



SUMMARY OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: 4-15 MAY 2015

The eleventh session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF11) took place from 4-15 May 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York. Participants, including Member States, international organizations, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and Major Groups, gathered to address a range of issues including: forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the international arrangement on forests (IAF); means of implementation for sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest law enforcement and governance; and a multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Delegates, including Ministers and Heads of Delegation, took part in a High-Level Segment (HLS) from 13-14 May, which was convened under the theme “The Future International Arrangement on Forests We Want.” The Ministerial Segment included a high-level opening session and general debate as well as roundtables on integrating forests into the post-2015 development agenda and renewed commitments to implementation of the IAF beyond 2015. A high-level interactive dialogue with the heads of the CPF member organizations also took place.

A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue took place on 5 May, which provided an opportunity for Major Groups to share their thoughts and suggestions on the IAF and UNFF beyond 2015. Discussants from Major Groups represented: Women; Farmers and Small Forest Landowners; Forest Workers and Trade Unions; Scientific and Technological Community; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); and Children and Youth.

Work on the Ministerial Declaration and the UNFF11 resolution took place under two working groups (WGs). Working Group 1 (WG1), which met from 5-12 May, dealt with the Ministerial Declaration. Working Group 2 (WG2), which convened from 5-15 May, addressed the UNFF11 Resolution.

Despite long negotiating sessions over the course of the two weeks that often went late into the night, delegates welcomed the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration at the HLS on 14 May and the adoption of the UNFF11 resolution on 15 May. Many felt that the two documents contain appropriate steps forward for a constructive future for the UNFF and the larger IAF.

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 and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. In October 2000, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in resolution 2000/35, established the 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 the implementation of forest-related agreements and foster a common understanding on 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.

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ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION: The UNFF's 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 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 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 (ESTs); 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 (NFPs) 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 contexts. Resolution 2/3 outlined specific criteria related to 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 ESTs. 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). UNFF6 also set four global objectives on forests (GOFs) 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 NLBI and a Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 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 would 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 it should 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.

UNFF11 SUMMARY

UNFF11 opened Monday morning, 4 May, with Bureau Member Srećko Juričić (Croatia) welcoming delegates.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Juričić 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, saying that Vicente Bezerra (Brazil) and Wu Zhimin (China) had been elected to these positions.

Juričić reported the endorsement of Noël Messone (Gabon) by the African Group following 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.

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 agenda, in particular forest-related Sustainable Development Goals (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 issues needing further discussion, citing, *inter alia*, whether making the NLBI 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 country-led initiative (CLI) on lessons learned 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 that the unique insights and hands-on experience young people have 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

General statements were delivered on Monday afternoon, 4 May.

South Africa, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) presented regional statements. The regional groups called for, respectively: establishing an adequately resourced global forest fund to achieve the IAF mandates; identifying a common definition for SFM; and increased linkages with sectors that have impacts on forests, such as agriculture and mining.

Member States, UN agencies and Major Groups spoke next. They highlighted the role and functions for the UNFF and the IAF beyond 2015, forest financing arrangements, and a strategic plan. They also discussed implementation challenges, national action and the CPF.

Switzerland said the post-2015 IAF should be strengthened to enable UNFF to become a hub that sets forests in a wider policy landscape. Iran supported the role of UNFF in monitoring and reporting on the forest-related SDGs. Russia noted that achieving SFM within the sustainable development agenda lies in coordinated cooperation between UNFF and all relevant partners.

Japan recognized the multifunctionality of forests, including their role in disaster risk reduction. 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.

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 highlighted the vast reforestation and community empowerment opportunities from bamboo and rattan.

A summary of the general statements is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13190e.html>

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Tuesday afternoon, 5 May, featured the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. UNFF Director Manoel Sobral Filho introduced the Note by the Secretariat on the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (E/CN.18/2015/6 and Add.1). Lambert Okrah, Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF), for NGOs, moderated the dialogue, saying that discussions would focus on Major Groups’ views on the future of the IAF. He called on regional groups to provide their opinions on Major Groups’ recommendations.

The Major Groups’ presentations discussed the need for UNFF to, *inter alia*: shift from negotiation of text to facilitating policy dialogue; expand the GOFs to include Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG); and set up specific WGs to ensure that momentum on decisions is maintained and emerging thematic issues are addressed. They also emphasized shortcomings of the current IAF; recommendations for global financial mechanisms for SFM; and the role of Major Groups in implementation.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates: urged MGPoF members to improve cooperation and coordination at all levels; underscored the need for the involvement of business and industry Major Groups; said the MGPoF does not require a formalized relationship with the UNFF to be effective; queried the merit in having the MGPoF as an official group; and highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder participation at country-level and in the development of country positions at UN processes.

A summary of the dialogue is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13191e.html>

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

The HLS convened Wednesday and Thursday, 13-14 May, under the theme “The Future IAF We Want.”

UNFF11 Chair Noel Messone welcomed delegates, saying this segment provides an opportunity for renewed commitments for a stronger IAF beyond 2015.

ECOSOC President Martin Sajdik (Austria) highlighted reforms in ECOSOC that aim to create synergies among its subsidiary bodies, including UNFF. He noted that the June 2015 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

will focus on ways to implement its functions in reviewing the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, in which forests play an important role.

UNFF11 Chair Messone then opened the floor for general statements. Statements largely focused on: constraints to effective SFM implementation, including a lack of funding; forests’ role in achieving the SDGs; the fragmented forest policy landscape; a strategic plan for UNFF’s going forward; and the future of the IAF.

South Africa, on behalf of the G-77/China, said the group strongly advocates for establishing a global forest fund to catalyze SFM implementation. The EU highlighted milestones achieved through the current IAF, including the NLBI and increased awareness of forests’ multi-functionality and their role in the international development agenda.

Senegal called for a strengthened UNFF, noting the importance of adopting specific measures to: address illegal logging; improve local governments’ accountability; and promote participatory forest management to build sustainable livelihoods. Gabon called on UNFF Member States to cooperate in a common vision for the future IAF, including supporting SFM implementation through the strengthening of financial mechanisms.

The Russian Federation reaffirmed the need for a legally binding agreement on all types of forests. Malaysia called for establishing a global forest fund. Slovakia emphasized the value of regional level processes in connecting national and global level efforts. Norway noted that the UNFF and CPF have the potential to improve their relevance and effectiveness by, *inter alia*: addressing emerging issues; reaching out to sectors beyond forestry; and taking into account the varying conditions across different regions.

Sweden noted their priority is to facilitate SFM that promotes gender equality and secure forest tenure for the most vulnerable groups. Turkey highlighted that their national policies provide grants and soft loans for income-generating activities among forest-dependent communities. Grenada emphasized that SFM needs to be achieved by “crossing boundaries and building alliances” with all stakeholders.

Morocco highlighted the question of how best to create synergies between UNFF and the Rio Conventions. Samoa noted that forests and SFM provide win-win solutions for many development challenges in the transition to a green economy. Suriname called for strengthening the UNFF Secretariat at all levels. Uruguay highlighted the role of education in ensuring the conservation of natural resources.

Kenya emphasized UNFF as a forum for ensuring SFM implementation. Papua New Guinea noted that customary land tenure in his country is a constraint to SFM. Tanzania emphasized the need for technology transfer to achieve SFM. Brazil affirmed the importance of the IAF and UNFF in enhancing national forest policy.

FAO said ensuring forest benefits in sustainable development requires putting people at the center of forest management. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) expressed their interest in joining the CPF. 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.”

Summaries of the HLS general debate are available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13197e.html>; and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol13/enb13198e.html>

ROUNDTABLE ON INTEGRATION OF FORESTS IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: This roundtable was co-chaired by UNFF11 Chair Messone and Christian Schmidt, German Minister of Food and Agriculture, on Thursday, 14 May.

Roundtable Co-Chair Schmidt called on delegates to provide views on how UNFF can be aligned with the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Roundtable discussions generally focused on how forests are an important component of sustainable development, identifying threats that could reduce sustainable development gains and steps to bolster forests’ role in the post-2015 development agenda.

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. Guinea said the threats of urbanization to forests in developing countries should be addressed.

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.

France urged the IAF to better utilize forest expertise in CPF member organizations. Fiji urged the UNFF to strengthen the Secretariat in order to “really make things happen” for SFM in the post-2015 development agenda.

Co-Chair Schmidt, in closing, 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, on Thursday, 14 May.

This roundtable outlined a number of actions to engage with and strengthen the IAF beyond 2015. Issues specified included: cooperation and coordination at all levels; criteria and indicators; the post-2015 sustainable development agenda; capacity building; and SFM.

Fiji called for increased SFM financing commitments. The Netherlands underscored partnership with private sector and NGOs for on-the-ground actions. Spain said the increased demand for forest resources needs consideration. 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 learned. South Africa called for capacity building to establish baselines for implementation. CITES urged collaboration with UN entities on shared priorities and objectives for forests.

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 on Thursday, 14 May, saying effective partnerships are key to achieving the future IAF we want.

