



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 13 No. 12 Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Thursday, 21 March 1996

IPF-2 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 1996

Delegates began consideration of the Co-chair's drafts on elements for the report of the session on the eighth day of the second session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. They debated the level of negotiations and began discussions of the draft on programme element I.2, underlying causes. Morning sessions were canceled to permit regional consultations.

CO-CHAIR'S DRAFT REPORT SECTIONS

Co-Chair KRISHNAN suggested that the discussion was not a negotiation, which should be reserved for IPF-4, but that delegates should recommend adjustments to the Co-chair's draft texts.

The EU said the conclusions should reflect: assessment and evaluation of forest goods and services; development and implementation of national plans and programmes considering the full range of forest benefits; domestic and international financial resources; and donor coordination. The G-77/CHINA said each set of conclusions should refer to means of implementation, provision of new and additional resources, and technology transfer. Focus should be on international action and coordination, not prescription of conditions for national policies. Recommendations to countries should be in accordance with national plans and policies. MALAYSIA said postponing negotiation until the final IPF session would overload that meeting. IPF-3 will deal with more contentious substantive issues. The PHILIPPINES said the process delineates parameters for future discussion. The basis of negotiations needs to be clarified.

The Co-chair said a line-by-line debate would produce agreed text but would consume time. He said a discussion could arrive at a text agreeable to all. A progress report would be sent to CSD. CANADA said the drafts should be action-oriented with specific recommendations. IPF-3 should build a critical mass of proposals on actions, consider intersessional outcomes, and then negotiate recommendations.

The US said the Co-chairs' texts are parameters of the debate based on discussions. She said negotiation of text could not precede negotiation of concepts. AUSTRALIA said it is too early to negotiate line-by-line. BRAZIL said clarification and enhancement, not negotiation, were necessary to include positions not reflected. Recommendations should be more precise and should be balanced because this will be text

subjected to final negotiations. JAPAN said these are not negotiated texts. IRAN said the views are to some extent negotiated text. MALAYSIA said it remains to be seen whether delegates will avoid negotiating. The Co-Chair said the debate would seek an agreed output that would be adopted as the text of the Panel, leaving scope for negotiations later.

UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION

The Co-chair's draft on programme element I.2 agrees that causes of deforestation and forest degradation are complex and, citing a number of factors, that it: notes wider geographic and time scales; discusses requirements, contexts and benefits of NFAPs and NFPs; mentions plantations and non-timber forest products and services; refers to a diagnostic framework and joint management with involvement of stakeholders and local people; and calls for coordination with other conventions. It also recommends actions and requests that the Secretariat take account of other programme elements, government initiatives and the IPF-1 report.

The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT stressed the need to acknowledge international and multilateral pressures leading to deforestation. IPF should develop concrete proposals and identify responsible parties. WWF noted the inherent danger in the statements that deforestation may not necessarily be harmful and that plantations may take pressures off natural forests; social repercussions to indigenous communities can result. The G-77/CHINA asked that interventions only clarify what was previously said. Causes of deforestation in all countries must be viewed from a historical perspective. He asked that the language reflect that the IPF "noted" rather than "agreed" on causes of deforestation.

The EU stated that the Panel's list of suggestions could be more clearly reflected in the Co-chair's report. Grazing pressures and forest fires should be recognized as causes of deforestation. CANADA noted the need to clearly distinguish between direct and underlying causes of deforestation. Poverty would be better linked to issues outside of forests. Deforestation may not be harmful in the context of land-use plans. AUSTRALIA stated that agricultural pressures and sustainable agriculture techniques should be addressed and that mechanisms for information sharing need to be better defined. BRAZIL noted that the list of causes of deforestation and forest degradation did not include all those raised by IPF. The international causes of deforestation should be recognized, particularly those related to trade, market forces and the under-valuation of non-wood products and forest services.

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SWITZERLAND suggested that “ecosystem level” replace “eco-regional” in a statement on approaches to land use because “regional” carries several connotations in UN parlance. The Secretariat’s preparation for IPF-3 should take into account relevant activities undertaken by the FCCC, CBD and INCD. MEXICO called for clarification of references to the “diagnostic framework,” the collection of information on forest cover and data on forest modification. She said C&I has not been raised in reference to managing information and suggested deleting the phrase. NORWAY said that while the document states that many causes of deforestation are outside the forest sector, it does not mention the impact of the forest sector directly and should refer to timber extraction. He said that the reference to rational justifications for changes in forest structure is dangerous. He emphasized: the identification of gaps in knowledge with regard to qualitative aspects; the involvement of local people in decision-making; and stated that forest modification should be planned.

The US said that including the statement that major land areas under forest cover are sometimes outside the direct control of national governments gave the impression that this was an underlying cause of deforestation. The reference to the effect of consumption and production patterns is unclear and should better reflect the full range of views. She noted that a reference to joint management is not appropriate for all countries. She suggested a new paragraph identifying examples of policies and interventions that have contributed to deforestation as well as those that have supported SFM. GABON stated that the paragraph on relevant international agreements should begin by mentioning the Forest Principles. He said the conclusions were timid on the indirect causes of deforestation and should reflect ideas on foreign debt and inadequate resources for implementing SFM. He noted that the text is confined to capacity building and should be expanded to other methods of implementation. He said the conclusions should also note the need for new and additional resources for developing countries.

INDIA emphasized poverty and consumption in the paragraph on the causes of deforestation, and poverty alleviation in the paragraph calling for an assessment of forest strategies in non-forest sectors of the economy. He added a reference to “emerging participatory management systems” to the paragraph on improved international collaboration, and emphasized the cross-sectoral nature of SFM. MALAYSIA noted that, in order to be credible, IPF must propose specific actions in three areas: identifying underlying causes; addressing these causes; and identifying difficulties in implementing SFM. He highlighted poverty alleviation and energy consumption in reference to underlying causes.

CANADA noted the importance of utilizing language which recognizes sub-national governing structures such as provincial governments within a federal system. The Co-chair stated that a revised draft text will be circulated Friday incorporating the day’s comments.

FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS

The draft Co-chair’s text recognizes, regarding desertification: relevance to both northern boreal forests and arid and semi-arid areas; action to address underlying causes; prevention over restoration; and bottom-up approaches. Regarding air-borne pollution, the text notes: the effect on many parts of the world; action is required outside the forest; the Critical Loads approach; and increased monitoring.

The EU stated that, under the section on desertification: the reference to Northern boreal forest should be deleted; “secure rights and access to land action” are important; initiatives should come from affected countries, and conclusions should focus on

fragile ecosystems, LFC, and underlying causes. Under the section on air-borne pollution, he stated the priority of this issue, that it cannot be addressed by forestry, and stressed language on international action. The UN ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UK on behalf of the NGO working group suggested: addressing specific problems of boreal ecosystems; considering root causes of poverty; stressing equal partnerships including those with private businesses; emphasizing regeneration linked to community access control; identifying actions for local capacity building and mechanisms for implementation. He highlighted restoration and reforestation.

The G77/CHINA added references to the desertification section on: air-borne pollution, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe; the merits of bottom-up approaches “along with top-down approaches;” “every interested party” rather than “stakeholder;” the IPF mandate, Agenda 21 and the Forest Principles; “development of those areas with fragile ecosystems” rather than “development of countries with fragile ecosystems”; and carrying out programmes under the Desertification Convention “within the broader mandate of IPF.” He deleted the entire reference to management of forests and “traditional production systems.” Under the section on air-borne pollution, he suggested: the Critical Loads approach for parties to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, while others should “consider” this approach; transferring “the best available, as well as future, technology;” evaluating how countries address forest decline; and studying biomass, management, regeneration and silviculture of native species and historical levels of sulfur dioxide emissions.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates and observers expressed mild discontent over the day’s progress and the possible impact of IPF-2’s conclusions on the entire IPF work programme. Some suggested that the Bureau and Co-chairs may have provided better guidance in terms of defining procedures and expected outcomes. Others noted the reserved tone of the reports and their apparent failure to call for action. It was suggested that discretionary editing of the reports may not have captured the full range of issues presented and that the time allotted for negotiations must be increased if a meaningful agreement is to be attained.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

CO-CHAIR’S DRAFT REPORT SECTIONS: Delegates are expected to continue discussion of draft conclusions on the underlying causes of deforestation and then move to I.4, fragile ecosystems, I.5, countries with low forest cover and II, financial assistance and technology transfer.

FOREST POLICY ON THE INTERNET

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) maintains a special section of the *Linkages* World Wide Web server for information on international forest policy:

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/forestry/>

- photos from IPF sessions
- archive of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*
- audio recordings of interventions at IPF-2 (in RealAudio)
- links to official documentation
- updates on past and upcoming forest policy related