



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

UNFF-O
5

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

UNFF online at <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/org/>

Vol. 13 No. 71

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Friday, 16 February 2001

UNFF INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2001

On the third day of the informal consultations, delegates heard an update on the on-going discussions on the Secretariat's location and discussed programme elements relating to: fostering a common understanding of sustainable forest management (SFM) and addressing forest policy issues and emerging areas; strengthening political commitment; and the review of the UNFF to be taken in five years. Bilateral discussions on the Secretariat's location and the tenure of Bureau members continued throughout the day.

PLENARY

LOCATION OF THE SECRETARIAT: Chair Mubarak reported on the progress of the informal consultations regarding the Secretariat's location. AUSTRALIA requested, and others supported, postponing the decision on the Secretariat's location until Friday to allow for consultations with capitals. Chair Mubarak invited delegations to consult on the venue of future UNFF sessions and suggested that the outcome of these consultations be included in the Chair's summary. He reminded delegates that UNFF-1 is mandated to reach a decision on this. SWITZERLAND stressed that consultations should be carried out in an open and participatory manner.

Regarding a comparative analysis of options for the location, the G-77/CHINA said the analysis does not allow for full appreciation of the costs involved. BRAZIL called for a presentation of the analysis to facilitate comprehension and consultations. A representative from the DESA Financial Office reviewed the comparative analysis, highlighting, *inter alia*: the GA decision that any intergovernmental body must meet at its headquarters; conference facilities and services; security; and travel. SWITZERLAND asked for clarification on costs associated with holding sessions outside of headquarters and the DESA representative replied that the host country pays for the additional cost. The G-77/CHINA reminded delegates that if the UNFF-O does not decide on a venue, New York is the default location.

FOSTERING A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF SFM AND ADDRESSING FOREST POLICY ISSUES AND EMERGING AREAS:

The US said that SFM can be advanced through implementation and action, rather than through discussion. She emphasized the use of thematic issue clusters, which encourage discussion of specific and technical issues and cross-cutting aspects. She said the UNFF should work with professional foresters. On emerging issues, she highlighted rural communities, forest fragmenta-

tion, agricultural conversion and urban sprawl, and law enforcement. The SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS outlined their work in promoting sustainable forestry.

The G-77/CHINA stressed the importance of environmental protection, social development and economic growth to SFM, and warned against producing too many definitions of SFM. He stated that emerging areas must be discussed in the context of how they will facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. MALAYSIA suggested the establishment of an *ad hoc* expert panel to identify a set of internationally-agreed criteria and indicators on SFM, and said that the full valuation of forest goods and services would promote and enhance SFM. The EU stated that programme elements related to this function should be directly linked to implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and that the ministerial segment should be used to make progress on cross-sectoral issues and to foster increased public awareness.

AUSTRALIA opposed any work on new proposals for action, as it would divert the international community from implementing existing commitments. He supported clustering of IPF/IFF proposals and prioritization at the national level. He said that while discussion during UNFF substantive sessions should be aligned with specific IPF/IFF proposals for action, overall progress should also be addressed. CANADA called for the UNFF to engage members in sharing experiences and lessons learned in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and recommended that a panel be established to facilitate this and to provide the Secretariat with an information focal point. CHINA stressed implementation of consensual areas. PAKISTAN emphasized the difficulties faced by LFCCs, including environmental degradation and threats to water supply due to desertification.

COSTA RICA noted that the rate of deforestation in Central America has greatly decelerated and highlighted its effort toward protection of forest-covered land. He outlined predicaments faced by rural and indigenous populations due to deforestation and identified national efforts to include new actors, including associations and community organizations involved in the forest sector, into management of large forest areas. He noted that forestry is becoming a viable alternative to cropping or raising livestock. He said Costa Rica is developing a revised forest management strategy, which takes stock of both local problems and the IPF/IFF proposals for action. BRAZIL commented that fostering SFM lies in building the capacity of countries and indigenous communities. She said emerging issues should be addressed with relevance to SFM and warned against taking on complex issues, such as emissions trading, which are being tackled by

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Laura Ivers <laurai@iisd.org>, Violette Laclache <violette@iisd.org> and Wendy Jackson <wendy@iisd.org>. The Digital Editor is Jenny Mandel <jenny@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the European Commission (DG-ENV). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2001 is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU) and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Finland, the Government of Australia, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, and the Japan Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES.) 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 Director of IISD Reporting Services. 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>. The satellite image was taken above New York ©2001 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



other instruments. NEW ZEALAND called for enhanced understanding of SFM, said criteria and indicators should be adapted to the diversity of geographical areas, and identified incentives for using first-growth planted forests for commercial purposes.

INDONESIA called for a participatory approach in implementing SFM, with the involvement of indigenous people at all levels, and said traditional forest-related knowledge is important in elaborating a common understanding of SFM. The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT suggested the UNFF collect the expertise of members by holding multi-stakeholder dialogues on national implementation of SFM. He said the UNFF should not invest time in working groups on criteria and indicators since that issue is addressed in other fora.

STRENGTHENING POLITICAL COMMITMENT: The EU stated that the strengthening of political commitment should result in increased awareness among other sectors regarding their impact on forests. MEXICO highlighted monitoring and evaluation as issues requiring major political commitment. GABON said political commitment should be based on analysis of the causes of forest degradation, and mobilization of human, financial and technical resources.

Regarding the timing of the high-level segments, delegates generally supported holding one segment in 2005, but opinions varied on the timing of the other session. The Secretariat explained that it proposed holding a high-level segment in 2002 so as to gain ministers' endorsement of the PoA and to prepare a message for Rio+10. COSTA RICA opposed holding the first high-level segment in 2002 due to the heavy meeting schedule that year, including Rio+10, and, with the US and NEW ZEALAND, supported holding a high-level segment in 2003. NORWAY supported timing the high-level segment to allow for inputs into Rio+10. The G-77/CHINA questioned whether the ministers' presence is necessary for the adoption of the PoA, and stressed that discussion at high-level segments must focus on implementation. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and BRAZIL supported holding a high-level segment in 2002.

AUSTRALIA, supporting a later high-level segment, cautioned that unwarranted high-level segments will discourage commitment. GABON suggested that if enough information is available by 2002, the high-level segment could be held then. BRAZIL noted that ministerial declarations are important for the international profile of forests. The US and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION stressed that the high-level segments should be more than the delivery of ministerial statements and should make use of the ministers' participation to increase political will and advance implementation. CHINA stressed that the high-level segments should be outcome-oriented and address substantive matters. CANADA stated that the high-level segment will mobilize commitment and facilitate concrete actions at all levels.

CHILE and COSTA RICA supported holding regional high-level segments. The G-77/CHINA said dialogue with the heads of CPF organizations should not be limited to the high-level segments, and called for annual briefings from the CPF organizations. The EU commented that the choice of venue for the high-level segments could enhance political visibility, and underscored that the segments must focus on specific themes, be of a limited duration and be well prepared to maximize their impact.

Regarding the multi-stakeholder dialogues, the G-77/CHINA said they should take place as side events or side discussions with their outcome feeding into meetings. INDONESIA suggested the dialogue format of the CSD could be used as a basis for the UNFF. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the organization and format of dialogues should build upon but not duplicate that of the CSD. NORWAY stressed the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, and emphasized the link between monitoring, assessment and reporting and implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The US supported holding dialogues at every meeting and underscored the importance of including the private sector and NGOs.

Regarding the legal framework, the G-77/CHINA opposed the establishment of an *ad hoc* working group until the UNFF's third or fourth meeting, cautioning that such a group would divert focus from implementation. CANADA suggested establishment of an expert group on a legal framework by UNFF-2, and said the group must consider issues such as financing. NEW ZEALAND suggested that monitoring and observation should precede the process of developing a legal framework. BRAZIL opposed the establishment of an expert group on a legal framework, stating that this issue should not contaminate the UNFF's work. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted discussion of the issue within a working group would be useful, and said the UNFF must decide what auxiliary bodies will be established. AUSTRALIA opposed discussion on the legal framework until the UNFF has undergone two reporting cycles. The US stressed considering progress achieved on implementation before discussing a legal framework. SWITZERLAND warned against overloading the UNFF, but said the question of the legal framework should not be left until UNFF-5. UGANDA called for more experience before starting discussions of the legal framework.

THE REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT ON FORESTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN FIVE YEARS:

The EU said the UNFF will need to define means available, expected outcomes and the criteria against which the effectiveness of the arrangement will be assessed. She suggested that the review should consider all the key elements of the international arrangement, namely the UNFF and the CPF, and should take into account the evaluation of the PoA's effectiveness. She underscored developing criteria for specific actions at an early stage, and invited the CPF to develop success criteria in a transparent and participatory way. She said the review of the PoA's effectiveness should involve all relevant actors and highlighted the link between the review of the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action and monitoring and reporting, including through third party assessment. CANADA supported early development of criteria. The US stressed the need to receive input from external stakeholders. BRAZIL suggested the CPF could undertake the task of elaborating the criteria. The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT said further consultations were needed on elements for the review criteria, but noted there is a consensus on elements that are not desirable, such as new proposals for action. He called for innovative thinking. JAPAN said when or how the criteria will be created is still unclear.

IN THE CORRIDORS

With Rio+10 on the horizon, many delegates' thoughts are beginning to turn to how the review of progress on forests will be addressed. A number of delegations see the UNFF as the appropriate body for reporting on progress to Rio+10 and are urging the Forum to take quick action to pave the road to South Africa with good implementation, so as to have positive news to report. However, others maintain that there is not enough time for solid advancement, and that focusing on a report for Rio+10 will distract from the UNFF's real work.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

The UNFF Organizational Session will reconvene at 11:00 am to take a decision on the Secretariat's location and to adopt the report of the meeting. Following the closure of the organizational session, the informal consultations will reconvene to continue discussion on the five-year review of the UNFF and the schedule of the MYPOW. The Secretariat will brief delegates on information regarding the preparation of the Secretary-General's Reports for UNFF-1 and delegates will consider the Chair's summary on the UNFF MYPOW prior to concluding the meeting.