



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

UNFF11
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UNFF11 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2015

UNFF11 reconvened for its penultimate day of negotiations on Thursday, 14 May. The HLS met for its final day of discussions. In the morning, two roundtables—Integration of Forests in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Renewed Commitments to the IAF beyond 2015—were held. In the afternoon, a High-Level Dialogue was convened with the heads and senior representatives of regional and CPF member organizations and Major Groups. The Ministerial Declaration, “The forests we want: beyond 2015,” was also adopted.

WG2 resumed its discussions on the draft resolution in parallel to the HLS. A new Co-Chairs’ proposal, compiled following Wednesday’s negotiations, formed the basis for the negotiations held throughout the day.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

ROUNDTABLE ON INTEGRATION OF FORESTS IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: UNFF Chair Noël Messone opened the round table discussions. Roundtable Co-Chair Christian Schmidt, German Minister of Food and Agriculture, called on delegates to provide views on how UNFF can be aligned with the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

SOUTH AFRICA urged for recognizing that climate change threatens to reduce sustainable development gains. The NETHERLANDS called for focus on the forest-climate nexus in SFM. MALAYSIA said funding for SFM is key to safeguarding the multiple benefits of forests. IRAN stressed the importance of diversifying forest-related livelihood opportunities. LITHUANIA said the declaration and resolution should stress UNFF’s role in promoting forests in the post-2015 development agenda. SENEGAL noted the importance of a special UNFF session in 2016 to discuss how to achieve this.

GUINEA said the threats of urbanization to forests in developing countries should be addressed. INDONESIA emphasized SFM funding, saying, “We expect a lot from forests, yet we are not giving back enough.” CHINA expressed hope that social and economic indicators can be included to help facilitate follow-up of forest-related SDGs.

CAMEROON and ZAMBIA urged the UNFF to provide clear, cost effective and practical solutions for conserving and managing forests. GHANA said forests need to be more strongly integrated into national development plans. GABON said that forests’ importance cannot be overemphasized when sending a message to the HLPF. VENEZUELA called for new ethics in the relationship between the earth and human needs, which include addressing consumption patterns.

FRANCE urged the IAF to better utilize forest expertise in CPF member organizations. ARGENTINA said that giving the UNFF “additional and predictable funds” must be prioritized.

FIJI urged the UNFF to strengthen the Secretariat enough to “really make things happen” for SFM in the post-2015 development agenda. CONGO urged the UNFF to streamline the duplication of forest programmes occurring due to policy fragmentation.

The US noted the “struggle” to integrate forests and the NLBI into mainstream economic decision making. MAURITANIA urged for emphasis on increased forest cover in the post-2015 development agenda. Co-Chair Schmidt said forests’ multi-functionality is highlighted in the SDGs. He urged for a focus on integration and cooperation with other fora and institutions at both global and local levels.

ROUNDTABLE ON RENEWED COMMITMENTS TO THE IAF BEYOND 2015: This roundtable was Co-Chaired by UNFF11 Chair Messone and Ivan Valentik, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment and Head of the Federal Agency for Forestry, Russian Federation.

ZAMBIA called for enhanced technical and scientific cooperation. SWITZERLAND urged for strengthening of intersectoral coordination at the national level. MALAYSIA called for new criteria and indicators in relation to ecotourism. FIJI urged for increased SFM financing commitments. GUINEA stressed capacity building needs at all levels. The NETHERLANDS underscored partnership with private sector and NGOs for on-the-ground actions. SPAIN said the increased demand for forest resources needs consideration. CANADA called for increased focus on boreal forests, which contribute 29% of global forest cover.

CZECH REPUBLIC called for measurable, time bound targets for forest-related SDGs. NORWAY said the future success of the IAF “depends on our ability to look outside the forest community.” FAO said they can provide technical assistance to countries through their regional forestry commissions.

SWEDEN urged the UNFF to shift its focus to sharing lessons learnt. GABON called for well-defined forest-related indicators. SOUTH AFRICA called for capacity building to establish baselines for implementation. VENEZUELA noted their support for SFM and NLBI implementation.

The CENTRAL AFRICAN FOREST COMMISSION (COMIFAC) outlined the Congo River Basin’s forest policies, noting new forest regulations in the region. CITES urged collaboration with UN entities on shared priorities and objectives for forests.

CAMEROON called for improved coordination and resource use. INBAR noted the wealth of local enterprise that can be leveraged through bamboo use.

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GENERAL STATEMENTS: Peru, for the AMAZON COOPERATION TREATY ORGANIZATION, called for strengthening regional cooperation through collective action of indigenous peoples. Gabon for FOREST ELEVEN said UNFCCC should recognize the “untapped” potential of forests beyond carbon sequestration. INBAR emphasized the opportunities offered by bamboo and rattan to deliver on SDGs. FAO said ensuring forest benefits in sustainable development requires putting people at the center of forest management.

Ecuador, for the COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES, noted the importance of a fully operational CPF and facilitative process to “bridge the gap between Member States’ needs and the resources available to promote SFM.” CÔTE D’IVOIRE highlighted their involvement in youth education projects and negotiations with the EU FLEGT process.

