



**SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS *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: 7-10 SEPTEMBER 2004**

The United Nations Forum on Forests *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 from 7-10 September 2004, at UN headquarters in New York. The Expert Group, which included 68 experts: assessed existing regional and international binding and non-binding instruments and processes relevant to forests; considered reports prepared by countries, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat and outcomes of UNFF sessions; considered other outcomes of the international arrangement on forests (IAF); reviewed relevant experiences of existing forest-related and other relevant organizations and agreements, focusing on complementarities, gaps and duplications; and adopted a report providing a range of options for the future framework to be forwarded to the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-5).

Many participants found that the meeting provided an open exchange of views and generated momentum regarding the development of a new IAF. Experts found several areas of common ground and points of convergence regarding the objectives and content of a new IAF, most underlining the need to strengthen the IAF and for the implementation of prior commitments. With this in mind, experts identified the following options to be considered by UNFF-5 in May 2005: developing the existing IAF; and negotiating a convention or a protocol.

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFF AND THE AHEG-PARAM**

The United Nations Forum on Forests was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in October 2000 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). The principal functions of UNFF are 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-related issues and emerging areas of concern; enhance cooperation, as well as policy and programme coordination 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.

ECOSOC also directed that, within five years, the UNFF was "to consider with a view to recommending to ECOSOC, and through it to the General Assembly, the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests."

The IPF/IFF processes produced 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.

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**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, addressed progress towards the establishment of the CPF – a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats – and discussed the duration of Bureau members' terms.

**UNFF-1:** The first session of UNFF took place from 11-23 June 2001, at UN headquarters in New York. Delegates 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 (WSSD) and 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; specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the IAF; proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005; and other matters. Delegates discussed the terms of reference for all three *ad hoc* expert groups and decided to carry forward these discussions to UNFF-3.

**UNFF-3:** UNFF-3 met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26 May - 6 June 2003. UNFF-3 adopted resolutions focusing 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, including AHEG-PARAM, a task that had been carried forward from UNFF-2. A decision on the voluntary reporting format was also adopted.

**UNFF AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING (AHEG-MAR):** The AHEG-MAR convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8-12 December 2003, to, *inter alia*: assess existing reporting requirements and monitoring and assessment procedures under relevant forest-related international conventions, processes, instruments and organizations; propose ways to monitor and assess progress based on voluntary reporting; and recommend ways to build capacity for monitoring, assessment and reporting. The AHEG-MAR recommended that UNFF: urge relevant organizations to identify areas of overlap in reporting and inconsistencies in reported information; invite relevant organizations and instruments, including the CPF, to prepare a document that overviews global progress toward SFM for consideration at UNFF-5; continue monitoring and assessing progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action until UNFF-5; and recommend more coherence and linkages between reports generated for domestic purposes and international reporting.

**UNFF AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON FINANCE AND TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES (AHEG-FINTEST):** The AHEG-FINTEST convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15-19 December 2003, to: assess the status of official development assistance for SFM; review the effectiveness of, and propose measures to improve, existing international SFM financing; explore ways to increase SFM financing; assess the role of private SFM financing; review and assess existing initiatives on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (EST) and knowledge diffusion for SFM promotion. The AHEG-FINTEST recommended, *inter alia*, that: countries and CPF members facilitate the flow of information relating to EST by linking with information networks and strengthening cooperation with enterprises and public institutions using EST; countries include the promotion of private investment in national SFM financing strategies; and countries take measures to improve rent capture from forest management.

**UNFF-4:** UNFF-4 met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3-14 May 2004. UNFF-4 adopted resolutions on: social and cultural aspects of forests; forest-related scientific knowledge; monitoring, assessment and reporting and criteria and indicators; finance and transfer of EST; and the review of the effectiveness of the IAF. Delegates were not able to complete and adopt resolutions on traditional forest-related knowledge and enhanced cooperation. A multi-stakeholder dialogue was held and delegates considered country experiences and lessons learned, with particular emphasis on a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the IAF at UNFF-5.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

*Editor's Note: Participants at the meeting acted in their personal capacity as experts and are referred to by their names and nationalities. Interventions on behalf of country delegations or other observers are indicated in this summary solely by the name of the country or organization.*

Pekka Patosaari, United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Coordinator and Head, opened the AHEG-PARAM on Tuesday morning, 7 September 2004, noting that its tasks include identifying complementarities, gaps and duplications in the existing IAF, reviewing catalysts and obstacles, and providing a balanced range of options to UNFF-5.

