaboration; and monitoring and networking.

Greece, on behalf of the EU and the accession countries, reiterated the EU's commitment to reducing emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases, and encouraged ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Morocco, on behalf of G-77/China, recommended that



UNFF-3, *inter alia*, strengthen the text on the means of implementation in its proposals for action. Senegal called for greater attention to the needs and priorities of the African countries. Ecuador stressed the need for the transfer of ESTs and an integrated scientific approach to the evaluation of forest functions. Guatemala stressed the importance of preventive approaches, education and the international exchange of experiences. Argentina called for increased research efforts and stressed its role in promoting regional cooperation and national actions related to emerging threats. Brazil, supported by Cuba, remarked that the report lacks focus on technology transfer, capacity building and resource mobilization and is biased towards developed countries, ignoring their emissions histories.

NEGOTIATIONS: Conceição Ferreira chaired a working group to discuss the draft resolution on FHP. This working group met from Tuesday - Thursday, 3-5 June. Delegates discussed whether the positive or negative effects, or both, of climate change should be reflected in the resolution. After prolonged debate, delegates agreed not to specify the effects as either positive or negative.

On addressing factors affecting FHP in an effective manner, the G-77/China insisted on a reference to the need for ODA and reliable new and additional financial resources. Canada, the US and the EU suggested retaining more general language to conform to the WSSD outcomes.

On pest and disease control, the US, with the EU, Mexico and New Zealand, stressed the importance of preventive approaches, while the G-77/China stressed that these approaches should not be used as disguised trade barriers. On resilience of ecosystems to negative factors, the EU proposed, but others opposed, reference to site-adapted forest stands and appropriate reproductive materials.

On data and information on forest health, the US and New Zealand supported, and the G-77/China opposed, reference to criteria and indicators (C&I) for SFM.

There was considerable debate about a reference to monitoring. The EU and the US advocated this reference, stressing the importance of monitoring countries' forest health strategies. Delegates agreed not to include this reference, and the draft resolution was adopted by the Plenary on Friday, 6 June.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution, the UNFF, *inter alia*:

- urges countries to strengthen international cooperation in the areas of financial resources, transfer of ESTs and capacity building, in particular for developing countries and CEITs;
- invites CPF members and other relevant organizations to facilitate regional, intergovernmental, and international cooperation;
- encourages countries, with the support of regional, intergovernmental, and international organizations, to further develop cross-sectoral preventive measures that reduce negative impacts on the health of forests; and
- encourages countries and regional and international organizations to continue to gather, analyze and disseminate reliable data and information on forest health and acknowledges voluntarily adopted C&I for SFM are helpful in this respect.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF FORESTS

In Plenary on Friday, 30 May, Jim Douglas, World Bank, introduced a report on EAF (E/CN.18/2003/7). He listed innovative approaches to implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including: tradable development rights; public-private partnerships in plantation development; and adjustment instruments to improve forest management.

EXPERT PANEL: Markku Simula, Indufor, facilitated an expert panel that addressed economic issues related to SFM, which included the personal views of several prominent forest policy experts. Yilmaz Akyüz, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, focused on the competitive disadvantage of developing countries in exporting forest resources. Manoel Sobral Filho, ITTO, noted that SFM is less competitive than other land use options and said that the lack of progress in achieving SFM is not a problem of technology, but one of economics. Achim Steiner, IUCN, said globalization represents an opportunity for SFM and stressed that the benefits of SFM are as much social and environmental as they are economic. He also said that the ecosystem approach is not merely biological, but aims to create a holistic understanding of all forest services.

In Plenary on Friday, 30 May, and Monday, 2 June, delegates engaged in discussions on EAF, highlighting concerns and sharing experiences. The G-77/China, supported by India and Indonesia, described the report as a set-back, noting that it marginalizes the issue of public funding and the need for new and additional financial resources. The EU called for strengthening the economic valuation of environmental services, higher rent capture in forest utilization, and better appreciation of forests' contributions to economies.

From Tuesday to Thursday, 3-5 June, a working group, chaired by Gustavo Ainchil, considered a draft resolution on EAF.

