



UNFF AHEG-PARAM HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2004

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) met for its second day on Wednesday at UN headquarters in New York. In the morning, participants continued their exchange of views on other outcomes of the international arrangement on forests (IAF), including efforts of countries to implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) Proposals for Action, and engaged in a stakeholder panel discussion on raising the profile of forests and forestry. In the afternoon, participants discussed options for a new IAF.

Editors' Note: Participants are acting in their personal capacity as experts.

PLENARY

OTHER OUTCOMES OF THE IAF: Mauricio Limón Aguirre (Mexico) outlined problems with access to resources, and said in Mexico legally binding instruments (LBIs) have been very effective for implementing national actions. He highlighted the need to strengthen international cooperation.

Eun Ju Ahn (Republic of Korea) said obstacles in implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action include the number and complexity of the Proposals for Action, lack of incentives for implementation and inadequate technology transfer. She emphasized that increased coordination and international cooperation are needed.

Richard Ballhorn (Canada) said national implementation and reporting are not easy and emphasized the value of regional processes and the use of country-led initiatives to develop policy ideas.

Gregoire Nkeoua (Republic of Congo) stressed the need to involve locals in forest management; strengthen forest administration and management capacities; and develop land tenure plans. He said SFM should be based on subregional needs, and emphasized the need for building capacity.

Ramiro Riobo (Chile) stressed the need to assist forest communities, improve the mobilization of financial resources, increase incentives for SFM, and improve monitoring. He underlined the value of the IAF to provide guidelines and coordinate work by forest agencies.

Vincent Kasulu Seya Makonga (Democratic Republic of Congo) noted the need for more equity between the State, people and economic players. He said SFM should proceed using an ecosystem approach, and underlined that the IAF should not be binding or impinge on national sovereignty.

Abdelhak Boussaha (Algeria) said sustainable development, land degradation and desertification are interlinked and, calling for increased international solidarity, stressed the need to take account of country specificities when designing and implementing forest-related activities.

Andre-Jules Madingou (Gabon) highlighted the benefits of international and regional cooperation, giving the work completed at the Yaounde Forest Summit as an example.

Hosny El-Lakany, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), clarified that the CPF will continue and will likely be part of the new IAF. Regarding the CPF Sourcebook on Funding for SFM, Tiina Vahänen, FAO, explained that it is increasingly being used and will be reviewed in 2005.

OPTIONS FOR A NEW IAF: In the afternoon, Co-Chair Andrea Alban Duran (Colombia) opened discussions on options for a legal framework on forests (E/CN.18/AC.3/2004/2), reminding experts that they were not mandated to negotiate the IAF.

Claudio Gutierrez (Argentina) said the need to review the IAF should be decided periodically, and called for a comprehensive framework, including provisions on financial support, technical and scientific cooperation, and reporting. He favored complementing biennial UNFF sessions with regional intersessional meetings, and proposed holding electronic consultations until UNFF-5.

Hans Hoogeveen (The Netherlands) said the IAF should aim to: strengthen long-term political commitment and international cooperation; support national- and regional-level implementation; provide a platform for monitoring; and link UNFF to other processes. He identified the following binding options: a convention with objectives, targets and provisions on criteria and indicators (C&I), technology transfer and capacity building, finance, and monitoring, assessment and reporting; a framework convention; or a protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). He said non-binding options include voluntary guidelines, and continuing or discontinuing UNFF. He stressed the need to involve all actors and stakeholders.

Ballhorn said SFM could be the goal of the IAF, and stressed the need for achievable objectives and targets. He said non-binding options include improving UNFF and building on certification. Regarding binding options, he expressed support for a convention, and cautioned against a protocol under the CBD, noting possible conflicts between the concept of SFM and the ecosystem approach.

Jan McAlpine (US) said the future IAF needs to be focused and should have a clear purpose to catalyze national-level action. She recommended convening biennial UNFF sessions with high-level segments every four years, and focusing work on the basis of 10- to 15-years work cycles. She also suggested establishing a trust fund to facilitate collaboration and implementation of SFM.



Aysar Tayeb (Saudi Arabia) urged a more focused approach that addresses forests in a comprehensive manner and aims to facilitate and catalyze actions on the ground, and recommended a binding convention with enhanced mechanisms for monitoring actions or a protocol under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Mahouna Tchiwanou (Benin) recommended that the IAF address issues relating to women.

Modesto Fernandez (Cuba) said the priority for developing countries is to strengthen the means for implementation through capacity building, stable financing and technology transfer.

Jitendra Vir Sharma (India) stressed the need to address finance, technology transfer, and indigenous knowledge issues, and suggested that a convention would not be flexible enough to address regional and local concerns.

Noting that there are several processes addressing forest issues, Franz Perrez (Switzerland) reviewed several options for the IAF, including discontinuing the IAF, discontinuing the UNFF, maintaining the *status quo*, developing a binding instrument, and reforming the existing IAF. He underlined that a new IAF needs to include both policy and action components and concrete and attractive goals and objectives.

Tony Bartlett (Australia) suggested a two-tiered IAF with: a focused global forum every 2-4 years to review implementation and discuss emerging issues; and a regional focus to facilitate implementation and State and stakeholder participation and cooperation.

Ricardo Ulate (Costa Rica) stressed that a future IAF would require a body with political authority, clear goals and objectives, improved reporting, and a regional structure, and noted the need to reposition forests within the global political agenda.

Oleg Shamanov (Russia) said the objectives of an IAF should be concrete, achievable and manageable, noted that options include an LBI and non-LBI, highlighted his preference for a framework convention, as opposed to a protocol, and emphasized the importance of collaboration.

Maria da Conceicao Ferreira (Portugal) stressed that an IAF requires clear objectives, and emphasized that providing an IAF with political authority is critical to its effectiveness. She said that, while fora contribute to learning and experience sharing, conventions are policy-making bodies, which are prioritized by governments.

Manuel Briceno (Venezuela) noted that forest issues are covered by several other international institutions, but that a convention covering all types of forests is needed. He said a convention would enable countries to craft national policies on a common basis and that UNFF-5 could be a platform from which to formulate a convention.

Jose Solano stressed the need to raise the profile of forests internationally, and said that the form of the IAF should follow its function.

Tasso Rezende de Azevedo (Brazil) said Brazil is currently holding consultations to determine its position on the new IAF, noting that a convention is not an option. He stressed the need for a refocused forum and a small number of global goals. He said countries should define their own priorities and targets and the forum should aim to: monitor progress towards the global goals; promote cooperation and collaboration; and promote incorporation of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action into other processes. He expressed support for holding forum sessions every two to three years and regional intersessional meetings.

Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa) underscored the importance of setting the IAF's goals and objectives before negotiating its form. He expressed support for cross-cutting goals and an IAF that would, *inter alia*: raise the profile of SFM; promote collaboration with other instruments; provide for means for implementation; and encourage bottom-up approaches that accommodate regional arrangements.

Erik Bjernebye (Norway) stressed that establishing the Global Environment Facility as the financial mechanism for forest-related work would require an LBI and would limit funding to certain types of projects, and expressed support for a trust fund. He stated that an LBI would raise the profile of forest issues.

Anders Portin (Finland) highlighted support for a stronger IAF and, noting limitations with regional instruments, stressed the need to address issues at the global level.

STAKEHOLDER PANEL DISCUSSION

STATEMENTS: Jeannette Gurung, on behalf of all Major Groups, noted the danger of marginalizing major groups, and urged the AHEG-PARAM to identify more effective means for major group participation.

Peter de Marsh, Farmers and Small Forest Owners, stressed that family forest owners need, *inter alia*, improved market access and tax regimes that encourage SFM.

Bernard de Galember, Business and Industry, said the IAF must, *inter alia*: identify basic SFM principles; be compatible with the rules of the World Trade Organization; and enforce national SFM commitments.

Atse Yapi, Scientific and Technological Communities, identified that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a positive model of science and policy interaction, and underscored the need for more research and communication.

William Street, Workers and Trade Unions, said the causes of deforestation and degradation are social, and advocated an equitable and just enabling framework derived from participatory processes similar to those used by some certification schemes.

Jebra Ram Muchahary, Indigenous Peoples, said an LBI would not stop deforestation, would legitimize forest commercialization and be colonial in nature, and advocated for a flexible non-binding instrument.

Miguel Lovera, Non-governmental Organizations, emphasized that the IAF should recognize human rights, support customary rights of local and indigenous communities, and promote genuine community-based forest management that empowers people.

Peter Wood, Children and Youth, urged ECOSOC accreditation for youth and children groups, and said a new IAF should prioritize forest education, increase political will, improve implementation, and promote the participation of youth and children.

Ruth Mbiru, Women, stressed the role of women in sustainable development and forestry, and noted the failure to take into account their needs and roles at the management and policy- and decision-making levels. She called for the creation of governance structures that enable women to constructively engage in poverty alleviation and land tenure and health issues.

DISCUSSION: Participants discussed the lack of support from indigenous people for an LBI on forests. Some participants noted that an international instrument, legally binding or not, could secure indigenous peoples' rights and involvement in decision making. One panelist noted that the CBD model of indigenous participation is unique and unlikely to be reproduced in other international processes.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Many experts were positive after the afternoon session on options for a future international arrangement on forests (IAF), noting that the discussions have become more focused and substantive. One expert stated that he expected a balanced and concise list of options to be forwarded to UNFF-5 and that there seems to be consensus on the need to strengthen the current IAF and develop a clear focus and objectives. Others thought that the AHEG-PARAM's discussions have seemed somewhat constrained, but that the panel discussion provided some fresh inputs to the dialogue, including the need to involve Major Groups in the process of developing a new IAF. Several experts noted that a stronger IAF could only realistically result from binding commitments regarding technology transfer and the provision of financial resources.