



UNFF-4 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 11 MAY 2004

On Tuesday morning, delegates convened in Plenary to hear country experiences from small island developing states (SIDS). In the afternoon, delegates met in parallel working groups to negotiate Vice-Chair's draft text on the process for reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (REIAF), and on the *ad hoc* expert group on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (AHEG FINTEST).

PLENARY

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED:

SIDS DAY: Pekka Patosaari, Head and Coordinator of the UNFF Secretariat, described the role of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPA), highlighting the importance of forest issues for SIDS, and welcoming cooperation. Stressing the urgent need for forest protection in SIDS, Moderator Joanne DiSano, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, commended UNFF for convening a constructive dialogue on this issue in light of the forthcoming BPA review.

Mette Loyche Wilkie, Food and Agriculture Organization, discussed the local and global importance of SIDS' forests to food security, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, national income, medicine and eco-tourism. Highlighting that constraints to achieving sustainable forest management (SFM) faced by SIDS include limited resources, population pressure, vulnerability to environmental disaster and species extinction, she said that SFM in SIDS depends on innovation, partnerships, regional collaboration and political will.

Graham Watkins, Iwokrama Project, reviewed a partnership in Guyana involving NGOs, indigenous peoples and business groups, as an example of SFM's contribution to sustainable human development, highlighting the challenges posed by monitoring and evaluation systems, institutional sustainability, new forest uses, creating markets for ecosystem services, and disseminating experiences.

Rafael Francisco de Moya Pons, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Dominican Republic, shared his country's experience in forest restoration and building a sustainable forest industry, explaining that despite normal levels of rainfall, water quantity was decreasing due to population pressure, deforestation and erosion. De Moya Pons described efforts to, *inter alia*, restore watersheds, replant state sugar plantations, reduce the wood deficit through a broad network of nurseries, grant definite titles to the private sector and offer reforestation incentives.

Rolph Payet, Department of Environment, Seychelles, discussed the uniqueness of his country's forests and their eco-tourism potential. He listed encroachment, invasive species and illegal logging as threats to the forests, which are used mainly for medicinal and water resources, rather than wood production.

Noting the potential revenues and threats to biodiversity posed by eco-tourism, Payet said eco-tourism required good marketing, education, infrastructure, community involvement and ownership.

Eugene Hendrick, Ministry of Agriculture, Ireland, presented on how SFM could mitigate the effects of climate change on islands, describing Ireland's forest management history and carbon sequestration potential in light of Kyoto Protocol targets.

Simione Rokolaqa, Fiji, highlighted the economic, cultural and spiritual significance of forests in the South Pacific. He noted the displacement of agroforestry systems by plantations and livestock expansion. Highlighting, *inter alia*, the importance of trees as ancestral totems, and open spaces in the forest as venues for spiritual communication, he emphasized the role of forests in constituting Pacific identity.

In the ensuing discussion, NEW ZEALAND highlighted the importance of regional initiatives, such as the Pacific Island Forum, and the role of forests in a range of development goals. The G-77/CHINA drew attention to the land and resource limitations faced by SIDS, and stressed that international support can make a critical difference in scaling-up programmes undertaken at the national level.

MAURITIUS said eco-tourism can contribute to forest protection and requested that the UNFF Secretariat help create a SIDS forestry communication network. GRENADA, with AUSTRALIA, lamented that most SIDS are not present at UNFF-4, and called for enhancing their participation. AUSTRALIA reaffirmed its commitment to regional partnerships. The US enumerated its forest-related initiatives in Caribbean and Pacific SIDS. GUYANA and JAMAICA listed their efforts at SFM and encouraged further international support. INDONESIA emphasized the need to integrate SFM with social development and biodiversity protection. CANADA stressed the value of national and regional partnerships developed with SIDS "in the driver's seat." NICARAGUA stressed the importance of reforestation and water management, and asked for help in calculating carbon dioxide emissions.

WORKING GROUP I

FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: Vice-Chair George Talbot (Guyana) tabled a Vice-Chair's draft text on the finance and transfer of environmentally sustainable technology. The G-77/CHINA, supported by the EU and the US, requested that the draft text refer to environmentally "sound" technologies (EST) instead and that the country-led initiative in Brazzaville, Congo, on transfer of EST be acknowledged; and proposed that the preambular paragraphs be merged into one.

On the AHEG FINTEST recommendations, the G-77/CHINA asked to "invite member states and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), as well as other regional and sub-regional organizations, to consider, with a view to take action, the



recommendations of the AHEG FINTEST as appropriate.” The EU proposed adding the list of AHEG FINTEST recommendations. The US and the G-77/CHINA, opposed by CANADA and the EU, asked to delete the paragraph on the AHEG on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests (AHEG PARAM) that takes into account the AHEG FINTEST recommendations. On the sharing of experiences, the US proposed including the private sector and civil society. The G-77/CHINA proposed rewriting this paragraph to focus on: the provision of increased financial resources, including official development assistance (ODA) and innovative strategies to mobilize financial resources; the sharing of experiences; technical assistance; and the development and transfer of ESTs. On support for micro-credit, the EU proposed inviting member states and CPF members, within their respective mandates, to facilitate an assessment of micro-credit, and deleting references to specific international organizations. The G-77/CHINA asked that this paragraph be bracketed. The US proposed additional paragraphs on: mainstreaming SFM in national development strategies and highlighting forests’ contributions to poverty alleviation and economic and social development; improving rent capture from forest management; and fulfilling ODA commitments and increasing the share of SFM-related ODA in accordance with wording from the AHEG FINTEST report (E/CN.18/2004/5).

