



IFF-3 HIGHLIGHTS 3 MAY 1999

On the first day of IFF-3, delegates met in a morning Plenary session, heard opening remarks by Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Nitin Desai, via video conference from New York, adopted the session's agenda, and presented general statements. In the afternoon, Working Group 1 discussed monitoring progress in implementation and Working Group 2 discussed future supply of and demand for wood and non-wood forest products and services.

OPENING PLENARY

IFF Co-Chair Ilkka Ristamäki (Finland) opened IFF-3 and noted its heavy agenda, particularly in light of the Thursday, 13 May, public holiday. He recalled recent initiatives taken by governments, IGOs and NGOs and work undertaken by the Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) and other experts. He urged governments to inject political will into the IFF process and to be forward-looking to IFF-4, CSD-8 and beyond.

Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai identified the period since Rio as one of confidence and consensus building. He said the IFF must develop a clear understanding of its work areas and indicate linkages between other fora such as the CCD, CBD, FCCC and CITES. He said the IFF is entering a round of critical and politically sensitive deliberations and noted the need to foster political commitment, build consensus on priority areas and determine what form continuing deliberations should take. Following his remarks, NEW ZEALAND asked how momentum would be maintained after the IFF and GERMANY, on behalf of the EU, asked what role the CSD could play. Desai responded that UN standing bodies such as the CSD would continue the process, but that this would depend on IFF outcomes, and said the IFF must first build consensus on the meaning of sustainable forest management (SFM). He said an inter-agency collaborative mechanism should be developed. The INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL expressed concern that indigenous peoples and cultures would be overlooked in the process. Desai responded that the relationship between people and resources is critical for sustainable development and emphasized participatory forest management.

JoAnne DiSano, Director for the Division of Sustainable Development, noted that implementation of the IPF proposals for action was very uneven and encouraged IFF-3 participants to produce a precise document. IFF Co-Chair Bagher Asadi (Iran) introduced the Bureau members: Co-Chairs Bagher Asadi (Iran) and Ilkka Ristamäki (Finland), Vice-Chairs Yevgeny Kuzmichev (Russian Federation) and Amalia Torres (Peru). Vice-Chair Torres was also elected as Rapporteur. The Plenary adopted the provisional agenda (E/CN.17/IFF/199/1) and approved the programme of work, and the floor was opened for general statements.

GERMANY, on behalf of the EU and Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, encouraged a substantive discussion on Category III, future arrangements and mechanisms, at IFF-3, and encouraged a

first exchange on functions, scope and format of future arrangements or mechanisms. GUYANA, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, lamented the attempts by the North to put conditions on forest trade and questioned what compensatory economic mechanisms were available to implement and maintain national protected forest areas. SWITZERLAND offered to host IFF-4 in Geneva and urged governments to avoid duplicating proposals for action.

The US suggested a fresh approach to deal with unresolved issues and supported elaboration and clarification of the IPF proposals. She expressed concern with duplication of the IPF's work and the lack of progress made on technology transfer. JAPAN stressed the importance of and urged consensus on some form of international arrangements and mechanisms. CUBA stressed development aid for developing countries, transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs) and specific concerns of Small Island Developing States. CHINA called for an international instrument to comprehensively deal with forests, but said any international instrument must reflect the sovereignty of states with respect to their forests. BRAZIL supported a seminar on trade-related aspects of SFM.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underlined the need to further clarify issues, particularly on trade and the environment, and for national forestry certification in achieving sustainable forestry and urged consensus for a preparatory process for a global forest convention. Regarding SFM, INDONESIA emphasized economic, social and ecological concerns. He supported examining roles of international funding sources, increased contributions by donor countries and the establishment of an international forest fund. He also supported WTO efforts to reduce and remove trade barriers to forest products and encouraged international harmonization and recognition of certification standards. CHILE reported on the International Experts Meeting on the Role of Planted Forests held in Santiago, Chile, 6-10 April 1999, and highlighted its recommendations. NEW ZEALAND emphasized trade in sustainable forest products, resource and technology transfer and promotion and creation of private sector investment. BENIN said questions of a political nature must take priority over technical issues. SENEGAL said the IFF should focus on a framework to guide all parties and to ensure sustainability of forests.

The WORLD COMMISSION ON FORESTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT presented the Commission's final report. It identified three areas of failure: economic (i.e. forest products are under priced); governance failure (i.e. lack of local and indigenous rights, benefit sharing and gender equity); and ethical failures (corruption and lack of transparency). The report concluded that a binding agreement might be useful and proposed new fora for international discussion on forests through the establishment of a forest security council and forest trust. The CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY noted its commitment to the IPF proposals and highlighted the programme on forest biological diversity adopted at COP-4.

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SOBREVIVENCIA highlighted the Global Meeting on Underlying Causes and said the success of IFF-3 would be judged by: agreement to protect frontier forests; a fund for forest protection; and a declaration acknowledging a forest crisis. Another representative of **SOBREVIVENCIA** noted concern over indigenous peoples' involvement and called for unfiltered access to the process. **ASOCIACION KUNAS UNIDAS** said national legal systems must take biodiversity conservation and indigenous land rights into consideration and emphasized the need for discussion on protected areas.