The participants then elected Tim Rollinson (UK) and Andrea Alban Duran (Colombia) as Co-Chairs. Co-Chair Rollinson stressed that the AHEG-PARAM is not a negotiating group, and Co-Chair Alban Duran emphasized that the discussions must be inclusive. The experts adopted the agenda (E/CN.18/AC.3/2004/1) without amendment.

Hosny El-Lakany, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), said CPF members have reaffirmed their commitment to UNFF, and to enhancing collaboration and coordination on forest issues as well as assisting member countries to implement sustainable forest management. El-Lakany urged the AHEG-PARAM to formulate a clear set of recommendations for UNFF-5.

During the first two and a half days, experts addressed each of the three agenda items. On Thursday afternoon and Friday morning, the experts reviewed a Co-Chairs' draft text of the report of the two-and-a-half-day discussion. By Friday afternoon, a final draft report was tabled for the experts to consider.



### **COMPLEMENTARITIES, GAPS AND DUPLICATIONS AND REVIEW OF EXPERIENCES WITH EXISTING PROCESSES AND INSTRUMENTS**

On Tuesday, experts discussed complementarities, gaps and duplications and reviewed experiences arising from existing forest-related regional and international binding and non-binding instruments and processes (E/CN.18/AC.3/2004/2). Regarding complementarities, experts noted, *inter alia*:

- the importance of focusing on all forest-related processes and instruments, including UNFF country-led initiatives;
- the need to emphasize coordination and collaboration among CPF members; and
- the complementary nature of current processes.

Regarding gaps and duplications, experts stressed the need to:

- expand the role of the CPF and strengthen inter-agency coordination and cooperation;
- catalyze action to cover all aspects of sustainable development;
- facilitate access to available funds;
- identify important Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests Proposals for Action;
- address new and emerging issues;
- adopt a regional approach to implementation;
- define SFM more clearly;
- define the relation between global, regional and national efforts;
- focus on implementation;
- engage more countries and stakeholders in discussions;
- address specific country needs, such as the conservation of genetic diversity and poverty reduction;
- strengthen and streamline monitoring, assessment and reporting; and
- clarify the roles of the UNFF focal points.

On reviewing experiences, experts voiced opinions indicating:

- a failure of UNFF to address the relationship between the ecosystem approach and SFM;
- negative consequences of a lack of focus;
- difficulties in following up on goals set at the global level;
- a legally binding instrument (LBI) on forests would not necessarily improve the implementation of SFM;
- AHEG-PARAM could learn from regional experiences;
- problems of coordination between processes and instruments do not result from duplication and overlapping responsibilities, but from lack of cooperation;
- a strong, central voice for forests within the UN system is important and would avoid fragmentation of the forest agenda; and
- assessing implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and forest-related agreements has been difficult.

For a more detailed account of these discussions, see

<http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13118e.html>

### **OTHER OUTCOMES OF THE IAF**

On Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, experts considered other outcomes of the IAF and reviewed relevant experiences with existing forest-related regional and international binding and non-binding instruments, organizations, and processes. Co-Chair Alban Duran introduced a document on catalysts and obstacles in implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and UNFF decisions (E/CN.18/AC.3/2004/3). Catalysts identified by the experts include:

- increased implementation of national forest programmes (NFPs);
- country-led initiatives;
- partnerships;
- the role of the CPF and its initiatives;
- opportunities for exchanges of experiences;
- bringing Major Groups into IAF policy discussions;
- the value of the IAF in providing guidelines and coordinating work by forest agencies; and
- the positive impact of work by the UNFF, including the development and implementation of criteria and indicators (C&I) for SFM.

Obstacles identified by the experts include:

- inadequate means of implementation due to scarce resources, lack of capacities, and insufficient technology transfer;
- poverty constraints;
- a disconnect between policy and needs on the ground;
- declining political interest in forest issues;
- the separation of SFM from sustainable development discussions;
- debt burdens, insufficient resources and a lack of stable financing;
- poor monitoring and reporting;
- the number and complexity of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and lack of clear goals and targets; and
- a lack of incentives for implementation.

