



IFF-4 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2000

On the second day of IFF-4, delegates met in Plenary to consider international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable developments of all types of forests (Category III).

PLENARY

Co-Chair Ilkka Ristimäki opened Plenary discussion on Category III. Jag Maini, IFF Secretariat, overviewed the Secretary-General's Report on Category III (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/4) and two Secretariat notes: priority forest policy issues (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/2); and elements and functions for a future international arrangement and mechanism (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/3). On international arrangements and mechanisms (IAM), Maini said the Secretary-General's paper was based on guidance from IFF-3, additional comments from countries, analyses by the IFF Secretariat, and consultation among ITFF members. The report identifies 16 priority elements to be addressed by any IAM and four principle functions that an IAM could perform: policy development, coordination, policy implementation and provision of legislative authority. The report puts forward ten options for an IAM ranging from ongoing *ad hoc* intergovernmental forest policy deliberations through to negotiating a new LBI on all types of forests. Maini said the options were not mutually exclusive and noted that at least one principal function would perform a dominant role. He stressed that any future arrangement must have a high status and provide for sustained political engagement.

NIGERIA, speaking for the G-77/CHINA, said any IAM should be comprehensive, holistic and inclusive of all issues relating to forests. He emphasized implementation, urged concluding negotiations on a global forest fund, and said an IAM should specifically address technology transfer and focus on major issues that undermine SFM, such as inadequate financial resources and lack of market access for goods from developing countries. He supported an action-oriented, permanent dialogue and provision of new and additional financial resources.

PORTUGAL, on behalf of the EU, supported an institutionalized and permanent arrangement, which is action-oriented and focused on implementation and monitoring. He said any arrangement should, *inter alia*, provide an intergovernmental forum for dialogue, establish a mechanism for improved coordination, and ensure transparency and broad participation. He remarked that although the EU has supported a LBI, it remains open-minded to the form of a future arrangement.

While stating that a LBI is necessary in the long-term, COSTA RICA acknowledged the lack of political support for such a mechanism and, supported by PANAMA, thus advocated a transitional arrangement. He proposed establishing an under secretary-general on forests to, *inter alia*, guarantee an ongoing dialogue, establish necessary coordination mechanisms, create a special intergovernmental commission to identify the scope of a LBI and establish a forest fund.

CANADA expressed support for negotiating a framework convention on forests or a LBI. He said other options fall short and do not ensure implementation, contradict the wisdom of experience, or fail to provide cooperation. He remarked that a forest convention would ensure sustained partnership, political commitment, policy development, implementation and compliance, and said commitments would be balanced with the provision of technology transfer and funding for implementation. He said Canada would submit a draft resolution for the CSD.

JAPAN supported an arrangement that includes policy implementation, development of criteria and indicators for SFM, and monitoring and evaluation of progress. She urged countries to develop national policies in line with international standards, to share national progress reports and to promote trade with products from sustainably managed forests. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION supported a LBI and emphasized the need to establish problem-solving arrangements. He said failure to reach agreement at IFF-4 might permanently compromise the international forest dialogue. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA noted the lack of time to merge divergent views and therefore said the IFF should formulate the basic functions and modalities of the future IAM but not commit to a particular IAM before CSD-8.

AUSTRALIA proposed a non-binding, permanent arrangement that would include: a multi-year work programme to implement SFM; a transparent forum to provide assessment on progress; funding and administrative arrangements similar to those of the IPF and IFF; coordination of forest-related work of international organizations; promotion of regional initiatives; continuation of policy dialogue; facilitation of trade and market access; and continued work on certification and labeling, consistent with WTO obligations.

The US preferred the establishment of a non-binding international arrangement under the CSD that, *inter alia*: facilitates a results-oriented dialogue; identifies new priority areas for action and emerging issues; enhances common understanding of SFM; fosters regional and international cooperation; contributes to collaboration under existing organizations and conventions; monitors and reports on progress; is based on scientific and technical knowledge; is open, transparent, and participatory; and facilitates implementation of



existing commitments. She opposed any arrangement that contains provision of legal authority or that supercedes other agreements or conventions.

SWITZERLAND supported a global LBI and suggested a framework convention with regional or issue-related protocols or annexes. She commented that such an umbrella convention would, *inter alia*: differentiate between issues; take into account specific regional conditions and achievements; and continue the global dialogue on forests.

IRAN stressed that all arrangements must take into account LFCCs. COLOMBIA called for a permanent arrangement under the CSD that would, *inter alia*: meet twice a year; possibly contain technical or subsidiary bodies; have political authority; act as a coordinator; and identify international sources of funding. BENIN welcomed a forest convention to, *inter alia*: develop forest policy; coordinate political activity; give special attention to developing countries; identify SFM criteria; facilitate technical cooperation; recognize LFCCs' concerns; and promote sustainably-produced forest goods and services.

CHINA said the Forest Principles should provide the basis for future negotiations and called on countries to honor commitments made at UNCED. GEORGIA and KYRGYZSTAN supported a LBI. BRAZIL proposed that the UN General Assembly (GA) establish and provide a mandate for a permanent mechanism, focused on policy development, implementation and coordination and based on IPF proposals for action. He said it should rely on, *inter alia*, input from secretariats of forest-related conventions and other organizations, and provide assistance and guidance to different programmes. He urged the establishment of a financial mechanism as soon as the CSD defines its structure.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA noted the role of legislative authority in influencing resource mobilization and supported a stronger mandate under the auspices of the GA. He highlighted the need to strengthen existing IAMs and floated the idea of working panels or a conference arrangement. POLAND expressed its support for a framework convention, including regional protocols, or for a regional forest convention. TAJIKISTAN advocated negotiation of a LBI as a complement to existing activities, taking into account the needs of economies in transition. BELARUS supported a LBI that would allow, *inter alia*, monitoring of SFM and coordination of economic activity and national forestry programmes.

NEW ZEALAND stressed the need to build on existing national and regional initiatives, and to send firm recommendations to CSD-8 for durable measures that avoid duplicating previous work. MALAYSIA advocated a LBI addressing all types of forests in a holistic and comprehensive manner that, *inter alia*, facilitates technology transfer, promotes private investment and generates financial resources. INDONESIA emphasized the urgency of implementation. CHILE remained open to alternative proposals to a LBI, but suggested the mandate of any future IAM allow for future discussion of a LBI.

CUBA said scarce economic and technical resources in developing countries prohibit the choice of a LBI. NORWAY called for, *inter alia*: an emphasis on implementation; monitoring of results; international and national coordination; a high degree of political commitment to SFM; and a clear recommendation for CSD-8. MEXICO supported strengthening existing mechanisms and said any IAM should, *inter alia*: outline specific goals; promote those aspects requiring additional attention; bring out synergies; and identify an action plan and a mechanism to coordinate political aspects.

INDIA said IAM discussions should proceed after consensus is reached on other remaining contentious issues. She cautioned against duplicating efforts with existing mechanisms, opposed a LBI, and supported a permanent forum and the establishment of a global forest facility to channel financial resources from different instruments. She said an IAM must address financial resources in its mandate.

TURKEY supported a permanent forum on forests to formulate a LBI on all types of forests. UKRAINE said IFF-4 presents a unique opportunity for a new global consensus on a LBI.

LATIN AMERICAN FOREST NETWORK attributed implementation problems to a lack of: will; reporting mechanisms; financial resources; and sufficient participation by civil society. He supported a permanent and restructured ITFF to ensure transparency and increased participation. He proposed strengthening regional initiatives and an IAM supporting private and independent efforts.

FOREST ALLIANCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA supported a LBI in order to ensure that economic, social and environmental aspects of forests are addressed. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL supported improved utilization of existing intergovernmental dialogues as the IFF duplicates the work of other institutions. She said compliance with international commitments to protect forests is the most important challenge and suggested creating a small regionally-balanced committee to ensure compliance.

SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM SECRETARIAT reported on results from the South Pacific Regional Meeting on Category III held in Fiji, including a preference for improved use of existing agencies, recognizing that no single existing mechanism can cover the entire forest agenda. He highlighted policy implementation and coordination as the most pressing functions. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF TROPICAL FORESTS underscored the importance of recognizing and strengthening indigenous peoples' rights to land, language, identity and culture by preserving and protecting forests. He warned there would be no future for forests should commercialization and exploitation continue.

GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT discouraged establishment of another IFF and urged delegates to provide details on their IAM proposals. CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK opposed a LBI but urged action through existing instruments, including monitoring of implementation and turning policies into national laws.

AUSTRALIA noted consensus on the need for a permanent arrangement and requested the Secretariat to draft an annex to the report of the day's Plenary discussion, listing the objectives, responsibilities, functions, the mode of operation, reporting arrangements and options for funding.

In closing, Co-Chair Asadi identified areas of agreement, including wide support for a high-level permanent arrangement, the desire to combine options, and a consensus in favor of conclusive results.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While a number of countries have maintained support for a LBI on forests, the two principal models for an ongoing non-legally binding institution on forests proposed by various delegations have stimulated discussion. The model for a body under the UN General Assembly appears to receive support from countries who want a high-level institution, but others are concerned that such an institution would exclude input from major groups. Others prefer an institution under the CSD, which would be more transparent and participatory but faces concerns that such an organization may not have high political commitment.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP 1: Working Group 1 will convene in the Trusteeship Council Chamber to discuss underlying causes of deforestation and possibly traditional forest-related knowledge.

CONTACT GROUPS: The contact group on EST transfer will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Room 2. The contact group on financial resources will meet at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 7. The contact group on trade and environment will meet at 6:00 pm in Conference Room 2.