On regional meetings and on cooperation, the US suggested referring to countries, CPF members and international and, where appropriate, regional organizations, rather than to the UNFF Secretariat exclusively.

On partnerships, the G-77/CHINA added references to North-South and triangular cooperation, and suggested deleting references to partnerships, as well as text on support to regional meetings. On the CPF’s engagement, the US suggested text based on the AHEG FINTEST recommendations to invite the World Bank to attract private investment to forests and incorporate SFM into its Operational Policy for Structural Adjustment Lending and country assistance strategies, and to facilitate the development of the SFM component of the Global Environment Facility’s Sustainable Land Management focal area. He also suggested compiling country experiences in an appendix. On further consideration of AHEG FINTEST recommendations in the context of UNFF’s programme of work, delegates agreed to delete a reference to the REIAF.

WORKING GROUP II

REVIEW PROCESS: Working Group II considered a Vice-Chair’s draft text on a process to facilitate the REIAF. Its key operational paragraphs: request the Secretariat to provide guidelines for implementation reports, a questionnaire based on the specific criteria for the review, baseline information, and a note on identifying quantifiable benchmarks; and invite countries to submit voluntary reports, responses to the questionnaire, and quantifiable benchmarks.

A number of delegations lamented the lack of detail in the text and sought clarification from the Secretariat on the scope of the questionnaire, the type of baseline information, and how quantifiable benchmarks would be developed. The G-77/CHINA proposed: blending four preambular paragraphs into one; deleting a preambular paragraph referring to a UN General Assembly resolution; and changing operational paragraphs to make them consistent with previous UNFF decisions. The US insisted on a detailed preamble. CANADA called for discussion on the format and structure of the final report resulting from the review. The group suspended the meeting for further consultations and resumed thirty minutes later to consider proposed text from the G-77/CHINA.

CANADA, with the G-77/CHINA, the EU and the US, suggested referring explicitly to the list of 21 Specific Criteria for the REIAF agreed to at UNFF-2. The UNFF Secretariat, clarified previous UNFF decisions, which state, *inter alia*, that national reporting focuses on the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action, and that reporting on the 21 criteria would take the form of a questionnaire. She also explained that the UNFF-2 decision text on benchmarks was unclear, and that, therefore, the Secretariat had offered to provide countries with a background note to assist them in elaborating benchmarks.

Vice-Chair I. Gede Ngurah Swadjaya (Indonesia) clarified that the questionnaire pertains to the criteria for the REIAF and is not meant to replace national reporting on implementation. CANADA said some of the 21 criteria are subject to qualitative evaluation. He also proposed text reflecting that the questionnaire aims to clarify the extent to which the international arrangement on forests (IAF) has influenced actions at the national level. The EU concurred, adding text on a “simple rating system” for evaluation. CHILE, supported by MEXICO, opposed qualitative evaluation as impressionistic.

Noting the CPF’s role in national implementation, the US suggested that countries answer questions related to criteria relevant to CPF organizations. She offered that “this response should include an indication of the relative importance of these criteria in achieving the objectives of the IAF.” The EU called for a focus on the rate of the implementation, rather than on the importance of the criteria.

On quantifiable benchmarks, the US stressed the need for precise definitions and suggested that member states identify the benchmarks used at the national level. The EU proposed references, in both preambular and operational paragraphs, that quantifiable benchmarks are “still to be developed or proposed.” The US suggested “utilized at the national level.” The EU opposed and the text remained bracketed.

The UNFF Secretariat explained the reference to a deadline to allow the Secretariat to prepare and translate a comprehensive report for consideration by all countries in advance of UNFF-5. On the REIAF report to be submitted by the Secretary-General, the US suggested referring to it as a synthesis report based on information provided by countries and CPF members as well as other relevant sources.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Regarding the proposed resolution on traditional forest-related knowledge, some delegates are anticipating intense discussions over access to traditional knowledge that will mirror debates underway in the Convention on Biological Diversity. Similarly, some have said that discussions about whether mainstream intellectual property mechanisms or *sui generis* instruments are more appropriate for the protection of traditional knowledge are expected to continue over the next few days.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: Delegates will convene in Salle XVIII from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm to negotiate a Vice-Chair’s draft text on traditional forest-related knowledge, and from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm to continue work on a Vice-Chair’s draft text on social and cultural aspects of forests. Informal consultations on FINTEST will take place at 2:00 pm to work on a revised Vice-Chair’s draft text.

WORKING GROUP II: Delegates will convene in Salle XVII from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm to negotiate a Vice-Chair’s draft text on enhanced cooperation, and from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm to work on a Vice-Chair’s draft text on monitoring, assessment and reporting and criteria and indicators. Informal-informal consultations on the REIAF will convene in room XXII from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm to work on a revised Vice-Chair’s draft text.