



SUMMARY OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: 3–14 MAY 2004

The fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-4) was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3–14 May 2004. Over 600 delegates representing governments, intergovernmental organizations and major groups were in attendance. Throughout the two-week meeting, delegates considered progress in implementation with respect to the following thematic areas: social and cultural aspects of forests; traditional forest-related knowledge; forest-related scientific knowledge; finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and monitoring, assessment and reporting and criteria and indicators. The Forum also considered issues common to each UNFF session, including: enhanced cooperation and coordination with other international organizations; and intersessional work.

As with other UNFF sessions, delegates to UNFF-4 convened a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue, during which the Major Groups participating in the UNFF process gathered with country delegations and international organizations to discuss the social and cultural aspects of forests and traditional forest-related knowledge. Unique to UNFF-4, delegates also spent two half-day sessions considering country experiences and lessons learned. One session was focused on African countries, and the other on small island developing states. Particular emphasis was given to negotiating a resolution on the process for facilitating the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at UNFF-5.

UNFF-4 adopted five resolutions on: social and cultural aspects of forests; forest-related scientific knowledge; monitoring, assessment and reporting and criteria and indicators; finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests. Delegates failed to adopt resolutions on traditional forest-related knowledge and enhanced cooperation.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNFF

The United Nations Forum on Forests was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in October 2000. Resolution E/2000/35 established UNFF as a subsidiary body to ECOSOC with the main objective to promote 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). To achieve its main objective, principal functions were identified for 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 coordi-

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of UNFF	1
UNFF-4 Report	2
Panel Discussion on Forests and their Role in Achieving Broader Development Goals	3
Forest Trends Based on National Reports	3
Country Experiences and Lessons Learned	3
Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue	4
Forest-Related Scientific Knowledge	5
Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge	5
Social and Cultural Aspects of Forests	6
Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting and Criteria and Indicators	6
Review of the Effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests	7
Enhanced Cooperation	8
Finance and Transfer of ESTs	8
Closing Plenary	9
UNFF-5 Report	10
A Brief Analysis of UNFF-4	10
Things to Look For Before UNFF-5	11

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UNFF-4 REPORT

nation on forest-related issues;

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

The IPF/IFF processes produced more than 270 proposals for action towards SFM, known collectively as the IPF/IFF proposals for action. These proposals are the basis for 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. In 2005, UNFF is mandated to "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 financing and technology transfer to support the 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), a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats, and the duration of Bureau members' terms.

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

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 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; and specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

UNFF-3: UNFF-3 met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26 May – 6 June 2003. 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 finalized the terms of reference for the three *ad hoc* expert groups, a task that had been carried forward from UNFF-2. It also adopted a decision on the voluntary reporting format.

On Monday, 3 May 2004, José Antonio Ocampo, UN Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, opened the fourth session of UN Forum on Forests. Noting that UNFF is the only subsidiary body of ECOSOC with universal membership, Ocampo emphasized the importance of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (MSD), the thematic areas of UNFF-4, and national reporting on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Delegates then elected Yuriy Isakov (Russian Federation) as Chair and George Talbot (Guyana) as Vice-Chair for the Latin American and Caribbean Group; and welcomed the remaining Bureau Members: Vice-Chair Stephanie Caswell (United States), Vice-Chair Ngurah Swajaya (Indonesia); and Vice-Chair-cum Rapporteur Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa). With the exception of Vice-Chair Talbot, all officers were elected to the Bureau at the first meeting of UNFF-4 in June 2003.

Chair Isakov stressed the importance of focusing on substantive issues and taking stock of progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in advance of UNFF-5. Phillippe Roch, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, commended the report streamlining and policy convergence through national forest programmes (NFPs). Hosny El-Lakany, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), reported on CPF activities and its planned contribution to the review of the effectiveness of international arrangement on forests (REIAF) at UNFF-5 and to the *ad hoc* expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests (AHEG PARAM).

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates adopted the provisional agenda of UNFF-4 (E/CN.18/2004/1), approved the proposed organization of work, established two working groups, and accepted the participation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Vice-Chair Mabhongo chaired Working Group I's discussions on traditional forest-related knowledge, social and cultural aspects of forests, and forest-related scientific knowledge. Vice-Chair Talbot chaired Working Group I's discussions on the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Partnerships and finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. Vice-Chair Caswell chaired Working Group II's consideration of monitoring, assessment and reporting and criteria and indicators, and the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Capacity Building. Vice-Chair Swajaya chaired Working Group II's review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and enhanced cooperation.

STATUS OF THE SECRETARIAT: Pekka Patosaari, Coordinator and Head of the UNFF Secretariat, reported on the activities and status of the UNFF Secretariat during the programme budget biennium 2002-2003 (E/CN.18/2004/3). He thanked donors for supporting the Trust Fund and called for donor support to ensure the wide participation of developing countries at UNFF-5.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS: During their opening statements, several delegates stressed the importance of traditional and scientific forest-related knowledge and the social and cultural aspects of forests (SCAF). Qatar, on behalf of the G-77/China, said that the lack of funds stalls the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and called for, *inter alia*: international support for poverty eradication; an international framework for the protec-



tion of traditional knowledge (TK), especially through *sui generis* systems to protect biodiversity; the negotiation of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and continued voluntary work on criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management (SFM). Ireland, on behalf of the European Union (EU), expressed confidence that consensus recommendations would emerge from the AHEG PARAM and stressed the importance of reaching a decision on the REIAF process.

Several delegates reviewed their countries' progress in national implementation and called for: international cooperation in overcoming obstacles to SFM; focus on the means of implementation, with Indonesia recommending that the CPF mobilize additional financial resources and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (EST); and synergies among forest-related conventions. Delegates also highlighted the importance of: addressing the problem of illicit trafficking of timber; regional partnerships as a low-cost and effective approach to implementation; decentralization; monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR); and the extension of patent laws to cover TK. Australia suggested changing the structure of UNFF sessions to focus on implementation. A more detailed account of this discussion is available online at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13107e.html>

PANEL DISCUSSION ON FORESTS AND THEIR ROLE IN ACHIEVING BROADER DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Under-Secretary General José Antonio Ocampo stressed the role of forests in providing sustainable livelihoods and achieving broader development goals, stressing the need for: coherent forest policy; efficient land tenure systems and access for local and indigenous communities; and effective governance, compliance and enforcement.

Ole Henrik Magga, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, called for allowing full participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making. Tony Simons, World Agroforestry Centre, described the contribution of agroforestry systems to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including those on poverty alleviation, health and education.

