



UNFF-4 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 6 MAY 2004

On Thursday morning, delegates reconvened in working groups to continue their work on monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) and social and cultural aspects of forests (SCAF), and opened discussed forest-related scientific knowledge (FRSK) and criteria and indicators (C&I). In the afternoon, delegates commenced the annual Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) in Plenary.

WORKING GROUP I

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FORESTS:

ARGENTINA stated that the social and cultural effects of deforestation are more devastating than the report (E/CN.18/2004/8) suggests. Pointing to conflicting interests of different forest users, AUSTRALIA called for social impact assessments and developing a conflict resolution mechanism. NORWAY stressed the need to protect local community access and ownership, and, supported by MEXICO, called for a Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) report on the forestry sector's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for consideration at UNFF-5. The US said they supported decentralization and tribal self-determination in forest management. PORTUGAL drew attention to forest fires and the resulting economic loss, erosion and greenhouse gas emissions. MEXICO stressed indigenous ownership of traditional knowledge (TK). INDIA called for fair and equitable benefit sharing. Noting that the WTO Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights does not address the concerns of developing countries, he supported the development of a *sui generis* regime to protect TK. G-77/CHINA stressed the importance of stakeholder participation, capacity building, examination of social impact assessments methodologies, and developing instruments for protecting TK and access and benefit sharing (ABS). ECUADOR called for greater participation from indigenous communities, youth and women. GRENADA and UGANDA urged the inclusion of forests in national poverty eradication strategies. The GLOBAL CAUCUS ON COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT and the INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MAJOR GROUP (MG) called the recognition of forest-dependent peoples' entitlement to forest resources.

FOREST-RELATED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE: Risto Seppälä, IUFRO, presented the report on FRSK (E/CN.18/2004/9), which called for, *inter alia*: strengthening research capacities; developing a global agenda for targeted research; increasing interaction with stakeholders in setting research priorities; supporting regional and international networks; consideration of establishing a standing scientific body to UNFF; and developing strategies for research funding.

Several delegates stressed the need for demand-driven research, support to international scientific networks, regional cooperation, and capacity building. Noting the lack of research funding in developing countries, G-77/CHINA stressed the impor-

tance of North-South cooperation. The EU recommended, *inter alia*, prioritizing forest research programmes, applying the precautionary principle, and, with BENIN, integrating scientific and TK. SWITZERLAND supported the use of sound precaution when science is inconclusive. NEW ZEALAND recommended prioritizing global knowledge gaps. BRAZIL opposed developing the global research agenda, noting the difficulties of conducting research on tropical vegetation. INDIA prioritized research on ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration. TANZANIA suggested developing joint-research plans.

On a recommendation to establish a standing body for scientific research, G-77/China, supported by NEW ZEALAND, said consideration of this proposal is premature. MALAYSIA and BRAZIL supported, and the EU opposed, establishing this body. CHINA recommended considering the proposal later in the international forest arrangement review process. SWITZERLAND recommended making better use of regional bodies. INDONESIA and AUSTRALIA requested clarification on the need for this body. JAPAN suggested considering ways to improve the CPF.

WORKING GROUP II

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING:

INDONESIA encouraged the FAO to complete the 2005 global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA). The US expressed concern that the process for preparing the global overview on progress toward sustainable forest management (SFM) is unclear. CANADA proposed that UNFF-4 develop terms of reference for the UNFF-5 global overview, and, with the UK, urged coherence between domestic and international reporting requirements. G-77/CHINA emphasized information gaps and a lack of financial resources for MAR. SWEDEN regretted a lack of standardized reporting. GUATEMALA supported MAR capacity building. SWITZERLAND called for the cost effective application of harmonized terminology, and stressed the value of the FRA for the global overview. CHINA called for more studies on non-timber forest products.

CRITERIA AND INDICATORS: Amha bin Buang, International Tropical Timber Organization, and Tiina Vähänen, FAO, presented the report on C&I (E/CN.18/2004/11), highlighting a recommendation to adopt indicators on seven common SFM themes: extent of forest resources; biodiversity; forest health; productive functions of forest resources; socio-economic functions; legal, policy and institutional framework; and protective functions of forest resources.

G-77/CHINA recalled the voluntary nature of SFM C&I and noted that reporting should accord with national needs. The EU stressed the importance of involving all countries in the C&I processes. CANADA, on behalf of the Montreal Process members, highlighted progress in reporting and assessment resulting from the Montreal Process. ARGENTINA stressed the importance of cross-sectoral information and, with NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, the US, and JAPAN, called for incorporating into the thematic areas the contribution of forests to the



global carbon cycle, and to water and soil conservation. GUATEMALA and NIGERIA called for technological and financial assistance to advance C&I processes. SWEDEN drew attention to participatory C&I development. CHINA called for ensuring compatibility of C&I under different conventions. NIGER described its efforts to establish a national information system. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed that the UNFF Secretariat cooperate with the World Meteorological Organization and the Earth Observation Summit to obtain satellite data.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

The MSD was organized along two theme areas: social and cultural aspects of forests and TFRK.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FORESTS: The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MG emphasized forests' economic, cultural and spiritual importance, called for delegating local forest management to indigenous peoples, and said forest concessions must reflect indigenous peoples' rights.