NEGOTIATIONS: Several delegates cautioned that some proposals in the draft resolution duplicated the IPF/IFF PfA and called for including concrete measures to facilitate implementation, rather than general exhortations.

Discussing the preamble highlighting lessons learned, the G-77/China stressed the dependence of effective implementation in developing countries on financing, capacity building and EST, while the Canada, the EU and Switzerland expressed concern with the strong causality implied between implementation of the IPF/IFF PfA and financing, capacity building and EST transfer. Delegates discussed inviting CPF member organizations to, *inter alia*: operationalize voluntary certification; provide assistance on the full-cost internalization of the production chain and payment mechanisms for environmental services; and consider ongoing research on market access for forest products and services. Delegates also discussed, *inter alia*, incentives for private and public sector investment, voluntary certification, forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG) and illegal trade. In Plenary, on Friday, 6 June, delegates adopted the draft resolution on EAF.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on EAF, the UNFF, *inter alia*:

- urges countries to integrate, within their priorities and capacities, SFM into their overall national poverty reduction and development strategies, especially through their NFP processes;
- invites CPF member organizations to assist the implementation of IPF/IFF PfA related to full cost internalization of both wood products and non-wood substitutes, undertake market and economic analysis of their implications for SFM, and develop financial mechanisms to develop new markets for environmental services;
- calls upon countries to take immediate action on domestic forest law enforcement and illegal international trade in forest products with the support of the international community and, including where appropriate, through regional processes, taking into full account their national conditions and priorities;



- encourages countries to create new voluntary partnerships to promote SFM;
- requests countries to enhance market access for forest products and services, understanding the special needs of developing countries as well as CEITs, by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in ways that simultaneously promote trade and SFM;
- invites CPF members to work on operationalizing the IPF/IFF PfA on voluntary certification and related voluntary labeling, with a view to promote SFM, while focusing on capacity building and without favoring or endorsing any particular certification scheme; and,
- encourages countries to: include in their NFPs support for the empowerment of women; foster greater involvement of local and indigenous communities; and support broad-based participation and clarification of ownership rights in conformity with national legislation.

MAINTAINING FOREST COVER FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

PLENARY STATEMENTS: In Plenary on Monday, 2 June, Pekka Patosaari introduced a report on MFC to meet present and future needs (E/CN.18/2003/8). The G-77/China emphasized the linkages of MFC with other elements of the UNFF MYPOW and underlined that implementation of IPF/IFF PfA requires financial resources, EST transfer, capacity building and better conditions for international trade. The EU stressed the importance of: secure land tenure and property rights; C&I as tools for SFM; and the contribution of planted forests to poverty eradication and biodiversity.

Delegates stressed the importance of: non-timber forest services; poverty alleviation among forest-dependent and forest-dwelling communities; and the provision of the means of implementation to assist developing countries in MFC efforts. Several delegates described their countries' efforts on MFC and SFM. The UK highlighted its active participation in the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration. The US stressed the role of long-term timber market forecasting in MFC. Delegates also noted the need for data collection and the internalization of environmental costs of forest goods and services. Malaysia recommended reaching an agreement on the concept of optimal forest cover.

NEGOTIATIONS: A draft resolution on MFC was considered in a series of working group meetings and informal consultations from Tuesday to Thursday, 3-5 June, and chaired by Péter Csóka.

Discussing the controversial language on the means of implementation for MFC, delegates agreed to consider this issue taking into account the deliberations of the working group on EAF. The G-77/China also raised the issue of the means of implementation in the paragraph on strengthening the efforts to combat deforestation and forest degradation. Delegates later agreed on the preambular paragraph that recognizes that MFC requires national actions and international cooperation.

Regarding Australia's text on the contribution of plantations to the environment and meeting present and future needs, the G-77/China objected to a reference to their environmental importance. The G-77/China suggested referring to "conservation," instead of "sustainable management" in the text of the draft resolution. Switzerland proposed a reference to SFM as a commonly understood concept. Some delegates called for more attention to natural and existing forests.