Assistant Secretary-General Thomas Gass, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), 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, Convention on Biological Diversity (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, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Executive Director, said timber production in tropical forests is an important economic activity in many countries, adding that the SDGs can mobilize new resources for sustainable forest use and management. Elliott Harris, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), said 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+) has the capacity to achieve global goals for forest protection. Gustavo Fonseca, Global Environment Facility (GEF), highlighted forest financing available through GEF-6 to enable countries to address the 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, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), emphasized that deforestation and land degradation are closely linked and need to be addressed together. Tiffany Hodgson, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (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 existing knowledge base of all Major Groups that could be better harnessed to strengthen the future IAF.

In the ensuing discussion, 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.

FORUM TRUST FUND

This item was addressed on Monday, 4 May, when the Secretariat's UNFF trust fund report (E/CN.18/2015/8) was introduced. UNFF Director Sobral summarized countries' funding contributions and pledges to the Trust Fund and lamented that UNFF is highly dependent on voluntary funds for staffing.

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

UNFF11 first addressed the ministerial declaration in plenary on Monday, 4 May, under Agenda Item 8 (HLS). The declaration was then the focus of discussions in WG1, Co-Chaired by Wu Zhimin and Srećko Juričić.

On Tuesday 5 May in WG1, delegates shared initial thoughts on and discussed new and additional substantive issues to be included in the non-paper "Possible Elements for Inclusion in the Draft Ministerial Declaration of UNFF11," circulated prior to the session, to inform the zero draft. The Co-Chairs said that this document provides elements for further elaboration based on intersessional work including the independent assessment of the IAF and CLIs.

Many cited a general need for introductory text communicating overarching concerns such as the continuing "alarming" deforestation rate and policy fragmentation. They also highlighted articulating a clear vision for protecting, restoring and sustainably managing all types of forests. Delegates called for recognizing, among other things: the UNFF as a policy forum for SFM promotion; the social and economic benefits of SFM for sustainable development; environmentally sound technologies (ESTs); technology transfer; science-policy dialogue; and clear land tenure rights. Delegates also underscored SFM financing issues and the need for enhanced UNFF collaboration with other forest-related conventions.

The zero draft (E/CN.18/2015/L.1) was introduced in plenary on Wednesday, where Chair Messone stressed that it 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.

On Thursday, 7 May, WG1 began discussing the zero draft. In their general views, delegates highlighted missing elements, including language regarding: a reaffirmation of ministers' commitment to SFM; a stronger statement on forests' contribution to the SDGs; and clearer mentions of SFM challenges. Some delegates stressed that UNFF is at a turning point and should send a global message stressing the importance of forests and their multi-functionality.

There was disagreement on the scope of the draft text, where some argued for keeping the outcome a political declaration rather than a detailed document. Similarly on finances, some delegates remarked that budgetary and administrative issues should not be included in the declaration, while others said existing financial mechanisms should be prioritized over a new mechanism.

On Friday, 8 May, delegates undertook a first reading of the draft text.

On the preamble, there was general support for stressing the importance of forests. On welcoming all efforts to advance SFM, many countries called for acknowledging the role of indigenous peoples and local communities. Regarding pressures on forests, views were split on whether, and how, to include agricultural expansion, inadequate financing for SFM, and illegal harvesting and associated trade.

On recognizing UNFF's role in promoting policy coordination, some delegates supported a reference to global forest policy fragmentation. New paragraphs were proposed to emphasize, *inter alia*: SFM's role in economic and social development; and the need for UNFF to cooperate with other forest-related processes.

There was continued disagreement regarding text on implementation and financing, including whether to: leave financial commitments out of the declaration; emphasize mobilizing funds from all sources and enhancing access to existing forest-related funds; commit to a new global forest fund specifically for SFM implementation; or focus on better coordination across "the plethora" of new and existing financing mechanisms.

Delegates also discussed: how to work with CPF members' governing bodies in implementing the NLBI; whether, or how, to refer to the IAF's original goal of establishing a potential UN convention on forests; and whether monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) should focus on the NLBI or encompasses the GOFs and other forest-related targets, both inside and outside the UN.

On engaging relevant stakeholders in the work of the IAF, there were suggestions to include mention of, *inter alia*, small farmers and landowners, international financial institutions, low forest cover countries (LFCCs), small island developing states (SIDS), women and youth. On whether to hold a ministerial meeting in 2020, many questioned the rationale behind the choice of year, and the purpose of such a meeting. All accepted that the date should be left open, adding that such a meeting should involve all key stakeholders.

A second reading of the draft declaration commenced on Monday, 11 May. Co-Chair Wu noted some delegates' concern that several issues under discussion were linked to the resolution negotiations in WG2. Delegates then broke into a contact group to continue deliberations paragraph by paragraph to resolve bracketed text.

A "Co-Chairs' proposal" was presented on Tuesday, 12 May. A number of delegates disagreed on language for promoting implementation and financing. Many called for language reflecting a commitment to take action to mobilize new and emerging resources, while others felt that their respective forest ministers did not have such a mandate, and therefore the text should rather "recognize the importance" of mobilizing forest-related finance.

On enhancing capacity building, some delegates preferred not including "technical and scientific cooperation." Several delegates objected to text on strengthening the UNFF and its Secretariat, saying it is not appropriate for the declaration to address such administrative issues.

Text was also discussed on the collaboration between UNFF and the CPF and other forest-related conventions. Delegates agreed on text inviting the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC to actively “collaborate” with the CPF and UNFF, where appropriate. There was general agreement to invite delegates at the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in July 2015, to consider SFM as one of their priorities. Delegates also agreed, *ad referendum*, to invite existing and emerging forest-related financing initiatives—including the GEF and Green Climate Fund (GCF)—to support SFM implementation, consistent with their mandates.

On text calling for ministers to meet again in 2020, some delegates said the paragraph should contain a vision for the meeting, suggesting that ministers “meet to explore other options to further strengthen forest management at the international level, including the conclusion of an international convention on forests beyond 2030.” Many objected, saying this precludes the outcomes of that meeting. Some suggested that the future meeting be held in conjunction with the review of the future IAF, while others stressed that ministers do not need to commit to meet again.

WG1 reconvened late Tuesday afternoon, where delegates were presented with a second “Co-Chairs’ Proposal” containing compromise text on many concerns that they had highlighted. After further informal consultations, Co-Chair Wu invited delegates to present major concerns only, noting the Co-Chairs’ reluctance to reopen the text for further negotiation. Unresolved concerns highlighted by delegates included: a statement that a ministerial declaration needs to contain actionable commitments; a call to “promote” rather than “advance” a common understanding of SFM; a disagreement on whether or not ministers should commit to considering a legally binding instrument on all types of forests; and a call to delete reference to “Mother Earth” as a common expression for planet earth. It was noted that the morning’s contact group made progress on many paragraphs, and that it would be time-efficient to include such changes in the Co-Chairs’ proposed text. Discussions continued late into the night where delegates agreed on a final text for adoption at the HLS.

At the HLS on Thursday, 14 May, UNFF Chair Messone presented the draft Ministerial Declaration on “The forests we want: beyond 2015,” which was adopted by acclamation.

Final Outcome: In the declaration (E/CN.18/2015/L.1/Rev.1), the Ministers responsible for forests:

- stress the vital role and significant contribution of all types of forests and trees outside forests in achieving sustainable development, including economic and social development and environmental protection;
- also stress that over 1.6 billion people depend on forests for subsistence, livelihoods, employment and income generation;
- underscore that forests and SFM provide multiple benefits for the lives and well-being of people across the planet, recognizing the importance of living well in harmony with nature;
- reaffirm their strong commitment to forests and the sustainable management of all types of forests, which they recognize as vital to facilitate transformative change

- and address major challenges such as poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable livelihoods;
- are deeply concerned about the continued deforestation and degradation of forests in many regions and underscore the need to reverse this trend;
- stress the need to continue to promote a common understanding of the SFM concept and continue collaborating to promote SFM and address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation;
- welcome efforts by countries and stakeholders to advance the sustainable management of all types of forests, including the role of collective action by indigenous and local communities and community-based SFM;
- also underscore the essential role of Major Groups and other stakeholders in achieving the GOFs;
- recognize UNFF, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, plays a vital role in addressing challenges and issues relating to forests in a holistic and integrated manner, and in promoting policy coordination and cooperation to achieve the sustainable management of all types of forests;
- recognize the value of the Forum as a policy forum for promoting SFM and decide to continue the IAF;
- welcome forest-related developments in other fora, in particular the Rio Conventions, their continued contribution to SFM and the importance of cooperation and synergies between these fora and the IAF;
- affirm that the IAF beyond 2015 should play a key role in promoting the achievement of forest-related SDGs; and
- underscore the need to accelerate efforts at all levels to achieve the objectives of the IAF beyond 2015 and establish a stronger, more effective and solid arrangement for the period 2015 to 2030.