Experts noted the need for:

- coordination at the national level and assessment of the usefulness of existing instruments and mechanisms;
- involvement of all stakeholders and raising foresters' awareness of international instruments;
- using international policy making to facilitate SFM at the national and regional levels;
- facilitating the efficient use of resources and integration of forest and other issues, including poverty eradication;
- taking into account the different needs and responsibilities of countries and the need for international cooperation;
- enhancing policy integration and coordination;
- raising the profile of forests in national policy agendas;
- improving access to financial resources;
- recognizing the roles of non-governmental actors in policy development;
- using country-led initiatives to develop policy ideas;
- addressing regional needs, such as gaps in technology transfer and financing for SFM;
- addressing national circumstances and the social and cultural dimensions of forests;
- improving monitoring;
- valuing forest goods and services properly;
- facilitating integration with the Millennium Development Goals and poverty eradication targets;
- developing tangible, realistic and attractive goals;
- focusing and prioritizing activities and issues;
- addressing needs on the ground;
- better coordinating activities among CPF members;
- strengthening commitments from the donor community;
- addressing subregional needs; and
- building capacities.



For a more detailed account of these discussions, see <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13118e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13119e.html>

### OPTIONS FOR A NEW IAF

Participants discussed options for a legal framework on all types of forests (E/CN.18/AC.3/2004/2) on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning. On Thursday afternoon and Friday, experts continued discussing this issue on the basis of a Co-Chairs' draft report to UNFF-5, which included observations on a range of options.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands) noted that non-binding options include voluntary guidelines and continuing or discontinuing the UNFF, while binding options include a convention, a framework convention or a protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Franz Perrez (Switzerland) said the options for the IAF include discontinuing the IAF, discontinuing UNFF, maintaining the *status quo*, developing an LBI, and reforming the existing IAF. Richard Ballhorn (Canada) said non-binding options include improving UNFF and building on certification activities, and Tasso Rezende Azevedo (Brazil) noted voluntary guidelines as a non-binding option. Many experts said the various options are not mutually exclusive and, noting the need to avoid polarizing positions, cautioned against dividing the options as a legally binding versus non-legally binding framework. Claudio d' Ayola (Italy) said an LBI can be adopted following the reform of UNFF, and stressed the need for all the options to be made attractive to donors to foster funding.

Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa) and Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) expressed support for identifying the IAF's function and objectives before debating its form. Hoogeveen and Armas Jappinen (Sweden) stressed the need to involve all actors and stakeholders in the process.

Claudio Gutierrez (Argentina) said the need to review the IAF should be decided periodically.

Ricardo Ulate (Costa Rica) and Mabhongo proposed identifying implementation modalities for each option. Several experts also requested assessing the options' financial implications.

Mabhongo stressed the need to identify the transition process between the existing arrangement and the future IAF and, with several other experts, called for the continuation of the dialogue prior to UNFF-5.

Bill Mankin, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), drew attention to a WWF discussion paper highlighting that the IAF needs to be radically overhauled if it is to continue.

**DEVELOPING THE EXISTING IAF: AIM:** The experts agreed that the profile of forests must be raised at all levels. Hoogeveen (Netherlands) said the IAF should aim to: strengthen long-term political commitment and international cooperation; support national- and regional-level implementation; enhance monitoring; and link UNFF to other processes. Ballhorn said SFM could be the main goal of the IAF. Jan McAlpine (US) and Aysar Tayeb (Saudi Arabia) said the future IAF should aim to catalyze national-level action. Mabhongo (South Africa) expressed support for an IAF that would, *inter alia*: raise the profile of SFM; promote collaboration with other instruments; and encourage bottom-up approaches that accommodate regional arrangements. Hossein Moeini Meybodi (Iran) stressed that any option should have as its main objectives a focus on SFM and the adoption of concrete measures to improve implementation. Tony Bartlett (Australia)

proposed that the establishment of protected areas be a goal of the IAF, and James Singh (Guyana) emphasized reducing poverty and improving local-community livelihoods. Azevedo (Brazil) said the forum should aim to, *inter alia*, monitor progress towards global goals. Several experts said the IAF should promote national- and local-level implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and Azevedo suggested their incorporation into other processes.

Several experts noted the need for the IAF to strengthen cooperation among countries and international and regional processes, as well as between international processes within and outside the IAF.