On integrating C&I into NFPs and the EU's proposal regarding the relevance of C&I to reporting on MFC, the G-77/China suggested text to stress that C&I should be "voluntarily adopted" and integrated into NFPs within countries' capacity and on a voluntary basis. The G-77/China also objected to taking into account the full range of "forest values" in long-term planning, and suggesting referring to "forest products and services" instead. Delegates also discussed the need for specific reference to synergies with the CBD proposed by the EU and supported by Norway, and Colombia requested a reference to biodiversity strategies. New Zealand, supported by the US, suggested adding a reference to SFM instead.

On the US proposal regarding effective FLEG as a means of MFC, delegates agreed to consider the deliberations held on this issue in the other working groups. On a proposal for an Internet-based clearinghouse mechanism, delegates noted the lack of Internet access in developing countries, and warned against duplicating the FAO's efforts to this end. Delegates adopted the draft resolution in Plenary on Friday, 6 June.

Final Resolution: The UNFF urges countries, in the context of their NFPs, to strengthen efforts to combat deforestation and forest degradation, while reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in the areas of finance, transfer of EST and capacity building for developing countries, as well as cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination. It also invites the FAO to conduct global forest resource assessments and regional outlook studies.

The UNFF encourages:

- countries, within their capacities, to assess long-term trends in supply and demand of forest products and services and use the findings in the development and implementation of NFPs and forest strategies;
- CPF members to explore the possibilities for most appropriate mechanisms for sourcing information on forest cover;
- efforts toward afforestation and reforestation;
- policies designed to promote forest plantations should be in accordance with the principles of SFM;
- countries, within their capacities, to integrate C&I for SFM into NFPs on a voluntary basis in order to strengthen efforts to take into account the full range of forest products and services in long-term planning, and consider the relevance of voluntarily adopted C&I for SFM to reporting on the IPF/IFF PfA;
- countries to recognize the importance of MFC in contributing to poverty eradication and the need to integrate forest issues into national poverty reduction and development strategies; and
- support, particularly in developing countries, for education, communication and capacity building among youth.

VOLUNTARY REPORTING FORMAT

PLENARY STATEMENTS: On Monday, 2 June, Pekka Patosaari presented a format and guidelines for voluntary reporting to UNFF-3, highlighting the Secretariat's intention to produce a structured yet flexible format for reporting progress in implementation, including lessons learned and challenges encountered (E/CN.18/2003/4*). Noting the limited number of submitted reports, Switzerland recommended streamlining the reporting format and harmonizing it with those formats of closely-related processes. Brazil, with Senegal and the US, stressed the need to emphasize the benefits of reporting for developing countries.

NEGOTIATIONS: Delegates continued discussion in informal consultations and in a working group chaired by Péter Csóka from Tuesday to Thursday, 3-5 June. Indonesia called for



Secretariat assistance in report preparation. The G-77/China presented an alternative draft resolution on this issue, proposing principles to be used in preparing the UNFF-4 reporting format. Delegates agreed to invite the CPF to continue its efforts to streamline forest-related reporting, but move this operative paragraph to the resolution on enhanced cooperation. A discussion on reference to C&I for SFM was taken up by the working group discussing MFC. Delegates adopted the draft decision in Plenary on Friday, 6 June.

Final Decision: The decision, *inter alia*:

- highlights the benefits to countries of reporting and the importance of continuing work to harmonize and streamline forest-related reporting to lessen the burden on countries;
- requests the UNFF Secretariat to develop a suggested format to serve as a basis for countries to use and report on their implementation of IPF/IFF PfA;
- states that this format should take into account a series of principles, including: simplicity, streamlining, flexibility, relevance to UNFF-4's thematic and cross-cutting issues, and timely availability; and
- urges countries and the international community to assist developing countries and CEITs in strengthening their reporting capacity.