The WOMEN'S MG called for organizational and cultural changes to increase women's participation in forest management, and identified the focus on technology transfer as an unfortunate by-product of male dominated forestry agencies.

The CHILDREN AND YOUTH MG stressed the need to include youth in forest policy development and incorporate forestry issues in educational curricula.

The WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS MG noted that governments do not have sufficient resolve and resources to pursue current approaches to SFM, and called for balancing environmental and economic values.

The FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS MG highlighted the importance of secure property rights, and noted the harmful impact of urbanization on forest knowledge and on rural peoples' livelihood.

The NGOs MG objected to the privatization of forest resources, which disposes local communities from their sustenance base, and encouraged local and indigenous communities to unite in resistance to dispossession. He also lamented the marginal role accorded to women and to social forestry.

The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY MG underscored the importance of decentralization in effective SFM and called for technical and financial support to local stakeholders.

The BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MG highlighted how illegal logging undermines public trust and credibility, and called for, *inter alia*, analysis of forests' contributions to economic and social conditions, and a legal framework to attract and protect private investment.

GAMBIA said governments should take into account traditional land tenure schemes in determining land ownership. ALGERIA recommended a comprehensive system for the protection of TK. The UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS said that indigenous peoples are not mere stakeholders, but nations and, supported by the FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS MG, stressed that the recognition of land rights is a prerequisite to protect TK and forests.

The WOMEN'S MG called for recognition of women's TK in forest-related planning. GERMANY said NFPs are instruments for integrating all stakeholders' views. INDONESIA stressed the need for capacity building and donor support for participation of stakeholders from developing countries.

The NGOs MG said that markets should play only a secondary role in the discussion on social aspects of forests, as markets do not deliver required social services. The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MG called for urgent action to halt the disappearance of forest dependent peoples due to forest degradation. The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES MG highlighted the need to learn from the examples of failed decentralization. PAKISTAN called for addressing the economic needs of forest dwellers and removing agricultural market barriers.

TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE:

The NGO MG stressed that TFRKs are living systems closely linked to the environments in which they were developed, and can be preserved only within local and indigenous communities that use TFRK for both subsistence and commercial purposes.

The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY MG recommended that scientific communities catalogue and share TFRK in national databases and that the international community review current regimes on intellectual property rights and establish a fair global arrangement. THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH MG said the loss of TFRK reduces the ability of future generations to achieve SFM. The WOMEN'S MG said women often possess unique and secret knowledge that should be recognized as theirs. The FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS MG identified forest owners' associations as important institutions for knowledge transfer.

The BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MG supported recognition of indigenous rights and involving private sectors and women in developing strategic forestry plans. THE WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS' MG called for a future legally binding forest convention that addresses TFRK.

The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MG said that implementing TFRK-related IPF/IFF proposals for action is compromised by violations of the territorial rights of indigenous people, and called for applying international standards of self-determination.

The NATIONAL ABORIGINAL FORESTRY ASSOCIATION described a tri-lateral agreement between the federal and provincial governments and an aboriginal group in Canada as an example of how governments can accommodate the environmental concerns of indigenous peoples. ECUADOR called for prior informed consent and access to TFRK inventories. The INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION called for the preservation of TFRK as a living source for education. The INDIGENOUS NETWORK ON ECONOMIES AND TRADE said indigenous peoples have to retain ownership of research resulting from their knowledge and build their own independent economies and, supported by KENYA, stressed the role of indigenous women and youth in protecting their traditional knowledge and territories. The GLOBAL CAUCUS ON COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT stressed that indigenous knowledge holders have an obligation to their communities to ensure the appropriate communication of relevant knowledge. The FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS MG called for concrete instrument resulting from the UNFF process. CANADA welcomed the convergence of views amongst major groups and noted the complementarity of TK and scientific knowledge.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Many delegates were quite satisfied with how well organized the MSD was and noted its value in facilitating dialogue among all stakeholder. Others however were sceptical of the MSD's value, pointing out that many stakeholders continue reiterating their well known positions rather than engaging in constructive dialogue. Some delegates even said that if UNFF wanted real dialogue it should give stakeholders equal opportunity to participate in substantive discussions of the UNFF process. Some stakeholders remarked that attending UNFF-4 has been empowering, but disillusioning all the same, given the disparity between the UNFF discussions and what is perceived to be a lack of adequate implementation.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: Delegates will convene in Salle XVIII from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm to continue the MSD on partnerships, and from 3:00 – 6:00 pm to discuss TFRK.

WORKING GROUP II: Delegates will convene in Salle XVIII from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm to continue the MSD on capacity building, and from 3:00 – 6:00 pm to discuss the proposal for the UNFF-5 review process.