



SUMMARY OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE OPEN-ENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON THE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT ON FORESTS: 12-15 JANUARY 2015

The second meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests (AHEG2) convened from 12-16 January 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York. In total 162 participants attended the meeting, including representatives from 79 Member States, nine members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, 10 Major Groups and two permanent observers.

AHEG2 took note of the Co-Chairs' Summary of Discussions and Recommendations, which, *inter alia*, identifies: areas of emerging convergence and where further discussion is required on the future of: the Forest Instrument; implementation and financing of sustainable forest management after 2015; the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and its Secretariat; and involvement of Major Groups and regional entities. The recommendations include elements or components of a possible resolution to be adopted at the eleventh session of UNFF in May 2015.

AHEG2 fulfilled its mandate, setting the stage for the discussions to come at UNFF11. While all options officially remain on the table, AHEG2 informally narrowed the range of options by identifying those for which there may be support and noting others that could prove politically infeasible, or for which there is little appetite.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNFF

The United Nations Forum on Forests was established in 2000, following a five-year period of forest policy dialogue within the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). In October 2000, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in resolution 2000/35, established the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), which established the UNFF as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC, with the main objective of promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The UNFF's principal functions 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 well as to address forest issues and emerging areas of concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner; enhance cooperation, and 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.

ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION: The UNFF organizational session 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, and made progress towards the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), a partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats.

UNFF1: The first session of UNFF took place from 11-23 June 2001 in New York. Delegates discussed and adopted decisions on the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work, a Plan of Action for the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and the UNFF's work with the CPF. Delegates

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also recommended establishing three *ad hoc* expert groups (AHEGs) to provide technical advice to UNFF on: approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting; finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

UNFF2: The second session of UNFF took place from 4-15 March 2002 in New York. Delegates adopted decisions on, *inter alia*, specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the IAF. UNFF2 agreed that specific criteria related to the implementation of the Proposals for Action are the extent to which: countries, the CPF and other actors progressed in implementing the Proposals for Action; countries developed and started to implement national forest programmes or equivalent processes; the IAF facilitated and promoted countries' implementation, focusing on means of implementation (MoI); and countries progressed in assessing the Proposals for Action in order to determine their relevance in their national context. Resolution 2/3 outlined the specific criteria related to the continued policy development, including the extent to which: the IAF enhanced forest policy development and dialogue and worked in a transparent and participatory manner; CPF members responded to the UNFF's guidance; and progress was made in reaching a common understanding of forest-related concepts, terminology and definitions.

UNFF3: UNFF3 met in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26 May - 6 June 2003, and adopted six resolutions 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.

UNFF4: UNFF4 convened in Geneva from 3-14 May 2004 and adopted five resolutions on: review of the effectiveness of the IAF; forest-related scientific knowledge; social and cultural aspects of forests; monitoring, assessment and reporting, and criteria and indicators; and finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. On the review of the IAF, delegates agreed to request that Member States submit a voluntary questionnaire based on the specific criteria agreed to at UNFF2. UNFF4 attempted, without success, to reach agreement on resolutions on forest-related traditional knowledge, enhanced cooperation, and policy and programme coordination.

UNFF5: UNFF5 took place from 16-27 May 2005, in New York. Participants were unable to reach agreement on strengthening the IAF and did not produce a Ministerial Statement or a negotiated outcome. They did agree, *ad referendum*, to four global goals on: significantly increasing the area of protected forests and sustainably managed forests worldwide; reversing the decline in official development assistance (ODA) for SFM; reversing the loss of forest cover; and enhancing forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits. They also agreed in principle to negotiate, at some future date, the terms of reference for a voluntary code or international understanding on forests, as well as MoI.

UNFF6: UNFF6 took place from 13-24 February 2006 in New York. Delegates generated a negotiating text containing new language on the function of the IAF, a commitment to convene UNFF biennially after 2007, and a request that UNFF7 adopt a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI or Forest Instrument). UNFF6 also set four Global Objectives on Forests for the IAF to: reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM, including through protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation; enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, and the contribution of forests to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals; increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests; and reverse the decline in ODA for SFM, and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

UNFF7: UNFF7 was held from 16-27 April 2007 in New York. After two weeks of negotiations, culminating in an all-night session, delegates adopted the Forest Instrument and a Multi-Year Programme of Work for the period 2007-2015. Delegates agreed that a "voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework for all types of forests" would be developed and considered, with a view to its adoption at UNFF8.

UNFF8: UNFF8 was held from 20 April - 1 May 2009 in New York. Delegates discussed: forests in a changing environment, including forests and climate change, reversing the loss of forest cover and degradation, and forests and biodiversity conservation; and MoI for SFM. After an all-night session on the last night, delegates adopted a resolution on forests in a changing environment, enhanced cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination, and regional and subregional inputs. Delegates did not agree on a decision on financing for SFM, and decided to forward bracketed negotiating text to the Forum's next session.

UNFF9: UNFF9 took place from 24 January - 4 February 2011 in New York and launched the International Year of Forests 2011. The Forum adopted by acclamation a resolution on forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication, which addressed, *inter alia*: procedures for assessment of progress; increased regional and subregional cooperation; enhanced cooperation, including with Major Groups; and MoI for SFM, particularly the AHEG process on forest financing.

UNFF10: UNFF10 met from 8-19 April 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. Among other items, delegates adopted the "Resolution on Emerging Issues, MoI and the UNFF Trust Fund," which decided that the effectiveness of the IAF will be reviewed in 2015, and established an open-ended intergovernmental AHEG to review the IAF's performance and effectiveness. The resolution set out the elements to be included in the review and decided that the review shall have the following components: submissions by countries, the CPF, its members and other relevant organizations and stakeholders; an independent assessment of the IAF; and an AHEG on the IAF review.

AHEG1: The first meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental *ad hoc* expert group on the international arrangement on forests (AHEG1) convened from 24–28 February 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. The expert group took note of the Co-Chairs' conclusions, which, *inter alia*, outline the achievements, strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas and options for action or improvement, of the: UNFF and its Secretariat; the Forest Instrument; the CPF; regional processes and organizations; and Major Groups.

AHEG2 REPORT

On Monday, 12 January, AHEG Co-Chair Charles Barber (US) opened the meeting, noting that in 2015 the future of the IAF will be negotiated at UNFF11 and that several important international events related to forests will take place, including the World Forestry Congress in September 2015. He recalled the intersessional activities that have taken place since UNFF10, including the first meeting of the AHEG in February 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya, the two rounds of submissions of stakeholders' views on the IAF and its future, the Independent Assessment of the IAF, and the China Country Led Initiative (CLI) on the IAF held in Beijing, China, in October 2014.

AHEG Co-Chair Raymond Landveld (Suriname) noted that forests figure prominently in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process. He said the main objective of AHEG2 is to identify the most suitable and viable options among those proposed by the Independent Assessment of the IAF and to provide views on what should be included in the UNFF11 resolution on the future of the IAF in the post-2015 development agenda.

Amb. Marianne Odette Bibalou (Gabon), on behalf of UNFF11 Bureau Chair Noel Nelson Messone, Minister for Forests, Environment and Protection of Natural Resources, Gabon, highlighted the “unprecedented and positive” foundation for UNFF11 created by AHEG1, the China CLI and other intersessional activities. She underscored that a solid outcome on the IAF is necessary to place forests higher on the post-2015 sustainable development and climate change agendas and that a future IAF should include measures that strengthen financing for SFM.

