



UNFF-5 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2005

On Thursday, delegates met all day in a high-level segment (HLS) on actions for the future. A concurrent negotiation on the Chair's draft decision was conducted throughout the day and late into the evening. A small contact group was also established to negotiate a ministerial declaration.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT: ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The EU noted that the final decision on the text would have to be postponed if targets and goals could not be agreed upon. NEW ZEALAND stressed, *inter alia*, biennial regional meetings and assessment of progress, and new funding arrangements. MALAYSIA called for firm political commitment, capacity building and funding. SOUTH AFRICA called for the international arrangement on forests (IAF) to identify concrete ways in which forests can contribute to poverty alleviation. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION recommended an enhanced UNFF role in policy development.

INDIA highlighted the role of his country's Joint Forest Management Principles in poverty eradication. FRANCE highlighted successes of the Congo Basin Partnership, and stressed ambition and flexibility in the IAF. GABON, on behalf of the Central African Forest Commission, lamented that despite seven percent of his country's forest being protected, deforestation continues. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO emphasized watershed rehabilitation and the challenge posed by natural disasters. FINLAND expressed disappointment that a legally-binding instrument (LBI) would not be achieved, since soft law would draw soft commitment. The UK stressed linking strategic objectives to the MDGs and said the status quo is unacceptable.

LATVIA called for clear definition of the state's role in achieving SFM. LESOTHO noted that its forest policy encourages gender equality. ARGENTINA recommended time-bound objectives. CHINA stressed, *inter alia*, national sovereignty over SFM and involvement of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and major groups in policy development. COLOMBIA called for renewed political and financial commitment from the international community. LEBANON noted that the CPF was a success, and that donor countries must continue to work in partnerships. Noting the lack of an LBI, HUNGARY supported voluntary responsibility on agreed guidelines. The NETHERLANDS stated that absence of action jeopardizes the credibility of all forest-related processes.

The CPF emphasized the importance of streamlining forest reporting and said CPF members are accountable to their respective governing bodies. ITTO stated that deforestation is concentrated in 15 countries and that few environmental services are provided by

plantations. UNCCD cautioned against blaming deforestation on its victims. The CBD highlighted contributions of its 2010 Global Biodiversity Targets and forest program. UNEP questioned why the IAF remains weak despite consensus regarding the decline of forest ecosystems, and stated that the MDG review would hold the UNFF accountable for its inaction.

WOMEN called for structural changes within forestry organizations to address gender equality. YOUTH AND CHILDREN recommended that, *inter alia*, forestry profits reach those living in forests. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS noted that ending illegal forest activity is more a matter of social justice than enforcement. FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS called for securing land tenure and property rights and acknowledging the contributions of forests to livelihoods. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES requested addition of references to the participation of indigenous peoples in the Chair's text. NGOs stated that dialogue on an LBI has hampered badly needed implementation, and that without clear and quantifiable targets and reporting mechanisms most NGOs would not participate in an IAF.

NIGERIA and IRAN called for capacity building, financial flows, and transfer of environmentally-sound technologies in support of SFM implementation. BOLIVIA pointed to the effects of conflict on forests, and recommended democratizing access to forest resources. NORWAY stressed the need for global targets and timetables, cross-sectoral partnerships, and a regional component of the IAF. ZIMBABWE called for additional financial resources to address challenges in implementing SFM, including high national debt, poverty, HIV/AIDS and natural disasters. TANZANIA pointed to a positive correlation between forest conservation and the achievement of international development goals. POLAND emphasized the global community's common responsibility for forests. PERU listed its initiatives on SFM, including recognizing the ancestral rights of indigenous people. PAKISTAN listed its efforts to reduce dependence on natural forests.

ZAMBIA highlighted its internalization of MEA commitments. The US called for the adoption of a voluntary code, and a strengthened UNFF, which would meet biennially, with regional meetings in the off year, in conjunction with the UN regional Economic Commissions or FAO Regional Commissions.

SWITZERLAND stressed its preference for an LBI, which would guarantee financing, but added that they are ready to explore alternatives that contain time-bound goals complimented by national targets. JAPAN supported adopting a practical course of action and a code of conduct. SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO stressed the importance of decentralization, democratization and participatory planning. ITALY highlighted forest law enforcement and governance as central issues, particularly in post-conflict



situations. NEPAL pointed to the lack of financial resources for SFM. SWEDEN stressed the importance of women's role in forests. AUSTRALIA emphasized regional approaches and a strong IAF reflecting meaningful implementation. CANADA underscored its commitment to ODA and the IAF, but cautioned that it and other countries would pursue alternative processes if the UNFF failed to address deforestation and forest degradation. CROATIA, the PHILIPPINES, GUYANA and CUBA stated that any future IAF must address currently inadequate means of implementation. CHILE emphasized addressing underlying causes of disagreement within the UNFF. HONDURAS described Central America's regional approach, and stated their preference for an LBI.

Upon reading the draft ministerial declaration by Pekka Patosaari, Coordinator and Head of the UNFF Secretariat, the EU, JAPAN, CUBA, SWITZERLAND, IRAN, NORWAY, CANADA and MEXICO stated the declaration was too general and did not send a strong enough message to the UN General Assembly on behalf of the UNFF. SWITZERLAND and IRAN further commented that it did not reflect ongoing debates on major issues.

CANADA stressed the need to reflect the major building blocks of the future IAF that are still being negotiated, and focus on the MDGs. Although initially supportive of the proposed declaration, the US later proposed using the omnibus resolution to convey UNFF-5's message, and called for withdrawing the declaration. The Chair decided, and delegates agreed, to retract the draft ministerial declaration in favor of a Chair's summary.

INFORMAL CONTACT GROUP

Late Wednesday night and early Thursday morning, delegates agreed *ad ref* to language on goals to significantly increase the area of protected forests and sustainably managed forests worldwide, and reverse the decline in ODA for SFM.

MEXICO, supported by SWITZERLAND, the EU, GUATEMALA, and CANADA, cautioned against including agreed-upon goals in the draft ministerial declaration before agreement is reached on other important elements of the Chair's draft text.

On the goal concerning loss of forest cover, NIGERIA, with the US, obtained consensus on "reversing" rather than "significantly decreasing" it. MEXICO, supported by BRAZIL, GUATEMALA and SWITZERLAND, called for language on rehabilitating degraded forest land. BRAZIL added "SFM" and INDONESIA moved SFM to the top of the paragraph. The US called for "protection" of forests. NIGERIA, supported by INDONESIA, called for text on "plantation development," which was later modified to "reforestation and afforestation" by the US. The EU and CANADA stressed the need to refer to degraded forest lands. NIGERIA, with MEXICO, supported either no listing or a comprehensive listing of activities related to SFM. Delegates agreed *ad ref* on the goal to "reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM, including protection, restoration, afforestation, and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation."

The group then debated a goal on enhancing forests' contribution to development goals. MEXICO stressed environmental sustainability as one of the MDGs. NIGERIA proposed significantly reducing poverty, with ARGENTINA adding "in forest areas." The EU, opposed by BRAZIL, advanced achieving "significant reduction in the number living in extreme poverty by 2015." The US, with BRAZIL, supported a broader goal to "enhance forest-related economic, social and environmental benefits."

The EU retracted its proposal for poverty reduction by 2015 but, supported by the US, GUATEMALA and NORWAY, asked for reference to improving the livelihood of forest-dependent people. The group agreed on the goal to enhance forest contributions to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, "particularly with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability, including improving the livelihood of forest dependent people."

On the chapeau to the goals, BRAZIL, supported by COLOMBIA, INDIA, ARGENTINA and NIGERIA, proposed that "demonstrable progress" be made by 2015. SWITZERLAND, opposed by BRAZIL, preferred "no later than 2020." The US offered a compromise to specify "preferably by 2015, but no later than 2020." The EU asked whether demonstrable progress on "efforts" or "achieving" the goals should be shown by the deadline. SWITZERLAND proposed that "all possible efforts should be made to achieve the shared global goals by 2015, with demonstrable progress to be made by 2011." SWITZERLAND, with MEXICO, NORWAY, and COSTA RICA, argued that linking the forest goals review with the CSD review would help decrease reporting burdens. The US stressed the CSD has no jurisdiction over forests and, with COLOMBIA and ARGENTINA, opposed linkage to the CSD review, and suggested a 2011 review. NIGERIA stressed that the goals' timeline is contingent on means of implementation. CUBA supported a review in 2015 that is separate from the CSD review.

CANADA suggested achieving the goals "no later than 2020" and making demonstrable progress by 2015. The US opposed "achieving" the goals, and supported demonstrable progress.

The EU opposed specifying that UNFF should achieve the goals, and stressed country responsibilities. BRAZIL agreed, noting the important role of international financial institutions for pursuing the goals. He clarified that demonstrating progress will depend on means of implementation.

On a paragraph on voluntary national measures, BRAZIL, supported by NORWAY, stressed the importance of developing "integrated" policies and measures that take into account the seven thematic elements of SFM. NIGERIA, supported by the US and COLOMBIA, noted that the seven thematic elements are addressed in a separate paragraph. MEXICO, supported by the US, called for voluntary national measures, policies, actions "and"/or targets by 2007.

BRAZIL disagreed strongly with "targets," and supported language on "development or indication of measures, policies and actions." SOUTH AFRICA strongly objected.

MEXICO stressed the need to report on national forestry activities and achievements since 1992 while BRAZIL stressed reporting on future actions.

After a hiatus, BRAZIL, supported by INDONESIA, CANADA, SWITZERLAND, MEXICO and the US, offered to replace "targets" with "specific goals" and delete reference to any year. Delegates agreed with BRAZIL that the goals and targets should be "voluntary" and "national." CANADA and MEXICO favored keeping the 2007 reference.

The EU suggested a compromise consisting of deleting the 2007 reference and moving it to a paragraph on reporting. BRAZIL accepted this compromise but preferred 2010, noting that not all countries have the capacity to report by 2007. MEXICO saw no reason for the date change, noting that countries are already reporting to the FAO. The EU also objected, pointing out that all reporting would be voluntary. INDONESIA and NIGERIA opposed time-bound reporting. SWITZERLAND called for flexibility and noted that concessions in forsaking quantitative global goals were not being reciprocated. He insisted on time-bound reporting, stressed the importance of establishing a mechanism for formulating and reporting on national goals, and said that without such a mechanism national financial resources would be allocated to other policy areas.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Disheartened by the stalemate over if and how to negotiate the terms of reference for a voluntary code, some countries have discussed the possibility of suspending UNFF-5 temporarily. Rumour has it though that permission to seek this suspension has not been received from some ministers. Nevertheless, most are of the view that the future IAF will not be finalized at UNFF-5 but will be negotiated during some form of intersessional meeting.