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HIGHLIGHTS FROM IPF-3 THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 1996

Plenary convened on the ninth day of the third session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. Programme elements V.1 (international organizations and multilateral institutions) and V.2 (legal mechanisms) were discussed in a morning session. Regional group meetings were held in the afternoon.

PLENARY

The EU called for improved efforts to integrate and clarify the mandate and task of UN agencies and strengthen their coordination. He proposed replacing a reference to national forest development with national forest programmes (NFPs). In a paragraph on research by international organizations, he noted the need for coordination with regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

The G-77/CHINA proposed language inviting governments to contribute to this process in order to improve the work of forest-related institutions. He proposed replacing several references to "SFM" in the text with "management, conservation and sustainable development of forests" from the Forest Principles. On proposals for action, he deleted references to "regional" and "global" data collection and projects and to specific agencies for research and development. He also proposed noting that the Panel "stressed the need" for information and a "comprehensive" study of international organizations and multilateral institutions.

The US said programme element V.1 is essential because it "should provide a clearer view of forest-related work" and proposed noting that there is significant potential for better coordination and collaboration, rather than further enhancement, of existing international structures. He called for improved participation of major groups in forest fora to promote SFM, and added the World Conservation Monitoring Centre to a list of organizations that should enhance strategic data sets. He suggested focusing, rather than strengthening, relevant international organizations.

CANADA proposed replacing "sub-regional" with "sub-national" action toward SFM and deleting a reference to building consensus on standards. He called for the establishment of a high-level forum for international policy debate on forests. He recommended replacing a reference to national forest development with "national forest plans or programmes." He supported the proposal for further study of the institutions and instruments relevant to forests and highlighted the need to

identify the institutional capacity to implement the UNCED agreements. SWITZERLAND agreed that further study of forest-related institutions and instruments is very important, but emphasized that other analyses should not be ruled out. He called for an independent review of the forthcoming proposals of the Inter-agency Task Force on Forests. JAPAN proposed replacing cross-sectoral "solutions" with "aspects" in a proposal to accelerate incorporation of forest-related UNCED decisions. He suggested that countries, rather than international organizations, facilitate international consultations on SFM, and proposed that these consultations develop, rather than implement, principles and content of NFPs. He recommended deleting a proposal to assign forest programmes increased priority in bilateral ODA.

In a proposal to strengthen forest research and development, AUSTRALIA advocated the addition of UNEP to a list of organizations, although he supported the US' proposal to generalize the reference by replacing the list with "relevant international organizations." He proposed development of a strategic framework for global forest research. He supported further work on the issues under discussion and suggested language requesting the Secretariat to "undertake an explicit needs analysis and associated work on options for any institutional and legal arrangements to be discussed at IPF-4, including broad castings of the options."

To a paragraph on enhancing the capacity of the existing institutional structure, the *AD HOC* NGO FOREST WORKING GROUP proposed that in addition to clarification and redefinition of forest-related mandates, effective implementation is also important. To a paragraph on promoting shared institutional objectives, he recommended adding participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, and proposed language on measures to enhance their participation, such as opportunities to review and comment on draft negotiation texts, participation on national delegations and special contracts to provide technical analyses and convene seminars. He advocated expanding a proposal to accelerate incorporation of forest-related UNCED decisions to include the full range of forest values. MEXICO recommended a reference in support of national forest programmes and activities and another proposal encouraging "international organizations that deal with trade-related aspects to contribute to activities that bring about greater market transparency and access." She said it is important to retain the paragraph calling for further study of forest-related institutions and instruments.

On programme element V.2 (legal mechanisms), the G-77/CHINA, supported by MALAYSIA, argued for a holistic

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and comprehensive treatment of existing legal mechanisms and their relation to conservation, management, and sustainable development of forests. Supported by the PHILIPPINES and MALAYSIA, he called for clear identification of existing gaps in such mechanisms, such as on trade and environment and on financing of technology.

The US noted there is no consensus on gaps and overlaps identified nor on what existing organizations can accomplish. Supported by NEW ZEALAND, he called for an extension of the current IPF with a more focused mandate. He called for a report from the Secretariat for IPF-4. Such a document would examine continuation of the IPF's *ad hoc* inter-agency mechanism as well as alternative mechanisms for continuing the forest dialogue using existing structures such as FAO and *ad hoc* temporary organizations. It should also consider duration of meetings and of the Panel. The EU emphasized that the Panel should send a clear message to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 1997 to engage a high-level commitment and guidance on worldwide forest management and its successful implementation.