AD HOC EXPERT GROUPS

Hossein Moeini Meybodi chaired consultations on setting the terms of reference (ToR) for three *ad hoc* expert groups (E.CN.18/2003/3). This was an outstanding issue carried forward from UNFF-2. Delegates met in informal consultations on Tuesday, 27 May, Thursday, 29 May, and Tuesday, 3 June, and held informal consultations between Tuesday, 27 May, and Tuesday, 3 June to discuss the ToR for the *ad hoc* expert groups on: approaches and mechanisms on monitoring, assessing and reporting (MAR); financing and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs), and consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests (parameters).

Delegates debated the composition of the three *ad hoc* expert groups, and the number and timing of their meetings. The G-77/China insisted that the parameters expert group have universal membership and make decisions based on consensus. The EU argued that universal participation may undermine the efficiency of the expert group, and supported limiting composition. In the end, it was decided that membership would be open to one expert from each UNFF country. Delegates also discussed the timing of meetings. The G-77/China suggested that the parameters expert group begin work after UNFF-4, while some developed countries preferred that its work begin in 2003. Delegates had difficulty agreeing on a JUSCANZ proposal that a task force prepare the parameters *ad hoc* expert group's work.

Final Decision: In Plenary, on Friday, 6 June, delegates adopted a draft decision submitted by Chair Meybodi on intersessional work by the *ad hoc* expert groups, which:

- establishes three *ad hoc* expert groups on MAR, ESTs and parameters;
- designates the ToR for each *ad hoc* expert group, including the scope and programme of work, tasks, composition and participation, travel assistance, officers, duration of work, meeting, proposals and recommendations for consideration by the UNFF, reports and Secretariat;
- invites each of the five UN regional groups to nominate six

country experts for the MAR *ad hoc* expert group, as well as six country experts for the EST *ad hoc* expert group, by 15 September 2003;

- invites all UNFF members to nominate a country expert for the parameters *ad hoc* expert group by 31 March 2004;
- invites UNFF members to submit their views and CPF members to provide information on preparations for the meeting of the parameters *ad hoc* expert group;
- asks the Bureau to convene a one-day informal meeting in New York immediately after a meeting of the UNFF-4 Bureau prior to UNFF-4; and
- states that the parameters expert group will convene once after UNFF-4 and complete its work three months before UNFF-5.

CLOSING PLENARY

DATE, VENUE, AND PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR

UNFF-4: On Friday, 6 June, delegates agreed that UNFF-4 will be held in Geneva from 3 -14 May 2004, and approved its provisional agenda.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT: Rapporteur Péter Csóka introduced the final report of UNFF-3 (E/CN.18/2003/L.1), which delegates adopted without amendments.

CLOSING STATEMENTS: All delegates delivering closing statements thanked the Government of Switzerland for hosting UNFF-3, and the Secretariat for organizing it.

Morocco, on behalf of the G-77/China, called for effective multilateral action towards achieving SFM, expressed regret about the low level of developing country participation, and called upon the UNFF to move from decision-making to implementation.

The US highlighted UNFF-3's spirit of unprecedented cooperation, said that high-standard decisions had been made, and encouraged participants to work towards UNFF-4 with action-oriented enthusiasm.

Greece, on behalf of the EU and acceding countries, said forests receive too little recognition, and expressed hope that future UNFF sessions will continue to provide impetus to SFM.

Expressing satisfaction with UNFF-3, Switzerland said it is committed to making constructive contributions to the global forest policy process. He reminded delegates that global forest policy is not limited to UNFF meetings, noting the importance of intersessional country-led initiatives, such as the Interlaken Workshop on Decentralization to be held prior to UNFF-4.

India expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share experiences in national efforts for SFM and emphasized the importance of financial, technical and technological support from the international community in efforts to achieve SFM.

Indonesia thanked the Governments of Japan and Switzerland for their important intersessional initiatives.

The Russian Federation noted that UNFF-3 contributed to a deeper understanding of common endeavors to ensure SFM, and the identification of the most acute problems to be addressed, such as illegal harvesting, and possible solutions to these problems, such as the use of EST.

Malaysia associated itself with sentiments thanking all those involved in UNFF-3. Cuba noted that the establishment of *ad hoc* expert groups has, to some extent, made up for the difficulties faced since UNFF-2 and expressed concern with the trend to avoid explicit reference to some recognized and indispensable principles, such as the need for ODA.