WORKING GROUP 1

Working Group 1 (WG1), chaired by IFF Co-Chair Asadi, conducted a preliminary round of substantive discussion on monitoring progress in the implementation of the IPF's proposals for action. Jag Maini, IFF Secretariat, opened the discussion by introducing the Secretary-General's report on this item (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/3). He referred to the FAO survey of national forest programmes (NFPs), underscored the importance of criteria and indicator (C&I) processes, and highlighted the options to be considered by governments which include: harmonizing forest-related information; seeking funding from existing bodies; and building upon existing monitoring, reporting and assessment arrangements. The EU, supported by G-77/CHINA, NORWAY, NEW ZEALAND and CANADA, underscored the need to harmonize data collection. He urged that increased attention be given to non-wood products and non-economic aspects of forests. The FAO noted that NFPs have stagnated in a number of countries due to a lack of finances and capacity. BRAZIL highlighted the importance of national information and, with NIGERIA, highlighted the need for financial resources to support national efforts. NEW ZEALAND noted the importance of C&I as a key instrument for monitoring progress. JAPAN urged that the ITTO C&I processes be recognized and said that the GEF is not the appropriate funding agency for forest data collection. PORTUGAL emphasized the importance of C&I and noted pan-European C&I efforts. The US, with CANADA, underscored that the benefit derived from reviewing, monitoring and reporting must accrue at the national level.

AUSTRALIA recalled a VALDIVIA GROUP proposal for a reporting system, calling for description of: national processes to assess the IPF proposals; major agencies, organizations and groups involved in implementation of the proposals; and new activities that facilitate the implementation of the IPF proposals. MALAYSIA drew attention to the shortage of scientific, technological and professional personnel for assessing and reporting on progress and noted the need for capacity building. CHINA identified capacity and resources as critical problems to be resolved at IFF-3. CANADA said reporting should include the state of both forests and policy, and said the FAO and CSD reporting systems could be models. CANADA said monitoring and reporting is linked to Category III, international arrangements.

INDONESIA emphasized the importance of maximizing the utility value of reporting and of dissemination of the reports. COLOMBIA said that evaluation is premature in countries where national plans are beginning. VENEZUELA said mechanisms for periodic reports on the IPF proposals should be institutionalized and said that a monitoring system could not be supported without additional funding. SOBREVIVENCIA emphasized participation of a wide range of stakeholders to avoid skewed reports from forest departments. The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT called for broader reporting on conservation and sustainable management of all types of forests.

Responding to questions from a number of delegations, Maini suggested that guidelines for reporting on forests could include such topics as decision making, status and capacity building as highlighted in the Secretary-General's paper.

WORKING GROUP 2

Working Group 2 (WG-2), chaired by IFF Co-Chair Ristamäki, discussed Category II.d(vii), future supply of and demand for wood and non-wood forest products. Lennert S. Ljungman, FAO, introduced the Secretary-General's Report on this issue as contained in document E/CN.17/IFF/1999/14. The report outlines conclusions and preliminary proposals for action on resource information, industrial wood raw material, fuelwood, non-wood forest products and services, pricing, role of the private sector and capacity building. Delegates supported the report's recommendations with some proposed amendments. Some delegates also highlighted recommendations from the International Experts Meeting on the Role of Planted Forests held in Chile and stressed links between Categories II.d(v), valuation, and II.d(vi), economic instruments.

AUSTRALIA pointed to duplications with IPF recommendations and suggested proposals that call on countries to: adopt an internationally agreed definition of plantations; work with the FAO to improve accuracy of data on plantation areas; and implement appropriate codes of practice and guidelines for sustainable plantation management. The EU reiterated that global studies indicate supply will be broadly adequate to meet global demand, but noted that scarcity in some regions may limit the scope of global assessments. He said the FAO should further develop and improve the definition for plantations and planted forests, stressed multifunctional and multipurpose rather than dominant usage forests, and, with the US, emphasized the private sector's role. He noted the lack of reference to substitutes, their life cycle assessments and potential market failures. The EU and NEW ZEALAND supported proposals to promote policies to increase tree cover, including trees on farms, to meet the rising demand for products and services, such as carbon sequestration. NEW ZEALAND called for promotion of policies to reduce unsustainable consumption of forest products.

CANADA requested that increasing other forest values within the context of increasing wood yields in plantation forestry be included in the preliminary proposals for action. He noted that the issue of plantation forests has received undue emphasis as a source of industrial wood raw material. INDIA underscored that future forest management must take into consideration demand and supply patterns to meet community, local, regional, national and global needs. He proposed setting a minimum basic percentage of land as forest-covered areas in each country, classifying forests as recreational, plantation, ecological and other types of areas, and determining supply and demand for each. The US stressed that any proposal should be explicitly linked to the IPF proposals for action.

IN THE CORRIDORS

A number of participants observed the relatively low turn out of delegations at this meeting and have commented that the low level of interest appears to reflect the sense of stagnation surrounding the IFF process. Others are hoping that discussions will become livelier as the meeting progresses.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP 1: Working Group 1 will meet at 10:00am in Salle XIX to discuss II.d(i), underlying causes, and II.d(ii), traditional forest-related knowledge, and time permitting, II.d(iii), forest conservation and protected areas

WORKING GROUP 2: Working Group 2 will meet at 10:00am in Salle XX to discuss II.d(v), valuation, II.d(vi), economic instruments, and, time permitting, II.a, financial resources.

CONTACT GROUPS: Contact groups on trade and environment and transfer of ESTs will meet at 6:30pm to begin work on cleaning up text from IFF-2.