Fredy Arnoldo Molina Sanchinel, Coordinating Indigenous and Peasant Farmers Association on Community Agroforestry in Central America, described the benefits of community-based concessions in Central America, highlighting that the involvement of local and indigenous communities in forest management is key to forest protection and poverty alleviation. Inviolata Chinyangara, International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, discussed the connection between globalization, structural adjustment programmes and job loss, and called on the International Labor Organization to adopt a convention protecting the interests of forest workers.

In the ensuing discussion, several delegates described their national efforts on SFM and human development. Costa Rica announced an expert meeting on traditional forest-related knowledge in December 2004. Brazil suggested adopting a resolution on strengthening the role of forestry in achieving the MDGs. The Forest Peoples Programme recommended that this resolution call for the devolution of control over forest resources to local and indigenous peoples. Germany called for connecting MDGs and NFPs, and for maximizing potential benefits of agroforestry

through better land-use planning. Participants also highlighted the importance of: linking forestry issues to poverty reduction strategies and macro-economic planning; indigenous and community involvement in forest management; the valuation of ecosystem services provided by forests; and the increase in official development assistance (ODA). A more detailed account of this discussion is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13107e.html>

FOREST TRENDS BASED ON NATIONAL REPORTS

On Tuesday, 4 May, delegates heard a presentation by the UNFF Secretariat on the results of national reports submitted by 16 developed countries, 11 developing countries and 7 countries with economies in transition (CEITs). The Secretariat noted that the low level of reporting by Member States prevents the provision of a complete account of the forest situation, and highlights the fact that most countries have no mechanism for assessing the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

In the ensuing discussion, several countries said that UNFF country reports should not duplicate the reporting requirements of other forest-related conventions or international bodies. The US stressed the voluntary nature of UNFF reporting, and said that countries should be free to report selectively on the IPF/IFF proposals for action relevant to their domestic forest situations. Several developing countries said they lacked adequate capacity to submit reports, and called for capacity building to facilitate national-level reporting. A more detailed account of this discussion is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13108e.html>

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

AFRICA DAY: The morning of Wednesday, 5 May, was dedicated to hearing the experiences and lessons learned in African countries. The aim of this special session was to: highlight the role of forests in rural development and poverty alleviation in Africa; strengthen SFM partnerships; and promote stronger African participation in the UNFF process. Chair Isakov explained that the outcomes of Africa Day would contribute to the high-level segment of ECOSOC's 2004 session.

Grégoire Nkeoua, Director of Forests at the Ministry of Forestry and Environment of the Republic of Congo, highlighted the importance of regional cooperation mechanisms, such as the Congo Basin Partnership, in cross-sectoral policy harmonization, coordination of common actions, and strengthening of capacity.

El-Hadji Sène, Director of Forests Resources at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), presented the recommendations of FAO's "Forestry Study Outlook for Africa" related to the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including: improving knowledge and local level participation; promoting forest product trade; increasing land reclamation; utilizing indigenous knowledge; simplifying procedures for Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding; and supporting small- and medium-size enterprises.

Ruth Mubiru, Director of the Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement, emphasized the contributions of forests and tree planting to African women's livelihoods. Noting that women lack decision-making power and land tenure, she called for their involvement in national planning and for organizing a UNFF-sponsored meeting on women and tree planting.



Tobais Takavarasha, Agricultural Adviser to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), reported on NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme Action Plan. He stressed the need for reprioritizing agriculture, linking the MDG on hunger and poverty reduction to the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and creating enabling environments for the private sector and smallholder farmers.

Frank Kufakwandi, Principal Forestry Officer of the African Development Bank, discussed how economic problems hinder SFM in Africa, and called for integrating SFM and poverty reduction strategies, and addressing land tenure, environmental governance and the empowerment of women.

Samuel Nguiffo, Director of the Center for Environment and Development in Cameroon, presented on illegal forestry activities in Cameroon. As partial solutions to illegal logging, he suggested thinking about the problem on a regional and ecosystem scale; deploying independent regionally-based observers; and applying persuasive sanctions.

Yemi Katerere, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), called for, *inter alia*, devolving benefits to those managing the forests, simplifying and enforcing regulations, integrating forestry into other sectors, and targeting capacity building.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates highlighted:

- the links between forests, poverty reduction, and the MDGs;
- the need for capacity building and market access;
- the importance of regional initiatives;
- decentralization and broadly participatory processes;
- the involvement of women;
- land reforms; and
- the assessment of the contribution of forests to the national economy.

A more detailed account of this discussion is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13109e.html>

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES DAY: This event, moderated by Joanne DiSano, UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), was convened on Tuesday morning, 11 May, to contribute to the preparations of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Mette Loyche Wilkie, FAO, explained that despite large variations between islands, they share common challenges, constraints and opportunities in SFM, and underscored the local and global importance of SIDS' forests to food security, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, national income, medicine and ecotourism. Graham Watkins, Iwokrama Project, presented a partnership in Guyana involving NGOs, indigenous peoples and business groups, as an example of SFM's contribution to sustainable human development.

Rafael Francisco de Moya Pons, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Dominican Republic, shared his country's experiences in forest restoration and developing a sustainable forest industry.

Rolph Payet, Department of Environment, Seychelles, discussed the importance of SFM in achieving sustainable human development, citing his country's experiences in developing ecotourism.

Eugene Hendrick, Ministry of Agriculture, Ireland, discussed the importance of SFM in mitigating the effects of climate change on islands both in developed and developing regions.

Simione Rokolaqa, Fiji, highlighted the economic, cultural and spiritual significance of forests in the South Pacific and emphasized the value of TFRK.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates shared their experiences with promoting SFM in SIDS. New Zealand stressed the importance of regional initiatives, such as the Pacific Island Forum. The G-77/China highlighted 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. Noting the absence of delegates from most SIDS at UNFF-4, Grenada and Australia called for enhancing SIDS participation. Mauritius suggested that the UNFF Secretariat help create a SIDS forestry communication network. Delegates also recommended: developing partnerships with and among SIDS; mobilizing international support to SIDS initiatives on SFM; improving research on SIDS' forests; and further promoting cooperation in SFM to identify key regional priorities and initiatives for SFM. A more detailed account of this discussion is available online at:

<http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13113e.html>

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

The annual MSD took place in the afternoon plenary session on Thursday, 6 May, and in two working groups on Friday morning, 7 May. The Dialogue focused on four theme areas: social and cultural aspects of forests (SCAF); traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK); capacity building; and partnerships. For each theme session, eight of the nine major groups (non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, women, youth, trade unions, farmers, the scientific and technological community, and business and industry) made a brief three-minute introductory statement. Following the introductory statements, participants engaged in an open dialogue.