UNFF Coordinator and Head Patosaari stressed that UNFF-3 demonstrated the willingness of many countries to implement the IPF/IFF PfA and said there was real progress toward SFM. Highlighting UNFF-3 as a turning point in UNFF history, he highlighted the increasing focus on new partnerships, and thanked the CPF for their assistance in preparing the Secretary-General's reports. He also commended the talent of Chair Meybodi for finding zones of agreement on difficult issues and thanked all UNFF participants for their work.

Chair Meybodi underscored the political will of UNFF members to move ahead and advance the implementation of IPF/IFF PfA. He adjourned the third session of the UNFF at 5:45 pm.

UNFF-4 REPORT

Immediately after the closure of UNFF-3, Chair Meybodi declared open the first meeting of UNFF-4 for the purpose of electing its Bureau. The delegates elected by acclamation the following UNFF-4 Bureau members: Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa), Gede Ngurah Swadjaya (Indonesia), Yuriy Isakov (Russian Federation) and Stephanie Caswell (US). Bureau positions for UNFF-4 will be decided on at a later date. Chair Meybodi postponed election of the member on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and the meeting was suspended.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF UNFF-3

At its third session, UNFF moved into a new phase as it began to address substantive forest management issues for the first time. Delegates to UNFF-3 were finally able to agree on the terms of reference for the three *ad hoc* expert groups, a decision that extricates the forum from all procedural issues and at the same time will broaden intersessional work. As a result, many have begun taking stock of the process and are now beginning to ask questions about what the next two years of the process could look like. In light of these developments, this analysis evaluates the successes of UNFF-3 and considers some of UNFF's strengths and weaknesses, before positing some generalizations about UNFF as it moves towards 2005.

BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE: A STATE OF AMBIVALENCE

In its opening statement at UNFF-3, the host country stated that the outside world is peering into the UNFF process with some confusion. This may also describe the perception shared by many UNFF insiders, particularly those who are openly ambivalent about UNFF's ambitions and somewhat uncertain about how to measure the success of its third session. While some were content with the achievement of establishing the *ad hoc* expert groups, and others were dissatisfied with the absence of concrete policy-related outcomes, focusing on just this meeting may be too narrow a lens for scrutinizing the UNFF. Indeed, as one delegate argued, UNFF has many incarnations and must be evaluated not solely by its sessional work, but also through the actions by countries and organizations that may be indirectly affected by the UNFF.

UNFF-3 began on an optimistic note with virtually everyone confident that an agreement on the *ad hoc* expert groups would be reached during the first week. Much seemed to be at stake in the establishment of the groups – not only because it would clear the table of procedural issues and allow time to focus on substance, but also because the groups would be addressing key issues such as finance, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and the merits of a convention on forests. Many felt that another failure

to establish the groups would serve a fatal blow to UNFF. And while the half-empty plenary pursued routine discussions, key players were busy over the first week and a half with informal consultations that ran all day and occasionally into the night. Not surprisingly, the main point of contention had to do with the *ad hoc* expert group on the parameters for a legally binding instrument. And while everyone was optimistic and upbeat about the prospects for compromise, agreements remained elusive day after day.

OUTCOMES: TACKLING SUBSTANCE

As UNFF-3 moved into its second week, delegates managed, albeit slowly, to make progress on procedural issues, as well as on substantive matters lying at the heart of the forestry problematic. At the end of the session, the forum adopted a new format for country reporting to UNFF, and resolutions on economic aspects of forests, forest health and productivity, and maintaining forest cover. Despite persistent calls to avoid duplication with existing decisions, the new resolutions are, however, in large measure, reiterations of existing proposals for action, and do not explicitly specify much in the way of concrete steps to implement them. This brought a sense of *déjà-vu* to UNFF-3. Many expressed outright frustration with the resolutions, dismissing them as merely intended to show signs of life in UNFF, described UNFF-3 as going in circles back to IPF and IFF and openly questioned the value of coming to UNFF meetings.