BRAZIL affirmed the importance of the IAF and UNFF to enhance national forest policy. The UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE highlighted joint work with FAO supporting country efforts to increase forest cover. CITES expressed their interest in joining the CPF.

ITTO urged for tropical forests to be a high priority in addressing global deforestation. The TEHRAN PROCESS highlighted that LFCCs have great reforestation potential and their needs must be better addressed in the UNFF.

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION: The draft ministerial declaration (E/CN.18/2015/L.1/Rev.1), which was presented by UNFF Chair Messone, was adopted by acclamation.

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE WITH THE HEADS AND SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES OF REGIONAL AND CPF MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND MAJOR GROUPS:

Chair Messone opened the high-level dialogue saying effective partnerships are key to achieving the future IAF we want. Thomas Gass, DESA Assistant Secretary-General, emphasized shared responsibility, saying forests transcend boundaries and thus institutions and stakeholders must engage fully to achieve transformative change at all levels.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary, reported that several Aichi Biodiversity Targets are explicitly forest-centered, noting that CBD COP13 to be held in November, 2016 will address strategic actions including those in the forest sector.

Emmanuel Ze Meka, ITTO Executive Director, said timber production in tropical forests is an important economic activity in many countries, adding that SDGs can mobilize new resources for sustainable forest use and management.

Elliott Harris, UNEP Assistant Secretary-General, said REDD+ has the capacity to achieve global goals for forest protection. Gustavo Fonseca, GEF, highlighted forest financing available through GEF-6 to enable countries to address drivers of deforestation.

Eva Müller, FAO, highlighted their role in CPF and said that Member States have encouraged FAO to engage more strongly in the forest arena. John Parrotta, IUFRO, highlighted their recent assessment “Forests, Trees and Landscapes for Food Security and Nutrition.” Stan Nkwain, UN Development Programme (UNDP), noted the urgency of addressing deforestation and forest degradation to mitigate climate change.

Narinder Kakar, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), highlighted the multiplier effect that is created when CPF member organizations work together. Nandhini Iyer Krishna, UNCCD, emphasized that deforestation and land degradation are closely linked and need to be addressed together.

Tiffany Hodgson, UNFCCC, said forests are critical for any meaningful action on climate change. Joseph Cobbinah, Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa, on behalf of Major

Groups, pointed to the knowledge base of all Major Groups that could be better harnessed in a future IAF.

CITES explained that its work as a legally binding instrument plays a significant role in controlling illegal trade in protected wildlife, including tree species. The MONTREAL PROCESS highlighted 20 years of experience in developing criteria and indicators for SFM.

Co-Chair Messone closed the High-Level Dialogue, calling on all present to respond to the urgent calls for partnership, collaboration and cooperation to achieve sustainable management of all types of forests.

WORKING GROUPS

WG2: In the morning, a new Co-Chairs’ proposal on the draft resolution was introduced, based on the previous evening’s discussions. The contact group reconvened to continue discussions on MoI, working from the unofficial document distributed on Wednesday.

UNFF Director Sobral synthesized the Secretariat’s current functions and highlighted its limited funding. He said it is “almost impossible” for the Secretariat to extend its functions to include financing and implementing significant projects. He therefore indicated that some of the proposals for an improved facilitative process would be difficult for the Secretariat to implement. He did, however, note the feasibility of an extension to the facilitative process, which would enable it to assist countries to access financing from other funds.

At lunchtime, Co-Chair Bezerra introduced a document containing the Vice-Chairs’ proposal on additional sections of the resolution. The MoI contact group met during lunch.

Resuming WG2 discussions in the afternoon, delegates discussed: review of the IAF; UNFF11 follow-up; and resources for the implementation of the present resolution. An informal discussion group was initiated to further develop language for UNFF11 follow-up, and what kind of body should be established to engage in this. Delegates also discussed financial support for developing countries and economies in transition for participation in UNFF sessions. Informal discussions on MAR and Major Groups and other stakeholders were also held in the afternoon. In the evening, the Co-Chairs presented a new text on MoI for delegates’ consideration. Several delegates expressed frustration at a perceived lack of reflection in the proposed text of progress made in the contact group. As of midnight, delegates were discussing the best way forward.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The corridors were abuzz with light banter during the second and final day of the HLS. Many delegates were seen conferring with their heads of delegation in anticipation of the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration. There was a general sense that its adoption would not meet any objections, with one delegate remarking, “we have now crossed the finish line.” Following the adoption, one delegate was heard reflecting, “the message has been sent, now let those who hear it act on it,” leaving one to hope that “the post-2015 IAF we want” may indeed come to pass.

Such high-spirited mood, however, was not reflected in WG2, where delegates continued to labor through text with no visible sign of the resolution’s finish line. Tensions within and between delegations seemed high, and more than one delegate was heard saying they were experiencing “déjà vu,” thinking back to previous UNFF “all-nighters.”

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of UNFF11 will be available on Tuesday, 19 May 2015 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff11/>