Participants made various recommendations, including:

- developing a common understanding of concepts and definitions;
- promoting valuation of forest environmental services;
- building information collection and dissemination capacity;
- extending family ownership of forests;
- building private managers' self-reliance;
- the need for more investment in national research;
- increasing participation of indigenous peoples;
- promoting gender equity;
- linking SFM to poverty reduction strategies; and
- supporting regional initiatives.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FORESTS: The focus of the discussion revolved primarily around land tenure and TK. Women said that the recognition of women's TK should be incorporated into forest-related planning. Some participants were of the view that, when determining land ownership and awarding concessions, governments should take into account traditional land tenure schemes. Others said that the recognition of land rights is a prerequisite for the protection of TK. Delegates also stressed the need: for capacity building and donor support to improve stakeholder participation in developing countries; to halt the disappearance of forest-dependent peoples due to forest degradation; to



address the economic needs of forest dwellers and the removal of agricultural market barriers; and to ensure that timber concessions on indigenous peoples' territories are awarded with the prior informed consent of indigenous people.

TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE:

The discussion focused on, *inter alia*: the prior informed consent of indigenous peoples and access to TFRK inventories; the importance of indigenous peoples' ownership of research resulting from their knowledge; the role of indigenous women and youth in protecting their TK and territories; and the obligation that indigenous peoples have to their communities to ensure that relevant TK is appropriately communicated and disseminated.

PARTNERSHIPS: During the discussion delegates considered the examples of effective partnerships, notably the Congo Basin Partnership and the Asia Forest Partnership. Sharing their experience regarding partnerships, participatory policy-making and decentralization, many delegates highlighted, *inter alia*, the importance of government facilitation, equity, trust, transparency and empowerment.

CAPACITY BUILDING: During the discussion, strong emphasis was placed on the importance of education and training and on the need to ensure that capacity building and research address the needs of local communities.

A more detailed account of the MSD theme sessions is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13110e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13111e.html>.

FOREST-RELATED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

On Thursday, 6 May, Risto Seppälä, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), presented the report on forest-related scientific knowledge (FRSK) (E/CN.18/2004/9). In the ensuing discussion, delegates agreed that a proposal for establishing a standing scientific body to UNFF, contained in the report, is premature. The EU recommended, *inter alia*, applying the precautionary principle, and, with Benin, integrating scientific and traditional knowledge. Brazil opposed a suggestion to develop the global research agenda. The Russian Federation requested that the needs of countries with economies in transition (CEITs) be reflected in the Vice-Chair's text.

The Vice-Chair's text on this issue was discussed on Monday and Thursday, 10 and 13 May. Warning against reiterating the IPF/IFF proposals for action, Australia and the EU suggested deleting text on enhancing research capacities and support for research. The G-77/China opposed the deletion, noting that the proposals for action do not call for a necessary level of support. The G-77/China also opposed highlighting specific CPF initiatives, aspects of SFM, such as fire management, or stakeholders in the resolution. On determination of forest research priorities, she proposed referring to the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, in forest-related research, and called for making available research results to developing countries free of cost. These and other outstanding issues were resolved in informal consultations on Thursday, 13 May, and the resolution was adopted during the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: The preamble to the final resolution takes note of the views expressed at UNFF-4 and highlights lessons learned from the exchange of country experiences. In the operative paragraphs, UNFF, *inter alia*:

- calls upon donors to enhance research capacity in developing countries and provide financial and technical support and capacity building within the priorities identified by developing countries;
- calls upon countries to enhance, within their capacities, forestry and research capacities;
- encourages countries to support research networks and promote: partnerships and participation of relevant stakeholders in the formulation of research programmes; private sector investment; and forest-related research based on the need and priorities of its users, considering the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, in forest-related research; and
- requests the CPF to improve communication and networking between science, forest policy and civil society and notes the strength of the CPF members.

TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE

On Friday, 7 May, Manuel Guariguata, CBD, presented a report on TFRK (E/CN.18/2004/7). Some delegates criticized the report for its: lack of focus on TFRK protection; excessive emphasis on cataloguing and patents without mentioning their dangers and limitations; and promoting transfer of technologies without taking into account the rights of traditional communities and national legislation. Many emphasized the importance of using non-intellectual property rights measures for TFRK protection. The G-77/China called for identifying rights of origin and developing an international regime for the protection of TFRK. The EU emphasized the need to recognize indigenous territories and rights and enhance capacity building for self-determination.

Several delegates stressed the need to consider relevant work in other international fora, particularly the CBD. New Zealand and the US suggested referring also to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and Japan to the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. Malaysia said *sui generis* systems are most appropriate for the protection of TFRK and the Indigenous Peoples stressed that these systems should be developed under the CBD, not WIPO. Delegates also highlighted the need for: sharing national experiences; financial support to apply TFRK in SFM; and recognizing the importance of indigenous peoples' free prior informed consent. Norway called for a reference to the Akwé:Kon Guidelines on impact assessments for any developments on indigenous territories.

On Wednesday and Thursday, 12-13 May, delegates discussed the Vice-Chair's draft text on TFRK. The EU, opposed by Canada, reiterated the importance of references to the rights of the indigenous and local communities, with the US adding "interests." The US, opposed by the G-77/China, suggested text on facilitating access to TFRK. Delegates then debated a G-77/China proposal to refer to "practices and genetic resources" and "the original holders of TFRK," with New Zealand warning against expanding the debate beyond the scope of TFRK and noting the difficulties in identifying traditional or original knowledge holders.

On Thursday, the G-77/China stressed its concern with the earlier proposed language on the facilitation of access to TFRK, use of mainstream intellectual property instruments, and prejudging relevant work in other fora. It proposed instead a



simplified alternative to the Vice-Chair's draft consisting of one operative paragraph on the need to protect and safeguard TFRK. After informal consultations and discussion in the working group, delegates agreed to revert to the initial Vice-Chair's text and debated, *inter alia*, the US suggestion, opposed by the G-77/China, to substitute the reference to "TFRK that is in the common domain" with language on the agreement of the traditional holders of that knowledge. On the CPF support to TFRK preservation, the Indigenous Peoples, upon the request of the G-77/China, reiterated the need for recognition of indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and title to property and the free prior informed consent of indigenous peoples prior to their property being accessed.

The group continued deliberations in informal consultations on Thursday night and Friday morning, but could not resolve the issues pertaining to indigenous rights, access to, and means of protecting, TFRK. It was therefore decided that no resolution on TFRK would be forwarded to the plenary for approval.