Developing countries negotiated skillfully and succeeded in obtaining most concessions they sought. As a result, some resolutions place less emphasis on biodiversity, downplay governance in operational paragraphs and at the same time embrace the much disputed concept of conditionality by linking country policies on sustainable forest management to the finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. To the consolation of developed countries, however, the G-77/China was not able to secure references to "new and additional resources."

The jury is still out on the significance of these documents. The time and energy spent on negotiating them suggests that players take them seriously, insofar as they (re)entrench concepts and ideas in the broader policy discourse. But many are left wondering about the extent to which they really affect the practice of forest management, even in the broadest sense of the term.

UPS AND DOWNS

But this negativity, however, should not overshadow the fact that there was universal agreement among government delegates, as well as NGO representatives, that UNFF-3 was a clear improvement over UNFF-2 and perhaps the most successful session so far. While UNFF-1 crafted the constitutional documents and UNFF-2 was spent on procedural and high-level political issues, UNFF-3 moved decisively into addressing substantive problems. Many were satisfied that the agenda contained three of the most important forestry issues: economic aspects of forests, forest health and productivity, and maintaining forest cover.

Moreover, some pointed out that discussion at UNFF-3 on these issues was more detailed and dialogue more constructive, than has been the case in the past. Participants maintained an amicable tone throughout the two weeks, even through difficult negotiations on particularly contentious matters. Numerous observers noticed genuine progress in how countries talk to each other, and attributed the successful resolution of outstanding issues to a tangible common commitment to forge ahead. Beyond negotiating styles and the procedural manner of the session, most actors commended the quality and quantity of work undertaken by international orga-



nizations comprising the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and took them as evidence of the added value of UNFF. Finally, delegates listed as a strength of the meeting a marked improvement in the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Yet, for every up there is a down, and the weaknesses of the session were as numerous as were its strengths. The low level of participation was conspicuous in the half-empty conference room, with many heavily-forested developing countries absent. This was of concern to everyone and explains why so much time and effort were spent on discussing ways to use the Trust Fund for supporting developing country participation. Only three NGOs were represented, and only during the first week, causing some to speculate about the value that citizens groups see in UNFF. And while many commended the organization of the multi-stakeholder dialogue, others lamented that there was little actual dialogue outside of the series of panel presentations and country statements.

MUCH TEXT, LITTLE ACTION

The continuing rhetoric on the need for action contrasted with the resistance to action. Many openly declared that they would lose all interest in the UNFF unless there is a fundamental change in its workings. Yet, the only proposal on a concrete initiative that would have made the UNFF more action-oriented stalled in the first week and was abandoned in the second, after encountering unexpected opposition from those it was designed to help. In particular, the proposal, circulated as a non-paper by a developed country, sought to create regional teams for facilitating assessments and, by extension implementation. But as the week wore on, it became obvious that the non-paper was receiving a lukewarm reception and increasing skepticism from developing countries wary of interventionist initiatives. Indirect blows from a different direction were inflicted by another country that, in plenary, repeatedly reminded the meeting that UNFF is not a body that can engage in action. When the proposal was abandoned, some stressed, quite resentfully, that countries are often so defensive that they will not permit any outside intervention, even though such interventions are designed to benefit them.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: JUGGLING CRYSTAL BALLS

By reaching the breakthrough agreement on the terms of reference for the three *ad hoc* expert groups, the UNFF has moved into a new phase. The agreement brought relief to many who now feel that the UNFF is finally free to focus on substance. Others lament that the Forum may have already lost the chance to demonstrate its potential, with only one session left before the storm over a possible legally binding instrument at UNFF-5. Whether UNFF-4 indeed focuses on substance or gravitates to the preparation of the parameters expert group remains to be seen.

For a change, the ubiquitous issue on the merits of a forest convention was not on the main stage at this session, although it could still be felt as a powerful undercurrent. With many confiding that everyone is waiting for the UNFF-5 treaty debates, UNFF-3 might well be viewed as a pleasant lull before the certain storm in 2005. Notably, there are signs that support for a convention may be diminishing as national positions seem to be evolving. Some actors on both sides of the fence have become more flexible and state that they are ready to consider various options for the future in a more balanced way and "go with the flow."

