

UNFF8 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2009

In the morning, UNFF8 delegates continued to hear general statements, and participated in a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue, including a panel discussion on forests, women and fuelwood. In the afternoon, delegates convened in two working groups (WG): WGI on forests in a changing environment; and WGII on means of implementation.

PLENARY

GENERAL STATEMENTS: JAPAN called for national cross-sectoral cooperation, further efforts to reduce deforestation, and to improve monitoring, assessment, reporting and forest governance in developing countries. INDONESIA advocated adequate financial resources to compensate developing countries for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and for the full range of forest values.

CHILE noted domestic initiatives, including its participation in the Montreal Process. IRAN, on behalf of low forest cover countries (LFCCs), underlined the vulnerability of LFCCs to impacts of climate change and land degradation, and called for financial resources and technology transfer.

The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO highlighted a national review and updating of forest-related legislation, prioritizing SFM implementation. PERU noted current domestic policies on agroforestry and biofuel promotion to counter deforestation by promoting job creation in other sectors. ISRAEL highlighted its afforestation activities and cooperation programmes that include technology and knowledge transfer to developing countries.

SAINT LUCIA and PALAU emphasized the plight of small island states in the face of climate change. PALAU called for capacity building to establish baseline information needed for adaptive management.

FINLAND outlined the outcomes of a recent workshop on forests in a changing environment, including the need to address global, regional and national concerns of SFM.

KYRGYZSTAN stressed that forest management depends on a sound forest resources inventory. GUYANA highlighted the need to correct perverse incentives under the Kyoto Protocol that make it more lucrative to cut down trees than to keep them standing. VENEZUELA emphasized that the UNFCCC is the appropriate forum to address climate change.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

UNFF8 Chair Boen Purnama introduced submissions to the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (E/CN.18/2009/13), chaired by Peter Mayer, Executive Director, IUFRO.

WOMEN stressed the role of women in SFM and climate change adaptation. She called for improved participation in decision making, suggesting that UNFF appoint a gender focal person and develop a gender-mainstreaming plan.

The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY prioritized, among other issues, enhancing the science-policy interface, integrating research outputs into technologies for adaptation, and mobilizing long-term funding for research, education and extension.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH underlined education, capacity building and participation, in particular horizontal knowledge transfer for adaptation. He called for a portfolio approach to financing including clear commitments from governments.

NGOs and INDIGENOUS PEOPLE recommended, *inter alia*, that actions to support SFM address causes of deforestation including unsustainable consumption, and cautioned against potential perverse effects of REDD-related financial flows.

FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST OWNERS said long-term solutions to deforestation are securing land and property rights, giving direct responsibility to foresters, and engaging family and community forest owners in political dialogue.

The EU encouraged further participation by Major Groups and, with SWITZERLAND and the US, noted that securing tenure rights is essential. JAMAICA recalled joint activities between its forest department and local NGOs and groups.

SWITZERLAND said that means of implementation should include educating youth and involving them as a full partner in implementing SFM. INDONESIA said SFM implementation requires cooperation among stakeholders and called for strengthening community organizations. CHINA said that NGOs and other Major Groups are playing an ever-increasing role in China's forestry.

PANEL ON WOMEN AND FUELWOOD: Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, moderated the panel, noting that women in developing countries suffer the most from the effects of forest degradation, due to increased risk of rape as they search for fuelwood, and exposure to smoke while cooking.

Carolyn Makinson, Women's Refugee Commission, noted that 80% of the 40 million refugees worldwide are women. She highlighted the upcoming release of guidelines for safe fuelwood collection.

Lambert Okrah, Institute for Cultural Affairs, Ghana, highlighted that women are disproportionately affected when people are forced to flee forests, as men often have alternative income sources. He emphasized that international agreements that only require implementation when it is consistent with national laws will be unable to change the status quo.

Kanchan Lama, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, said that despite efforts in rural development, women lack access to adequate household energy alternatives, requiring them to collect firewood under dangerous conditions. She asked how women could benefit from REDD-related funding.

Pieter van Midwoud, CarbonFix, noted the importance of firewood in the lives of impoverished people. He said that many solutions are localized and cannot necessarily be replicated.

WORKING GROUP I

Delegates continued making general statements on forests in a changing environment. The Democratic Republic of Congo, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed the need to address the drivers of deforestation and forest and land degradation.

The US, supported by AUSTRALIA, suggested preparing a strong and concise outcome document, clear to people outside the forest sector. AUSTRALIA said the message should underline SFM's multiple benefits.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION stressed the particular situation of boreal forests. ECUADOR outlined its forest fund and verification system to reduce illegal logging. UKRAINE called for a solid framework for adaptation and afforestation activities.

Delegates then considered recommendations on key challenges (E/CN.18/2009/8). The US asked to avoid repeating language of the Forest Instrument, questioned the value of developing new indicators and asked for clarification regarding the Forum's role in addressing conflicts.

On establishing national coordinating mechanisms among UNFF and the three Rio Conventions, the US said this should refer specifically to forest issues. BRAZIL suggested referring to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity instead of biodiversity loss. SWITZERLAND suggested adding the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. VENEZUELA said the message should support work done by UNFCCC.