The Ministers commit themselves to:

- implement SFM as defined in the NLBI, taking into account different visions, approaches, models and tools, including by strengthening NLBI implementation by national, regional and global actions to achieve the GOFs;
- affirm their commitments to a stronger and more effective post-2015 IAF with a view to providing leadership to promote the vital significance of forests in the global sustainable development agenda, enhancing implementation of SFM, advancing forest policy dialogue, and fostering collaboration, cooperation and synergies with all forest-related organizations, conventions and processes;
- promote integration of SFM and commitments contained in the NLBI into poverty reduction strategies, national sustainable development strategies and sectoral policies;
- support the CPF’s work as a strategy for improving coherence and synergy on forest issues at all levels and to promote integrating SFM into the CPF member organizations, strategies and programmes;
- adopt cross-sectoral approaches and foster collaboration to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in a coherent and coordinated way and to increase the valuation and recognition of the full value of forest goods and services;
- review and improve forest-related legislation, strengthen forest law enforcement and promote good governance at all levels

in order to support SFM, create an enabling environment for forest investment and combat and eradicate illegal practices, as well as promote secure land tenure;

- continue to tackle deforestation and forest degradation and promote trade in forest products from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests;
- promote the sustainable management of all types of forests including by stressing the importance of new and additional resources from all sources for SFM, continue to enhance capacity building, and strengthen the IAF and its components to perform their functions effectively;
- strengthen coordination and collaboration on all issues relating to forests and promote complementarity and coherence between the IAF and other forest-related cross-sectoral processes;
- fully engage all stakeholders in the work of the IAF; and
- strengthen national MAR and the ability of the IAF to assist countries in regard to achieving the objectives of the IAF, including implementation of the NLBI, GOFs and forest-related SDGs and targets to be considered for adoption at the UN summit in September 2015.

The Ministers invite:

- the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in July 2015, to give appropriate consideration to the issue of financing for forests and SFM as one of its priorities;
- forum members, financing institutions and the private sector to aim to ensure investment and development finance take account of forests in poverty eradication and sustainable development;
- the UNFCCC COP to consider the importance of forests and SFM in both climate change mitigation and adaptation, in accordance with its mandates;
- COPs to the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC to consider outputs of the future IAF, and also invite their secretariats to continue to actively participate in the CPF and continue their involvement in the work of the Forum and the Partnership;
- existing and emerging forest-related financing initiatives, including GEF and GCF, to support the implementation of SFM; and
- above-mentioned forums and 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 Forum to the outcomes of those events.

The ministers resolved to meet again to further strengthen the Forum, review progress of implementation of the IAF beyond 2015 and explore options for strengthening SFM at all levels.

UNFF11 RESOLUTION

The UNFF11 resolution addressed agenda items 3 (Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the IAF), 4 (MoI for SFM and FLEG at all levels), 5 (enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination), 6 (regional and subregional inputs), 7 (multi-stakeholder dialogue), and 9 (Forum Trust Fund).

PLENARY SESSION: Forests: Progress, Challenges and the Way Forward for the IAF: On Monday, 4 May, UNFF11 Chair Messone highlighted discussions on this agenda item as an opportunity to raise the profile of forests, including through

integrating forests into other major processes. UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson 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.

Reviewing the effectiveness of the IAF and consideration of all future options and Reviewing the contribution of forests and the IAF, including the NLBI, to the internationally agreed development goals: UNFF Director Sobral presented the Secretary-General's 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 NLBI, the UNFF Secretariat, the CPF, MoI and the post-2015 development agenda. He 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.

Reviewing the progress towards the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the NLBI: On the report on the progress made in the Forest Instrument implementation 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 those relating to climate change.

Enhanced Cooperation and Policy and Programme Coordination, including the Provision of Further Guidance to the CPF and Regional and Subregional Inputs: UNFF Director Sobral introduced the report (E/CN.18/2015/5), highlighting the interest of the CITES and the World Trade Organization in cooperating with UNFF.

Zero Draft of the Resolution: The zero draft (E/CN.18/2015/L.2) was introduced in plenary on Wednesday, 6 May. UNFF11 Chair Messone noted that intersessional activities have highlighted the need for the IAF to harness its full potential, underscoring that the UNFF process is at the "crucial, final stage" of developing a solid IAF beyond 2015.

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS: On Tuesday, 5 May, delegates convened in WG2, co-chaired by Heikki Granholm and Vicente Bezerra, to provide their views on the document titled "Non-paper on possible elements for inclusion in the UNFF11 draft resolution on the IAF beyond 2015."

Delegates generally expressed satisfaction with the non-paper as a basis for further discussion. Issues raised included: the IAF beyond 2015; the UNFF beyond 2015; the NLBI beyond 2015; FLEG; MAR; synergies among CPF members; strengthened multi-stakeholder involvement; and improved support for regional and subregional initiatives.

On the IAF beyond 2015, some delegates called for extending the IAF to 2030. Many also stressed the importance of integrating it into the post-2015 development agenda.

Addressing the status of the UNFF beyond 2015, some cautioned that establishing a standing subsidiary body or

committee on implementation under the UNFF may duplicate the work of other forest-related bodies. One delegate said that strengthening UNFF relies on improving its financing framework, and some cautioned that renaming UNFF without adding substance could be considered “cosmetic.”

On the NLBI beyond 2015, many stated that they would not reopen negotiations on the instrument’s substance and would rather explore opportunities for strengthening its implementation.

On catalyzing implementation and financing, several delegates supported the call for establishing a global forest fund. Others said they do not support establishing such a fund, noting that SFM financing should come from a range of complementary sources. They also underscored that although global forest funding has increased significantly, many countries lack capacity to access it. The role of FLEG in mobilizing resources was also highlighted.

Delegates were further heard calling for replacing language on MAR with reference to “follow up and review.” Others urged for specific, measurable and time-bound targets for UNFF, with some suggesting this be supported by a strategic plan. Many called for strengthening the UNFF Secretariat.

On Thursday, 7 May, WG2 Co-Chair Bezerra opened discussions on the draft resolution. He invited delegates to express general views on the draft as a whole, followed by statements on different sections of the resolution.

Some delegates welcomed the draft resolution, saying it was a good basis for going forward. Others expressed strong reservations about the proposed resolution’s length and scope, saying it may be difficult to complete its negotiation in less than two weeks, and urging for a more focused, high-level document.

On IAF beyond 2015, UNFF beyond 2015, and the NLBI beyond 2015, there was some concern that the proposed expanded UNFF functions were too focused on implementation. Some delegates suggested that additional aspects necessary for the IAF’s implementation could be mentioned, such as governance and enabling environments. Many stated they would not support reopening and renegotiating the text of the NLBI. Additionally, while some expressed support for renaming the NLBI the “Forest Instrument,” others queried the merit of renaming it.

On establishing a committee on implementation and technical advice (CITA) as a subsidiary body of the Forum, diverse views were expressed, including: a lack of support for its establishment; a request for clarification on its role; and a call for its establishment so that the UNFF can remain relevant in a changing landscape.

Some urged for increased reference to SFM and capacity building. Many stated that while they saw value in holding high-level sessions, these should be held as part of regular UNFF sessions.

On catalyzing implementation and financing, MAR, and the Secretariat of the Forum, some delegates said upgrading the Facilitative Process, a mechanism established at the Special Session of UNFF9 to assist developing countries in mobilizing forest funds, should be cautiously addressed. Many questioned whether it was necessary to upgrade it to an entity. Others suggested that upgrading it would not necessarily require this.

Views on the merit of the proposed global forest indicators partnership were split.

Delegates also stated that: establishing a global forest fund and a voluntary strategic trust fund are not mutually exclusive; UNFF cannot assume to be the primary body responsible for monitoring forest-related SDGs; establishing a forest financing window in the GEF should be viewed with caution; and anchoring the role of the Secretariat in a strategic plan will help prioritize UNFF’s strategic role.

On the CPF, regional and subregional involvement, and Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement, several delegates said they did not support the proposal to transform the CPF into a “UN-Forest.” One delegate saw merit in reaffirming the UNFF’s relationship with the CPF, and in providing input to enhance its accountability, transparency and communication with the UNFF and others. Another delegate noted that the role of Member States in strengthening the NLBI and its components should not be diminished by emphasis on the CPF. It was suggested the CPF could be invited to develop its own model for further formalization.

Many noted that language on regional and subregional organizations and processes should be maintained throughout the section on regional and subregional involvement. It was mentioned this section could capture some of the specific challenges faced by LFCCs, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and SIDS.

Some noted the section on Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement to be “of critical importance.” The need to consider how concrete suggestions from Major Groups could be integrated under ECOSOC regulations was cited. The key importance of the private sector was also underlined. Other delegates said the Secretariat should strengthen participation of all, rather than specific, Major Groups.

On the preamble, general comments included statements on what prominence should be given to the CPF and other IAF components. One delegate suggested recognizing all significant forest-related developments over the last decade. There was disagreement on whether the preamble should make specific reference to Rio Principles 2 (countries’ sovereign right to exploit their own resources) and 7 (common but differentiated responsibilities). Some said that singling out these principles would take them out of context, while another pointed out that they are already specifically cited in the NLBI.

On Friday, 8 May, WG2 deliberations resumed and continued late into the evening. In the morning, the UNFF Secretary reported on the feasibility of changing the name of the NLBI. He said that any name change to the NLBI would have to be sanctioned by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). He noted that: the term “instrument” is broad and does not have legal implications; “Agreement” with a capitalized “A” implies a formal, legally-binding agreement subject to ratification procedures; and “agreement” with a non-capitalized “a” denotes a more generic term, not subject to legal processes.