In the end, if one thing can be said about UNFF-3 it is that it serves as a reminder that the IPF/IFF proposals for action have still not been fully implemented. This should not be taken to mean, however, that UNFF has failed, not at all. UNFF is a forum, not an

implementing agency, and should be judged accordingly. But it does leave open the question as to how the international community will implement the proposals for action. Delivering these through partnership initiatives, in conjunction with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, seems like the most expedient approach.

However, many delegates at UNFF-3, while urging that UNFF not reinvent the IPF/IFF proposals for action, were also quick to point out that now is the time for UNFF member States to ask themselves whether or not they are satisfied with the status quo on international forest policy. More than likely how countries respond to this question will largely determine the politics constituting the UNFF as the Forum runs its course over the next two years.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE UNFF-4

MEETING ON FORESTS IN SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT – RISKS AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT:

This meeting, organized by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), will convene from 9-13 June 2003, in Galtuer, Austria. For more information, contact: Gernot Fiebiger, IUFRO; tel: +43-1-877-01-510; fax: +43-1-877-01-5150; e-mail: gernot.fiebiger@wlv.bmlf.gv.at; Internet: <http://iufro.boku.ac.at>

THE FOREST SCIENCE/POLICY INTERFACE IN EUROPE, AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST WORKSHOP:

This workshop will be held from 23-27 June 2003, in Copenhagen, Denmark. This workshop will cover issues related to the management of natural and plantation forests and woodlands for economic, social and environmental goods and services in the European-African region and the Middle East. For more information, contact: John Parrotta, IUFRO Division 1; tel: +1-703-605-4178; fax: +1-703-605-5131; e-mail: jparrotta@fs.fed.us; Internet: <http://www.flec.kvl.dk>

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT SEMINAR: This seminar will be held from 7-3 August 2003, in Missoula, Montana, US. This meeting will address integrated planning for protected areas, community involvement, tourism, concessions and visitor management, and communication, marketing and environmental education. For more information, contact: Wayne Freimund; tel: +1-406-243-5148; fax: +1-406-243-6656; e-mail: wayne@forestry.umn.edu; Internet: <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/ispam/welcome.htm>

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON FOREST AND NATURAL RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT:

The seminar will be held from 24 August -11 September 2003, in Denver, Colorado, US. This seminar's themes are global perspective, policy, programmes and administration, sustainable management, and research and technology transfer. For more information, contact: Ann Keith, Seminar Coordinator; tel: +1-970-482-8098; fax: +1-970-490-2449; e-mail: IFS@cnr.colostate.edu; Internet: <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/isfam/welcome.htm>

SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR ON FOREST RESEARCH

CROSSING BORDERS: This seminar, organized by the European Forest Institute, will convene from 28-29 August 2003, in Joensuu, Finland. Topics include the role of forests in creating welfare, the effects of global change on SFM, and better information for good forest governance. For more information, contact: Anu Ruusila, European Forest Institute; tel: +358-13-252-0215; fax: +358-13-124-393; e-mail: anu.ruusila@efi.fi; Internet: <http://www.efi.fi/events/2003/10AC/seminar.html>



UNCCD COP-6: The Sixth Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will convene from 25 August - 5 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2802; fax: +49-228-815-2898/99; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; Internet: <http://www.unccd.int/>

EUROPARC 2003: The Europarc General Assembly meeting will be held from 27-31 August 2003, in Stryn, Norway. It will discuss ways to balance nature conservation and local economic development in protected areas in Europe. Recommendations will be forwarded to the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, in September 2003. For more information, contact: Europarc 2003 Conference Office; tel: +47-57-877200; fax: +47-57-877201; e-mail: office@europarc2003.no; Internet: <http://www.europarc2003.no>