On Friday, 14 May, Vice-Chair Mabhongo reported to the closing plenary that the working group had concluded that it is not in a position to adopt a resolution and the discussion on the agenda item was closed.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FORESTS

On Wednesday, 5 May, Yemi Katerere, CIFOR, presented the report on SCAF (E/CN.18/2004/8), highlighting the need to: mainstream SCAF in NFPs and SFM strategies; promote fair and equitable benefit-sharing; document the contribution of forests to poverty reduction; adopt social impact assessment methodologies; and consider lessons learned on decentralization and the devolution of authority.

Noting the connection between SFM and poverty alleviation, many said there was a need to create a stronger link between SFM and the MDGs. Delegates also said that local community involvement in SFM decision-making and decentralization and devolution across the forestry sector were, or could be, important contributors to poverty alleviation. They debated the significance of: access and fair and equitable benefit sharing; social conflict; land tenure and the rights of indigenous peoples; TK; and illegal logging.

The Vice-Chair's text was negotiated on Monday and Wednesday, 10 and 12 May and in informal consultations. On the issue of benefit-sharing and stakeholder involvement, the EU, opposed by G-77/China, proposed that UNFF "encourage the use of the CBD Bonn Guidelines and the development of an international regime to promote access to forest genetic resources and benefit-sharing within the framework of the CBD." On the issue of social impact assessment, some argued that the Akwé:Kon Guidelines should be used, while others were concerned about how the Guidelines' implementation can be assessed. Delegates also debated a paragraph on decentralization to which Switzerland suggested adding a reference on devolution and on further exploring decentralization to help address social and cultural concerns more effectively. The G-77/China objected to the reference to devolution and proposed deleting this paragraph, unless a compromise formulation was developed.

On Thursday afternoon, 13 May, in informal consultations, delegates finalized the SCAF resolution. In the closing plenary, the indigenous peoples and NGOs expressed concern that, while the

resolution on SCAF does contain a reference to indigenous peoples, this reference was lacking in substance.

On Friday, 14 May, Vice Chair Mabhongo presented the draft resolution on SCAF to the closing plenary. Norway, opposed by the G-77/China, asked to add an operative paragraph on the contribution of forests to achieving the MDGs, but later agreed with Chair Isakov not to re-open the debate. The resolution was adopted without amendments.

Final Resolution: The final resolution highlights several lessons learned, including on: the role of forests in poverty eradication and sustainable development, as recognized in the internationally agreed development goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; and the effective participation of all relevant stakeholders within countries could enhance the implementation of SFM.

The resolution also:

- urges countries to integrate SFM into their national poverty reduction strategies, including through their NFPs;
- urges the donor community to provide support to developing countries to enhance their capacities;
- invites countries to consider the evaluation of the social and cultural impact of the implementation of NFPs;
- urges the donor community to provide support to developing countries to enhance their human and institutional capacities, in the implementation of SFM, including on social and cultural aspects;
- encourages countries to promote the role of private sector investment in SFM that takes account of the social and cultural aspects of forests;
- urges countries to foster greater involvement of relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, women and youth, in SFM decision-making; and
- encourages countries to explore options for decentralization of decision-making on SFM.

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING AND CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

On Wednesday, 5 May, Peter Holmgren, FAO, presented the report on MAR (E/CN.18/2004/10) and discussed the connections between country reports and the FAO global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005). Noting progress on national forest assessments, streamlining and reporting, and harmonization of definitions, he suggested that CPF members strengthen MAR capacity building and further develop information-reporting frameworks.

Mike Dudley, United Kingdom Forestry Commission, presented the report of the AHEG MAR (E/CN.18/2003/2), which recommends that: countries make better use of existing resources for MAR and strengthen C&I processes; international organizations continue work on streamlining reporting requirements; the FRA 2005 be enhanced; the collection of country information for UNFF-5 be improved; and the sharing of country experiences through side-events and panel discussions at UNFF-5 be expanded.

In the ensuing discussion, many delegates underscored the need to harmonize definitions and terms, streamline reporting procedures, and enhance the FRA 2005.



On Thursday, 6 May, several delegates expressed concern that the REIAF may flounder without sufficient national reports, and that the process for preparing the global overview on progress towards SFM was unclear. The G-77/China emphasized information gaps and a lack of financial resources for MAR. 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;
- protective functions of forest resources;
- socioeconomic functions; and
- legal, policy and institutional framework.

The G-77/China recalled the voluntary nature of SFM C&I and noted that reporting should accord with national needs, while the EU stressed the importance of involving all countries in the C&I processes. Several delegates highlighted progress in reporting and assessment resulting from the Montreal Process (Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests), and others called for incorporating into the thematic areas the contribution of forests to the global carbon cycle, and to water and soil conservation.

On Monday, 10 May, after hearing country statements, Vice-Chair Caswell introduced a draft text on both MAR and C&I for SFM. Delegates discussed the references to the inclusion of forestry in poverty reduction strategies, stakeholder participation, assistance to developing and CEITs, and the seven thematic elements of SFM, with the G-77/China suggesting to take note of them instead of endorsing them.

On Wednesday and Thursday, 12-13 May, delegates discussed, *inter alia*: harmonizing definitions; linking C&I and certification; synchronizing forest-related reporting; carrying out research on indicators; and the preparation of a global review of progress towards SFM for UNFF-5 by the Secretariat. Several paragraphs related to the REIAF were relegated to the discussion on this issue. These paragraphs refer to the global overview of progress towards SFM as a contribution to the discussion at UNFF-5 and were moved because delegates decided that these issues were better dealt with in the REIAF resolution, than in the MAR/C&I resolution.

Delegates also debated, *inter alia*, referencing: the seven thematic elements; the inclusion of forest-related MAR in national development plans and poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP); stakeholder participation in C&I development; and cultural aspects of forests as a criteria for SFM. The resolution was adopted in the final plenary.

Final Resolution: In the resolution, UNFF-4 highlights lessons learned, including that national forest-related reporting to international fora places a heavy burden on countries and needs to be streamlined. The resolution, *inter alia*, also:

- calls upon the donor community, CPF members and other organizations to continue to assist countries at their request in their capacity building for forest-related information and for MAR, including adoption or implementation of C&I;
- encourages countries to include forests and forest-related

MAR in national development plans and PRSPs; and

- acknowledges the seven thematic elements as a reference framework for SFM and invites countries to consider these elements in the development of national C&I.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT ON FORESTS

On Friday, 7 May, Pekka Patosaari introduced a proposal on a process to facilitate the REIAF (E/CN.18/2004/12). The proposal involved, *inter alia*, the submission of voluntary reports by countries, CPF members and major groups, and the preparation of a synthesis report prior to UNFF-5. A number of delegations stressed the need for a transparent and universally participatory review process. Canada proposed that the CPF conduct the REIAF. CPF Coordinator Hosny El-Lakany said the CPF would not undertake the REIAF. The US described the REIAF as an inherently political function to be undertaken by the UNFF, and asserted that the REIAF should cover not only UNFF but also the work of the CPF and the UNFF Secretariat. Patosaari replied that the Secretariat is not part of the international arrangement on forests (IAF) and is accountable only to the Secretary-General.

