



SECOND SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS 24 AUGUST-4 SEPTEMBER 1998

The second session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF-2) will open today in Geneva. During the two-week session, delegates will address the following topics: promotion, facilitation and monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests' (IPF) proposals for action; matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process, including the need for financial resources, trade and environment, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, forest-related work of international and regional organizations and issues needing further clarification; and international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. IFF-2 delegates will have before them four background documents, five reports of the Secretary-General, five notes from the Secretariat and three information notes that address these topics.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IFF

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) open-ended *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Forests was established in 1995 to pursue consensus and coordinated proposals for action to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The IPF focused on 12 programme elements: national forest and land-use plans; underlying causes of deforestation; traditional forest-related knowledge; ecosystems affected by desertification and pollution; needs of countries with low forest cover; financial assistance and technology transfer; forest assessment; valuation of forest benefits; criteria and indicators; trade and the environment; international organizations and multilateral institutions; and legal mechanisms. Its objective was to submit final conclusions and policy recommendations to the CSD at its fifth session (CSD-5) in April 1997.

The Panel met four times from 1995-1997. The first session of the IPF (IPF-1) took place in New York from 11-15 September 1995. Delegates adopted the IPF's programme of work and discussed the dates and venues of future meetings. At IPF-2, held from 11-22 March 1996 in Geneva, delegates conducted their first substantive discussions on six programme elements and completed initial consideration of the remaining six. Delegates agreed to begin negotiations at IPF-3 on items that had received substantive consideration at IPF-2. At IPF-3, which convened from 9-20 September 1996 in Geneva, the objective was to produce a document

containing elements to be considered for inclusion in the Panel's final report to the CSD. Delegates did not engage in negotiations or drafting of the document at IPF-3, but made comments and proposed amendments to be negotiated at IPF-4.

The fourth and final session of the IPF was held from 11-21 February 1997 in New York. Delegates negotiated and agreed on conclusions and proposals for action under the 12 programme elements for the final report of the IPF. Delegates called for continued intergovernmental forest policy dialogue but could not agree on major issues such as financial assistance and trade-related matters, or whether to begin negotiations on a global forest convention. On these and other elements, the IPF forwarded a range of options to the CSD in its final report. Recommendations on specific characteristics and functions of a continued intergovernmental forum or negotiating process were attached as a non-negotiated annex to the report. CSD-5 adopted the IPF's report and forwarded a set of recommendations based upon its findings to the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS).

UNGASS

The UN General Assembly, at its nineteenth special session in June 1997, decided to continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests through the establishment of an *ad hoc* open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests under the aegis of the CSD. In addition, the General Assembly decided that "the Forum should also identify the possible elements of and work toward consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally-binding instrument." The Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1997/65, established the IFF, which will report to the CSD at its eighth session in 2000.

IFF-1

The IFF held its organizational session (IFF-1) from 1-3 October 1997 in New York. Delegates agreed on the IFF's programme of work, the schedule and allocation of programme elements for discussion at future sessions, the number, date and venue of future sessions, participation and the organization of intersessional meetings or consultations.

The Forum stressed the need for a focused and balanced approach to its work and emphasized the need to build on the positive results achieved in the IPF. It stressed that the focus should be on implementation of the proposals for action and those issues on which international consensus is yet to be achieved.

The programme of work agreed at IFF-1 includes eight items grouped into three categories. Category I includes two items: promoting and facilitating the implementation of the IPF's proposals for action (I(a)); and reviewing, monitoring and

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Deborah Davenport <ddavenport@emory.edu>, Laura Ivers <laurai@iisd.org>, Leila Mead <leila@interport.net> and Kira Schmidt <kiras@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Managing Editor is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation, the Government of Canada (through CIDA) and the United States (through USAID). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 1998 is provided by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Office for Environment, Forests and Landscape, the European Community (DG-XI), the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Ministry for the Environment in Iceland. The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Managing Editor. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>. The satellite image was taken above New York City (c)1998 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (I(b)). Under Category I(a) the IFF will: consider the launching of programmes by countries, UN agencies and other international organizations and major groups to implement all IPF proposals for action; and consider appropriate mechanisms for the mobilization of financial resources, institutional and human resources and capacity-building, with particular attention to the role of women. Under Category I(b) the IFF will: consider mechanisms, process and format for reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress; and assess progress in implementation by countries, UN agencies and other international organizations and major groups, including the private sector, indigenous people, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities.

Category II consists of: matters left pending (the need for financial resources, trade and environment, and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management (SFM)); other issues arising from the IPF process needing further clarification; and the forest-related work of international and regional organizations. Category II(a) (financial issues) includes urgent consideration of the following options for action: establishment of an international fund to support SFM; and action to enhance funding in other ways, *inter alia*, by inviting relevant international organizations to explore innovative ways to use existing financial mechanisms more effectively and generate new and additional public and private financial resources at the domestic and international levels to support activities for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Under Category II(b) (trade and environment) the IFF will: analyze the mutually supportive roles of international trade and SFM and, in that context, issues related to non-discriminatory international trade in forest products from all types of forests, including the role that tariff and non-tariff barriers may perform in relation to SFM, certification issues where relevant, and improved market access, taking into account the needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed; consider the relationship between obligations under international agreements and national measures, including actions imposed by sub-national jurisdictions, recognizing that those matters are also considered in fora whose primary competence is to address trade issues; and consider the relative competitiveness of wood and substitutes, valuation, market transparency and illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products.

In Category II(c) (transfer of technology), the IFF will: examine the promotion, facilitation and financing as well as appropriate mechanisms for access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how to developing countries on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account Chapter 34 of Agenda 21 and paragraph 11 of the Forest Principles; in this context, consider technologies and technical knowledge including extension services for local SFM; and consider enhanced technology development, transfer and application for improved utilization of wood and non-wood forest products and services, with special attention to wood as an energy source and to the role of women.

Category II(d) (issues needing further clarification) includes consideration, *inter alia*, of: underlying causes, in particular international causes, including transboundary economic forces of deforestation and forest degradation, taking into account a historical perspective and the pressures exerted on forests by other sectors, notably agriculture, in the quest for food security; traditional forest related knowledge, consistent with, *inter alia*, the terms of reference of the Convention on Biological Diversity; valuation of forest goods and services; assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of

forest cover in environmentally critical areas; forest conservation, including conservation in protected areas; identification and definition of global and regional research priorities, taking into account national priorities; the use and application of a range of economic instruments, including tax policies and land tenure arrangements as a means of promoting SFM; and future supply and demand of wood and non-wood products and services.

Category II(e) (forest-related work of international and regional organizations) consists of further examination of forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps.

Under Category III (international arrangements and mechanisms), the IFF will identify elements, build a global consensus and engage in further action to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. It should also identify the possible elements of and work towards consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally-binding instrument on all types of forests. The Forum is to report on its work to the CSD in 1999. Based on that report and depending on the decision taken at CSD-8, the Forum will engage in further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally-binding instrument on all types of forests.

In addition to the work programme, it was decided at IFF-1 that the second session would be convened in June or August 1998 in New York or Geneva, the third session in February or March 1999 in Geneva and the fourth session in February or March 2000 in a venue to be determined.

Delegates agreed on a work schedule for the ensuing sessions of the IFF. At its second session the IFF will conduct background discussions on Categories I(b) (monitoring progress in implementation), II(a) (the need for financial resources), II(d) (issues needing further clarification) and III (identifying elements, building a global consensus and engaging in further action) and will conduct substantive discussions and prepare draft conclusions and proposals for action in Categories I(a) (promoting and facilitating implementation), II(b) (trade and environment), II(c) (transfer of technology) and II(e) (forest-related work of organizations). At its third session the IFF will engage in substantive discussions and prepare draft conclusions and proposals for action on Categories I(b), II(a), II(d) and III and will receive information and updates on Categories I(a), II(b), II(c) and II(e). The fourth session will consider these Categories for its report to CSD-8.

Regarding modalities of work, it was agreed at IFF-1 that, following the guidance given by ECOSOC in its decision establishing the IPF (E/1995/72), intergovernmental organizations as well as the full range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other groups would participate as observers in the IFF on an open-ended and fully participatory basis, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the CSD. The IFF will draw, *inter alia*, on the resources and technical expertise of the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests and other relevant organizations within and outside the UN system, as well as secretariats of relevant conventions, with appropriate contributions from NGOs. The IFF also encourages inputs from major groups in all the activities of its work programme.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Delegates will convene in Plenary at 10:00 am. Opening statements are expected from Kenneth Ruffing, on behalf of Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, and from the IFF Co-Chairs, Ilka Ristamäki (Finland) and Bagher Asadi (Iran). It is expected that the Plenary will establish two Working Groups that will convene later in the day.