FIFTH WORLD PARKS CONGRESS – BENEFITS BEYOND BOUNDARIES: The Parks Congress will be held from 8-17 September 2003, in Durban, South Africa. The Congress occurs once every decade and is sponsored by the IUCN. For more information, contact: Peter Shadie, IUCN Programme on Protected Areas; tel: +41-22-999-0159; fax: +41-22-999-0025; e-mail: pds@iucn.org; Internet: <http://iucn.org/themes/wcpa/>

CONFERENCE ON TROPICAL SAVANNAS AND SEASONALLY DRY FORESTS – ECOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: This international conference will convene from 14-20 September 2003, in Edinburgh, United Kingdom. For more information, contact: the Edinburgh Centre for Tropical Forests; tel: +44-131-440-0400; fax: +44-131-440-4141; e-mail: savanna-conference@ectf-ed.org.uk; Internet: <http://www.nmw.ac.uk/ectf/events.htm#International>

12TH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS: The Congress, organized under the auspices of the FAO, will convene from 21-28 September 2003, in Quebec City, Canada. The Congress welcomes everyone interested in the sustainable management of forests. For more information, contact: World Forestry Congress 2003 Secretariat; tel: +1-418-694-2424; fax: +1-418-694-9922; e-mail: secgen@wfc2003.org; Internet: <http://www.wfc2003.org/>

EVENT ON CERTIFICATION AND WORLD FORESTRY: This one-day event will be held on 25 September 2003, in Quebec City, Canada, and consider forest certification and responsible procurement throughout the world. For more information, contact: Candace Reimer, Conference Coordinator; tel: +1-877-273-5777; e-mail: info@CertificationWatchConference.org; Internet: http://www.certificationwatchconference.org/upcoming_events.htm

INTERNATIONAL WILDLAND FIRE CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION: This conference will be held from 3-6 October 2003, in Sydney, Australia. It is designed to stimulate the wildland fire fighting industry and provide impetus for global coordination. For more information, contact: Conference and Exhibition Managers; tel: +61-2-9248-0800; fax: +61-2-9248-0894; e-mail: wildlandfire03@tourhosts.com.au; Internet: <http://www.wildlandfire03.com/home.asp>

ITTC-35: The thirty-fifth session of the International Tropical Timber Council will take place from 3-8 November 2003, in Yokohama, Japan, immediately followed by the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Negotiation of a Successor Agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994. For more information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: ittc@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON FOREST

PROTECTED AREAS: This workshop, sponsored by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), will convene from 6-8 November 2003, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON QUALITY TIMBER PRODUCTS OF TEAK FROM SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: This conference will take place from 2-5 December 2003, in Peechi, Kerala, India. For more information, contact: K. M. Bhat, International Teak Conference 2003; tel: +91-487-2699037; fax: +91-487-2699249; e-mail: kmbhat@kfri.org; Internet: <http://www.kfri.org/html/k0500frm.htm>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSFER OF EST FOR SFM: This Conference on the Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies (EST) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), organized by the Republic of Congo and the UNFF Secretariat in collaboration with potential donors, will review regional and national experiences on SFM, discuss options for improving EST transfer, and identify the opportunities for coordination and cooperation among CPF members in this field. The conference is expected to take place prior to UNFF-4. For more information, contact: Barbara Tavora-Jainchill; UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: unff@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests.htm>

INTERLAKEN WORKSHOP ON DECENTRALIZATION: FEDERAL SYSTEMS IN FORESTRY AND NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES: This workshop is expected to be held from 27-30 April 2004, in Interlaken, Switzerland. It will combine both indoor and outdoor activities relating to decentralization, federal systems in forestry and NFPs. The workshop is a country-led initiative, organized by the governments of Switzerland and Indonesia, the Centre for Forest Research Organizations (CIFOR), and UNFF. For more information, contact: Internet: <http://www.buwal.ch/forst/d/index.htm>

UNFF-4: The fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-4) will convene from 3-14 May 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates will discuss, *inter alia*: progress in implementation, regarding forest-related knowledge, social and cultural aspects of forests, MAR, and C&I for SFM; and means of implementation. For more information, contact: Mia Söderlund, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: unff@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests.htm>