Resuming discussions on the draft resolution, several delegates proposed that the scope of the section on the IAF beyond 2015 be broadened. Their suggestions included: reference to adapting to new demands and developments;

acknowledging that there are other tools and instruments at work besides the NLBI; and recognizing the IAF also consists of, *inter alia*, regional and subregional processes and Major Groups.

One delegate proposed that the UNFF decide to facilitate the development of a legally-binding global agreement on all types of forests. Another urged mention of global stewardship of forests and trees outside of forests. Others suggested including the word “voluntary” in the context of the UNFF Trust Fund.

On the UNFF beyond 2015, one delegate requested to include that MAR be on the basis of voluntary reports submitted by Member States. Others proposed narrowing the scope of the section, for example through referring to promoting the implementation of the NLBI instead of “sustainable management of all types of forests.” Some delegates suggested text that references the implementation of SFM through the forest-related SDGs and the GOFs. Others suggested text on facilitating synergies through receiving and considering reports from the CPF, as well as providing guidance to the CPF.

Some delegates stated their opposition to establishing a CITA. One speaker favored an arrangement where UNFF sessions in “even years” deal with political issues, while sessions in “odd years” address scientific advice and implementation issues. Each would meet for five consecutive days. Others expressed concern that the text expands the functions of the Bureau.

On the NLBI beyond 2015, a number of delegates proposed deleting reference to renaming the NLBI to the “Forest Agreement,” preferring “Forest Instrument” instead. One delegate urged deleting text on renaming the NLBI, saying that resources could be better spent on activities other than the instrument’s renaming.

On catalyzing implementation and financing, while there was some support for the proposed functions of an upgraded Facilitative Process, others called for enhancing it, rather than upgrading it to an entity or financing mechanism. Some proposed replacing this section with wording that emphasizes assisting countries to access existing forest-related financing. This would include assisting them to design strategies for NLBI implementation for submission to various financing mechanisms. Additionally, some supported referencing a global forest fund; others opposed this, preferring wording on a voluntary strategic trust fund. There was some support for language inviting new actions from the GEF, while others suggested encouraging the GEF to continue its SFM strategy in GEF-6.

On MAR, there was a suggestion to amend the title of the section to include text on the NLBI and follow up and review of the forest-related SDGs and targets. One delegate suggested including MAR as a component of follow-up and review activities. Delegates also considered deleting language, *inter alia*: implying that Member States carry out monitoring, assessment and review activities; and requesting the Secretariat to prepare quadrennial global publications on progress in the implementation of the NLBI and the achievement of the GOFs and forest-related SDGs and targets.

On Monday, 11 May, WG2 delegates began the second reading of the draft resolution. Co-Chair Granholm introduced the text containing the compilation of country inputs on the draft resolution gathered during the first reading.

The UNFF Secretariat clarified that UNFF has often used the terms “sustainable management of all types of forests” and “SFM” interchangeably, for instance in Resolution E/2000/35 (Report on the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests) and UNFF10 Decision 10-2 (Dates and Venue for UNFF11).

On the IAF beyond 2015, one delegate underscored a preference for referring to “SFM,” rather than “sustainable management of all types of forests” while others noted their flexibility on this issue. Some opposed reference to “trees outside of forests.”

On mobilizing resources, it was suggested to mobilize “increased” resources specifically for developing countries. Delegates also noted that this section should not preclude the possibility of additional resource mobilization for SFM in developed countries. There were also calls to increase references to technology dissemination and transfer.

Divergent views were heard on widening the scope of the objectives of the future IAF, with calls to acknowledge the role of forest instruments besides the NLBI. One delegate noted the existence of five other important instruments that should not be disregarded. Several delegates called for deciding early on how to reference the post-2015 development agenda.

On the UNFF beyond 2015, some questioned the need to refer to the UNFF supporting IAF objectives, cautioning that such text may imply that the UNFF could support other processes. Delegates also proposed text calling for promoting capacity-building initiatives and the development, dissemination and transfer of ESTs for SFM implementation in developing countries.

On UNFF’s core functions, several delegates opposed reference to basing some of these functions on respect for states’ sovereignty to establish their national forest policies, saying this principle is already guaranteed, and is acknowledged in the preamble’s reaffirmation of the Rio Principles. Others supported including the active participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders as a core UNFF function.

Some delegates supported replacing reference to “forest-related SDGs and targets” with “contributions of forests to an eventual framework on sustainable development after 2015,” given that post-2015 development agenda and SDG discussions are still ongoing. Some highlighted that wording on strengthening political commitment should not be limited to the NLBI.

Several delegates opposed including references to: mobilizing and channeling financial, technical, and scientific resources for SFM; and promoting capacity-building initiatives and development, dissemination and transfer of ESTs. They did, however, support reference to promoting good governance at all levels.

On strengthening the functioning of UNFF beyond 2015, there was general support for developing a strategic plan for the period 2017-2030, but it was suggested that such a plan does not require biennial reassessment. On how best to strengthen and organize intersessional work, some supported establishing a new committee but there was disagreement on whether the committee should be on implementation and technical advice, or

on finance, technology and policy. On the NLBI, there was also disagreement on whether to reaffirm its continued “validity” or “value.”

On catalyzing implementation and financing, there was discord about whether to refer to “upgrading” or “enhancing the capacity of” the Facilitative Process. One delegate cautioned against creating new functions for a process that is not delivering on its existing functions. Another proposed referring to the future Facilitative Process as the “UNFF/Global clearinghouse on SFM financing.” One delegate stressed their delegation “is not ready to go along” with reference to finance being provided on a voluntary basis. There was some support for recognizing that the financing landscape for forests has evolved considerably. Significant support was expressed for inclusion of a paragraph on upgrading the Facilitative Process in order to assist countries’ access to existing and emerging forest-related funds.

Some delegates opposed the preconditions listed in the text for mobilizing funds. They also suggested text specifying that developed countries mobilize funds to assist developing countries to implement the NLBI as follows: US\$150 million annually for a voluntary global forest fund; and US\$15 million annually, through an upgraded Facilitative Process, for submission of strategies, programmes and projects to the GEF, GCF and others.

Some delegates opposed requesting the GEF to: expand existing programmes that engage with and fund SFM; and enhance the accessibility of funds by seconding staff to support the upgraded Facilitative Process. Others noted that the GEF has already allocated a quarter of its funds to forest-related projects and that requesting dedicated funding for forests may jeopardize this opportunity.

On the core functions of the CPF, some were not ready to negotiate specific details in the text. While there were many suggestions and disagreements on how best to frame the CPF’s functions, a number recognized the “useful” work the CPF is already undertaking, recommending language to invite it to continue with this. Some felt it would be better for the CPF to decide its own working modalities. It was also suggested that a more flexible approach to achieving the CPF’s functions would be preferable, given each member organization has different internal structures and rules.

On regional and subregional involvement, one delegate proposed a paragraph inviting Member States to voluntarily establish regional and subregional processes for forest policy development, dialogue and coordination to promote SFM. They explained that existing mechanisms might not address SFM, but another delegate opposed the paragraph, saying the UNFF should not create duplicate platforms.

On Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement, views were split on whether to mention the need for the UNFF to promote transparency and implementation by enhancing partnership with Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders at the international level. Delegates discussed whether it was more appropriate to “urge,” “invite,” “request” or “recommend” Member States and the Secretariat to take actions in this regard.

Reporting back from a lunchtime contact group, the Co-Facilitators noted emerging consensus to separate text on the following: MAR on the IAF and the NLBI; and possible contributions of the IAF to follow-up on the post-2015

development agenda. It was noted that the latter could be reworded so as not to prejudice the outcome of the post-2015 development agenda discussions.

On Tuesday, 12 May, WG2 established a contact group to address: establishing a CITA and articulating its functions; a CITA’s modalities; and catalyzing implementation and financing.

On the potential CITA, the contact group’s Co-Facilitators clarified that the proposed committee, regardless of its final form, is intended to be a permanent body, with a set of defined functions that operates during intersessional periods. One delegate expressed strong support for a CITA, saying it could play a significant role in implementing the NLBI by, *inter alia*, making recommendations to the UNFF on implementation, and increasing the efficiency of financing mechanisms. Several opposed, saying the current UNFF structure could fulfil these different functions. Some cautioned on the budgetary implications of establishing such a body.

There was also concern regarding a proposed paragraph on having a CITA make recommendations on enhancing policy coherence and strengthening a common international understanding of SFM.

On who such a body would serve and for what purpose, delegates suggested more generic language listing its potential functions, to be cross-checked with those of the UNFF. They also said that the language on its functions could be refined once the relevant discussions had been completed.

Among the actors who would be served by this body, some delegates called for explicit reference to Member States. Some also urged for mention of regional and subregional platforms. Delegates agreed that the body would also serve the CPF and its member organizations.

Delegates chose to maintain a paragraph on the need to advance the science-policy interface and facilitate sharing of knowledge and best practices. Discussions then turned to whether a new subsidiary body is necessary for the UNFF to enhance the implementation of its functions. One delegate explained the rationale behind their proposal to replace a CITA with a model based on the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), saying that they wish to avoid creating a new body whose role and function is not completely understood. This prompted the question of whether other delegates were “wedded” to the idea of establishing a UNFF subsidiary body for implementation. Some responded that they saw a strong need to emphasize implementation and wanted a “break” from the status quo.

