



## UNFF AHEG-PARAM HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 9 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 third day on Thursday at UN headquarters in New York. In the morning, participants continued discussing options for a new international arrangement on forests (IAF). In the afternoon, participants reviewed draft text prepared by Co-Chairs Tim Rollinson (UK) and Andrea Alban Duran (Colombia) to be included in the AHEG-PARAM report to UNFF-5.

*Editors' Note: Except where indicated, participants are acting in their personal capacity as experts.*

### PLENARY

**OPTIONS FOR A NEW IAF:** Ramiro Riobo (Chile) underlined that an effective convention should include States representing the greatest proportion of native forests. He said an international directorate of forests is needed to provide guidelines and receive reports on implementation. He also recommended strengthening work with the FAO through a network of regional and country offices with a focus on reaching out to local communities.

Hoda Salah El-Din Rashed (Egypt) supported the need to shift emphasis in a new IAF from discussion to implementation.

Gregoire Nkeoua (Republic of Congo) noted problems relating to access to resources, capacities, local-level implementation and duplication, and stressed the need to: reinforce the forum as a consultation and coordination body; hold regional meetings; assist regional agencies; improve access to financing; and promote the development of forest inventories.

Yugi Imaizumi (Japan) said regardless whether a new IAF includes a legally binding instrument (LBI), there is a need for monitoring and reporting on implementation of agreed actions and sustainable forest management (SFM) as well as for policy guidance and coordination. He stressed that a new IAF should be authoritative and that the financial implications of each option must be assessed, noting that the share of costs borne by individual donor countries must not be excessive.

Don Wijewardana (New Zealand) highlighted the need for a new IAF to facilitate regional initiatives, and build on work that has already been accomplished. He said a holistic and tiered approach is needed and that a new IAF should focus on country-level actions.

BRAZIL recommended renewing UNFF's mandate for an additional 15 years, and suggested focusing on expanding SFM through domestic policies based on clustered Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) Proposals for Action. He proposed that UNFF hold biennial policy meetings complemented by regional or thematic intersessional meetings, and recommended channeling funding through existing national, regional and global mechanisms.

The UK noted that a convention on forests could rationalize the body of forest-related international law and lead to more effective treatment of forest issues or, considering possible overlaps, lead to further complexities and uncertainties. He said a gap-filling convention may be a solution.

Noting that a stand-alone convention would not solve all problems, Hossein Moeini Meybodi (Iran) stressed that any option needs to be realistic and efficient, and should have as its main objectives to focus on SFM and adopt concrete measures to improve implementation. He said a new IAF should include, *inter alia*, elements on reporting and undertakings to provide resources. He called for increased involvement of regional processes, and noted that a strengthened UNFF requires increasing its regular budget.

James Singh (Guyana) said a new IAF should aim to reduce poverty, improve local-community livelihoods, and include mechanisms for financial support, technology transfer, capacity building and rewards or incentives for countries working diligently towards SFM.

Eun Ju Ahn (Republic of Korea) noted that a framework convention would not preclude a protocol under other instruments and could focus on coordinating existing programmes for a holistic approach.

Djauhari Oratmangun (Indonesia) suggested that a global forum on forests should address, *inter alia*, technology transfer, capacity building and financial assistance. He said a strengthened UNFF should focus on priority issues, including illegal logging, adopt a few global goals and objectives, and ensure stakeholder participation. He expressed reservations regarding the treaty approach.

Fred Manuel Batlle Rio (Guatemala) favored an LBI, noting that it would bolster, strengthen and enrich national legislation.

Bill Mankin, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), drew attention to a WWF discussion paper, which was written from the perspective that: an LBI is not a viable political option; the IAF will continue;



and it needs to be radically overhauled. He noted the need to build upon the strengths of the current arrangement and that all weaknesses should be discarded. He concluded by urging creativity.

Fady Raymond Asmar (Lebanon) said cooperation under a new IAF should be strengthened, noting the importance of cooperation with FAO and UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

Carlos Salinas (Peru) noted there had been little discussion concerning the middle ground between an LBI and non-LBI, and said whichever option is chosen must be adequately financed.

Bashir Ahmed Wani (Pakistan) noted the need to reformulate the IAF, supported the adoption of a protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), said a permanent funding mechanism is critical, and advocated for creating a trust fund that would promote SFM.

Armas Jappinen (Sweden) noted that the IAF needs political buy-in and input from all stakeholders, and urged the forest sector to reach out to the international community to expand cooperation with other sectors.