On improving analytical capacities for reporting on SFM contributions to combating climate change, desertification, and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the EU proposed inviting member countries and regional entities to regularly conduct and improve forest inventories.

On setting voluntary national targets for incorporating support to SFM in national development policies, PAPUA NEW GUINEA expressed concern that this could mean a conditionality for receiving funding. On giving priority to afforestation and reforestation, CHINA suggested referring to forests' multiple values and to afforestation quality.

AUSTRALIA, the US, BRAZIL, COLOMBIA and VENEZUELA opposed a reference to bioenergy, citing duplication of work in other fora. The AFRICAN GROUP, the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, SWITZERLAND, CAMBODIA, CHILE and CHINA preferred retaining the recommendation and also addressing wood energy in poor countries.

Delegates discussed whether UNFF8 should send a message to UNFCCC and how to negotiate it. BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC raised concerns about duplicating work under the UNFCCC's Bali Action Plan and UNFF's mandate to address such issues. Many delegates considered Co-Chair Ozols' proposal to establish a contact group to draft the message premature.

The US, opposed by the AFRICAN GROUP, suggested deleting reference to addressing the impacts of armed conflicts on forests in the Forum's future work.

BRAZIL and CHINA, opposed by the AFRICAN GROUP, the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, GRENADA and VENEZUELA, proposed deleting text on inviting forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG) processes to consider threats of climate change. CHILE, COLOMBIA and INDONESIA requested clarification of the text, and the US proposed stating that FLEG is a prerequisite for combating deforestation.

WORKING GROUP II

CUBA, ARGENTINA, GUATEMALA, URUGUAY, JAMAICA, COSTA RICA, GHANA, INDIA, BRAZIL and PAKISTAN supported the G-77/China's call for a dedicated global forest fund, technology transfer, capacity building, and new and additional funding.

ARGENTINA said the mechanism should include the active participation of countries at all levels and, with COSTA RICA, that all forest types should be considered. SWITZERLAND, with the US, NORWAY and NEW ZEALAND, noted the need to

create enabling environments for developing countries, including capacity building and strong governance, and that all sources of funds should be considered.

JAMAICA stated that the global forest fund should emphasize reforestation and afforestation projects in small island states. AUSTRALIA, SURINAME and Fiji, for the PACIFIC ISLAND COMMUNITY, called for a flexible mechanism. Ghana, for the AFRICAN GROUP, supported by SURINAME, INDONESIA and URUGUAY, called for simplifying access to existing funds.

JAPAN, with MEXICO, cautioned against the establishment of a fund that would fragment or duplicate current funding mechanisms. GUATEMALA noted that the fund should strengthen current policies and processes.

The EU noted that a portfolio approach would avoid a "one size fits all" solution. He stressed that both donors and recipients have committed to mobilizing domestic funding sources, and said that future financing should be consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and supported by many, that it should remain voluntary.

BRAZIL, with COSTA RICA and ARGENTINA, stressed that the principles of "common but differentiated responsibilities" and "sovereignty over national resources" must guide the financial mechanism.

CHINA said the mechanism must be practical, realistic, cost-effective, have a wide participation, and reflect developing countries' needs.

In response to Co-Chair Kile's request for more detailed proposals, ARGENTINA suggested a framework with two distinct components: a facilitative mechanism; and a global fund based on voluntary contributions, accompanied by guidelines to facilitate access. The AFRICAN GROUP emphasized national ownership and a demand-driven approach.

BRAZIL emphasized the distributive benefits of SFM, and said that financing should not be contingent on counterpart funding. SWITZERLAND emphasized the need for political will in recipient countries, and that any mechanism must address geographical and thematic gaps in funding. IRAN emphasized short-term funding targeted at immediate problems, particularly for LFCCs.

The EU and US noted that a facilitative mechanism should increase capacity building, strengthen and support the development of national forest programmes, and increase knowledge of available funds. INDONESIA noted that a global fund and a facilitative mechanism could be mutually reinforcing. BRAZIL cited examples showing it is possible to establish a new fund with low overheads.

On the administration of a new fund, SWITZERLAND, NEW ZEALAND and the EU stressed a role for the CPF in a facilitative mechanism, highlighting achievements such as the Sourcebook on Funding for SFM. The US added that CPF members possess an array of expertise and mandates to address SFM. The AFRICAN GROUP stressed accountability to member states, and governance based on equitable geographical distribution of representation.

IN THE CORRIDORS

After a first exchange of views on finance, delegates commented that now that everybody has their cards on the table the trick will be to find out what concessions donors and recipients are willing to make, which some noted will likely take up a good part of the two weeks. While donors agree on a "light" mechanism that will provide easier access to existing funding, a few delegates noted that recipient countries don't converge as much as their joint interventions imply; talk in the corridors has it that some countries might break away from the G-77/China position, which favors an independent global forest fund, before the end of the week.

On forests and climate change, some noted a remarkable mutual lack of understanding; while most UNFF delegates lamented the level of appreciation of the complexities of SFM within the climate change community, climate experts expressed dismay about the foresters' misconceptions regarding REDD. The way to find a common perspective, as some noted, would be to allow forest experts to participate in UNFCCC negotiations. "Great idea," responded others, "only that the climate people in our governments don't think that way."