Delegates then moved into discussions on the proposed modalities for a new implementation body, including who should chair it, and how its meetings, and delegates’ participation in them, should be funded. Some wished to bracket such details as long as other aspects remained outstanding.

WG2 Co-Chair Granholm introduced the Vice-Chairs’ proposal on the draft resolution on Tuesday evening. He explained it aimed to streamline delegates’ comments, noting that text on catalyzing financing for implementation was not included as this topic was still under the contact group’s consideration. He also noted the original section on MAR had been split into two sections: provisions on MAR on the NLBI had been retained

in the section; and language on linkages with the post-2015 development agenda had been moved to a later section.

On Wednesday, 13 May, WG2 resumed its discussions in parallel to the HLS. Delegates heard that Tuesday evening's MoI discussions had resulted in new, alternative text being formulated. WG2 Co-Chair Bezerra invited delegates to come up with an agreed, clean text on MoI by the end of the day's sessions, suggesting delegates split into both a contact group and a smaller discussion group to resolve key issues.

Delegates then turned to the Vice-Chairs' proposal on the draft resolution. On the IAF beyond 2015, there was discussion on wording concerning the implementation of the sustainable management of all types of forests, "taking into account different visions and approaches." Some preferred deleting this addition, while others urged that different models and tools for achieving sustainable development also be taken into account. Delegates discussed whether the IAF should promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, "in particular" or "including" the NLBI.

Delegates agreed, *ad referendum*, on certain points concerning the IAF beyond 2015, the UNFF beyond 2015 and the NLBI beyond 2015. Many delegates stressed that the section on MAR was key. There was, however, no consensus on how to capture all concerns. Some, therefore, suggested simplifying the section to refer only to issues that needed to be resolved at the current session, with the Co-Chairs engaging in consultations on this.

On MoI, it was explained that a small group had met over lunchtime to work through some issues. This had resulted in an unofficial document with proposed text seeking to capture different views. The MoI contact group resumed its discussions on the basis of this proposal after the first reading of the Vice-Chairs' proposal had concluded.

On Thursday, 14 May, a new Co-Chairs' proposal was introduced to the WG, based on the previous evening's discussions. The contact group reconvened to continue discussions on MoI.

UNFF Director Sobral reported to the WG on 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 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. Resuming WG2 discussions in the afternoon, delegates discussed: review of the IAF; UNFF11 follow-up; and resources for the implementation of the resolution. An informal discussion group was initiated to further develop language for UNFF11 follow-up, and the kind of body to be established to engage in this. Delegates also discussed financial support for developing countries and economies in transition to participate 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 text of progress achieved in the contact group. Delegates continued into the early hours of Friday morning, where a new Co-Chairs' text was agreed to as a basis for further negotiations.

On Friday, 15 May, UNFF11 convened in plenary to assess progress in WG2 on the draft resolution. UNFF11 Chair Messone urged delegates to achieve consensus on pending text negotiations and reassemble for its adoption later in the day.

WG2 Co-Chair Granholm called on delegates to deliberate on the Co-Chairs' new proposed text. Informal discussions on the Co-Chairs' proposal were held throughout the day. An informal group on MAR and a friends of the Co-Chairs group on MoI was convened and met in parallel to the WG2 informal discussion.

Delegates concluded their discussions in the evening, with the adoption of the draft resolution "International arrangement on forests beyond 2015" by acclamation.

Final Outcome: The resolution (E/CN.18/2015/L.2/Rev.1), which will be forwarded to ECOSOC for its consideration and adoption, outlines actions under the following areas: IAF beyond 2015; UNFF beyond 2015; the NLBI beyond 2015; catalyzing financing for implementation; MAR; the Secretariat of the Forum; the CPF; regional/subregional involvement; Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement; the IAF and the post-2015 development agenda; review of the IAF; UNFF11 follow-up; and resources for implementing the present resolution.

In the preamble, ECOSOC, *inter alia*:

- recalls resolution 2000/35, which establishes the IAF;
- recalls resolution 2006/49 and UNFF resolution 10/2, which provides for the 2015 review of the effectiveness of the IAF;
- recognizes the achievements of the IAF since its inception;
- acknowledges the progress made by countries and stakeholders towards SFM;
- welcomes the significant forest-related developments in other fora;
- welcomes the recognition given to forests and SFM by the Open Working Group of the UNGA on SDGs; and
- stresses the need to strengthen the capacity of the IAF to foster coherence on forest-related policies.

Under **IAF beyond 2015**, ECOSOC decides:

- to strengthen and extend the IAF to 2030;
- that the IAF is composed of the UNFF and its Member States, the Secretariat of the Forum, the CPF, the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and the UNFF Trust Fund; and
- that the IAF involves as partners interested international, regional and subregional organizations and processes, Major Groups and other stakeholders.

The **IAF Objectives** are to:

- promote implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, in particular the implementation of the NLBI;
- enhance the contribution of all types of forests and trees outside forests to the post-2015 development agenda;
- enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels;
- foster international cooperation;
- support efforts to strengthen forest governance frameworks and MoI to achieve SFM; and

- strengthen long-term political commitment to the achievement of objectives to strengthen forest governance frameworks and MoI.

ECOSOC also decides that the IAF beyond 2015 should, *inter alia*, operate in a transparent, effective, efficient and accountable manner, and contribute to enhanced coherence, cooperation and synergies with respect to other forest-related agreements, processes and initiatives.

It emphasizes that the objectives should be achieved through the collective and individual actions of: Member States; international, regional and subregional organizations and processes; and Major Groups and other stakeholders.

On the **UNFF beyond 2015**, the core functions of the UNFF are to:

- provide a coherent, open, transparent and participatory global platform for policy development, dialogue, cooperation and coordination on issues related to all types of forests;
- promote, monitor and assess SFM implementation;
- promote governance frameworks and enabling conditions at all levels to achieve SFM;
- promote coherent and collaborative international policy development on issues related to all types of forests; and
- strengthen high-level political engagement in support of SFM.

ECOSOC also reaffirms that UNFF is a subsidiary body of the Council with universal membership, which operates under the rules of procedure of the functional commissions and reports to the Council and, through the Council, to the UNGA.

It decides that the UNFF will continue to operate according to provisions specified in paragraph 4(a)-(e) of ECOSOC resolution E/2000/35, unless otherwise provided for in the resolution.

It further decides to improve and strengthen the functioning of the Forum beyond 2015 by having the Forum:

- carry out its core functions on the basis of a strategic plan for 2017-2030;
- restructure its sessions and enhance its intersessional work to maximize the impact and relevance of its work, including by fostering an exchange of experiences and lessons learned;
- hold annual UNFF sessions for a period of five days;
- convene HLLs, not exceeding two days, to accelerate towards SFM and address forest-related global challenges and emerging issues;
- enhance the contributions to the work of the Forum by CLIs and other similar initiatives by ensuring they directly support the UNFF's priorities as defined in its four-year work programmes and their outcomes are considered by the UNFF, and update the Forum's guidelines in this regard; and
- dedicate the alternate years of the UNFF to discussions on implementation and technical advice for the purpose of focusing Member States' attention on the functions as listed in the resolution.

On the **NLBI**, ECOSOC:

- reaffirms the NLBI's validity, including its GOFs;
- decides to extend the timeline of the GOFs to 2030 and rename the NLBI to the "UN Forest Instrument";
- recommends the UNGA adopts the modifications referred to above at its 70th session and not later than December 2015; and

- urges Member States to utilize the NLBI as an integrated framework for national action and international cooperation for SFM.

On **catalyzing financing for implementation**, ECOSOC reiterates that there is no single solution to address forest financing needs, and that a combination of actions is required at all levels by all stakeholders and from all sources. It also welcomes the positive work carried out by the Facilitative Process to date and recognizes it has yet to fulfil its potential.

To strengthen and make the Facilitative Process more effective, ECOSOC decides:

- that the name of the Facilitative Process be changed to "Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network";
- to set clear priorities for the strengthened Facilitative Process in the strategic plan;
- to promote the design of national forest financing strategies to mobilize resources for SFM;
- that it should serve as a clearinghouse on existing, new and emerging financing opportunities and as a tool for sharing lessons learned from successful projects, building on the CPF online sourcebook for forest financing;
- to ensure that special consideration is given to the special needs and circumstances of, *inter alia*, Africa, LDCs and SIDS, in gaining access to funds; and
- to enhance the capacity of the Secretariat to effectively and efficiently administer the upgraded Facilitative Process; and to strengthen collaboration with the CPF in implementing the activities of the upgraded process.

With the aim of strengthening the Facilitative Process, it decides to, *inter alia*:

- request the Secretariat in consultation with the Forum members and the CPF to make recommendations on ways to further increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Facilitative Process and submit them for consideration by the Forum in 2018;
- welcome the report of the GEF on the mobilization of financial resources through the GEF-5 SFM/REDD+ incentive programme and invites GEF to periodically provide information on the mobilization of financial resources and funds that are dedicated to SFM;
- welcome the decision taken by the GEF Assembly at its May 2014 session to include an SFM strategy in GEF-6; and
- invite the GEF Council to request the GEF Secretariat to discuss arrangements to facilitate collaboration between the GEF and the UNFF to support eligible countries to access funding for SFM.