The EU said the review of progress toward SFM and the REIAF are closely related. Switzerland, with Australia, stated the review of progress toward SFM is irrelevant to REIAF and that REIAF should focus on the particular contributions of the IAF to SFM. China proposed that the Secretariat prepare a questionnaire based on the review criteria agreed at UNFF-2. Japan called for identifying quantifiable benchmarks to facilitate country reporting for the REIAF. Others urged the inclusion of qualitative information in addition to quantified benchmarks.

On Tuesday and Thursday, 11 and 13 May, delegates considered a Vice-Chair's draft text comprising proposals for submitting a questionnaire, quantifiable benchmarks, and voluntary reports on implementation. The deliberations were frequently suspended for informal consultations.

The working group engaged in a prolonged discussion on the proposed questionnaire. Many repeatedly stressed that a questionnaire would raise the reporting rate and facilitate REIAF by making reports more comparable. Several countries emphasized the voluntary nature of the questionnaire. Canada stressed that the questionnaire should aim to clarify the extent to which the IAF has influenced national actions. The G-77/China expressed reservations about the feasibility of developing a questionnaire at UNFF-4, suggested making only a general request to Member States for their views, and opposed a US proposal to convene an informal group in New York to draft the questionnaire, as well as an EU proposal to use a "simple rating system."

On quantifiable benchmarks, the US suggested that Member States identify the benchmarks used at the national level, while the EU stressed that quantifiable benchmarks are still to be developed.

During informal consultations Thursday evening, 13 May, the G-77/China agreed, in principle, to the inclusion of a questionnaire on the condition that an explicit reference be included that recognized that responses to the questionnaire would be voluntary. The remainder of the informal consultations dealt with designing the questionnaire. Delegates agreed that the questionnaire would be annexed to the resolution. References to quantifiable benchmarks were subsequently deleted from the text, but retained in the



annexed voluntary questionnaire. Consensus was finally reached early in the morning of Friday, 14 May. Delegates agreed to the REIAF resolution in the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: In its resolution, UNFF-4 requests the Secretariat to submit to Member States, CPF members and other relevant organizations and processes: guidelines for reports on the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action; a voluntary questionnaire, annexed to the resolution and based on the Specific Criteria for REIAF contained in UNFF resolution 2/3; and baseline information relevant to the Specific Criteria. The annexed questionnaire allows respondents to select activities on which to report, and asks countries to assess the IAF as having either “none,” “limited,” “moderate,” or “high” effectiveness.

The resolution also:

- invites Member States to voluntarily submit responses to the questionnaire and reports on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;
- requests the Secretary-General to prepare well in advance of UNFF-5 a report based on the submitted information; and
- requests the UNFF Secretariat to prepare and contribute to UNFF-5 a global overview of progress towards SFM, in cooperation with CPF members and C&I processes and based on existing sources of information, including national reports, the FRA and C&I processes.

ENHANCED COOPERATION

On Tuesday morning, 4 May, Pekka Patosaari presented the Secretariat’s note on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination (E/CN.18/2004/13). He suggested that UNFF, *inter alia*:

- further improve major groups’ involvement;
- facilitate the creation of partnerships;
- invite CPF members to prepare a contribution on the role of forests in implementing the Millennium Declaration;
- consider the impacts that implementing the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development will have on SFM; and
- strengthen regional cooperation and identify regional focal points for the UNFF.

The UNFF Secretariat also presented an overview of views from Member States and CPF members on collaboration between UNFF and the CBD, highlighting that many respondents agreed on, *inter alia*, similarities between the ecosystem approach and SFM and the high degree of correspondence and potential complementarity between the IPF/IFF proposals for action and the CBD expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity.

Hosny El-Lakany, CPF, reported on the CPF’s progress since UNFF-3 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1), highlighting: the CPF Sourcebook on Financing for SFM; the task force on streamlining forest-related financing; work on definitions; and support to all UNFF country- and organization-led initiatives.

Henning Wuester, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), noted a recently adopted common framework for reporting greenhouse gas emissions and removals by forests that will be freely available and useful to UNFF participants.

Manuel Guariguata, CBD, highlighted the development of a CBD forest-related information service as well as recent CBD decisions on mountain biodiversity and protected areas.

Rui Zheng, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), reported on activities undertaken by the CCD in relation to forests and ecosystems, highlighting the Viterbo workshop on synergies among the Rio conventions.

Kanta Kumari, Global Environment Facility (GEF), presented the scope of various GEF modalities that support the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including the Forest and the Sustainable Land Management Operational Programs.

Several delegates noted the need for synergies among international initiatives on forests and with subregional organizations, and links between the ecosystem approach and SFM.

Many delegates stressed the importance of cooperation between UNFF and the three Rio conventions and expressed regret that initiatives on forest-related synergies occur outside the CPF network. They also emphasized linkages between SFM and the ecosystem approach, and between forest policy and poverty eradication.

On Monday, 10 May, and Wednesday, 12 May, delegates discussed a Vice-Chair’s draft text on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, and discussed cooperation with regional organizations, country experiences, progress already achieved in enhancing cooperation, and the need for cooperation on finance and technology transfer. The EU, supported by New Zealand, Switzerland, the US and Canada, and opposed by the G-77/China, proposed a preambular paragraph welcoming a CBD decision recognizing SFM as a means of implementing the ecosystem approach. The G-77/China, opposed by the EU, Switzerland, the US, New Zealand and Canada, also requested the deletion of an operative paragraph urging countries to use SFM to implement the CBD ecosystem approach. China said the ecosystem approach is a scientific tool for implementing SFM, not vice versa. The G-77/China proposed that the Secretariat identify the linkages between forests and the MDGs in a report to UNFF-5. Norway, the US, Switzerland and New Zealand, opposed by the G-77/China, called for retaining reference to the private sector. Delegates accepted a G-77/China proposal to standardize references to “multilateral development goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.”

Informal consultations continued during the evenings of Wednesday, 12 May, and Thursday, 13 May. However, late on 13 May, delegates decided that no consensus could be reached on this resolution. The point of contention had to do with the relationship between SFM and the ecosystem approach. Some developed countries wanted to make an explicit reference urging countries to utilize SFM as a means of implementing the ecosystem approach. But the G-77/China was opposed to this reference.

