

UNFF8 HIGHLIGHTS:

TUESDAY, 28 APRIL 2009

In the morning, UNFF8 delegates participated in a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue. Later in the morning and in the afternoon, Working Group I addressed a revised draft resolution on forests in a changing environment, enhanced cooperation and regional and subregional inputs. Working Group II convened briefly in the morning to address forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG), non-financial means of implementation and progress towards SFM. A contact group on financing for SFM briefly convened in the afternoon.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

UNFF Director Jan McAlpine invited Major Group representatives to rethink the manner of their participation in the Forum to improve engagement with member states.

Children and Youth, on behalf of MAJOR GROUPS, highlighted the need to fully account for tenure rights and the rights of indigenous people and women when developing and implementing policy. MAJOR GROUPS supported establishing a global forest fund, and emphasized that funds be made available at the grassroots level.

WOMEN expressed concern that the gender aspect of the proposed financing mechanism was unclear. She highlighted the important role of agroforestry in SFM, including reducing stress on natural forests and allowing for easier firewood collection by women.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY called for investment in research and development to further SFM implementation in developing countries.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH called for: a message to be sent to UNFCCC; investment in creating enabling environments; and funds for youth-led activities.

NGOs outlined constraints to UNFF participation due to restrictive ECOSOC accreditation rules, and to participation in national processes due to private company interests in forest exploitation. Expressing his disappointment that the recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Financing were not considered in UNFF8 deliberations, he urged delegates to revisit recommendations regarding stakeholder participation, the role of governmental and non-governmental actors, capacity building and enabling frameworks.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE stressed that they are disproportionately affected by climate change. He requested that

climate change mitigation activities fully respect international instruments on indigenous rights.

FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST OWNERS stressed knowledge-based SFM for climate change adaptation, and cautioned that SFM could be marginalized by REDD. He called for a forest fund that is accessible to forest communities and small forest owners, avoids perverse incentives regarding tenure rights, and addresses payments for environmental services.

The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC supported the statements of Women, Children and Youth and NGOs, and said citizens across all groups should have the same legal recognition.

ANGOLA urged UNFF to carefully consider indigenous peoples' concerns. PERU reported on progress made in including indigenous peoples in forest management, noting that 70% of its forests are certified. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE responded that there are ongoing protests in Peru calling for the government to recognize indigenous peoples' traditional land rights. ALGERIA noted that combating desertification through SFM can avert the displacement of peoples.

The PHILIPPINES said its upland development and agroforestry programmes have resulted in the reclamation of previously degraded areas. LEBANON criticized the lack of coordination amongst NGOs in carrying out forest-related projects, saying that catering to trends instead of needs leads to duplication, and noting that these groups often receive greater donor support than Lebanon's public institutions. GRENADA encouraged scientific research and support specific to the needs of small islands.

MAURITANIA expressed concern over the low capacity of local NGOs to implement forest projects. FIJI noted the importance of NGOs' work in small countries with weak human resources. URUGUAY said that moving to a decentralized land ownership structure has led to the sharing of experiences between adjacent managers.

WORKING GROUP I

PREAMBLE: On a reference to the adoption of the Forest Instrument, BRAZIL and the US suggested to recall the Instrument's adoption, "including its purposes," rather than spelling out the purposes, to which delegates agreed. On a reference to the Rio Principles of national sovereignty over resources and common but differentiated responsibilities, delegates agreed after lengthy debate to cite a related preambular paragraph of the Forest Instrument. In a paragraph citing the theme of UNFF8, delegates chose to use agreed text as contained in the MYPOW.

On recognizing the impacts of environmental change on forests while also recognizing forests' positive role in climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation, the EU amended its earlier proposal, to state "while also recognizing the contribution of forests in addressing climate change, biodiversity conservation and combating desertification." CHINA suggested two separate paragraphs: the first recognizing impacts on forests; and the second recognizing forests' role in addressing these impacts. Delegates agreed to the original paragraph, with the EU's amendment.

On recognizing the special needs of certain country groups, CHINA suggested stating "recognizing the vulnerability of LFCCs and SIDS and their challenges and needs to adapt to climate change." The US and BRAZIL preferred quoting the relevant paragraph of the Forest Instrument stating "recognizing the special needs of countries with fragile forest ecosystems, including those of LFCCs."

On emphasizing that SFM aims to enhance all forest benefits, the EU suggested amending reference to biodiversity conservation to state "conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity" so as to reflect language of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, while ensuring that the language was forest-specific, as had been requested by the US. After some discussion, SWITZERLAND proposed also referring to "forest" desertification and "forest" land degradation, following the same logic. On the EU's earlier proposal to delete a reference describing SFM as a "dynamic and evolving concept," BRAZIL reiterated its opposition to its deletion, noting that the reference was contained in the Forest Instrument. The AFRICAN GROUP proposed deleting reference to the contribution of SFM in addressing climate change, noting that this was already covered in other preambular paragraphs. The EU, SWITZERLAND and NORWAY opposed this deletion and the matter was left outstanding.

On emphasizing that the Forest Instrument offers an integrated framework to implement SFM and in turn addresses the challenges of climate change, BRAZIL suggested reflecting that the Forest Instrument alone cannot "address" climate change but can "contribute" to addressing it.

Delegates discussed whether to "take note" or "welcome" the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but did not reach agreement. On regional and subregional initiatives identifying the interrelated forest challenges, the EU and the US supported "welcoming" these initiatives. The AFRICAN GROUP indicated that they would prefer "taking note of" instead of "welcoming." The text remained bracketed.

On synergies between the Rio Conventions, INDONESIA, BRAZIL, CHINA, the AFRICAN GROUP and others, supported using an alternative, more streamlined paragraph. Opposing this motion, the EU asked to include reference to the 2010 target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss. The text remained bracketed.

OPERATIVE TEXT: On deciding to encourage member states to strengthen environmental aspects in their forest policy dialogue, the EU proposed the inclusion of wording that encourages member states to implement SFM. COLOMBIA preferred "promoting" SFM. Co-Chair Mero noted that these were two different concepts so clarification was needed. The AFRICAN GROUP with COLOMBIA and others proposed the inclusion of the three pillars of sustainable development to be in line with country policies. The text was bracketed.

On encouraging member states to use national forest programmes or other strategies for SFM to integrate measures to

address climate change, delegates could not decide between the original amended option and an alternative option that had been suggested by the EU. On encouraging coordination in member states among national focal points of the UNFF and the Rio Conventions, the AFRICAN GROUP and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC preferred not to refer to "relevant instruments," instead only referring to SFM and the Forest Instrument.

WORKING GROUP II

FLEG: FIJI noted differences in illegal logging definitions, stressed strengthening land tenure and land use policies, and called for means of implementation including technology to combat illegal logging. AUSTRALIA noted many countries' progress on FLEG issues.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: The EU highlighted education, information dissemination and technology transfer as other means of implementation. He proposed that UNFF8 invite CPF members, member states and regional bodies to monitor progress for reporting on SFM implementation at UNFF9.

PROGRESS TOWARDS SFM: The US supported text on decreasing the Secretariat's reporting burden and on acknowledging the contribution of regional and subregional processes.

FINANCING SFM: The G-77/CHINA objected that the revised Co-Chairs' draft did not reflect a proposal the Group had made on Monday afternoon, and requested that a new version be issued prior to the afternoon's contact group. After some discussion, the Forum agreed to proceed in this manner.

CONTACT GROUP ON FINANCING

Tri Tharyat (Indonesia) chaired a contact group on financing for SFM. AUSTRALIA, supported by many developed countries, expressed concern regarding the organization of the text and requested an adjournment until Wednesday morning to allow time to restructure the document in a more logical manner. The G-77/CHINA and several of its members objected, saying that restructuring should be done within the contact group. After some discussion, Chair Tharyat proposed and the group agreed to adjourn the meeting until Wednesday morning for consultations.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As discussions in Working Group II broke early Tuesday afternoon, there was discussion regarding whether the donors' expressed concerns over the structure of the draft on financing SFM were merely of an aesthetic nature, or reflected a deeper substantive disagreement. In pushing for a better organized text, one delegate emphasized that clarity is essential in ensuring that the document is relevant to other fora, namely climate change. While one delegate commented that the bracket-riddled financing text looked like "the dog's breakfast," one of the deeper substantive concerns voiced by another delegate is that should a global forest fund be created, it is unlikely to attract any contributions, and this would reflect very badly on the Forum, countries' commitment to it, and consequently its long-term viability. However, some delegates expressed the hope that demands for the creation of such a fund may be satiated by sufficient reference within the text to the creation of new and additional resources.

Increasingly there have been calls for small groups of countries with less polarized positions to establish a middle ground that will help bring the two sides together in time to come to an agreement by the end of the week. New York City is famous for its historic bridges, and many delegates felt that UNFF8 is in need of one right now.