Alain Chaudron (France) proposed that a new IAF be linked to FAO and UNEP and be based in Rome, and said that national forest programmes are critical for implementation.

Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) stressed that form must follow function, and said a new IAF must have clear and focused objectives, raise the profile of forest issues, have strong political authority, increase Major Group participation in policy deliberations, facilitate access to resources, and promote cooperation and interactions with regional processes.

Mauricio Limon Aguirre (Mexico) stressed the need for substantive improvements to the existing IAF through structural changes. Underlining the value of LBIs, he emphasized that, in Mexico, LBIs have been very effective for implementing national actions, noting that laws must be realistic to be effective.

Xia Jun (China) said a new IAF must promote the implementation of SFM and the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action at national and local levels, address finance, technology transfer and capacity building issues, and strengthen cooperation among countries and international and regional processes in a comprehensive manner.

Andreas Drouzas (Greece) called for a holistic approach and comprehensive steps towards SFM and, noting the key element is commitment, stated that an LBI would overcome many of the obstacles identified.

John Bazill (European Community) said a new IAF must facilitate communication, promote inter-sectoral initiatives among international institutions and processes, and strengthen financing tools.

Matthias Schwoerer (Germany) outlined several advantages of an LBI, including increased political support, a reliable long-term framework and reference base for forest policy, and a higher international profile. He also highlighted the benefits of a framework convention in terms of addressing global and regional goals and fostering gradual commitment building over time.

**CONSIDERATION OF ELEMENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT:** In the afternoon, Co-Chair Alban Duran (Colombia) introduced a Co-Chairs' draft text summarizing the meeting's discussions. Several experts stressed that the report should not convey the impression that it is a consensus document.

Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands) stressed the need to better convey consensus reached on strengthening UNFF, ground-level allocation of resources and stakeholder involvement. He said a strengthened UNFF must not retain its current institutional structure, and requested including voluntary guidelines as a non-binding option, and outlining in a balanced manner the advantages and disadvantages of various options. He stressed the need to agree on an intersessional process until UNFF-5.

Claudio Gutierrez (Argentina) requested that the importance of financing be better reflected throughout the document, and that options for strengthening the forum be highlighted.

Moeini stressed that financing is one of the main gaps in the existing IAF and, regarding options, that strengthening of the IAF requires, *inter alia*: a declaration of commitments and collaboration on reporting and financing; and participation of regional representatives.

Tasso Rezende de Azevedo (Brazil) requested including among the options for an IAF those of an approach based on global goals and of developing voluntary guidelines. He also suggested identifying specific objectives for each option.

Modesto Fernandez (Cuba) suggested that the views of experts should be separated from those presented by governments and major groups, and emphasized the need for stronger language on means of implementation.

Wijewardana proposed that the report list the preconditions needed to ensure the success of each option.

Bazill suggested that the positive mood of the meeting be more strongly conveyed.

Tony Bartlett (Australia) proposed that the report reflect the need to raise awareness of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and their use in facilitating country evaluations. He also proposed the inclusion of the establishment of protected areas as a goal, and said monitoring under the IAF needs to be simple and cost effective.

Noting that they are not mutually exclusive, Franz Perrez (Switzerland) cautioned against characterizing the options as legally binding versus non-legally binding.

Schwoerer said the text could be improved by taking out duplicative text, and suggested amendments regarding, *inter alia*, the advantages of an LBI.

Erik Bjernebye (Norway) requested reflecting the direct relationship between the strength of the instrument and the strength of the financial arrangement.

Jan McAlpine (US) suggested further work on identifying common elements regardless of the form of the arrangement, and exploring working options prior to UNFF-5. She also requested including possible elements of the future IAF.

Aguirre said distinguishing between binding and non-binding instruments may harden positions, and requested reflecting the need for a holistic vision in the report.

Xolisa Mabongo (South Africa) requested a clear articulation of means of implementation and identification of financial modalities for each option. He stressed the need to agree on goals and objectives before identifying options, and to discuss possibilities to continue dialogue prior to UNFF-5.

Riobo expressed doubts regarding the way text on bvcertification appears in the report, and said a binding agreement entails that donors are bound to specific levels of financing.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

Some experts stated that, in spite of outstanding work to be carried over from Thursday's discussion, there is no reason to think that the group would not fulfill its mandate in a timely manner. Although some expressed strong disappointment with the negotiating spin that some delegates were trying to place during the review of the Co-Chairs' draft summary report, many experts thought the tone of the discussion remained, for the most part, focused. Many experts agreed that informal discussions should continue in the lead-up to UNFF-5. However, the modalities for such dialogue appear undetermined.