Noting that the IAF provides for the only universal, intergovernmental forum on forests, Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA), stated that in the future the IAF will be in a unique position to monitor and ensure achievement of the forest-related goals and targets in the SDGs, and to serve as a “conduit” between the forest and development communities.

Manoel Sobral Filho, Director, UNFF Secretariat, outlined several priorities necessary to meet rising demand for forest products when forests are disappearing and degrading: mainstreaming forests into the sustainable development agenda; addressing unplanned and illegal deforestation; mobilizing financing for SFM, including from the private sector; and maintaining a coherent international governance arrangement.

Co-Chair Landveld then introduced the AHEG2 provisional agenda (E/CN. 18/AEG/2015/1) and the provisional organization of work, which was adopted without amendment.

TASKS OF THE EXPERT GROUP

On Monday, AHEG members listened to and discussed presentations on the: report of the Independent Assessment of the IAF; outcome of the China CLI workshop on the IAF beyond 2015; post-2015 sustainable development agenda process; and views of Member States, organizations and stakeholders on the IAF. On Tuesday through Thursday, AHEG members met in working groups to discuss: the Forest Instrument after 2015; implementation and financing of SFM after 2015; the UNFF and its Secretariat after 2015; the CPF after 2015; involvement of Major Groups after 2015; involvement of regional entities after 2015; and key issues for inclusion in the UNFF11 resolution on the IAF beyond 2015.

REPORT OF THE IAF ASSESSMENT: On Monday, Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands), and Saiful Abdullah (Malaysia), Co-Facilitators of the Independent Assessment Team (IAT), said the team recommended two central functions for the post-2015 IAF: undertaking a stewardship role; and promoting and facilitating sustainable management of all types of forests. Hoogeveen summarized four options highlighted by the team:

- Option 1, an enhanced IAF that includes an updated Forest Instrument, establishment of a UN Forest Assembly to replace the UNFF, regional fora, the creation of UN Forests as a science-policy interface, the appointment of a Special Envoy on Forests, development of UN Trust Funds and a strengthened UN Forest Assembly Secretariat;
- Option 2, incorporating many of the elements of Option 1, with UN Forests created as a new institution supporting global forest policy and SFM implementation;
- Option 3, building on Option 1, but also allowing individual Member States to make firmer, legally-binding, commitments to SFM through a parallel political track; and
- Option 4, which is the same as Option 3 but with regional-level legally-binding agreements.

He stressed that with any of the options it would be essential for the post-2015 IAF to have a strategic plan that can be adapted to reflect changing circumstances and emerging issues.

In the ensuing discussion, several AHEG participants welcomed the report of the IAT, with Iran stressing the need for constructive discussions on the future of the IAF. China inquired on the research necessary to overcome the information gaps related to the four options and France asked about the criteria used to select the four options.

Latvia stated that a discussion of institutional arrangements should be guided by an understanding of the functions, objectives and roles of a new entity. Cuba characterized strengthening implementation and resolving financing issues as key to the future design of the IAF. Germany stressed the need to focus on how to operationalize the proposed options for strengthening the IAF.

Brazil asked for clarification on the role of the Special Envoy, and Chile cautioned that creating an assembly could imply that decisions are legally binding.

The EU said that governance at the global level should focus on enhancing and facilitating implementation at the national level, but cannot be a primary driver of national level implementation.

Finland noted the need to further elaborate on the developments that have taken place outside the UNFF and possible coordination with other conventions and processes. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) called for future arrangements to give other UN agencies a commensurate role in the IAF to provide incentives for those agencies to participate.

Colombia asked how the strategic plan would guide or link the parallel tracks proposed under Option 3.

In response, the IAT stressed that the post-2015 IAF should focus on the concept of “stewardship,” to ensure that forest-related issues are connected with other policy areas. The IAT further clarified that the four selected options were chosen because they are possible within UN DESA and most closely resemble the current process, and highlighted a strengthened Forest Instrument as the most attainable option. Team members noted that there are examples for options 1, 2 and 4 in other processes. On the role of the Special Envoy, the team explained that a charismatic individual could help bridge the divide between the public, including those responsible for managing forests, with the highest political levels.

On option 3, team members clarified that they envisioned a step-wise approach where countries would join a binding agreement when ready, whereas Option 4 entails regions moving at different speeds. Regarding strategic planning for parallel tracks, the IAT suggested that the tracks could merge over time, while sharing the same overall objectives.

OUTCOME OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE IAF

BEYOND 2015: On Monday, workshop Co-Chair Peter Besseau (Canada) reviewed messages from the workshop held 29-31 October in Beijing, China, highlighting the six workshop themes: strengthening regional/subregional involvement; strengthening the role and functioning of the CPF; supporting the involvement of Major Groups and other stakeholders; upscaling the Facilitative Process; undertaking low-cost/high-value actions over a relevant two-to-three-year horizon; and identifying possible elements of a “strategic plan.” He said while none of the workshop’s individual suggestions are daunting, bundling them into a single strategic plan may prove difficult. He urged seeking a plan that is flexible and adaptable, rather than perfect.

UPDATE ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT

AGENDA PROCESS: On Monday, UNFF Director Sobral Filho presented an update on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda process, highlighting the UN Secretary-General’s Synthesis Report entitled “The road to dignity by 2030,” issued in December 2015 and the High-level Plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly to be held from 25-27 September 2015 in New York for the adoption of the post-2015

development agenda. He reported that the outcome report of the high-level meeting may include: a declaration, SDGs and targets, means of implementation and global partnership for sustainable development, and follow up and review.

VIEWS OF MEMBER STATES, ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS: On Monday, AHEG members and observers presented their views on the future of the IAF.

Norway underscored the need to consider developments outside UNFF, and, with Mexico, Latvia, Canada and the European Union (EU), noted the need to avoid duplication and consider existing institutions, with some noting existing funding arrangements. Japan highlighted the role of UNFF as a facilitating platform to help countries take full advantage of existing frameworks and ensure the relationship between SFM, the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. Colombia urged engaging with the process for developing the indicators for the SDGs.

The US noted UNFF should capitalize on its strengths as an intergovernmental forum for discussion. She also said that AHEG2 should identify options that are not realistic in the immediate timeframe and produce concrete recommendations to UNFF11.

Nepal noted the slow implementation of the Forest Instrument and stressed the need for a dedicated forest fund.

Malaysia, with Ecuador, called for a legally-binding instrument (LBI), with sufficient funding to enable effective monitoring of SFM implementation. Brazil said that the political will to support the IAF is more important than the legal nature of the arrangement. While acknowledging the contribution of regional organizations, he noted coordination among them could be difficult due to their differences. He called for greater coordination among CPF members.

Latvia highlighted the need for the post-2015 arrangement to employ the principles of coordination, cooperation and synergy, include an accountability framework, and promote comprehensive stakeholder involvement.

The African Forest Forum noted the conflicting roles and responsibilities between UNFF and the CPF and called for clarity on this in the future IAF. She suggested that the UNFF Secretariat may not be the appropriate institution to implement the IAF.

Switzerland underlined the need to give forests a single voice at the UN and supported an “appropriate platform” for all forest-related processes, while noting that countries need to address internal coordination challenges.