SWITZERLAND supported the call for a report for IPF-4 and called for negotiations on a framework convention that would: provide a holistic programme for SFM; facilitate coordination and implementation of existing programmes and instruments; and foster negotiation of regional instruments. He also suggested that IPF participants should be able to make substantive proposals for the report for IPF-4 on various options such as the mandates or structure of future instruments in order to facilitate discussion on concrete elements.

JAPAN said proposals for action should be considered simply as conclusions, leaving deliberations of actions for IPF-4. He supported the need for continued international consultation on forest issues, but called for language stressing the general need for a holistic and comprehensive approach rather than a specific continuation and enhancement of the current exercise.

The *AD HOC* NGO FOREST WORKING GROUP emphasized: the effective implementation of existing agreements; consideration of opportunities to reform existing instruments informally; promotion of programmes of action that interpret and clarify responsibilities within existing instruments; and the possibility of negotiating amendments to existing agreements that focus specifically on forests and SFM. The PHILIPPINES called for stronger language on the need for a high-level intergovernmental mechanism and sought one holistic instrument on forests rather than a separate convention on trade in forest products.

MALAYSIA called for recognition that existing instruments collectively impose significant responsibilities and commitments on tropical producers but not on temperate and boreal producers. He said that proposed protocols to existing conventions would give unbalanced treatment to forest issues rather than the required holistic approach, noting gaps in the handling of certain issues such as financing, technology and resource transfer and capacity-building under existing instruments. He also supported a high-level inter-agency task force to support continued international forest dialogue. With MEXICO, he called for a set time frame for actions to ensure definite progress. NEW ZEALAND expressed willingness to consider numerous options including a convention. MEXICO supported calls for preparation of a document for IPF-4 and said it should address the existing gap on economic issues such as the comprehensive need for technology and resource transfer and international policies that have an impact SFM. She called for further work on the shared common responsibility of the international community and differentiated responsibilities. ARGENTINA urged that options remain open and called for a study devising a comprehensive

programme on SFM at the international level. INDIA sought the establishment of a mechanism similar to IPF, with some refinement, and suggested that a new legal instrument may not be necessary. BRAZIL noted the Panel has the option to maintain the status quo, modify it or adopt new instruments and/or arrangements. He highlighted the need to take the onus off governments and increase private sector involvement.

UGANDA expressed concern regarding the Panel's emphasis on continued deliberations rather than necessary action. He suggested that the Secretariat's report contain only proposals for action. He opposed the adoption of an instrument focusing on trade. PERU supported continued contributions to IPF and the establishment of an independent body of experts. He acknowledged the potential application of the results of the Swiss-Peruvian initiative. COLOMBIA proposed language calling for increased responsibility for the private sector. He said any instrument or mechanism adopted by the Panel should address the impacts and repercussions on other conventions and the work of the CSD.

INDONESIA sought incorporation of language contained in the Forest Principles and Agenda 21. GABON supported the continuation of an international dialogue, but said the product of such a dialogue must lead to a fair distribution of costs for achieving SFM. He urged countries to form consensus at the regional level and contribute regionally to the formation of an international instrument. The ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY supported the development and implementation of a legally-binding agreement on forests but not on forest trade. A single multilateral body to administer an instrument is needed due to the number of cross-cutting issues involved.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Several observers have noted that the end result of IPF-3 is bound to include heavily bracketed text, and volunteered ideas for next steps. Some participants speculate that there may not be consensus for an intersessional open-ended Bureau meeting to further consider the text to be taken to IPF-4. Others have expressed a desire for a second week to be added to IPF-4's session. It remains to be seen whether UN budget constraints can be overcome so that IPF-4 can have time to complete its work effectively.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

Working Groups: Working Group I will meet at 10:00 am in Room XIX. Working Group II will meet at 10:00 am in Room XX. Both groups are expected to adopt decisions on their respective programme elements.

Plenary: Plenary will convene at 3:00 pm to adopt decisions and the report of the meeting.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

Sustainable Developments, formerly *Proceedings*, is a new IISD reporting service for environment and development meetings falling outside the intergovernmental negotiations covered by the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*. *Sustainable Developments* is currently available to provide reporting and Internet information dissemination services for upcoming intersessional initiatives.

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