**CONTENT:** Several experts called for a focused and comprehensive framework, which would provide for implementation means, such as financial support, technical and scientific cooperation, and monitoring and reporting. Jitendra Vir Sharma (India) stressed the need to address indigenous knowledge-related issues, and Gregoire Nkeoua (Republic of Congo) emphasized environment- and development-related concerns. Djauhari Oratmangun (Indonesia) said a strengthened UNFF should focus on priority issues, including illegal logging. Singh said a new IAF should include incentives for countries working diligently towards SFM. While Hoda Salah El-Din Rashed (Egypt) stressed the need to shift emphasis in a new IAF from discussion to implementation, Perrez (Switzerland) and Yuji Imaizumi (Japan) stressed the need for policy guidance. John Bazill (European Community) said a new IAF must strengthen financing tools, and Gschwandtl (Austria) said that it must facilitate access to resources. Many delegates suggested that the IAF strengthen major group participation. Meybodi (Iran) stressed that strengthening the IAF requires, *inter alia*, a declaration of commitments, collaboration regarding reporting and financing, and participation of regional representatives in forum sessions.

Many experts called for clear, concrete, achievable and focused objectives, goals and targets. Perrez said these must be attractive to politicians. Oleg Shamanov (Russia) said specific targets should build on existing internationally agreed forest-related objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

Mabhongo expressed support for cross-cutting goals, and Azevedo (Brazil) supported a small number of global goals, which countries would commonly achieve on the basis of domestically-defined priorities and targets. A representative of the Brazilian Government said setting overarching goals should not be a priority.

**STRUCTURE:** Hoogeveen and Mauricio Limon Aguirre (Mexico) stressed that a strengthened IAF requires structural changes to the existing arrangement.

McAlpine recommended convening biennial UNFF sessions with high-level segments every four years, and working on the basis of 10- to 15-year work cycles. Gutierrez (Argentina), Azevedo (Brazil) and a representative of the Brazilian Government suggested complementing biennial UNFF sessions with regional or thematic intersessional meetings. Bartlett (Australia) suggested a two-tiered IAF with a global forum every two to four years to review implementation and discuss emerging issues and a regional focus to facilitate implementation and cooperation. Don Wijewardana (New Zealand) highlighted the need for a new IAF to facilitate regional initiatives, adopt a tiered approach, and focus on country-level actions. Nkeoua (Republic of Congo) stressed the need to reinforce the forum as a consultation and coordination body and hold regional meetings in conjunction with FAO regional meetings. Anders Portin (Finland) recommended addressing issues



at the global level. Ramiro Riobo (Chile) said an international directorate of forests is needed to provide guidance and consider reports on implementation.

Ulate (Costa Rica) stressed that a future IAF would require a regional structure and, with Maria da Conceicao Ferreira (Portugal), Imaizumi (Japan), and Gschwandtl (Austria) emphasized that providing an IAF with strong political authority is critical to its effectiveness. Brazil recommended renewing UNFF's mandate for an additional 15 years, and suggested focusing on expanding SFM through domestic policies based on clustered IPF/IFF Proposals for Action.

**FINANCING:** Meybodi (Iran) noted that a strengthened UNFF requires increasing its regular budget. McAlpine (US) and Erik Bjornebye (Norway) suggested establishing a trust fund to facilitate collaboration and implementation of SFM. Bashir Ahmed Wani (Pakistan) said a permanent funding mechanism is critical, and advocated creating a trust fund that would promote SFM. Imaizumi stressed 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.

**CONVENTION OR PROTOCOL APPROACH:** Azevedo said Brazil is currently holding consultations to determine its position on the new IAF, noting that a convention is not an option. Sharma (India) said a convention would not be flexible enough to address regional and local concerns.

Matthias Schwoerer (Germany) noted that advantages of an LBI include increased political support and a reliable long-term framework and reference base for forest policy. Schwoerer and Bjornebye said an LBI would also raise the international profile of forests. Andreas Drouzas (Greece) noted that commitment is the key element to overcoming obstacles to SFM, and expressed support for an LBI. Fred Manuel Batlle Rio (Guatemala) favored an LBI, noting that it would strengthen national legislation. Riobo (Chile) underlined that an effective convention should include countries representing the greatest proportion of native forests, and said an LBI entails that donors are bound to specific levels of financing. Aguirre noted that LBIs have been effective in facilitating implementation of national actions in Mexico. Hoogveen (Netherlands) said a convention, a framework convention or a protocol to the CBD could include objectives and targets, and provisions on: C&I; technology transfer; capacity building; a financial mechanism; and monitoring, assessment and reporting.