On Friday, 14 May, Chair Isakov, on behalf of Vice-Chair Swajaya (Indonesia), announced in plenary that no consensus had been reached on enhanced cooperation.

FINANCE AND TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES

On Tuesday, 4 May, Knut Øistad (Norway), presented the recommendations of the AHEG on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (FINTEST) (E/CN.18/2004/5). The G-77/China stressed the urgent need for concrete efforts toward achieving ODA targets and recommended further developing and



implementing specific recommendations. The US suggested selecting a set of concrete recommendations regarding areas where both Member States and the CPF can catalyze action on the ground.

Delegates also highlighted the importance of the private sector and the need for more effective utilization of existing resources. The EU, supported by many, suggested that an informal group with balanced representation guide the UNFF Bureau and Secretariat in producing a draft resolution on this issue.

On Tuesday, 11 May, delegates discussed a Vice-Chair's draft text on FINTEST, focusing on, *inter alia*: how to refer to the Brazzaville Global Workshop on EST and Capacity Building; the text on linkages between the recommendations of the AHEG FINTEST and AHEG PARAM, with the US and G-77/China opposing the reference; and the G-77/China proposal to focus on the provision of increased financial resources, including ODA.

The US proposed additional paragraphs based on the AHEG FINTEST report pertaining to:

- mainstreaming SFM in national development strategies and highlighting forests' contributions to poverty alleviation and economic and social development;
- improving rent capture from forest management;
- fulfilling ODA commitments and increasing the share of SFM-related ODA;
- inviting the World Bank to attract private investment to forests and incorporate SFM into its policies and strategies; and
- developing the SFM component of the GEF's Sustainable Land Management focal area.

This proposal and other outstanding issues were discussed in informal consultations on Thursday, 13 May. The resolution was adopted in the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: In the preamble, UNFF reaffirms that finance and transfer of EST are essential for sustainable development of all types of forests, particularly in developing countries and CEITs, and takes note of the AHEG FINTEST recommendations with a view to REIAF, the Brazzaville Global Workshop, and views exchanged at UNFF-4.

In the operational paragraphs, UNFF: encourages Member States, the CPF, and other organizations, bodies and processes to take concrete action on the AHEG FINTEST recommendations, as appropriate; and decides to give further consideration to FINTEST in the UNFF programme of work.

CLOSING PLENARY

During the closing Plenary, on Friday morning, 14 May, delegates approved without comment the Chair's Summaries of the Africa Day Panel Discussion (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.1), the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.2), the Panel Discussion on the role of forests in achieving broader development goals (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.3), and the SIDS Day Panel Discussion (E/CN.18/2004/CRP.4).

PREPARATIONS FOR THE AHEG PARAM: Pekka Patosaari introduced a note on progress in preparing the meeting of the AHEG PARAM (E/CN.18/2004/6), noting that the Secretariat is preparing documentation to assist experts in undertaking the tasks mandated. Noting that only 32 expert nominations have been submitted, he urged Member States to submit their nominations as soon as possible.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2007: Patosaari also introduced a note on the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2006-2007 (E/CN.18/2004/14), to be submitted to the UN General Assembly in time for its fifty-ninth session. The framework includes long-term objectives, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievements, and strategies to achieve objectives. Noting that UNFF will undertake a review of its activities at UNFF-5 that may require revisions to the 2006-2007 work programme, he underlined that the strategic framework acts as a placeholder, and that any modifications of the programme will be submitted to ECOSOC in order to make appropriate recommendations to the UN General Assembly on necessary revisions to the proposed programme budget. Switzerland noted that the submission of the 2006-2007 strategic framework to ECOSOC should not, in any way, pre-empt the UNFF-5 decision on the future of UNFF.

DATES AND VENUE FOR UNFF-5: Delegates agreed that UNFF-5 would be held from 16-27 May 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. Delegates adopted the UNFF-5 provisional agenda (E/CN.18/2004/L.2) without amendments.

ADOPTION OF UNFF-4 REPORT: Delegates adopted the final report of UNFF-4 without comment (E/CN.18/2004/L.1). Delegates also adopted final resolutions on FRSK, MAR/C&I, REIAF, SCAF, FINTEST. These will be included in the final UNFF-4 report.

CLOSING STATEMENTS: Pekka Patosaari said that UNFF is the key international institution for comprehensive dialogue on forests, and emphasized the high degree of trust and friendship that characterizes UNFF. He also noted the important role of the CPF and said that the next year will be very important for UNFF.

Qatar, on behalf of the G-77/China, thanked the Secretariat and Bureau and welcomed further progress in the achievement of SFM.

Noting its positive engagement in the process, Ireland, on behalf of the EU and candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, expressed disappointment at the failure to advance thematic issues and, therefore, the process as a whole and called for the development of core future goals for the forest process and an IAF.

Sharing the disappointment of many delegations about the lack of a resolution on TFRK, Canada noted that TFRK had been an important element throughout the discussions, stressed the link of TFRK to SFM and committed to attend to the issue at the national and international levels, welcoming the upcoming expert meeting in Costa Rica.

Noting the heavy agenda, the US welcomed rich dialogue on TFRK involving indigenous representatives as the real experts both in the MSD and as members of delegations.

Switzerland expressed disappointment that there was no resolution on TFRK, one of the main topics of UNFF-4, and that no agreement on the linkage of SFM and the ecosystem approach had been reached, but said that the resolution on the REIAF process and the attached questionnaire were a sign for the commitment to reforming UNFF.

Russia was confident that the positive trends that came to light at UNFF-4 would be continued at the next session.

Mexico regretted not reaching agreements on TFRK and enhanced cooperation.



Lamenting that their voices and input had been limited, Emily Caruso, Forest Peoples' Programme, on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples and NGOs, noted lack of agreement between governments on fundamental issues for indigenous peoples, including their rights and free prior informed consent and customary mechanisms for the protection of TFRK, all of which they said must be based on the recognition of indigenous ownership and control of their knowledge, territories and resources. She recognized that UNFF is not the appropriate forum for this debate and said the expert meeting on TFRK in Costa Rica will be an important venue for indigenous experts and government representatives.

Chair Isakov said that despite the heavy agenda the spirit of cooperation at UNFF-4 was remarkable and encouraged delegates to maintain this momentum over the coming year. He closed UNFF-4 at 1:28 pm.