It also invites the GEF to consider: options for establishing a new focal area on forests during its next replenishment and continue to seek to improve existing forest finance modalities; and designating amongst its staff a liaison to serve as a link between the UNFF and the GEF.

On MAR, it decides:

- to invite Member States to continue to monitor and assess progress towards implementing the NLBI, and the GOFs, and to submit national progress reports on a voluntary basis;
- to take note of the ongoing efforts by the CPF and its members and other relevant entities and processes to work

jointly to further streamline and harmonize reporting, reduce reporting burdens and synchronize data collection;

- to request the Secretariat to propose for the Forum's consideration at its next session, a cycle and format for national reporting and enhancement of voluntary MAR under the IAF as part of the strategic plan; and
- to request the Secretariat to continue making the reports of its sessions available to relevant UN bodies and other international forest-related organizations, instruments and intergovernmental processes.

On the **UNFF Secretariat**, the Secretariat will: continue to service and support, *inter alia*, the UNFF; administer the UNFF Trust Fund; manage the strengthened Facilitative Process; promote inter-agency collaboration; provide, upon request, technical support to CLIs and similar initiatives; and liaise with and facilitate the participation and involvement of countries, organizations, Major Groups and other stakeholders in the activities of the Forum.

It further notes that the Secretariat should perform a number of additional functions, including:

- servicing and supporting the UNFF's working groups;
- managing the strengthened Facilitative Process and implementing its activities in collaboration with the CPF;
- promoting coherence, coordination and cooperation on forest-related issues including by liaising with the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions; and
- working with the UN system to support countries to align forests and the IAF with their considerations for the post-2015 development agenda.

It reaffirms that the Secretariat will continue to be located in UN Headquarters in New York, and recommends the UNGA to consider strengthening the Secretariat.

On the **CPF**, the core functions of the CPF are to: support the work of UNFF and its Member States; provide technical and scientific advice to the UNFF; enhance coherence and policy and programme cooperation and coordination at all levels; and promote implementation of the NLBI and the contribution of forests to the post-2015 development agenda.

It reaffirms that the CPF should continue to: receive guidance from UNFF and submit coordinated inputs and progress reports to UNFF sessions; operate in an open, transparent and flexible manner; and undertake periodic reviews of its effectiveness.

It encourages the CPF and its member organizations to:

- strengthen the Partnership by formalizing its working modalities;
- identify ways to stimulate broader participation of existing member organizations in its various activities;
- assess its membership and the potential added value of additional members with significant forest-related expertise;
- identify ways to actively involve Major Groups and other stakeholders in CPF activities;
- develop a work plan, aligned with the strategic plan, to identify priorities for collective action by all CPF members or subsets of members and the resource implications of such actions;
- prepare periodic reports on its activities, achievements and resource allocations suitable for a wide range of audiences; and

- further develop and expand its thematic joint initiatives.

ECOSOC further invites the governing bodies of member organizations to include in their work programmes dedicated funding to support CPF activities, as well as budgeted activities supporting the Forum's priorities. It also calls on Member States and members of the CPF governing bodies to support the work of the Partnership.

On **regional/subregional involvement**, ECOSOC:

- requests the Forum to strengthen collaboration with relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, organizations and processes to facilitate NLBI implementation;
- requests the Secretariat to consult with relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes on means to enhance collaboration;
- invites relevant regional and subregional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes in a position to do so, to consider developing or strengthening programmes on SFM, as well as provide coordinated inputs and recommendations to the sessions of the Forum; and
- invites Member States to consider, on a voluntary basis, establishing or strengthening regional and subregional processes or platforms for forest policy development, dialogue and coordination to promote SFM while seeking to avoid fragmentation.

On **Major Groups and other stakeholder involvement**, ECOSOC:

- recognizes the importance of continued and enhanced participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders at UNFF sessions and its intersessional activities;
- decides in this regard that provisions 14-16 of UNGA resolution 67/290 apply *mutatis mutandis* to the UNFF in view of existing modalities and practices of the Forum;
- invites Major Groups and other stakeholders to enhance their contributions to the work of the IAF beyond 2015;
- invites Member States to consider enhancing the participation and contribution of Major Groups and stakeholders in CLIs; and
- requests the Secretariat of the Forum to promote the involvement of Major Groups and other stakeholders in the work of the Forum, in particular leaders from private and non-governmental sectors, including forest industries, local communities and philanthropic organizations, as well as, enhance the Forum's interaction with such stakeholders.

On the strategic plan, the resolution decides that the Forum should develop a strategic plan for 2017-2030 to serve as a strategic framework to enhance coherence and guide and focus the work of the IAF and its components.

It further decides that the strategic plan should be aligned with the objectives of the IAF and should incorporate a mission and vision, the GOFs and forest-related aspects of the post-2015 development agenda, taking into account significant forest-related developments in other fora; and that the plan should identify the roles of different actors and the framework for reviewing implementation, and outline a communication strategy to raise awareness of the IAF.

It also requests the Forum to operationalize the strategic plan through quadrennial programmes of work, which set out priority actions and resource needs, beginning with the period 2017-2020.

On the **review of the IAF**, UNFF is requested to undertake a mid-term review of the effectiveness of the IAF in achieving its objectives in 2024, with a final review in 2030, and on that basis, to submit recommendations to ECOSOC relating to the future course of the arrangement.

ECOSOC decides that in the context of the mid-term review in 2024, the UNFF could consider:

- a full range of options, including a legally binding instrument on all types of forests, a strengthening of the current arrangement and a continuation of the current arrangement; and
- a full range of financing options, *inter alia*, establishing a voluntary global forest fund to mobilize resources from all sources in support of SFM.

It also notes that further consideration of establishing a global forest fund could occur if there is consensus to do so at a session of the Forum prior to 2024.

On **follow-up to UNFF11**, ECOSOC decides that the UNFF should consider proposals on the following matters: replacing references to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in relevant sections of the NLBI with those of the SDGs and targets, which will be considered at the UN Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in September 2015; and the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020.

ECOSOC also invites Member States and relevant stakeholders to provide their views and proposals on the matters referred to above.

It decides to establish a WG of the Forum with a time-bound mandate, for a period of up to two years in 2016 and 2017, to develop proposals for the Forum's consideration on the items above. The WG should: operate in accordance with the Forum's working modalities; and elect two Co-Chairs who serve as *ex officio* members of the Bureau for the Special Session mentioned below.

It decides that the UNFF's WG should be convened in one session by 30 March 2017 for up to a total of five working days to develop proposals referred to above. It also decides to establish an AHEG to conduct up to two meetings in 2016 to develop proposals on the items above for consideration by the WG.

It decides to hold a special session in a half-day meeting immediately upon the adjournment of the final session of the WG to consider the proposals of the WG consistent with the provisions in the resolution. It also requests that UNFF hold its next session in 2017.

On **resources for implementing the present resolution**, ECOSOC recognizes that the responsibilities of the UNFF Secretariat have changed considerably in their scope and complexity, including as related to servicing the UNFF processes and providing substantive and technical support to developing countries.

It requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide, in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, all appropriate

support to the UNFF Secretariat. It urges donor governments and organizations to provide voluntary contributions to the Forum Trust Fund. It calls upon donor countries and intergovernmental organizations to provide financial support to the Forum Trust Fund in order to support participation of developing countries in the AHEG, the Forum's WG and Forum sessions.

It requests the SG to report to the next regular session of the Forum on the implementation of the resolution.

CLOSING SESSION

On Friday, 15 May, UNFF Chair Messone introduced the draft resolution (E/CN.18/2015/L.2/Rev.1), which was adopted by acclamation. Messone then introduced the draft report of UNFF11 (E/CN.18/2013/L.3), the contents of which were highlighted by UNFF11 Rapporteur Heikki Granholm.

Brazil requested the report of the 11th session to register their reservations to various paragraphs of the ministerial declaration for reasons relating to, *inter alia*, MoI and capacity building.

UNFF Director Sobral congratulated delegates for the successful conclusion of UNFF11, saying they have "set the stage for a brighter future for forests and the communities that depend on them." Noting that lack of implementation had been identified as a key weakness of the IAF, he stressed that the new Global Forest Financing Network agreed at UNFF11, and the decision to meet in alternate years to focus work on implementation and technical advice, has the potential to make the Forum much more effective.

UNFF Chair Messone thanked delegates and their ministers for reiterating their political support for the IAF, summarizing one of their key messages as: "We need this arrangement, but we need to improve it and strengthen it."

UNFF11 was gavelled to a close at 7:47 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF UNFF11

It is the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic, of all things physical and metaphysical, of all things human and all things superhuman, of all true manifestations of the head, of the heart, of the soul, that the life is recognizable in its expression, that form ever follows function. This is the law. – Louis Sullivan

The eleventh session of the UNFF was arguably the most important since the Forum's inception 15 years ago. Delegates in New York had been presented with an ambitious agenda addressing issues that are challenging in their own right, such as implementation, means of implementation, enhanced cooperation and coordination, and regional and subregional inputs. Yet now was the time to consider such issues as a whole; to reflect on progress made in the last 15 years, and, similar to a teenager contemplating his/her future career path, to face major decisions that would shape the next 15 years.