Ballhorn (Canada) expressed support for a convention, and cautioned against a protocol to the CBD, noting possible conflicts between the concept of SFM and the ecosystem approach. Manuel Briceno Mendez (Venezuela) expressed support for a convention, stating that it would provide a common basis to craft national policies. Tayeb (Saudi Arabia) expressed support for a convention with enhanced monitoring mechanisms or a protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Wani (Pakistan) expressed support for a protocol to the CBD.

Shamanov (Russian Federation) expressed support for a framework convention. Eun-ju Ahn (Republic of Korea) said a framework convention could focus on coordinating existing programmes, and Schwoerer noted that it would allow addressing global and regional goals and foster commitment over time. Ferreira (Portugal) noted that conventions are policy-making bodies, which are often preferred by governments over experience-sharing fora. She highlighted that the distinction between a framework convention and a convention is not clear cut.

The UK noted that a convention 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.

Bjornebye stressed the direct relationship between the strength of the instrument and its financial arrangement, and stressed that establishing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the financial mechanism for forest-related work would require an LBI and would limit funding to certain types of projects.

For a more detailed account of these discussions, see <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13119e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13120e.html>

### STAKEHOLDER PANEL DISCUSSION

On Wednesday, a stakeholder panel discussion was held on raising the profile of forests on the international agenda at which Major Groups highlighted the need for more effective participation under a new IAF.

- Farmers and Small Forest Owners highlighted the need for improved market access and tax regimes that encourage SFM.
- Business and Industry said an IAF should identify basic SFM principles, be compatible with the rules of the World Trade Organization and enforce national SFM commitments.
- The Scientific and Technological Community identified the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a positive model of science and policy interaction and urged further research on forest issues.
- Workers and Trade Unions expressed concern regarding the social causes of deforestation, and said an equitable and participatory enabling framework is necessary.
- Indigenous Peoples called for a flexible non-binding instrument.
- Non-Governmental Organizations said the IAF should support human rights and rights of local and indigenous communities and promote genuine community-based forest management that empowers people.
- Children and Youth supported an IAF that prioritizes forest education and increases political will.
- Women called for the creation of governance structures that enable women to constructively engage in decision-making on SFM.

For a more detailed account of these discussions, see <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13119e.html>

### CLOSING SESSION

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT:** On Friday afternoon, Co-Chair Alban Duran introduced a revised Co-Chairs' draft report, including comments made on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. Hoogveen (Netherlands) said the revised text successfully captured the positive spirit and richness of the discussions, and noted that the options for a new IAF are not mutually exclusive but support one another. Juan Holguin (Ecuador) requested that the report better describes the option of a framework convention. The experts then adopted the report.

**Final Report:** The final report provides a brief background on the AHEG-PARAM. The main thrust of the report is a section that summarizes discussions on:

- complementarities, gaps and duplications, as well as review of relevant experiences of existing forest-related regional and international binding and non-binding instruments and



processes;

- consideration of other outcomes of the IAF and efforts of countries to implement the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action; and
- options with respect to “consideration with a view to recommending the parameters for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.”

*Complementarities, gaps and duplications:* The report highlights that, during the discussion, which did not reach a consensus, experts concluded that, *inter alia*:

- forests are cross-sectoral in nature;
- there could be a role for a central voice for forests in the UN system;
- coordination and cooperation both nationally and internationally is important;
- financial constraints are serious obstacles to implementation; and
- stakeholder involvement is important.

*Consideration of other outcomes of the IAF:* The report highlights that, in the discussion, which did not reach a consensus, experts noted several catalysts to implementation, including:

- long-term political commitment;
- increased development and implementation of NFPs;
- certification;
- partnerships;
- the CPF; and
- country- and organization-led initiatives.

This section of the report also notes several obstacles to implementation, which include:

- forests’ lack of status on the political agenda;
- insufficient financing;
- inconsistent reporting;
- a lack of clear goals and targets; and
- inadequate use of partnership opportunities.

*Options with respect to “consideration with a view to recommending the parameters for developing a legal framework on all types of forests”:* This section of the report states that some experts expressed the importance of clear targets in any future IAF. In particular, it notes that clear targets could include some measure of the contribution that combating deforestation and forest degradation could play in achieving previously agreed goals, such as those found in the Millennium Declaration. It also says that some thought specific targets should be developed to this end, such as the reduction of deforestation by X percent by 2015, or of illegal logging by Y percent.

The report also notes that other overarching objectives of the IAF might include:

- securing high-level political support;
- securing more stable and predictable financing;
- promoting transparency;
- developing partnerships; and
- facilitating cross-sectoral coordination.

The remainder of the report spells out two specific options that countries might consider at UNFF-5 when they take a decision on the future IAF. These include developing:

- the existing IAF; or
- an LBI on forests, such as a forest convention or a protocol to an existing LBI.

The report notes that many experts were cautious in drawing too sharp a distinction between these two approaches so as not to foreclose the possibility that elements from one approach could be folded into the other. For each option, the report provides the aims and possible policy and financial modalities.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Manuel Rodriguez, UNFF-5 Bureau, said there is common ground as well as many points of convergence on objectives and substance of a new IAF, and consensus on the need to strengthen the IAF and implement commitments. He recommended that informal consultations, including regional discussions and country-led initiatives, be held prior to UNFF-5. McAlpine (US) stressed the importance of holding informal consultations during the lead-up to UNFF-5, and suggested that a country-led initiative would be useful to expand discussions and deepen understanding regarding the substantive activities of an IAF. Mexico stated that it would be willing to host a meeting in January 2005 as part of such a country-led initiative.

Pekka Patosaari congratulated the experts on a successful meeting, and said the idea of holding regional briefings prior to UNFF-5 should be further explored.

Co-Chair Alban Duran closed the meeting at 5:38 pm.

### A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF AHEG-PARAM

The meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legally Binding Framework on All Types of Forests (AHEG-PARAM) took place at a critical juncture in the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) process. After four years of policy dialogue, the international forest and forestry community must now reconsider its objectives and, perhaps more importantly, review the institutional arrangement that will best deliver on these objectives. For its part, the AHEG-PARAM was assigned the task of furnishing the UNFF with an overview of options on possible future arrangements. In the end, the AHEG-PARAM was able to complete this task and produced a document that appeared satisfactory to all the experts. The fifth session of UNFF, which is to convene in May 2005, will have a dual task: review the effectiveness of the current international arrangement on forests (IAF) and, from the options formulated by the AHEG-PARAM, reach agreement on the most appropriate way forward.

What makes this juncture even more critical, however, is that over the last decade the profile of forests has steadily declined in importance on the international agenda. This decline is associated with the perceived lack of funding for forest projects, implementation problems with sustainable forest management (SFM) at the country-level and the primary focus on policy activities within the UNFF.

Within this context, this analysis will examine the meeting and its implications for a future IAF.

### FORMAL AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

In spite of the fact that the AHEG-PARAM was designed to be a meeting of independent experts and had the pretence of being a non-political discussion, there was a strong political undertone throughout the meeting, particularly when the experts turned their attention to the final report and the options contained therein. The meeting was not a particularly detailed discussion of the legal technicalities of the various options and was more of an open exchange of views of the various options available. This is not surprising, nor is it necessarily a negative thing. But it goes some way in



explaining why the *formal* AHEG-PARAM discussion at times had the appearance of being polarized: some countries continue to want a forest convention and others are flatly opposed to the idea. This divergence of views is reflected in the final report in which the listed options fall within two categories: developing the existing IAF; and developing a convention or a protocol to an existing agreement. The report, however, cautions against making too sharp a distinction between these two options so as not to foreclose the possibility that elements from one might be combined with elements of the other to forge a compromise framework.

However, there seemed to be a sense among the experts that the discussion on the future arrangement would be counter-productive if the point of departure for such discussion is constituted by opposing views on the future IAF. Here, most were in agreement that now is the time to begin identifying common objectives of the new IAF. The corollary to this was a general recognition that the question of modalities must come later. In this regard, some experts suggested that the new IAF might benefit from clear targets in order to better direct its work. Others proposed a host of different, more general, objectives, such as increasing financing, promoting transparency and improving coordination. Of course, there was no agreement on these objectives, since the experts were not mandated to reach one. But what this focus on objectives suggests is that the international forest community possesses a good deal of goodwill and a collective desire to improve and strengthen the IAF.