UNFF-5 REPORT

Immediately after the closure of UNFF-4, Chair Isakov opened the first meeting of UNFF-5, and delegates elected by acclamation the following UNFF-5 Bureau members: Francis K. Butagira (Uganda), Adam Craciunescu (Romania), Manuel Rodriguez Becerra (Colombia), and Denys Gauer (France). Chair Isakov postponed election of the Asian Group Bureau member and closed the meeting.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF UNFF-4

The fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests will likely be remembered as one of the most ambitious sessions. The UNFF-4 agenda was a rich palette of issues ranging from traditional and scientific forest-related knowledge to the social and cultural aspects of forests. However, throughout the two weeks, it appeared that many participants seemed more intent on one single issue – the preparations for next year's review of the effectiveness of the current international arrangement on forests. This is not surprising given that the future of UNFF and the sustainable forest management dialogue hinges on UNFF-5 and the review process.

Over the last 12 years, since the adoption of the Forest Principles and Agenda 21, the international community has worked hard to operationalize the concept of sustainable forest management. Yet, for all its effort, it is still struggling to put into practice what it set out to do a decade ago, namely to find the right balance between the economic imperatives of forestry and conservation within a social context that demands an ever-increasing degree of accountability.

Despite recurrent calls for specificity, much of the formal discussions at UNFF-4 remained at a high level of generality. There were concrete proposals intended to pour life into the current *modus operandi* of UNFF, but those ran up against opposition and talks on two of the five thematic issues collapsed. As a result, to the chagrin of many, the meeting failed to adopt resolutions on enhanced cooperation and on traditional forest-related knowledge. This analysis considers some of the achievements and shortcomings of UNFF-4, and offers some observations on the political dynamics constituting UNFF at this critical juncture.

ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE THE RHETORIC TREADMILL

One positive aspect of UNFF-4 was that some countries went beyond empty rhetoric and sought innovative ways to jumpstart political will by introducing new incentives into UNFF. Several countries made concerted efforts to enhance cooperation with other institutions by linking SFM with the application of the ecosystem approach developed under the CBD. This proved to be too difficult, since others refused to deal with issues that are being discussed in other fora. Those who opposed the idea were so adamant that they blocked the entire resolution on enhanced cooperation that sank as a result, taking down with it important paragraphs on other topics.

The most significant collateral damage was the loss of already agreed paragraphs linking SFM to the Millennium Development Goals. Several countries had made a strong push to link forestry with poverty reduction strategies. Many saw this as a promising way to increase forest-related funding. Perhaps more importantly, some viewed it as a way to elevate the international status of forests and forestry, given that the Millennium Development Goals are becoming a focus of the larger sustainable development agenda. The proponents of the idea eventually succeeded in allaying the concerns of developing countries that such linkage would be tantamount to imposing conditionality. In the end, however, this victory was wasted, since the resolution on enhanced cooperation in which the SFM-Millennium Development Goals link was most prominent was abandoned altogether.

TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE

In the debate on TFRK, UNFF may have gotten ahead of itself when it attempted to address the deeply political issues of indigenous peoples' rights, access and benefit-sharing and intellectual property rights, all of which have been the subject of intense political debate in other United Nations bodies for years. Given the fact that some of the delegates had not participated in such parallel processes, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNFF was not in a position to deal with these specific questions, let alone pre-empt other ongoing discussions. On the other hand, UNFF could have shaped its identity and demonstrated expertise by making an independent contribution to more technical and little researched issues, such as the development of *sui generis* systems for the protection of TFRK. In the end, the attempt to deal with too many issues backfired. The resolution on TFRK could not be adopted, so that, in the end, the only thing that delegates ultimately agreed upon was that UNFF was not the appropriate forum for addressing these issues.

POLITE LISTENING: ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

The multi-stakeholder dialogue drew superlatives from delegates who praised its organization and level of civil society participation. At the same time, many of the 150 major group representatives were dissatisfied with the mode of the dialogue. In the plenary and corridors alike, they complained that UNFF has never really incorporated the input of indigenous peoples and other members of civil society. The fact that the resolution on social and cultural aspects of forests included merely a single weak reference to indigenous peoples only served to reinforce the perception that UNFF does not reflect the concerns of civil society. Similarly, governments kept their monopoly on next year's review, by making national and CPF reports the sole basis for drawing conclusions in



the review, and carefully deleting references to "other sources of information." Thus, it should come as no surprise that environmental NGOs continue to feel as though their views are not respected within UNFF. As one NGO representative noted, it is hard to persuade NGOs that it is worth investing scarce resources in the UNFF, when the return on investment is so meager.

Indeed, few members of civil society view UNFF as a forum for a genuine exchange of views and opportunity to advance the SFM agenda. This raises the question of the ramifications of the civil society disengagement for the design of the post-UNFF arrangement, as well as for its long-term viability. The fact that the agreed review process does not allow input from members of civil society is likely to perpetuate their sense of alienation from the process and could eventually deprive the post-UNFF arrangement of an important source of legitimacy.

PREPARING FOR THE UNFF-5 REVIEW: "READY, STEADY - GO!"

The hallmark of the session was the intense informal consultations that occurred throughout the two weeks on the future directions of the multilateral forestry process. Next year's review is highly consequential since it will set the stage for the post-UNFF-5 era. Thus delegates were eager to establish the modalities and scope of the process for preparing the review.

Given the low rate of country reporting in the past, everyone was concerned that a shortage of reports would undermine the review, and negotiating efforts focused on devising a mechanism to boost the submission of reports on which to base the review. One proposed mechanism was to send countries a questionnaire that they could use to report back to UNFF the extent of their implementation and the contributions that UNFF and the CPF have made to it. Initially, many delegations were opposed to idea of a questionnaire, wary that the questionnaire might force them to report and afraid that their countries would be judged and ranked. However, these fears were allayed after it was made clear in the resolution text that the questionnaire would be voluntary. Reaching agreement in the wee hours of the last day brought relief to many and the resulting resolution can be considered a notable achievement of UNFF-4.

QUO VADIS: CONTEMPLATING THE POST-UNFF ERA

One point of clear consensus in Geneva was that UNFF has failed to deliver on its stated aims, and that continuing the arrangement in its current form is neither politically viable nor desirable. Even countries who were traditionally enthusiastic supporters of UNFF are now willing to concede that the arrangement has been only marginally successful. As such, many have noted that the virtually unanimous agreement among delegations that a serious change is needed should now be the starting point for discussions on the post-UNFF arrangement.

The major players conducted their consultations in a constructive mood, eschewing worn-out arguments for and against a convention, and seeking agreement on the particular objectives of a post-UNFF arrangement before trying to choose the most suitable arrangement for achieving these goals. This is perhaps the most significant dynamic shift that has occurred within UNFF since its inception.