Despite UNFF being a relatively "young" multilateral environmental body, forest policy has been the subject of global debate since the 1940s. Historic milestones include the establishment of the FAO Committee on Forestry (1971), the adoption of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA 1983) and the establishment of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO 1986). The 1990s saw the formation of two

temporary international forest bodies: the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (1995-1997) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (1997-2000), which many observers considered to be unsuccessful in providing forests with a necessary strong, long-term, coherent policy framework.

The questions facing delegates during UNFF11, thus, was to what extent the UNFF had been able to deliver on its mandate of promoting “the management, conservation and sustainable development of the world’s forests, and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end” and how to enable it to be more effective in the future. These deliberations took place in the context of critical challenges for forest governance, including: ever-increasing fragmentation of global forest policy; lack of implementation of the NLBI; lack of accessible funding for SFM; and an underfunded Secretariat.

Against this backdrop, UNFF11’s task was really an existential one. Already during the intersessional period, it was clear that some Member States were eager for significant reinforcement of the Forum so it could better address existing and emerging challenges. Indeed, the meeting’s draft declaration and resolution contained several ambitious proposals for strengthening the Forum, including, notably, the establishment of a permanent subsidiary body to be a committee for implementation and technical advice (CITA), and an upgraded facilitative process with strengthened provisions on MoI. Other delegations, however, expressed less of an appetite for far-reaching changes.

This brief analysis assesses how far the meeting came in strengthening the Forum, in particular what “form and function” has been decided for a more robust UNFF, and some of the challenges delegates faced in getting there.

FUNCTION BEFORE FORM?

*To create architecture is to put in order. Put what in order?
Function and objects. - Le Corbusier*

UNFF’s main priority over the past 15 years has been the development of international policy on, and a political agenda for, forests. This initial era has helped to elevate the role of forests in the global development agenda and given rise to the NLBI and four Global Objectives on Forests, which, to a greater or lesser degree, have guided regional and national policies on SFM.

Marked by insistent calls for more on-the-ground actions to reverse ongoing trends of forest loss, some saw UNFF11’s review of the IAF as heralding a “turning point” for the Forum. Additional momentum had been infused through ongoing discussions for the post-2015 development agenda, which have had a palpable effect on the aspirations of some UNFF Member States for strengthening the role of forests in the global sustainable development framework.

Deliberations during UNFF11 saw debate on whether the function of the future IAF would be enhanced through restructuring the Forum. Delegates constantly raised the issue that the functions of UNFF need to be upgraded in order to meet the aspirations and challenges for “the future IAF we want.” Many felt that a restructured Forum, potentially in both form and function, would be able to place UNFF squarely in the middle of forest policy dialogues at all levels.

Debates on the functions of different entities of the Forum were closely linked to form and the various proposals for a restructured Forum and IAF. This was underscored by the debate on whether to address function or form when proposals involving significant change—such as a permanent subsidiary body to carry out intersessional work—were put forward.

Among other things, delegates discussed more frequent meetings, greater involvement of the CPF, enhanced engagement of Major Groups, and changing its name to “UN Forest Assembly.” Most delegates were keen, however, to focus on the functions UNFF would undertake, in addition to who would carry them.

In many multilateral environmental processes, including UNFF, bridging the gap between international policy and national implementation is an ever present problem. In the UNFF, the role of the CPF in bridging the “science-policy gap”—which in prior years was a constraint for the Forum—has provided scientific knowledge and technical support, including tools to support SFM implementation. However, translating these solutions into real tangible on-the-ground actions in SFM remains a noticeable gap in UNFF’s and the IAF’s ability to assist in implementation.

Many throughout the meeting acknowledged that Major Groups have an extensive experience at the grassroots level that would be beneficial to the Forum for implementation. Whereas Major Groups offered some options for more active engagement, some Member States were cautious in how far such engagement should be encouraged. A number of states have frequently noted that some Major Groups are more involved in civil action than community empowerment, saying this could create political tension within the Forum. Due to this, many expressed the need to find a mechanism for implementation of SFM within the Forum and thus maintain this function “in-house.”

A CITA was proposed as a platform to bring all players—the CPF, Major Groups, and Member States—on board to share technical advice for implementation of the NLBI. Opponents of a CITA emphasized the existence of other tools and programmes for implementation, including for monitoring, assessment and reporting. Proponents, most of whom expressed major gaps in capacity and technology in their own countries, preferred a Forum-led implementation mechanism.

It was generally acknowledged that elevated functions come with greater financial implications, as evidenced by the majority of UNFF11’s informal deliberations centering on MoI, as regional groups debated where such finances would come from, in what form, and how they would be accessed. Indeed, this is where contention was strongest, coming to a head during the meeting’s penultimate night, with delegates engaging in discussions until 3:30 am. Whereas many noted the weakness of the Forum, and the Secretariat, the debates on financing seemed to counter these calls for strengthening the IAF. As many emphasized, a strong IAF depends on financing to strengthen the Bureau. Only then will the Secretariat be able to carry out its tasks efficiently, to engage further with other processes such as the Rio Conventions, and to provide secretariat services for the CPF, the Forum and its *ad hoc* subsidiary bodies, and to support on-the-ground implementation.

FORM BEFORE FUNCTION?

An object should be judged by whether it has a form consistent with its use. - Bruno Munari

“Form should follow function,” as several delegates reminded UNFF11. Many conversations, thus, debated the appropriate “form” needed to fulfill in a meaningful way the diverse “functions” proposed for the IAF beyond 2015, resulting in a long list of potential activities. Many agreed that implementation would require a transformative shift and restructuring of the current UNFF.

Alternative ways forward for the UNFF have been debated for many years, with “form” and “function” being highly interlinked. As with elevated function, proposals for restructuring the form of the Forum are aimed at achieving efficiency and tangible on-the-ground actions for SFM, but also at engendering a more proactive dialogue between UNFF and other forest-related processes, such as the climate and biodiversity conventions, and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

At UNFF11, various reforms were proposed. Some noted, for instance, that the current practice of holding biennial meetings presents difficulties for maintaining the momentum needed for meaningful cooperation, collaboration and coordination. Some suggested Forum sessions that are held on an annual basis, with one year addressing implementation and technical issues, while the alternate years focus on policy dialogue, similar to that of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) during its second decade. They also noted that this proposal could, to some extent, allay the concerns of certain Member States that felt more focus on implementation was needed in order to achieve SFM.

The establishment of a subsidiary body, in the form of a CITA, was identified as a potential new direction for the Forum, which would convene on alternative years specifically to consider implementation and technical issues. Such a committee, some delegates said, would help facilitate the three key areas identified for a future IAF: catalyzing implementation and financing for SFM; integrating the future IAF in the broader development agenda beyond 2015; and strategic planning, collaboration & participation. Some delegates posited that whether or not a subsidiary body was established, a shortened time period between sessions would be better able to maintain the momentum needed.

The proposed CITA was debated long and hard by delegations, but did not make it into the final draft text. Instead, the final resolution proposed a configuration that echoed the CSD. As the UNFF11 resolution was adopted, and the session drew to a close, delegates were heard saying that having a configuration similar to that of CSD, while intended to allay some SFM implementation concerns, may not be enough for some Member States.

The ancillary functions of the CPF were reaffirmed in the resolution; this was generally lauded as many see the CPF as being able to address and allay the concerns on implementation for SFM, through providing the UNFF and its Member States with scientific and technical advice. One delegate was heard saying “having heard the numerous calls for more capacity building and lesson sharing, one can only hope that the newly formed annual sessions will provide a more effective space for

the abundant expertise of CPF members to be heard. This would be the best of both worlds.”

An additional issue identified by many over the course of UNFF11 was that the Forum’s current form doesn’t lend itself to effective participation of Major Groups. The marked absence of the business and industry Major Groups was a signal that the Forum lacked relevance for their active participation and recognition; this is emphasized by the fact that business and industry have not participated for a number of sessions. There was constant reminder from delegates that the new Forum’s form should be all inclusive and “leave no one behind.”

There was specific reference to including and promoting Major Groups and other stakeholders in the work of the Forum. However, it does not detail how this should be done. Some Member States expressed concern that this may not be an effective enough impetus to boost Major Groups’ participation. As one delegate was heard pondering, “only time will tell.”

FORM AND FUNCTION AS ONE

Form follows function - that has been misunderstood. Form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union. - Frank Lloyd Wright

UNFF11 drew to a close after two long, hard weeks of negotiations, many that ran all night and into the early morning. Nevertheless, delegates were generally upbeat at the end having adopted a Ministerial Declaration that many felt would, in addition to sending a strong message on the importance of forests’ role in different sectors, be able to highlight the role of UNFF within the broader IAF. The final resolution outlined the future of the IAF and UNFF going forward, aiming to strengthen their functioning and have a more prominent footing in the increasingly fragmented forest policy landscape.

Some delegates bemoaned that they had not been able to successfully conclude discussions on dedicated financing for SFM through the establishment of a new funding mechanism, or secure a function or form that would place more emphasis on implementation and capacity building. However, many felt that the footing was strong enough to go forward and work with others on the broader goals of, *inter alia*, ensuring that forests are placed firmly in the sustainable development agenda, and, in the long-run, effectively implementing SFM.

And while a permanent subsidiary body of the Forum was not established, UNFF11 did decide to form a working group to operate for a maximum of two years to create proposals for, *inter alia*, a strategic plan 2017-2030, and a quadrennial programme of work 2017-2020. It also provides for the establishment of an AHEG to assist in creating these proposals before the next session of the Forum in 2017. The Facilitative Process was strengthened to provide assistance in obtaining SFM funding, whose priorities are to be set out in the above-mentioned strategic plan.

These, in addition to other steps set out in the resolution, aim to ensure that form matches function, thus providing the foundation for UNFF to raise the profile of forests and of itself in the many different policy fora currently on everyone’s agendas. One delegate cautioned though that there will be a need to ensure that these actions are not perfunctory, saying “we must ensure that there is progress, not only process.”

UPCOMING MEETINGS

2nd Drafting Meeting for the Preparation of the 7th FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference: With the aim of continuing the work initiated during the first Drafting Meeting for the preparations of the 7th Ministerial Conference (held on 24-27 March 2015), a 2nd Drafting Meeting for the preparations of the 7th Ministerial Conference will take place. **dates:** 1-3 June 2015 **location:** Madrid, 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/2nd-drafting-meeting-preparation-7th-forest-europe-ministerial-conference>

15th MoP of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership: Convening under the theme, “Congo Basin Ecosystems: a source of natural capital, producer of economic value and driver of green growth for the well-being of its people,” this meeting of partners will consider priority actions for the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, develop roadmaps for implementation, and discuss partner engagement. Main issues for discussion will include: ecosystem services, wildlife and bushmeat, law enforcement and governance, REDD+, green growth, and sustainable financing. **dates:** 17-19 June 2015 **location:** Yaounde, Cameroon **contact:** Andre Toham **email:** andre.toham@pfb-cbfp.org **www:** http://pfb-cbfp.org/news_en/items/Mop-15-invitation.html

Seventeenth RRI Dialogue on Forests, Governance, and Climate Change: Held on the theme, “forest tenure, restoration, and green growth,” the dialogue, hosted by the Rights and Resources Initiative, will explore forest governance and tenure reform as an important element in forest landscape restoration. In particular, the dialogue will build a common understanding and identify key policy messages on the links between forest tenure, restoration and green growth. **date:** 18 June 2015 **location:** Washington D.C., US **email:** dialogue@rightsandresources.org **www:** <http://www.rightsandresources.org/event/seventeenth-rri-dialogue-on-forests-governance-and-climate-change/>

Third Meeting of the High-level Political Forum: The third meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will take place under the auspices of ECOSOC, will focus on the theme, “Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015.” **dates:** 26 June - 8 July 2015 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1838>

Third International Conference on Financing for Development: The Third International Conference on Financing for Development will be held at the highest possible political level, including Heads of State or Government, relevant ministers—ministers for finance, foreign affairs and development cooperation—and other special representatives. The conference will result both in an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome and summaries of the plenary meetings and other deliberations of the Conference, to be included in the report of the Conference. **dates:** 13-16 July 2015 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** UN Financing for Development Office **phone:** +1-212-963-4598 **email:** ffdoffice@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/ffd3>

Forests, People and Environment: Some perspectives from Africa: Held immediately prior to the Fourteenth World Forestry Congress, this two-day workshop will discuss important trends relevant to the African forestry sector with a view to: enhancing the roles of forests and trees in national economic development and poverty alleviation; improving food security and nutrition; and enhancing environmental stability and other forest values. **dates:** 4-5 September 2015 **location:** Durban, South Africa **contact:** African Forest Forum **phone:** +254-20-7224000 **fax:** +254-20-7224001 **email:** exec.sec@afforum.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/world-forestry-congress/programme/precongress-events/african-forest-forum/en/>

Third Forum of the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF): This meeting will discuss issues related to forest financing, with the objective of enhancing coherence and coordination of forest financing. **dates:** 8-9 September 2015 **location:** tbc **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php

Fourteenth World Forestry Congress: The 2015 World Forestry Congress will meet under the theme, “Forests and People – Investing in a sustainable future.” The Congress, convened by the FAO and the Government of South Africa, will consider how forests can be mainstreamed into global discussions on sustainable development and will facilitate the development of partnerships to address global forestry issues. **dates:** 7-11 September 2015 **location:** Durban, South Africa **contact:** South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries **email:** WFC-XIV-Info@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/wfc/en/>

International Forests and Water Dialogue: At the margins of WFC XIV, this dialogue will convene under the theme, “Forests USE water! And forest ecosystems PROVIDE water!” and focus on the links between water and forests, including trade-offs and synergies between water yield and other forest ecosystem services. In addition, a five-year action plan will be launched to support and increase coordinated international and national action on forest-water linkages in science, policy, economics and forest practices. **dates:** 8-9 September 2015 **location:** Durban, South Africa **contact:** Thomas Hofer **email:** thomas.hofer@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/world-forestry-congress/programme/special-events/international-forests-and-water-dialogue/en/>

UN Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda: The Summit is expected to adopt the post-2015 development agenda, including: a declaration; a set of Sustainable Development Goals, targets, and indicators; their means of implementation and a new Global Partnership for Development; and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation. **dates:** 25-27 September 2015 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>

UNCCD COP 12: The 12th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) to the UNCCD will take decisions regarding the Convention’s implementation. **dates:** 12-23 October 2015 **location:** Ankara, Turkey **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat

phone: +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-288-815-2898/99 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int>

CITES PC22: The 22nd meeting of the CITES Plants Committee (CITES PC22) will be held before the seventeenth meeting of the CITES COP. **dates:** 19-23 October 2015 **location:** Tbilisi, Georgia **contact:** CITES Secretariat **email:** jvasquez@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.php>

FOREST EUROPE Extraordinary Ministerial Conference and 7th FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference: The Extraordinary Ministerial Conference and the 7th Ministerial Conference of FOREST EUROPE will be held back-to-back to consider the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe. **dates:** 19-23 October 2015 **location:** Madrid, Spain **contact:** FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit Madrid **phone:** +34-914458410 **fax:** +34-913226170 **email:** liaison.unit.madrid@foresteurope.org **www:** <http://www.foresteurope.org/>

Joint Session of the 38th European Forestry Commission and 72nd UNECE Committee on Forest and Forest Industry: FAO and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will convene this meeting to bring together forestry experts and decision-makers from the region. The meeting is one of six region-specific meetings held every two years in support of the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions. **dates:** 2-6 November 2015 **location:** Engelberg, Switzerland **contact:** Dominique Reeb, FAO **email:** dominique.reeb@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/efc/en/>

29th Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission: FAO will convene this meeting in order to bring together forestry experts and decision-makers from the region. The meeting is one of six region-specific meetings held every two years in support of the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions. **dates:** 16-20 November 2015 **location:** Lima, Peru **contact:** Hivy Ortizchour, FAO **email:** hivy.ortizchour@fao.org **www:** <http://www.fao.org/forestry/31106/en/>

ITTC-51: The 51st session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) and the Associated Sessions of the four Committees (Finance and Administration; Economics, Statistics and Markets; Forest Industry; and Reforestation and Forest Management) will take place in Malaysia. **dates:** 16-21 November 2015 **location:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia **contact:** ITTO Secretariat **phone:** +81-45-223-1110 **fax:** +81-45-223-1111 **email:** itto@itto.int **www:** <http://www.itto.int>

UNFCCC COP 21: The 21st session of the COP to the UNFCCC and associated meetings will take place in Paris. **dates:** 30 November - 11 December 2015 **location:** Paris, France **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://www.unfccc.int>

Global Landscapes Forum 2015: The third annual Global Landscapes Forum will take place alongside UNFCCC COP21. The Forum focuses on land use as a key sector for achieving global climate and sustainability goals, and brings together stakeholders from different land-use sectors. In previous years, Global Landscapes Forum coordinating partners have included CIFOR, CGIAR Research Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), FAO and UNEP.

dates: 5-6 December 2015 **location:** Paris, France **contact:** Ann-Kathrin Neureuther, Global Landscapes Forum **email:** a.neureuther@cgiar.org **www:** <http://www.landscapes.org/setting-stage-2015-global-landscapes-forum/>

UNFF12: The twelfth session of the UN Forum on Forests is expected to take place in 2017, at a place and time yet to be determined. **dates:** tbc **location:** tbc **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>

For additional meetings, go to <http://nr.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

AHEG	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Expert Group
CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CITA	Committee on implementation and technical advice
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLIs	Country-led initiatives
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ESTs	Environmentally sound technologies
FAO	UN Food and Agricultural Organization
FLEG	Forest law enforcement and governance
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOFs	Global Objectives on Forests
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HLS	High-level segment
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
IUFRO	International Union of Forestry Research Organizations
LDCs	Least developed countries
LFCCs	Low forest cover countries
MAR	Monitoring, assessment and reporting
MoI	Means of implementation
NLBI	Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (or forest instrument)
REDD+	Reduced emissions from avoided 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
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	UN Forum on Forests
UNGA	UN General Assembly
WG	Working Group