It was clear that both experts and governments were intent on encouraging SFM implementation under a new IAF, and that a balance between policy and project activities is needed under such an international arrangement. Throughout the meeting, experts explored the substantive focus of a possible IAF, which many said would help determine its future structure.

Indeed, one of the more productive aspects of the AHEG-PARAM was the *informal* "corridor" conversations among the experts, which sent a very clear signal that countries are now beginning to think more critically and more creatively about what the future IAF might look like. While a good deal of the *formal* discussion centered on the identification of objectives, a considerable amount of the *informal* discussion focused on the "third way": not a full fledged convention, but certainly something with more political authority, streamlining, stronger coordination and focused priorities than the current arrangement.

### THE THIRD WAY

At the end of the week, it was clear that country representatives would continue to explore the third way – to find a middle ground while still calling attention to the importance of forest activities. Over the course of the four-day meeting, a number of experts, particularly from donor countries said that adequate funding exists to successfully implement SFM work. For instance, Global Environment Facility (GEF) policy provisions to fund forest projects will be subject to much attention in the donor community, as countries will be searching for ways to allocate existing money in the GEF to countries where greater SFM work is needed. Despite the GEF's strong funding base, a number of developing countries are not convinced that there is adequate multilateral funding for forest projects and have suggested that their countries need more.

Although still very much an academic exercise, many experts and observers spent the week experimenting with different ideas – for instance, securing financing through the Global Environment

Facility, designing a grassroots, opt-in framework, and establishing overarching targets – as well as rearranging old ones and thinking strategically about how to reorient the direction of the IAF.

Some of the tough questions currently being asked include: How can the IAF be strengthened? How can a reformed IAF increase the flow of public and private financing for SFM? How can the CPF ensure that coordination and cooperation are a greater priority among its membership? From a financial and logistical point of view, what should be the frequency, duration and geographic location of formal sessions? What should be their mandates?

### CONCLUSION

The AHEG-PARAM generated momentum in the discussions on a new IAF. Several experts at the meeting expressed the need to build on this work and continue discussion in the lead up to UNFF-5. The US and Switzerland supported the idea of a country-led initiative to facilitate further discussions and Mexico offered to host a meeting in January 2005, which would be an open discussion on all the options presented in the report of the AHEG-PARAM. This country-led initiative represents an opportunity to build on the work of the AHEG-PARAM and possibly foster more creative and strategic thinking.

Can successful implementation of SFM objectives be achieved and the profile of forest issues be raised on the political agenda? Where the momentum generated at the AHEG-PARAM meeting will lead will only be known when UNFF reconvenes in May 2005. In the interim, one thing is certain: if the future IAF is going to be an improvement over the current one, some accommodation needs to be made to strengthen centralized coordinating and implementing bodies, secure predictable funding for SFM activities, mobilize country-led initiatives and attract more high-level political attention to the world forest situation.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON REGENERATING MOUNTAIN FORESTS – PREREQUISITE FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT:** This IUFRO-conference will be held from 12-16 September 2004, in Kloster Seeon, Germany. It will gather experts in the field of mountain forests regeneration to discuss approaches and best practices for natural and artificial regeneration, target values of regeneration for sustainability of mountain forests management, and economic and social impacts on mountain forest regeneration. For more information, contact: Pasi Puttonen; tel: +358-91-915-8118; fax: +358-91-915-8100; e-mail: [pasi.puttonen@helsinki.fi](mailto:pasi.puttonen@helsinki.fi); Internet: [http://www.forst.uni-muenchen.de/EXT/LST/WALDB/iufro/start\\_en.html](http://www.forst.uni-muenchen.de/EXT/LST/WALDB/iufro/start_en.html)

**UNECE/FAO WORKSHOP ON ILLEGAL LOGGING AND TRADE OF ILLEGALLY DERIVED FOREST PRODUCTS IN THE UNECE REGION:** This Joint UNECE/FAO workshop, to be held from 16-17 September 2004, in Geneva, Switzerland, will discuss the extent and causes of illegal logging in the UN Economic Commission for Europe region. For more information, contact: Ed Pepke, UNECE; tel: +41-22-917-2872; fax: +41-22-917-0041; e-mail: [ED.Pepke@unece.org](mailto:ED.Pepke@unece.org); Internet: <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/sem/2004-1/sem-2004-1.htm>



**MEETING ON ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE: FINDING PATHS TO ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEMAKING – WATER, FORESTS, AND MINERALS:**

This meeting will be held from 16-19 September 2004, at Wilton Park, Sussex, United Kingdom. The conference will emphasize positive theories and examples to counter the persistent focus on negative linkages among threats to the environment, development, and peace. For more information, contact: Sandry Koo, Conference Administrator; tel: +44-1903-81-7765; fax: +44-1903-81-7162; e-mail: sandry.koo@wiltonpark.org.uk; Internet: http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE FOREST SECTOR: CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM IN TROPICAL COUNTRIES:**

This forum, to be held from 21-23 September 2004, in Seoul, Republic of Korea, will identify current trends and potential impacts of carbon forestry, with an emphasis on the forest industry and rural livelihoods, in tropical countries of the Asia-Pacific region. For more information, contact: Yeo-Chang Youn, Seoul National University, Department of Forest Resources; tel: +82-2-884-754; fax: +82-2-875-476; e-mail: youn@snu.ac.kr; Internet: http://www.itto.or.jp

**CITES COP-13:** The thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species will be held from 2-14 October 2004, in Bangkok, Thailand. For more information, contact: CITES Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8139; fax: +41-22-797-3417; e-mail: cites@unep.ch; Internet: http://www.cites.org/eng/news/meetings/CoP13.shtml

**MCPFE EXPERT-LEVEL MEETING:** The first Expert-Level Meeting of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) will convene from 14-15 October 2004, in Warsaw, Poland. For more information, contact: Piotr Borkowski, Head of the Liaison Unit Warsaw; tel: +48-22-331-7031; fax: +48-22-331-7032; e-mail: liaison.unit@lu-warsaw.pl; Internet: http://www.mcpfe.org/index.html

**THIRD IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS:** The third IUCN World 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/congress

**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/

**AFRICAN REGIONAL PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR CRIC-3:** The African regional preparatory conference for the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-3) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will convene in December 2004 (exact dates to be determined), in Bamako, Mali. 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

**EXPERT MEETING ON TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELATED INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS:**

This meeting, which will be held from 6-10 December 2004, in San José, Costa Rica, is organized by the International Alliance of Indigenous Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests, and supported by the secretariats of the UNFF and the Convention on Biological Diversity. 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 International Tropical Timber Council will be held from 13-18 December 2004, in Yokohama, Japan. For more information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: ittc@itto.or.jp; Internet: http://www.itto.or.jp

**SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER AGREEMENT, 1994:**

The second session of the United Nations Conference for the Negotiation of a Successor Agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 will be held from 14-18 February 2005, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Alexei Mojarov, UNCTAD Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-5809; fax: +41-22-917-0051; e-mail: alexei.mojarov@unctad.org; Internet: http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Startpage.asp?intItemID=1942&lang=1 or http://www.itto.or.jp

**CBD SBSTTA-10:** The tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity is tentatively scheduled for 14-18 February 2005, in Thailand. For information, contact CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: http://www.biodiv.org

**SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (COFO):** This meeting will be held from 15-19 March 2005, at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: Douglas Kneeland, FAO Forestry Department; tel: +39-06-5705-3925; fax: +39-06-5705-5137; e-mail: douglas.kneeland@fao.org; Internet: http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/2962/en

**SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON LEGAL ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN FOREST SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** This meeting, organized by IUFRO, will be held on 1 April 2005, in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro. For more information, contact: Peter Herbst, IUFRO; tel: +43-42-425-2471; fax: +43-42-426-4048; e-mail: hp@net4you.co.at; Internet: http://iufro.boku.ac.at/

**CRIC-3:** CRIC-3 is tentatively scheduled to convene from either 18-29 April 2005 or 25 April to 6 May 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

**UNFF-5:** The fifth session of UNFF is scheduled to be held from 16-27 May 2005, in New York, US. This meeting will represent the conclusion of UNFF's five year mandate, where delegates will discuss the future of the UNFF, among other things. 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