The EU highlighted current shortcomings that the IAF should address, including a lack of interest from stakeholders and disconnection from forest-related discussions in other fora. Germany identified shortcomings, such as a lack of systematic implementation of the Forest Instrument and Facilitative Process and little follow-up on ministerial declarations and UNFF decisions, including on access to funding.

Iran expressed concern about how the UNFF could address the growing demands for timber. Noting the drivers of

deforestation are often outside the forest sector, Canada, with Switzerland, called for engagement with other actors.

Indonesia said the current structure of the UNFF should be maintained, but expressed interest in the Special Envoy. India emphasized the need for a very long time horizon and engaging other sectors in forest policy. The Republic of Korea said it is imperative to integrate forestry issues more into the post-2015 SDG process before these are finalized.

FAO, for the CPF, reported that the CPF members produced “self-critical yet proactive” recommendations on its vision of the CPF after 2015, which he looked forward to discussing with AHEG participants during the meeting.

The Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) reported that, without pre-empting any decisions by UNFF11, CIFOR, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) have preliminarily agreed to coordinate their contribution to the IAF under the CPF umbrella.

IUFRO underscored that deliberations on the future of the IAF and the post-2015 development agenda should provide stakeholders with opportunities to further strengthen the science-policy interface.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat highlighted the forest-related aspects of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including halving the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, by 2020.

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) supported an effective and efficient IAF including the CPF and any successor body.

NGOs endorsed creating a UN Special Envoy on Forests, establishing a UN Forest Assembly and creating a global forest fund.

Co-Chair Barber summarized the areas of emerging consensus as: no mere extension of the IAF; support for the Forest Instrument, even as its form is debated; the key role of the SDGs; keep UNFF or its successor within the UN; and involve more coordination, dialogue and forest financing mechanisms. He summarized that the areas requiring further discussion include: the legal status and character of the IAF; regional bodies; the need for an implementation body; the role of Major Groups; and the institutional options to be pursued.

On Wednesday morning in plenary, the Secretariat responded to some of the questions raised during Monday’s discussion. He explained that, as proposed in the Independent Assessment Report, a Forest Assembly would have the same membership as the UNFF and also reside under ECOSOC. He said that the institutional arrangements seem the same, although it is up to members to determine if the functions would differ. On a Special Envoy on Forests, he reported that four Special Envoys exist for political issues, and no such envoy exists for a socio-economic or environmental issue. He related that the budgets for the current Special Envoys, ranging from US\$700,000 to US\$4.6 million per year, are to support their programmes of work, and not to pay the Envoy’s salary.

THE FOREST INSTRUMENT AFTER 2015: This item was discussed in parallel working groups on Tuesday, 13 January. After a review of the nine actions and options regarding the Forest Instrument after 2015 proposed by the Independent Assessment Report and AHEG1, participants’ discussions centered on: the legal form of the Instrument; the possibility of regional agreements; the timeframe for the global objectives on forests (GOFs) and the Instrument; and the means and extent of the update of the Instrument.

On the legal form, participants debated whether to recommend the negotiation of a legally-binding instrument or to retain the non-legally binding nature of the Instrument. Two developing countries said the NLBI is not delivering the desired results on financing, SFM and implementation, and it is time to negotiate an LBI.

Several countries suggested that an NLBI with political support may be more effective than an LBI with weak support, questioning the added value of an LBI. Two developing countries noted that uneven resources among countries would constrain the implementation of an LBI.

Some cautioned against re-opening the debate on the legal nature of the Instrument, saying that it would distort future negotiations, and a participant added that this debate has preoccupied negotiators for over 20 years.

A developed country stressed the need to narrow the focus, independently from the type of the instrument, which was seconded by a developing country that suggested identifying what priorities and challenges lie ahead and then choosing what legal form best addresses these challenges.

A regional group expressed interest in exploring a parallel track and asked the IAT for clarification on precedents for this approach and an IAT member explained the two-track process used in the regional seas conventions. A developed country said legally and non-legally binding approaches to the forest instrument could be mutually supportive. A developed country stated its opposition to a parallel track process.

Regarding regional agreements, a civil society group expressed support for an NLBI that aligns with the SDGs, and, with a developed country, for regional agreements. An observer noted that regional agreements could facilitate the implementation of SFM. A developed country noted the possible need for legal advice on how to recognize regional agreements and another added that UNFF can at best encourage, and not negotiate, regional agreements. By putting together some of the options, a developing country suggested a global framework with regional agreements.

On timeframes, several observed the benefits of aligning the Instrument and GOFs with the SDGs until 2030. A developed country expressed concern that 15 years could be too long and during that time circumstances could change. Several developed and developing countries supported periodic reviews, including the suggestion that such reviews be reflected in a strategic plan.

On updating the Instrument, many developed and developing countries expressed support for the content of the Instrument and the GOFs. While some suggested aligning the GOFs with the

SDGs, others cautioned against creating duplication of efforts already underway. A civil society group underlined the need to reduce, where possible, fragmentation among the various institutions undertaking forest-related work and a developing country highlighted that climate change, the CBD's Aichi Targets and the sustainable development agenda should be part of UNFF's agenda.

Three developing country representatives suggested extending the number of GOFs while two other countries cautioned against this, saying that efforts should be directed to advance the objectives that exist and have not been implemented as envisioned. A civil society group called for the new Instrument to recognize the legal tenure rights of local communities and indigenous people.

Three countries asked about how to update the Instrument, with one requesting legal advice on this matter. An IAT member clarified that the report suggested very limited and minor changes in the NLBI text, with any significant additions or changes left to an addendum. He explained that this approach would avoid reopening a "can of worms" by renegotiating the Instrument.

Two developed countries and a regional group agreed that negotiations of the Instrument should not be reopened, but rather urged more promotion of the Instrument, which could include changing its name, and a developing country proposed "the UN Forest Charter." Calling previous agreements "sacrosanct," a developing country did not support changing the Instrument's name from NLBI. A developing country supported changing the name without changing the legal nature of the Instrument.

In both working groups, the Co-Chairs thanked the participants for their concrete proposals and said they would reflect these comments in the Co-Chairs' Summary.

On Wednesday morning in plenary, the Secretariat responded to the questions posed during the working groups. On the legal aspects of updating the Instrument, he explained that, since the Instrument is not legally binding, members would need only to agree to the text and forward it to the General Assembly for adoption. He added that any addendum to the Instrument must have the same legal character as the Instrument, meaning that UNFF members cannot decide to add a legally-binding addendum to the Instrument.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCING OF SFM

AFTER 2015: This item was discussed in parallel working groups on Tuesday afternoon. The Co-Chairs first reviewed the options generated by previous discussions in the China CLI workshop and AHEG1 as well as the Independent Assessment Report. Participants discussed implementation, with a focus on monitoring, assessment and reporting, separately from finance.

On implementation, several noted that the suggestions raised in previous meetings could be grouped into a recommendation on monitoring, assessment and reporting, and expressed support for strengthening these aspects of the IAF.

Several noted that setting a common basis for reporting on SFM status and development poses several challenges, and one participant proposed that a common basis should apply

across the whole IAF and have a common reporting format. A developed country said competing terminology and processes have developed parallel to the UNFF, so the focus should be on where the IAF can provide added value, such as promoting a common understanding of what SFM implementation means.

A developed country suggested that there may be need for agreeing on a global set of criteria and indicators for SFM, and a developing country called for time-bound quantifiable targets that would add value to implementation and reporting. A developing country drew attention to the need for baseline data to measure progress against, and said support should be provided to countries in order to help establish the baselines. Drawing attention to a suggestion he made at a previous meeting, a developed country called for establishing a global forest indicators partnership, which would be placed under the UNFF or CPF.

Three developed countries noted the need to synchronize the UNFF reporting cycle with the FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment, i.e. every five years.

A developed country called for further streamlining reporting, while another pointed to the new reporting format developed at UNFF10, and expressed concern over further streamlining this format. A developing country called for including more information in the reports, saying that the reporting format provides an opportunity for countries to collaborate internally to collect the data. A member of the IAT called attention to the rising number of national reports received, from 57 reports at UNFF10, which was a new record at the time, to 79 reports submitted for UNFF11. He credited this trend to the specific questions on the new template and support provided to countries for reporting.

Saying "we need something to measure, assess and report," a civil society participant called for actions that improve on-the-ground implementation, and suggested a capacity-building role for the UNFF to support the development of national plans and national forest inventories. A regional group said that the CPF should continue to serve as the monitoring, research and development arm that provides information to the UNFF. Two developed countries said that measurable results on SFM were needed.

On financing, participants discussed the Facilitative Process, the proposal to establish a strategic trust fund (STF), other sources of funding, and existing financing mechanisms and funds.

On the Facilitative Process, a developed country supported addressing activities under the Facilitative Process as core elements of the future IAF, with another asking what the difference was between the STF proposal and the idea behind the AHEG1 proposal to establish a "global forest mechanism." He called for clearer rules to govern the Facilitative Process, clearer strategic planning, priority setting, regular reporting and greater involvement of donors in the Process.

On the STF, a member of the IAT urged distinguishing between the proposals for the STF, which would catalyze Forest Instrument implementation at the national level, and

the global forest fund, which would address the SFM needs of developing countries. A developed country did not support the establishment of a new forest fund but, with another developed country, welcomed the idea of a strategic fund. Recalling that establishment of a global forest fund was proposed at UNFF8, a developing country expressed hope that such fund will be created. Another country said deciding on the necessary funding should depend on first defining what the post-2015 IAF will seek to accomplish, and added that it did not support creating a global forest fund when so many complementary funding sources already exist for forests.

On other sources of funding, one developed country noted that ODA in the forest sector has increased and that new financing mechanisms exist, such as payment for ecosystem services. Another developed country urged countries to identify forests in their development priorities if they are going to seek funding from ODA.

A developed country called for closer collaboration between the UNFF and financing mechanisms that have been developed outside of the UNFF, notably reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). A developing country agreed on the need for closer collaboration between UNFF and the GEF and highlighted the need for a dedicated source of funding for SFM not dependent entirely on private investments.

Some developing countries emphasized the need to develop UNFF's own funding, with a civil society group saying UNFF should not be a "parasite" on other processes.

A delegate noted that, while the private sector is identified as a Major Group, there is need to reflect on how to engage them, with a developing country underscoring the importance of creating enabling environments for private investment. Noting that private investments often do not address social and ecological functions of forests, a civil society group called for public accounting systems that recognize the multiple values of forests.

An IAT member cautioned against the assumption that accessing GEF funds for SFM is easy, with a participant adding that the application time and complexity for accessing GEF funds for SFM depends on each project, and the GEF is seeking to streamline the process. Another noted that during the GEF's fifth replenishment, from 2010 to 2014, the GEF spent US\$700 million and expects a similar level of expenditure during the GEF's sixth replenishment, and underlined that these figures fall short of the goal of US\$1 billion because countries have not prioritized forests in their System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocation. He urged countries to make use of the SFM/REDD+ Incentive Mechanism.

The Co-Chairs said that the discussions would be reflected in the Co-Chairs' Summary.

UNFF AND ITS SECRETARIAT AFTER 2015: This item was discussed in parallel working groups on Wednesday.

The Co-Chairs first reviewed the ideas put forward in AHEG1, the China CLI workshop and the Independent Assessment Report. Participants first considered UNFF as an intergovernmental body after 2015 and then turned to a discussion of the UNFF Secretariat.

On UNFF as an intergovernmental body after 2015, most of the interventions opposed changing the name of UNFF. Many speakers supported keeping the basic form of the Forum, although one developing country expressed interest in further assessing the possible benefits of a UN Forest Assembly. Two developing countries added that a UN Forest Assembly would be a good way to raise the profile of forests, and help connect the Forum or Assembly to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) or the UN General Assembly. Another called for a specific timeframe, before UNFF11, for the deliberations on whether a UN Forest Assembly would be different from the UNFF in its function and format.

A civil society representative suggested exploring the option of a Special Envoy, while a developing country proposed that the UNFF Director, not an additional appointed individual, provide high-level leadership in order to secure effective stewardship of forests within the global sustainable development agenda.

Many participants discussed the need to clarify and possibly add new functions to UNFF after 2015. Several participants underlined that UNFF could promote coordination for integrated action and create synergies with other forest-related discussions, including the Rio Conventions. A developed country said a main function of the UNFF should be policy dialogue and development, while other participants highlighted the need to create links with the wider sustainable development agenda. A regional group added: securing long-term, high-level political commitment; strengthening understanding of SFM and its holistic nature; and galvanizing the interest of a wider range of stakeholders.

A developed country suggested that UNFF undertake clearinghouse functions and voluntary peer reviews of country policies so countries can learn from the policy experiences of others.

An IAT member emphasized the need for the future IAF to provide space in its programme of work for new and emerging issues.

Four developing countries urged UNFF to play a role in raising the profile of forest issues within the UN and attracting attention to the need for funding, with one participant underlining the need for political commitment to mobilize resources to assist countries implementing SFM and addressing deforestation and forest degradation. A civil society representative drew attention to the need to strengthen and manage the Facilitative Process and funding mechanisms to catalyze implementation of the Forest Instrument.

Participants also discussed: adopting a strategic plan to guide UNFF work; limiting UNFF sessions to one week and undertaking more active intersessional work, such as through regular working groups, AHEGs and/or virtual meetings.

On the UNFF Secretariat, several participants noted that the mandate of the Secretariat should follow from the functions of the UNFF, with one participant underlining the Secretariat's only function as providing support to the UNFF.

Stating that undertaking strategic and analytical work could open the door to duplicative efforts, a developed and a developing country expressed concern that the UNFF Secretariat should be asked to undertake these roles. One participant expressed support for the Secretariat to coordinate monitoring, assessment and reporting. Several participants called for clearly delineating the roles and responsibilities of the UNFF Secretariat and the CPF.

A developing country urged making the Secretariat more action oriented, and finding resources to allow it to launch "regional projects," which would be guided by UNFF and discussed at subsequent meetings to provide lessons learned on implementation. Another added that the Secretariat should have a facilitating role in helping countries overcome challenges for SFM implementation. Another developing country suggested that the Secretariat should engage with actors outside the forest sectors.

Two developed countries expressed concern that it may not be feasible to provide more posts from the regular UN budget, with one suggesting that this option could be removed from the list of options. One participant said that resources should be found from within UN DESA and not from increased contributions, while another asked about changes expected within UN DESA in relation to the post-2015 development agenda.

A participant suggested that the Secretariat's capacity and resources be consistent with its mandate and function, and a developing country underlined that the Secretariat's resources should be commensurate with the strengthened functions of the future UNFF. A developed country called for discussing how to enhance the contribution of the UNFF Bureau to facilitate the functioning of the Secretariat.

Two countries agreed on the importance of a strengthened Secretariat and said they have started to contribute to the UNFF Trust Fund. Participants also discussed the possibility of strengthening the Secretariat through secondments from other organizations including through remote working arrangements.

THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP ON FORESTS AFTER 2015: This item was first discussed in plenary on Wednesday, when the CPF presented its views on the future of the CPF, and then discussed in parallel working groups.

CPF Chair Eduardo Rojas Briales, FAO, presented the agreed views of the 14 CPF member organizations on the future of the CPF. Among the CPF suggestions were:

- amending the CPF's objective to support not only the UNFF but also other intergovernmental processes related to forests and the post-2015 development agenda;
- defining and reviewing priority actions periodically;
- formalizing the CPF to some degree to address current constraints, while maintaining its voluntary nature;
- identifying current gaps in membership, setting admission criteria for new members, and extending invitations to those organizations that CPF members agree will enhance the work of the Partnership;
- providing stable budget contributions for CPF secretariat support;
- identifying and engaging stakeholder groups with the strongest potential to influence SFM that are most relevant to the CPF;
- strengthening coordination and synergies of the work of CPF members at the regional and country level;
- making clearer, more realistic and more focused UNFF requests to the CPF, to be followed up by the UNFF Secretariat; and
- considering the options of a CPF trust fund, a strategic plan for the CPF including a budgeted work plan, and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between CPF members or a UN General Assembly resolution on the CPF.

During the discussion, participants considered the science-policy interface and possible institutional reforms to the CPF.

On the science-policy interface, one developing country underscored the role of the CPF in the forest science-policy nexus, including other forest-related processes. A developing country called for a more systematic approach to identify policy questions requiring input from the scientific community. Instead of creating new institutions, two participants preferred using existing bodies that already provide expertise, such as IUFRO, CIFOR, ICRAF, and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). A developed country asked how the CPF or UNFF could better interact with IPBES, since 80% of biodiversity is in forests.

On institutional issues, a participant noted the positive contribution of the CPF to promoting SFM and policy dialogue, and that any future IAF will have to include an enhanced collaborative arrangement, a "CPF+."

An IAT member noted that the independent assessment found that UNFF has tended to impose a heavy workload on the CPF and stressed the need for selective requests based on the future strategic plan. One developed country favored expanding the role of the CPF to support other forest-related processes, and a developing country supported the idea that the UN should recognize the CPF in all forest-related matters. A developed country observed that CPF actions may include actions by a subset of CPF members, but to be considered CPF actions they have to be approved by the CPF.

Recalling that the original ECOSOC decision is an invitation for the CPF to support the Forum, a participant suggested leaving the "form" of the CPF to its members to organize themselves, and instead focus on how UNFF can provide the "function" to the CPF, in terms of asking for concrete deliverables. He suggested, with some other countries, a workplan be developed that clarifies the deliverables the CPF is expected to produce and when the Partnership reports back to the Forum.

Two developed countries noted that a slightly more formalized CPF would facilitate catalyzing voluntary contributions, including by CPF members. Two developing countries noted that establishing more than one trust fund may not be realistic at UNFF11. A CPF member welcomed the proposals to formalize the partnership, for example through a MOU among the CPF agencies, and to establish an additional, stable CPF fund.

A developing country suggested following the example of UN Water, which was not supported by another participant who expressed concern that it is a significantly different mechanism. Another participant queried if organizations outside the UN system could become members of a possible UN Forests.

The Co-Chairs assured participants that the discussion would be reflected in the Co-Chairs' summary.

INVOLVEMENT OF MAJOR GROUPS AFTER

2015: This item was discussed in parallel working groups on Wednesday afternoon.

All interventions recognized the role of Major Groups in the work of the IAF. A developed country called for engaging the Major Groups more during intersessional work and in UNFF deliberations. A regional civil society group called for genuine engagement of all stakeholders in the planning, management and implementation of SFM policies and another participant underlined that Major Groups represent those who are managing forests on the ground.

On behalf of several Major Groups, a participant called for: recognizing and granting official status to the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPOF) as the official coordination body of Major Groups; exploring an independent accreditation process; establishing a coordination mechanism between MGPOF and the CPF; and funding on an *ad hoc* basis to support the MGPOF's activities.

A representative of a Major Group urged: encouraging governments to collaborate with Major Groups at the national level and including them on their delegations; considering a comparative review of how convention bodies, UN bodies and CPF members interact with Major Groups; and raising the profile of the Forum in the private sector.

An IAT member, with a few developed countries, stressed the importance of finding ways to engage the private sector, with one country observing that the recent New York Declaration on Forests, adopted during the 2014 UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit, is an example of a partnership among governments, companies and civil society engaged in forest-related initiatives.

The Co-Chairs thanked the Major Groups for their inputs and said the discussion would be reflected in the Co-Chairs' summary.

INVOLVEMENT OF REGIONAL ENTITIES AFTER

2015: This item was discussed in parallel working groups on Wednesday afternoon.

Noting that forest challenges differ significantly across regions, a country stressed that a clear role for regional processes was important for the post-2015 IAF, while a developed country

expressed skepticism about the IAT's proposal to organize new regional meetings.

A UN regional commission noted the regional commissions' role in the development of the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda, including forest-related SDGs. A developing country called for promoting a regional role in the Facilitative Process. A developed country, supported by a regional civil society group, called for more engagement of Major Groups at the regional level.

A civil society member characterized the need to engage regional bodies as a "very strong" message from AHEG1 and urged clarity on which regional groups the Forum intended to work with. An IAT member, supported by a developing country, discussed the role of Association of Southeast Asian Nations in promoting regional cooperation on forestry issues and another developing country suggested a recommendation that regional bodies include forest issues on their agenda.

A participant queried if in the IAT's proposal, regional organizations would be expected to fund the regional meetings, or if the funds would come from the global level. Recalling the intention is to encourage "cross pollination" between the global and regional levels, a developing country said that the benefits of collaboration between the global and regional levels may outweigh the costs.

The Co-Chairs encouraged participants to continue informal discussions and to bring ideas forward during their discussion of the Co-Chairs' summary.

KEY ISSUES FOR INCLUSION IN THE RESOLUTION OF UNFF11 ON THE IAF BEYOND 2015:

On Thursday morning, the Co-Chairs began the discussion by circulating a draft paper on "Elements/Components to Include in UNFF11 Resolution on Future IAF," which Co-Chair Landveld confirmed is intended to be an annex to the Co-Chairs' summary. The paper included a preambular section and an operative section with proposed agreements on: the future of the Forest Instrument; strengthening the intergovernmental machinery of the future IAF; developing a strategic plan for the future of the IAF; and the post-UNFF11 intersessional work. On the intergovernmental machinery, the draft suggests, *inter alia*: establishing a standing body on the future UNFF; strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting; establishing a STF; strengthening the CPF; encouraging greater involvement of Major Groups; and improving communication between the CPF and regional entities.

In the discussion, AHEG participants made general comments, as well as specific comments on the STF, the CPF and other issues.

Among the general comments, a developing country cautioned against making the paper too prescriptive. A developed country stated that the document should be high-level and noted that the section on intersessional work was prescriptive while the suggestion to encourage the participation of Major Groups was too general.

Several countries supported adding context on the basic objectives, functions and principles for the post-2015 IAF,

and what would be handled intersessionally afterward. One developed country suggested mentioning the functions of the future IAF as described in the Independent Assessment report and a developing country suggested including the four options outlined in the report.

A developed country further suggested: discussing IAF components rather than “machinery;” elaborating on the restructuring of Forum sessions; and providing more detail on the intersessional process after UNFF11, including what issues it would be assigned, a roadmap, and how it would link to the post-2015 development agenda. Another agreed, and suggested the paper should be clearer about the Secretariat’s functions and have sub-sections on the STF and on the CPF and its role in the IAF.

A developed country suggested creating a section for ongoing work, such as on monitoring, assessment and reporting, clarifying that this is different from the establishment of new bodies, as envisioned in the section on the machinery of the future IAF.

A developed country called for further clarity on the relationships between the IAF and other relevant conventions and processes and said the current draft underestimates the policy dialogue function of the IAF. Another developing country, supported by another participant, called for the SDGs to be mentioned in the operative paragraphs. A developed country called for clarification on the value added of the UNFF vis-à-vis the UN Environment Assembly, the HLPF and other bodies. A developing country, supported by a developed country, highlighted the need for promoting high-level awareness of the linkages between the UNFF and other cross-cutting environmental processes.

A Major Group suggested considering a long-term vision for forests and a mechanism to adjust to new and emerging issues.

A developed country said the paper should outline clearly what fundamental decisions need to be taken by UNFF11, such as the core mandate of the post-2015 IAF with another underlining that this discussion should not prejudice the UNFF11 resolution.

On the STF, two developing countries underscored the need for including capacity building and technology transfer. A developed country cautioned against giving too much prominence to financing as the IAF is not just a financing institution. Another participant noted that additional resources could be raised from partnerships with a range of actors.

A developing country proposed that the STF should be a “mixed fund” that can finance the development of national action plans as well as the establishment of sustainable development programmes and SFM.

Two developed countries underlined that the document should explicitly state that contributions to a fund should be voluntary.

A developing country suggested having a more structured and clearer document and queried why some elements, such as a global forest fund, were not included and Co-Chair Landveld clarified that the document only represents areas where emerging convergence was noted. Recalling a Group of 77 and China

proposal made at UNFF8 for a global forest fund included considerations such as the provision of resources, governance, funding targets and operational and reporting procedures, another developing country asked that the UNFF8 proposal be circulated to AHEG2 members.

On the CPF, a developed country suggested learning from the UN Water experience and combining the suggestions to strengthen the CPF with the suggestion to encourage greater involvement of Major Groups. A developing country suggested enhancing UNFF guidance to the CPF and said he could not yet support a proposal to rotate the CPF Chair. Two developed countries noted that CPF members have their own mandates, with one suggesting that some of the language regarding the CPF is “micromanagement.”

A CPF member sought clarification if the phrase “interagency collaboration mechanism” in the EU submission would exclude non-UN agencies, underlining the importance of scientific and research organizations, which are not UN agencies, to the CPF and the UNFF. She said a workplan and budget for the CPF would be useful to improve its accountability, and recalled that there is a timeline for the CPF to report to UNFF. Another CPF member added that CPF members should be able to internally decide issues such as chairing arrangements.

A regional group clarified that their submission intended that an interagency cooperation mechanism would include non-UN organizations.

On other issues, some countries highlighted that the document should be more specific regarding how to support the involvement of Major Groups. A Major Group suggested: the UNFF recognize the MGPOF as a permanent observer; countries include Major Groups in their delegations; the UNFF establish a Major Group accreditation body; and resources be devoted to encourage greater participation of Major Groups and their coordination bodies in UNFF activities.

A developed country expressed concerns over possible budgetary implications of some ideas such as intersessional bodies or establishing a STF, and another requested the paragraph referring to Secretariat resources be removed saying that this is not an issue for the AHEG to discuss.

A regional group asked about the difference between an *ad hoc* group and a working group and the Co-Chairs responded that an *ad hoc* group is temporary and its conclusions can be reversed by the Forum, while a working group can negotiate, agree and provide decisions to the Forum. The Secretariat added that a working group is granted access to full conference services and participation of all Member States, while an *ad hoc* group is not.

Co-Chair Barber said the Co-Chairs’ summary will reflect these inputs.

DISCUSSION OF THE CO-CHAIRS’ SUMMARY

On Friday, AHEG members discussed the Co-Chairs’ summary and recommendations, which is annexed to the Co-Chairs’ summary of the points of emerging convergence and where there seems to be differences as well as additional points

on: the Forest Instrument; implementation and financing of SFM; the UNFF and its Secretariat; CPF; involvement of Major Groups; involvement of regional entities; and the discussion of elements or components to include in a UNFF11 resolution. The recommendations by the Co-Chairs on the future of the IAF consist of a preambular and an operative section. The preambular section includes: recognizing the contributions of the current IAF; emphasizing the need for a strengthened IAF beyond 2015, in particular in relation to advancing implementation and mobilizing financing; noting the developments related to forests in other fora; stressing the critical significance of the future IAF to position and integrate itself in the broader context of the post-2015 development agenda; and further emphasizing that the future IAF should be based on the principles of promoting coherence and value-addition by continuing to be a universal body for policy dialogue on all issues related to all types of forests.

The operative section outlines seven elements of a UNFF11 resolution on:

- the objectives, mandate, and rationale for the future IAF;
- the core components of the future IAF and their roles and responsibilities;
- strengthening UNFF;
- the future of the Forest Instrument;
- strengthening the CPF;
- development of a strategic plan for the future IAF; and
- the post-UNFF11 roadmap or intersessional work.

On strengthening UNFF, the recommendations include: establishing an STF to advance implementation of SFM through the UNFF Facilitative Process; strengthening the human and financial resources of the Secretariat; and ensuring full coherence with the post-2015 development agenda, including through making the UNFF the body to report on the implementation of the forest-related SDGs.

Characterizing the importance of the Co-Chairs' summary as an important input to UNFF11, some countries underlined the need to discuss all sections of the document. Germany and the EU underlined the need to include the discussions of the shortcomings of the current arrangements. FAO, for the CPF, called for consistency in the terms used to describe the CPF. Cuba called for terminology that recognizes that access to finance is the "key" issue for developing countries.

Brazil noted that there was emerging consensus to update the Forest Instrument, but not on the form that the update may take. The US said that there was emerging consensus on the need to streamline the functions of the UNFF and the need for a cost-effective IAF that adds value, avoids duplication and promotes coherence. Japan suggested that the need to make clear that STF contributions would be voluntary was an area of emerging consensus. NGOs, for the MGPOF, stated that there was emerging consensus on: promoting Major Groups' participation, maintaining the multi-stakeholder nature of the Forum; and establishing cooperation and collaboration between the CPF and MGPOF.

The EU suggested a chapeau recognizing that the discussion thus far represents consideration of "low hanging fruits," but that all options remain on the table.

On the process moving forward, Switzerland noted that the Independent Assessment was requested in UNFF Resolution 10/2 and, supported by China, requested the Independent Assessment Report be formally presented at UNFF11. China reiterated the need to fully make use of the options presented in the report. Finland recalled the "very good" discussions at AHEG1 of the strengths and weaknesses of various elements of the IAF, and suggested that the AHEG1 report be an input to UNFF11.

The Co-Chairs explained that the AHEG2 report incorporated all the previous inputs to the IAF review process.

In response to a query from Latvia on the process toward UNFF11, the Co-Chairs also clarified that there will be no further inputs collected on the Co-Chairs' Summary after AHEG2, and that it will be up to the UNFF Bureau to consider the best way to conduct informal consultations between AHEG2 and UNFF11, building on the Co-Chairs' Summary for inclusion in the UNFF11 resolution on the future of the IAF.

In the afternoon, participants turned to the recommendations by the Co-Chairs on the future IAF, discussing both the preamble and operative section.

On the preamble, Norway called for avoiding language that implied a hierarchy among forest-related institutions, recalling that UNFF cannot "coordinate" other institutions. The EU called for a reference to the lessons learned from the shortcomings of the current arrangement to avoid replication of these shortcomings in the future.

Regarding the operative sections, participants discussed the references to other bodies, financing, the CPF, updating the Forest Instrument, the post-UNFF11 roadmap and other elements.

Regarding other forest-related bodies, Latvia suggested UNFF should also provide solutions for achieving SDG targets, not only report on them. Norway asked if the UNFF could decide that it would be the forum for reporting on and implementing the forest-related SDG actions, and, with Canada and the US, instead suggested that UNFF extend an invitation to the SDG process to contribute to the post-2015 development agenda's forest-related work. Canada requested removing reference to the HLPF given the uncertainty about the functions of this body.

Regarding financing, Cuba called for a new section to follow the call for the establishment of the STF to "establish a fund, like the Global Forest Fund envisioned by G-77/China to support developing countries, to provide new and additional financial resources in order to achieve the four GOFs on forests, promote SFM, and implement the NLBI in all types of forests."

The EU suggested a reference to a better use of existing sources of funds.

Regarding the CPF, Ukraine stressed the need for cooperation in addition to communication between the CPF and regional entities. Chile suggested the development of a CPF workplan, rather than a strategic plan. Germany cautioned against

a business-as-usual approach to redefining the roles of a strengthened CPF.

FAO, for the CPF, requested deleting reference to “formalizing” the CPF and to the strategic workplan, as she said this does not exist yet, and underlined that working modalities should be decided among CPF members.

Regarding updating the Forest Instrument, Brazil, with Chile and Cuba, urged keeping all the options for the possible means to update the Instrument, such a resolution or an addendum, open, with Chile noting the possibility of the adoption of an LBI.

Regarding the post-UNFF11 roadmap, the US, Chile, and the EU expressed concern that this section may prejudice what UNFF11 will decide regarding intersessional work.

Regarding other elements in the resolution, NGOs called for concrete opportunities for the involvement of Major Groups, including through the provision of adequate resources. France noted that the proposal for strengthening the human and financial resources of the Secretariat seems premature given that the future functions of the Secretariat have not been agreed.

Children and Youth reiterated their suggestion to consider how the UNFF could take up emerging issues in the future. Germany highlighted that high-level commitments are an important political issue that require a separate section. The Russian Federation called for a new section underlining the importance of regional processes, such as the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

France noted that the proposal for a global forest indicators partnership has not been discussed or agreed yet.

Latvia remarked that participant’s proposed modifications should be kept as options since not all countries have agreed on them. Co-Chair Barber reiterated that this is not a negotiated document but a Co-Chairs’ summary and stated that comments will be presented as options. Panama, with Brazil, called for more clarity on the text and better reflection of the discussions in the working groups.

Co-Chair Landveld suggested, and members agreed, that AHEG2 take note of the Co-Chairs’ Summary as annexed to the report of the meeting.

OTHER MATTERS

The Secretariat presented the new website for the Facilitative Process (<http://unff-fp.un.org/>), which provides information on UNFF projects and related reports. Participants asked, *inter alia*, why small island developing states (SIDS) and countries with low forest cover are highlighted and whether countries can report on the projects implemented as a result of the Facilitative Process.

In response, the Secretariat explained that SIDS and countries with low forest cover were prioritized because these categories experienced the sharpest decline in forest funding in the last decade. Another member of the Secretariat underscored that the impacts of the Facilitative Process are limited because resources are limited. He drew attention to the limited capacity of the Secretariat to help developing countries access the funds

available for SFM, particularly GEF funds. He agreed that it is important to record the benefit of the Facilitative Process’s efforts.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Co-Chair Landveld drew attention to the report of the session and, without amendment, AHEG2 took note of the report.

Saying the summary and recommendations will “bear our name, but be your product,” Co-Chairs Landveld and Barber thanked everyone for their efforts over the past two years. AHEG2 participants applauded the Co-Chairs for their “flexibility, creativity, and guidance.”

UNFF11 Bureau Chair Noel Nelson Messone, Minister of Forests, Environment and Protection of Natural Resources, Gabon, congratulated participants for setting a positive tone for the discussions and convergence of views at UNFF11. He explained that the Bureau will build upon this meeting to chart the next steps toward UNFF11 and appealed to participants for their continued collaboration and preparation.

Co-Chair Landveld gavelled the meeting to a close at 5:11 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF AHEG2

The Second Meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests was the last stop before UNFF11 where the future of the International Arrangement on Forests is supposed to be determined. Two years ago, UNFF10 tasked the AHEG with assessing the nearly 15-year history of the IAF, and envisioning its future as it strives to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. As a result, AHEG2 participants faced a considerable opportunity to revive the UNFF, which one observer called a “toothless bulldog who has lost confidence in himself.”

As if that task itself was not daunting enough, the AHEG2 Co-Chairs reminded participants at the opening session to bear in mind the broader context: 2015 is the year that the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda will be adopted at the September 2015 Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and a climate agreement is supposed to be concluded in Paris in December, all of which will affect forests and their role in environmental protection and socio-economic development.

This brief analysis considers the extent to which AHEG2 fulfilled its mandate to provide forward-looking advice to enable UNFF11 to determine the future of the IAF.

DESIGNING THE MENU

UNFF10 tasked the AHEG to consider a wide range of inputs, and based on these views, to fashion a workable menu of options for UNFF11 to consider in its redesign of the IAF. UNFF Resolution 10/2 called for the AHEG to sift through numerous inputs, including a lengthy independent assessment and dozens of country and stakeholder submissions, to review all possible options for all the components of the IAF as well as its role in the post-2015 development agenda.

The AHEG’s task was complicated by the timing of the production of the independent assessment, whose version with

the full analysis and options was only released after AHEG1 in September 2014, allowing only three months for national capitals to digest and discuss the report and its recommendations before experts convened in New York for AHEG2.

Left with five days to review both the report and a second round of national submissions, AHEG2 managed to discuss the main suggestions from the various inputs, clarify government and stakeholder positions, examine all components, and sketch out basic elements for a UNFF11 resolution.

The AHEG2 Co-Chairs' summary document—the outcome of the review process—reflects a range of views and provides recommendations on elements for the future IAF. As a result, many thought AHEG2 fulfilled this mandate, noting that the document provides “strategic direction” and a solid basis for UNFF11 to discuss the function and institutional arrangements of the post-2015 IAF.

During the week “emerging convergence” was noted on many topics that are reflected in both the Co-Chairs' summary and the elements for a draft resolution, and these could very well shape the negotiations at UNFF11. By providing a forum for initial discussion and deliberation of many of the possible options for the future IAF, AHEG2 identified some options that were politically infeasible, or for which parties did not show an appetite. It became clear during the week that there was only limited support for proposals for a UN Forest Assembly or Special Envoy on Forests. In addition, the discussions illustrated that long-standing divides remain regarding whether to: negotiate a legally-binding instrument, reopen the carefully-crafted compromises contained in the Forest Instrument, or revisit negotiations on a Global Forest Fund. However, there was emerging convergence on clearly tying the post-2015 IAF to forest-related elements of the SDGs, adjusting the working modalities with the CPF, and adopting a concise strategic plan to focus and guide post-2015 IAF work.

Yet this identification of politically feasible and infeasible options was informal. Repeated calls for all options to be kept open and on the table, and reminders that AHEG experts could not “pre-negotiate” a zero draft or prejudge discussions at UNFF11, prompted worries that AHEG2's inputs could be brushed aside. In its suggestions for elements or components to include in the UNFF11 resolution, the AHEG completed its mandate to provide strategic guidance. Yet for some these recommendations did not live up to aspirations for a well-crafted and streamlined document to send to UNFF11. Several commented that discussions were at times characterized by a lack of urgency, and an observer noted that, despite the AHEG's efforts, UNFF11 will still be “a very long, difficult meeting.”

In the end, AHEG2 produced a summary document that identifies the range of opinions, and areas where there may be future agreement, as well as recommendations for incremental change to the IAF.

A CROWDED TABLE

For many, this outcome was not wholly unexpected. The original mandate from UNFF10 was so comprehensive, AHEG2 had many inputs to digest, while trying to balance divergent

views on the future for the IAF in an increasingly congested landscape of institutions working on forest-related governance, that ten days of discussion over two years could not cover all aspects in great depth.

Substantively, participants acknowledged that a clear constraint on the review process was the differing views of the niche that the future IAF will occupy in the crowded field of institutions undertaking forest-related work. Disagreement among Member States about what they want from the IAF has dogged UNFF for many years and there is no clear solution in sight. Throughout the week many experts urged focusing first on the core mission, functions and value added of the post-2015 IAF vis-à-vis other institutions. Where some viewed the future UNFF as an implementation and reporting body serving the post-2015 development agenda, others envisioned a new IAF as an umbrella for all other forest-related work in the international arena.

Several delegates suggested a step-wise approach to reforming the IAF, whereas others sought a more comprehensive set of decisions. Some argued that UNFF11 should focus primarily on achieving consensus on these fundamental questions, with decisions on operationalization aspects (UNFF process, Secretariat, new funds, the relationship with the CPF, and relationship with Major Groups) to come later after the September 2015 Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. As the European Commission and Latvia repeatedly urged during AHEG2, “form will follow function.” Yet as some developing countries suggested, the form, in the shape of the non-legally binding instrument, was clear and what was really needed was on-the-ground implementation, accompanied by sufficient financing to achieve sustainable forest management.

In fact, the ongoing work to finalize and adopt the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda presented a moving target for AHEG2. Since there appeared to be growing consensus that the IAF's linkages to the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda are critical, certain aspects of IAF reform may not be able to be finalized at UNFF11 and will have to await the outcome of the September 2015 Summit. While nearly all agree some sort of follow-up to that Summit will be needed, the exact shape and timing of the follow-up process—another AHEG or a special UNFF session in 2016—is still open for debate.

UNFF11, A MOVABLE FEAST?

Since no options can be taken off the table before Member States convene for UNFF11 in May, the Forum will be still be faced with a wide list of issues and options to choose from. Nevertheless, AHEG2 provided a short list of palatable options. Whether UNFF11 delegates choose to consider these expert suggestions or ignore them and revert to prior Forum debates over finance and an LBI—perennial flashpoints at UNFF sessions—may make all the difference in UNFF11's outcome.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

FOREST EUROPE Expert Level Meeting (ELM) for the Preparations of the 7th Ministerial Conference: The ELM will discuss: the implementation of the FOREST EUROPE work programme; the proposal for an update of the Pan-European Set of Indicators for SFM; preparations for the 7th Ministerial Conference; and upcoming international meetings on forests. **dates:** 20-22 January 2015 **location:** Santiago de Compostela, Spain **contact:** FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit Madrid **phone:** +34-914458410 **fax:** +34-913226170 **email:** liaison.unit.madrid@foresteurope.org **www:** <http://www.foresteurope.org/events/expert-level-meeting-preparations-7th-fe-ministerial-conference>

INTERLAKEN+10: Governing Forest Landscapes: The Governments of Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Switzerland and Ukraine will convene this CLI in support of UNFF. The theme for this CLI, which will focus on forest governance, is “lessons learnt from ten years of experience and the way forward post-2015.” The meeting is meant to generate recommendations on how to integrate forest governance into the UNFF and the post-2015 development agenda. **dates:** 3-6 February 2015 **location:** Interlaken, Switzerland **contact:** Claudia Greco **email:** claudia.greco@helvetas.org **www:** <http://unff-interlaken10.org>

Major Groups-led Initiative in Support of UNFF: The Major Groups participating in UNFF are convening a workshop on sustainable forest management under the theme, “Designing the vehicles for securing the means of implementation.” Expected outputs from the meeting are recommendations to be submitted to UNFF11. The workshop is being supported by the Governments of Nepal and Germany in collaboration with the Major Groups Partnership on Forests, the UNFF Secretariat and the International Tropical Timber Organization. **dates:** 2-6 March 2015 **location:** Kathmandu, Nepal **contact:** Lambert Okrah **email:** info@mgp-forests.org **www:** <http://www.mgp-forests.org/major-groups-initiative-mgi/mgi-2015/background-information-mgi-nepal-2015/>

Third UNCCD International Scientific Conference: The third UN Convention to Combat Desertification’s International Scientific Conference will address combating desertification, land degradation and drought for poverty reduction and sustainable development – the contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices. **dates:** 9-12 March 2015 **location:** Cancun, Mexico **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898/99 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://3sc.unccd.int/>

IV Mediterranean Forest Week: The Fourth Mediterranean Forest Week is being convened by FAO, the Government of Spain, FOREST EUROPE and other partners in order to explore the role of Mediterranean forests in the green economy. The Week will bring together stakeholders to explore policy considerations from the Tlemcen Declaration and Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests, promote resilient forests, consider the integration of other sectors within national forest

programmes and develop an overall vision for the future of Mediterranean forests and woodlands. **dates:** 17-20 March 2015 **location:** Barcelona, Spain **contact:** David Solano **email:** david.solano@ctfc.es **www:** <http://med.forestweek.org/>

International Day of Forests: UN General Assembly resolution 67/200, adopted on 21 December 2012, declared 21 March the International Day of Forests. **date:** 21 March 2015 **contact:** UNFF Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-3401 **fax:** +1-917-367-3186 **email:** unff@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

UNFF11: UNFF11 will consider the future of the IAF, based on challenges and its effectiveness. The meeting will also review progress in the implementation of the global objectives on forests and the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. Thematic issues under consideration will include sustainable forest management and forest law enforcement as well as cooperation and coordination. **dates:** 4-15 May 2015 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNFF Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-3401 **fax:** +1-917-367-3186 **email:** unff@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

GLOSSARY

AHEG	Open-Ended Intergovernmental <i>Ad Hoc</i> Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CLI	Country Led Initiative
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOFs	Global Objectives on Forests
HLPF	High-level Political Forum
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
IAT	Independent Assessment Team
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
LBI	Legally-binding Instrument
MGPOF	Major Groups Partnership on Forests
NLBI	Non-Legally Binding Instrument
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
STF	Strategic trust fund
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests