



## UNFF11 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 6 MAY 2015

On Wednesday, 6 May, UNFF11 reconvened for its third day of deliberations. Morning plenary convened to introduce the zero drafts of the ministerial declaration and the resolution on the IAF beyond 2015. Plenary was then adjourned until Thursday, 7 May, to allow delegations time for consultations.

### PLENARY

Chair Messone introduced the draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of UNFF11, entitled “Future international arrangement on forests we want,” (E/CN.18/2015/L.1). The declaration, he stressed, is intended to be a concise document providing key political messages on a shared vision recognizing forests’ benefits and the collective commitment of ministers to the future IAF, as well as a call to action for forest-related conventions to recognize the declaration.

Chair Messone also introduced the Chair’s draft resolution entitled “International arrangement on forests beyond 2015” (E/CN.18/2015/L.2). He stressed that the annex, which contains information on the current functions of the facilitative process, is not open to negotiation. Messone also referred to an information note circulated on possible meeting timelines for the IAF beyond 2015.

Noting that intersessional activities have highlighted the need for the IAF to harness its full potential, Messone underscored that the UNFF process is at the “crucial, final stage” of developing a solid IAF beyond 2015. He said the future UNFF should have clear objectives with defined responsibilities, be more efficient, and respond to country needs. He highlighted that the zero draft of the resolution pays specific attention to: clarifying the future IAF’s objectives and components; catalyzing financing; more robust monitoring, assessment and reporting processes; and stronger linkages with Major Groups and other stakeholders. He urged delegates to engage in constructive negotiations towards a successful outcome.

Delegates will resume their discussions in two parallel WGs on Thursday morning.

### SUMMARY OF THE ZERO DRAFT OF MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF UNFF11

In the zero draft, the ministers:

- stress the multiple benefits of forests to life and wellbeing, and their vital role in poverty eradication, economy, health, food and water security, gender equality, climate change, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction;

- welcome the efforts of countries and stakeholders to advance SFM, but express their deep concern about, *inter alia*, the continued loss and degradation of the world’s forests and the fragmentation in global forest governance;
  - recognize the vital role UNFF plays in addressing challenges and issues holistically, and promoting policy coordination and cooperation;
  - affirm that the UNFF should play a key role in achieving forest-related SDGs and targets; and
  - underscore the need to accelerate efforts to achieve the IAF’s objectives by strengthening the current arrangement.
- The ministers commit to:
- strengthening implementation of the Forest Instrument and GOFs;
  - integrating forest-related SDGs into the Forest Agreement/Instrument/Framework;
  - integrating implementation of the Forest Agreement/Instrument/Framework into the work of the CPF and its member organizations;
  - promoting implementation and financing, including: enhancing access to forest-related funds; strengthening scientific and technical capacity; strengthening FLEG; and ensuring the UNFF, the Secretariat and the CPF have adequate resources;
  - developing a strategic plan for 2017–2030;
  - accelerating coordination and collaboration, and promoting complementarity and coherence between the IAF beyond 2015 and other forest-related processes;
  - fully engaging with stakeholders, including industry, and local and indigenous communities; and
  - strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting by countries.

The ministers call upon:

- participants in the third International Conference on Financing for Development to consider the role of forests in advancing sustainable development as a financing priority;
- UNFCCC COP21 to use the Forest Agreement/Instrument/Framework as the reference framework for its future forest-related climate change mitigation and adaptation policies;
- the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC to strengthen their participation in UNFF;
- existing and emerging forest-related financial initiatives to support the implementation of the Forest Agreement/Instrument/Framework; and
- the above-mentioned bodies, and participants in the above-mentioned conferences and the UN summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, to consider the present declaration to be the contribution of the UNFF to the outcomes of these events.



The ministers emphasize that in relevant negotiation processes, their country representatives should integrate key elements of the declaration and the UNFF11 resolution into outcome documents of the above-mentioned conferences and summit. They also agree to meet again in 2020.

### **SUMMARY OF THE ZERO DRAFT OF THE UNFF11 RESOLUTION ON THE IAF BEYOND 2015**

The zero draft of the UNFF11 resolution outlines actions under the following subjects: IAF beyond 2015; UNFF beyond 2015; the Forest Instrument beyond 2015; catalyzing implementation and financing; the UNFF Secretariat; the CPF; regional and subregional involvement; Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement; the strategic plan; review of the IAF; follow-up to UNFF11; and resources for implementing the present resolution.

Under **IAF beyond 2015**, the IAF is extended to 2030, will have universal membership and operate in a transparent and cost-efficient manner. The objectives of the IAF beyond 2015 are also affirmed.

On the **UNFF beyond 2015**, the core functions of UNFF will include: providing a participatory, global platform for policy development and dialogue; facilitating SFM implementation; promoting cooperation and policy and programme coordination; and strengthening political commitment to SFM.

UNFF will continue to be a subsidiary body of ECOSOC and meet biennially, convene *ad hoc* group meetings and encourage voluntary initiatives. Regarding strengthening UNFF beyond 2015, *inter alia*, the UNFF mandate will be implemented on the basis of a strategic plan for 2017-2030. UNFF will hold regular sessions during even calendar years and establish a committee on implementation and technical advice (CITA) as a subsidiary body.

The CITA will have the same membership as UNFF, meet intersessionally, be funded through regular budgetary resources, and be supported by the UNFF Secretariat.

On the **Forest Instrument beyond 2015**, the Forest Instrument's validity—and that of the GOFs—is reaffirmed, the timeline of the GOFs is extended to 2030 and the Forest Instrument is renamed to either the UN Forest Agreement/Instrument/Framework. The UNFF WG is requested to propose a special session, to be held in 2016, to replace references to MDGs with references to SDGs. Member States are urged to use the Forest Instrument as a framework for implementing SFM and forest-related SDGs.

On **catalyzing implementation and financing**, the facilitative process is upgraded to a UN forest financing facility or global forest facility in order to significantly increase its capacity to implement its existing and additional functions.

On **monitoring, assessment and reporting**, among other things, the UNFF shall be the primary body to contribute to the follow-up and review of the forest-related SDGs and targets. Member States are invited to monitor, assess and report on implementing the Forest Instrument and the forest-related SDGs and targets. The Secretariat is requested to prepare a quadrennial global publication on implementation of the Forest Instrument.

On the **UNFF Secretariat**, the Secretariat will: continue to service and support the UNFF; manage the upgraded facilitative process and the Forum Trust Fund sub-account; integrate the IAF beyond 2015 into the post-2015 development agenda and prepare the associated quadrennial publications. The resolution notes with concern that the Secretariat continues to be under-resourced.

On the **CPF**, the core functions of the CPF will be to support UNFF's work and enhance policy and programme cooperation and coordination. CPF members are urged to strengthen the Partnership by formalizing its working modalities. The CPF is invited to assess its membership, provide views on the UNFF WG, and request members to provide technical and scientific advice.

On **regional and subregional involvement**, UNFF will: endeavor to strengthen collaboration with regional and subregional organizations; invite regional commissions to develop substantive programmes on forests, if they have not already done so; and invite regional and subregional organizations and processes to provide periodic inputs to the UNFF.

On **Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement**, the participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders at UNFF sessions will be strengthened. Member States are urged to include interested stakeholders as members of their official delegations and to consider enhancing the participation of stakeholders in CLIs. The Secretariat is requested to strengthen the participation of leaders in business and NGOs, forest industries, local communities and philanthropic organizations in the work and sessions of the Forum, and inform the UNFF's WG of the practices of CPF members and other relevant intergovernmental bodies in engaging with stakeholders.

On the **strategic plan**, a strategic plan for 2017-2030 will be developed by the UNFF's WG, which will be operationalized through a quadrennial programme of work.

On the **review of the IAF**, UNFF is requested to undertake a midterm review of the IAF's effectiveness in achieving its objectives in 2024, with a final review in 2030.

On the **follow-up to UNFF11**, the UNFF's WG is endorsed as a subsidiary organ of the UNFF with membership identical to that of the UNFF. The WG will, *inter alia*, be time-bound and meet during 2016 to develop the proposals set out in the resolution.

UNFF is requested to hold a special session in early 2016 and hold its next regular session in 2018. In the context of the midterm review in 2024, UNFF should consider initiating an intergovernmental negotiating process to develop text for a legally binding agreement on all types of forests.

On **resources for implementing the present resolution**, it is recommended that the UNGA make the necessary regular programme budget provisions. The SG is requested to ensure full implementation of the present resolution. The Bureau is urged to invite donor countries and organizations to raise funding for the Forum Trust Fund and its sub-account to support the implementation of the resolution's provisions. Donor countries and organizations are urged to provide voluntary contributions for activities with no regular budgetary provisions. The SG is requested to report on this to UNFF in 2018.

The annex of the resolution sets out the current functioning of the facilitative process.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

The Wednesday session of UNFF proved to be "a slow news day" for some, as the day's plenary session was used to introduce the zero drafts of the ministerial declaration and resolution, with the remainder of the day given over to regional consultations in preparation for the long, tough negotiations that are expected to commence from Thursday.

Delegates said they appreciated having sufficient time to properly reflect on the contents of the drafts. While they had not yet had time to formulate initial reactions, a number of "pet" issues are already apparent. For some developing countries, these include capacity building to enhance SFM implementation, which they will be working to ensure its inclusion in the final negotiated documents. Among some Major Groups and observers, there was a desire for more emphasis on the voices of forest-dependent peoples, especially after Tuesday's multi-stakeholder dialogue. After a thorough independent assessment process, many expressed impatience to start tackling the real, gritty, substantive issues for improving the IAF. The corridors were certainly packed with energetic conversations that signal genuine engagement with the upcoming negotiations.