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UNFF11 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 4 MAY 2015

The eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF11) opened Monday at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting convened in plenary throughout the day. In the morning, delegates addressed agenda items on: organizational matters; reviewing the effectiveness of the IAF and consideration of future options; and reviewing the contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally agreed development goals. Reports on AHEG2, the IAF independent assessment and the CLIs held during the intersessional period were also heard. In the afternoon, delegates heard statements from regional groups and Member States.

PLENARY

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Srećko Juričić (Croatia) recalled Bureau members elected at the first session of UNFF11: Macharia Kamau (Kenya), Srećko Juričić (Croatia) and Heikki Granholm (Finland). He noted the agreement to postpone the election of remaining members to the second session of UNFF11. Delegates elected Vicente Bezerra (Brazil) and Wu Zhimin (China) to these positions.

Juričić reported the endorsement of Noël Messone (Gabon) by the African Group following Macharia Kamau's resignation. Delegates elected Messone as UNFF11 Chair, Bezerra and Wu as Vice-Chairs, and Granholm as rapporteur.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates adopted the agenda (E/CN.18/2015/1) and the provisional organization of work with the understanding that it may be adjusted where necessary.

FORESTS: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE IAF: Chair Messone said these discussions will provide an opportunity to raise the profile of forests, including through integrating forests into other major processes, such as the post-2015 development agenda.

Jan Eliasson, UN Deputy Secretary-General, said the success of SFM requires recognition of the role of forest peoples, civil society, women and other stakeholders. He emphasized the role forests play in poverty eradication, climate resilience and renewable energy, saying that a meaningful IAF will provide a roadmap to a green economy and a sustainable future for all.

Manoel Sobral Filho, UNFF Director, presented the Secretary-General's (SG) summary report reviewing the effectiveness of the IAF and considering all future options (E/CN.18/2015/2), which emerged from a review process led by the UNFF Bureau. The report, he said, addresses past performance, the Forest Instrument, the UNFF Secretariat, the CPF, MoI and the post-

2015 development agenda. UNFF Director Sobral recommended that the IAF's future be guided by three key areas: catalyzing implementation and financing; integration into the broader post-2015 development agenda; and strategic planning, and fostering collaboration and participation.

On the report on the progress made in the Forest Instrument and the GOFs (E/CN.18/2015/3), UNFF Director Sobral noted that national reporting has increased, with a total of 181 reports from 100 countries since 2007, encompassing 72% of the world's forests.

MOI FOR SFM AND FLEG AT ALL LEVELS: Introducing the report (E/CN.18/2015/4), UNFF Director Sobral noted that the facilitative process has raised limited funds, and reported disbursement constraints in several forest financing funds, particularly in relation to climate change.

ENHANCED COOPERATION AND REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL INPUTS: UNFF Director Sobral introduced the report (E/CN.18/2015/5), highlighting the interest of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in cooperating with UNFF.

FORUM TRUST FUND: On the Secretariat's UNFF trust fund report (E/CN.18/2015/8), Director Sobral summarized countries' funding contributions and pledges to the Trust Fund and lamented that UNFF is highly dependent on voluntary funds for staffing.

CPF FRAMEWORK 2013-2014: Eduardo Rojas-Briales, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Assistant Director-General for Forestry and Chair of the CPF, provided an overview of the CPF Framework 2013-2014 (E/CN.18/2015/7), identifying the integration of forests in the post-2015 development agenda as its most important achievement. He additionally addressed the functions of the CPF in the post-2015 IAF, proposing to include in the CPF's mission: measuring progress and support for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular forest-related SDGs; and increasing the CPF's support of forest-related activities in other international fora.

AHEG2 REPORT: Raymond Landveld, Suriname, and Charles Barber, US, Co-Chairs of AHEG2, presented the meeting's outcomes (E/CN.18/2015/11). Landveld outlined areas of "emerging convergence," including that: the CPF and the facilitative process should be strengthened; UNFF should have closer ties to existing financial mechanisms; and multi-stakeholder engagement should be maintained and enhanced. He highlighted

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issues needing further discussion, citing, *inter alia*, whether making the Forest Instrument legally binding would be of benefit to SFM on the ground, and the need for a global forest fund.

Barber summarized the Co-Chairs' recommendations, saying that: the universal membership of the UNFF should be reaffirmed; the future working modalities of the UNFF must be addressed; the UNFF Secretariat should be strengthened; and there is a need to ensure coherence with the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

IAF INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT: Jorge Illueca, Panama, and Juergen Blaser, Switzerland, reported on the IAF independent assessment. Illueca highlighted the need to find synergies between the SDGs, the GOFs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Blaser noted the need for increased Member State commitment and Major Group engagement; and an improved science-policy interface.

IAF BEYOND 2015 WORKSHOP REPORT: Wu Zhimin, China, and Peter Besseau, Canada, reported on the Workshop on the IAF beyond 2015 held in October 2014 in Beijing, China (E/CN.18/2015/9). Wu said that the workshop discussed both legally and non-legally-binding scenarios, and highlighted the need for: an effective financial mechanism; flexibility within UNFF to enable innovation and adaptation; and better use of multi-stakeholder processes, including private sector involvement. Besseau reported the key message that business-as-usual "is not acceptable."

INTERLAKEN+10 REPORT: Christian Kuechli, Switzerland, reported on the CLI on lessons learnt in ten years of the IAF (E/CN.18/2015/12). He concluded that forest governance is the key enabling condition for SFM and emphasized the importance of anchoring forest governance, rights-based approaches and forest tenure in the future IAF. Children and Youth representative Anna Stemberger noted the unique insights and hands-on experience young people have that must be incorporated into UNFF.

MAJOR GROUP INITIATIVE ON ADVANCING CONSERVATION AND SFM IN PARTNERSHIPS:

Shatrudhwan Pokharel, Nepal, presented a report of the Major Group Initiative held in support of the UNFF (E/CN.18/2015/13) in Kathmandu, Nepal in March 2015 entitled "SFM: designing the vehicles for securing the MoI."

FORESTS IN THE ECE REGION REPORT: Roman Michalak, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, presented on a joint UNECE/FAO study "Forests in the ECE region," which showed the region has seen: a net increase of forest area over several decades; a reduction in income generated by the forestry sector; and a fivefold increase in total annual ODA in 2011-2012 compared to 2005-2007.

CIFOR/ICRAF/IUFRO STATEMENT: Peter Holmgren, Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and John Parrotta, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), in a joint statement on behalf of CIFOR, IUFRO, and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), announced the development of a forestry science-policy platform and invited UNFF Member States to consider its potential opportunities.

GENERAL STATEMENTS: South Africa, for the G77/CHINA, urged establishing an adequately-resourced global forest fund to achieve IAF mandates, and questioned the rationale of the proposed position of a special envoy on forests. The EU called for increased linkages with sectors that have impacts on forests, such as agriculture and mining. The ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN) urged for a common definition of SFM and highlighted policies and tools developed to assist its Member States in implementing SFM.

SWITZERLAND said the post-2015 IAF should be strengthened to enable UNFF to become a hub that positions forests in a wider policy landscape. INDONESIA said that

UNFF11 provides a significant opportunity to renew political goodwill. JAPAN affirmed UNFF as an important platform for dialogue to create enabling conditions for SFM worldwide. He recognized the multifunctionality of forests, including their role in disaster risk reduction.

TURKEY said the IAF should integrate all global forest-related efforts and work to avoid forest policy fragmentation. With GABON, he supported establishing a global forest fund. IRAN supported the role of UNFF in monitoring and reporting on forest-related SDGs, and called for recognizing the needs of low forest cover countries. MEXICO noted many national reports refer to activities not directly related to UNFF. NORWAY called for UNFF to continue as a vital arena for cooperation, dialogue and policy but stressed that it should not focus on implementation.

BOLIVIA questioned the effectiveness of market-based mechanisms in achieving SFM, calling for approaches that, *inter alia*, integrate sustainable agriculture, rights-based approaches and living in harmony with mother earth. RUSSIA noted that achieving SFM within the sustainable development agenda lies in the coordinated cooperation of UNFF with all relevant partners.

MALAYSIA urged supporting UNFF with a strategic plan that has time-bound targets and adequate financial support. GHANA advocated for a clear roadmap showing how countries will have access to adequate resources to support IAF implementation.

COLOMBIA noted that despite progress in discussions, "huge lacunae" on implementation of the IAF remain, underlining the need for a clear, results-oriented roadmap working towards measurable GOFs. CHINA, with MALAYSIA, emphasized the need for strengthening the IAF. He further emphasized enhancing the CPF, cross-sectoral work, and regional and sub-regional mechanisms.

INDIA, with ARGENTINA, supported strengthening the UNFF. ARGENTINA said any strategy to conserve forests should be seen in the context of socio-economic development. PERU highlighted the need for the CPF to make information and solutions more easily accessible.

The US highlighted strengths that can be built on to improve SFM, including past intersessional work, the CPF's resources, and the timing of the IAF review process.

THE PHILIPPINES noted increased international awareness of the Forest Instrument. BRAZIL highlighted the need for adequate financial support for developing and implementing SFM policies.

FAO underscored support to UNFF through statistics on forests and publications including the "State of the World's Forests." The INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR BAMBOO AND RATTAN (INBAR) highlighted the vast reforestation and community empowerment opportunities from bamboo and rattan.

IN THE CORRIDORS

UNFF11 opened today with a familiar buzz of energy as delegates came prepared to address the substantive issues of what the post-2015 IAF landscape should look like, and what the role of UNFF in this landscape will be. The general debate highlighted that while there is broad consensus on strengthening both the IAF and UNFF, the finer details are going to be where the real work is needed. Some noted that the impending discussions provide a good opportunity to address areas that might have been overlooked in the past, as well as to incorporate new ideas and ideologies.

There has been what some have termed "commendable engagement" thus far but the next two weeks will be the "litmus test" when Member States will determine the post-2015 IAF and the future of the UNFF.