Several countries appear to be still entrenched in their positions regarding a convention, and the pro-treaty camp can boast new additions in its ranks. However, the vast majority of countries are flexible, willing to keep all options open, and eager to find out what everybody else wants before they align themselves. In this context, the upcoming September meeting of the *ad hoc* expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests promises to be an important threshold.

It is worth noting that many want to elevate the legal status of UNFF vis-à-vis other instruments relevant to forests. Some see elevating the status of UNFF as a way to gain advantage in turf wars with other legally binding instruments, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. Whether such calculus affects the likelihood of a convention, and what the post-UNFF format would look like is far from clear at this stage. For now, a host of proposals are on the table, from a non-binding arrangement that is looser than UNFF, to developing a forest protocol to the CBD, to negotiating a global forest convention.

Eventually, the effectiveness of any post-UNFF-5 arrangement will depend not so much on its particular modalities, but on governments' political will to work within it. The real question, therefore, is not what type of umbrella arrangement to create, but how to jumpstart the political will of governments and what incentives might be introduced to induce action on the ground. The continued supply of constructive ideas, such as linking forestry to poverty reduction as a way of boosting SFM financing, may be essential for the viability of the multilateral forestry process. On balance, however, the productive mood that permeated UNFF-4 made the session a generally positive experience and elevated hopes that next year governments will take advantage of the opportunity to shape the post-UNFF arrangement.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE UNFF-5

THIRD SESSION OF THE UN PERMANENT FORUM

ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES: The third session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will take place from 10-21 May 2004, at UN headquarters in New York. The special theme of this session is indigenous women. For more information, contact: Yao Ngoran, NGO Unit, UN Division for Social Policy and Development; tel: +1-212-963-3175; fax: +1-212-963-3063; e-mail: ngoran@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfi/PFI3/index.html>

FAO NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION: The FAO Regional Forestry Commission Meeting for the Near East will be held from 24-28 May 2004, in Beirut, Lebanon. For more information, contact: Hassan O. Abdel Nour, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO Regional Office for the Near East; tel: +20-2-331-6000; fax: +20-2-749-5981 or 337-3419; e-mail: hassan.abdelnour@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/forestry2/index.jsp?siteId=1400&sitetreeId=2970&langId=1&geoId=0>

SYMPOSIUM ON THE EFFECTS OF FOREST CERTIFICATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND EMERGING ECONOMIES:

This symposium will be held from 10-11 June 2004, in New Haven, Connecticut, US. For more information, contact: Elizabeth Gordon, Yale Program on Forest Certifi-



cation; tel: +1-203-432-3034; fax: +1-203-432-0026; e-mail: elizabeth.gordon@yale.edu; Internet: <http://www.yale.edu/forestcertification/symposium>

TWENTIETH SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY

BODIES TO THE UNFCCC: The Twentieth Session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will convene from 16-25 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://unfccc.int/sessions/sb20/index.html>

FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF AGROFORESTRY:

This Congress will take place from 27 June to 2 July 2004, in Orlando, Florida, US. For more information, contact: Mandy Padgett Stage, School of Forest Resources & Conservation, University of Florida; tel: +1-352-392-5930; fax: +1-352-392-9734; e-mail: mrpadgett@ifas.ufl.edu; Internet: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/wca>

ITTC-36: The 36th session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) and Associated Sessions of the Committees will take place from 20-23 July 2004, in Interlaken, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Manoel Sobral Filho, Executive Director, ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itto@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

NEGOTIATIONS OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO

ITTA, 1994: The negotiations of a successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA, 1994) will be held from 26-30 July 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland, following ITTC-36. For more information, contact: Manoel Sobral Filho, Executive Director, ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itto@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

SECOND WORLDWIDE SYMPOSIUM ON GENDER AND FORESTRY: This symposium, organized by the Gender and Forestry Research Group of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), will be held from 1-10 August 2004, in Arusha, Tanzania. For more information, contact: Ann Merete Furuberg, Hedmark University College, Norway; tel: +47-90-163092; fax: +47-62-945753; e-mail: merete.furuberg@hedmark-f.kommune.no; Internet: <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/iufro/iufro.net/d6/wu61800/2an-gender.htm>

UNFF AHEG PARAM: The *ad hoc* expert group of the UNFF on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests (AHEG PARAM) will meet from 6-10 September 2004, in New York. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3263; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: barsk-rundquist@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests>

FAO EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION AND UNECE TIMBER COMMITTEE: This joint session of the FAO European Forestry Commission and the UNECE Timber Committee will take place from 4-7 October 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact UN Economic Commission on Europe (UNECE) Secretariat; UNECE/FAO

Timber Branch; tel: +41-22-9171234; fax: +41-22-917-0041; e-mail: info.timber@unece.org; Internet: <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/tc-meet.htm>

THIRD IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS:

The third World Conservation Union Conservation Congress will be held from 17-25 November 2004, in Bangkok, Thailand. For more information, contact: Elroy Bos, IUCN Wetlands and Water Resources Programme; tel: +41-22-999-0251; fax: +41-22-999-0025; e-mail: elroy.bos@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.iucn.org>

TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC: The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will meet from 6-17 December 2004, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://unfccc.int/cop10/index.html>

EXPERT MEETING ON TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELATED INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS: This meeting, organized by the International Alliance of Indigenous Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests, will take place from 6-10 December 2004, in San José, Costa Rica. For more information, contact: Annabel Pinker; tel: +66-53-904037; fax: +66-53-277645; e-mail: iait@loxinfo.co.th; Internet: <http://www.international-alliance.org>

ITTC-37: The 37th session of the ITTC and Associated Sessions of the Committees will be held from 13-18 December 2004, in Yokohama, Japan. For more information, contact: Manoel Sobral Filho, Executive Director, ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itto@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION: The International Meeting will be held from 10-14 January 2005, in Port Louis, Mauritius. It will be preceded by informal consultations on 8 and 9 January. For more information, contact: Diane Quarless, UNDSO, SIDS Unit; tel: +1-212-963-4135; fax: +1-917-367-3391; e-mail: Mauritius2004@sidsnet.org; Internet: <http://www.sidsnet.org/>

CCD CRIC-3: The third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-3), a subsidiary body of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, is tentatively scheduled to convene from 31 January to 11 February 2005, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2802; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; Internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

CBD SBSTTA-10: The tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention of Biological Diversity is tentatively scheduled from 14-18 February 2005, in Thailand. 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>

UNFF-5: The fifth session of UNFF is scheduled to be held from 16-27 May 2005, in New York. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: barsk-rundquist@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests>