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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION AND INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK: 12-16 FEBRUARY 2001

The organizational session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the informal consultations on the UNFF's multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) took place at UN Headquarters in New York from 12-16 February 2001. The organizational session elected the UNFF Bureau, agreed to the duration of Bureau members' terms, determined the location of the UNFF Secretariat, and addressed progress towards the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

The purpose of the informal consultations was to exchange views on the MYPOW in order to facilitate the UNFF Secretariat's preparation of a Secretary-General's document on the MYPOW for consideration at the first substantive session of the UNFF (UNFF-1), to be held in June 2001. During the informal consultations, delegates exchanged views on the programme elements of the MYPOW relating to: facilitating and promoting implementation; monitoring, assessment and reporting; enhancing cooperation and policy and programme coordination; fostering international and cross-sectoral cooperation; fostering a common understanding of sustainable forest management (SFM) and addressing forest policy issues and emerging areas; and strengthening political commitment. The informal consultations also addressed the review of the international arrangement on forests to be undertaken in five years.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFF

The possibility of developing international forest policy and a mechanism to coordinate such policy was discussed during preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, but delegates eventually agreed only to adopt the "Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests," also known as the "Forest Principles," and Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 "Combating Deforestation."

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS: In 1995, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), at its third session, established the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) to continue the intergovernmental forest policy dialogue. During its two-

year mandate, the IPF developed some 150 negotiated proposals for action on issues relating to SFM. However, delegates could not agree on a few major issues, including financial assistance and trade-related matters, or whether to begin negotiations on a global forest convention. The fifth session of the CSD, in April 1997, and the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly, in June 1997, endorsed the IPF's outcome and recommended a continuation of the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) to continue this work under the auspices of the CSD.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS: The IFF met four times between October 1997 and February 2000, with its deliberations resulting in approximately 120 proposals for action on a range of topics, including: promoting, facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the IPF proposals for action; financial resources; trade and environment; transfer of environmentally sound technologies; issues needing further clarification; and forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments. At its final session in February 2000, the IFF concluded its deliberations and issued its final report, which included a recommendation for an international arrangement on forests. Delegates agreed to recommend the establishment of the UNFF and to invite the relevant international organizations, institutions, and instruments and UN organizations to participate in a Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Delegates at CSD-8, meeting in April 2000, endorsed the IFF's conclusions and proposals for action and invited the President of ECOSOC to initiate informal consultations on options for placing the UNFF within the intergovernmental machinery of the UN system.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNFF: On 18 October 2000, ECOSOC adopted resolution E/2000/35 (originally issued as E/2000/L.32*), outlining an international arrangement on forests and establishing the UNFF as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC.

The ECOSOC resolution states that the main objective of the international arrangement on forests is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. Its purpose is: to promote the implementation of internationally agreed actions on forests at the national, regional and global levels; to provide a coherent, transparent and participatory global framework for policy implementation, coordination and development; and to carry out principal functions, based on the Rio Declaration, the Forest Principles, Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the IPF and the IFF, in a manner consistent with and complementary to existing international legally binding instruments relevant to forests.

The resolution sets out six principal functions for the international arrangement on forests to meet its objective:

- (a) Facilitate and promote the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action as well as other actions that may be agreed upon; catalyze, mobilize and generate financial resources; and mobilize and channel technical and scientific resources;
- (b) Provide a forum for continued policy development and dialogue to foster a common understanding of SFM and to address forest issues and emerging areas of priority concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner;
- (c) Enhance cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments;
- (d) Foster international cooperation, including North-South and public-private partnerships, as well as cross-sectoral cooperation at the national, regional and global levels;
- (e) Monitor and assess progress at the national, regional and global levels through reporting by governments and regional and international organizations, institutions and instruments, and on this basis consider future actions needed; and
- (f) Strengthen political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests through: ministerial engagement; liaising with the governing bodies of international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments; and promoting action-oriented dialogue and policy formulation related to forests.

To carry out these functions, the resolution establishes the UNFF as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC and also establishes the CPF to support its work and enhance cooperation and coordination. Other provisions include that the UNFF will consider, within five years, the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests, with a view to making a recommendation to ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly (GA), and take steps to devise approaches toward appropriate financial and technology transfer support to enable implementation of SFM as recommended under the IPF and IFF.

The resolution also decides that the UNFF will operate under the rules and procedures of ECOSOC and that it should, *inter alia*: be open to all States and operate in a transparent and participatory manner; build upon the transparent and participatory practices established by the CSD, IPF and IFF; and ensure the opportunity to receive and consider inputs from representatives of major groups, in particular through the organization of multi-stakeholder dialogues.

The resolution decides that the first substantive meeting of the UNFF (UNFF-1) will adopt a MYPOW and develop a Plan of Action (PoA) for implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

The resolution states that the UNFF will meet on an annual basis for up to two weeks and have a high-level ministerial segment for two to three days, as required. It indicates that the UNFF may convene *ad hoc* expert groups for scientific and technical advice.

REPORT OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

The UNFF organizational session met throughout the day on Monday, 12 February and resumed again Friday afternoon, 16 February, to complete its work.

On Monday, 12 February, UNFF Chair Amb. Mubarak Hussein Rahmtalla (Sudan) welcomed participants to the newly-established Forum. Jag Maini, Coordinator and Head of the UNFF Secretariat, delivered opening remarks on behalf of Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, noting that the UNFF is the first subsidiary body of ECOSOC to be established since the CSD in 1992. He highlighted the unique nature of the UNFF, including its universal membership, ministerial segment and focus on implementation. Maini emphasized agreement on the MYPOW as a first step toward demonstrating the UNFF's collective commitment, stating it should be practical and pragmatic and identify priorities. Norway and Sweden, on behalf of the EU, commented that the duration of UNFF-1 should be reconsidered, indicating that perhaps the informal consultations would facilitate preparations for UNFF-1 to such an extent that only one week of meetings would be necessary. Delegates then adopted the provisional agenda (E/CN.18/2001/1).

ELECTION OF THE UNFF BUREAU: The following UNFF Bureau members were elected: Chair, Amb. Mubarak Hussein Rahmtalla (Sudan); Vice-Chairs, Amb. Slamet Hidayat (Indonesia), Alexey Kornienko (Russian Federation), Gustavo Suarez de Freitas (Peru) and Knut Øistad (Norway). Øistad will also serve as Rapporteur.

PROGRESS TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CPF

Hosny El Lakany, Assistant Director-General of the Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), speaking on behalf of the Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF), informed delegates of progress towards the establishment of the CPF. He remarked that the ITFF has initiated a process to identify the modalities and membership for the CPF, and noted a process underway to seek endorsement of the CPF by the governing bodies of ITFF members. With regard to the CPF's structure, he suggested that it operate as a high-level, informal and manageable body, and suggested that membership should be limited to approximately 12 international forest-related organizations, with other bodies, such as NGOs and regional organizations, contributing, as appropriate. In closing, he reiterated ITFF member organizations' commitment to the UNFF and to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Nigeria, on behalf of the G-77/China, commented that the CPF should not be another forum for dialogue or a "talk shop," but rather an action-oriented body that focuses on implementation. The EU stressed that while the ITFF should serve as a model, some additional members may be essential, such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

CONSIDERATION OF ALL PROPOSALS AND OPTIONS ON THE LOCATION OF THE UNFF SECRETARIAT

On Monday, 12 February, Costa Rica noted its offer to host the Secretariat in San José, highlighting its commitment to SFM, even in the face of financial constraints. Switzerland reaffirmed its offer to host the Secretariat, drawing attention to the financial and administrative contributions it would provide if the Secretariat were to be based in Geneva. The FAO also highlighted its offer to host the Secretariat in Rome. Chair Mubarak recalled that the ECOSOC resolution 2000/35



states that, unless otherwise decided, the Secretariat will be housed at UN Headquarters in New York. Bilateral and informal negotiations on the Secretariat's location continued throughout the week.

During the resumed organizational session on Friday, 16 February, Chair Mubarak presented a draft proposal, which decides to locate the Secretariat at UN Headquarters in New York. The EU, with Switzerland, requested simultaneous consideration of the location decision and the decision on UNFF session venues. The G-77/China opposed. After informal consultations, delegates agreed to adopt the decision on location.

UNFF SESSION VENUES

Discussions on the UNFF session venues took place during informal consultations throughout the week. On Friday, 16 February, delegates adopted a proposal deciding that the first and fifth substantive sessions of the UNFF will be held in New York and that the three intervening sessions will be held in Geneva and San José, and that if any ministerial segment is held during the intervening period, it will take place in San José, with the two other meetings in Geneva. The G-77/China reminded delegates that the ECOSOC resolution provides for a high-level ministerial segment. The US regretted that the meeting venues were not distributed on a regional basis, expressing concern that the session locations would not permit the involvement of local experts.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DETERMINATION OF THE DURATION OF THEIR TERMS OF OFFICE

On Monday, 12 February, the EU remarked that, in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 2000/35, the Bureau needs rules of procedure, and called for: yearly election of Bureau members; retaining the same Bureau for the first and second years; and a rotating chairmanship. The G-77/China supported annual rotation of the Bureau members to allow for equal regional representation during the first five years. These matters were addressed over the course of the informal consultations through bilateral and informal discussions.

On Friday, 16 February, delegates adopted a proposal deciding that: following the closure of a regular session the Forum will hold the first meeting of its subsequent regular session with the sole purpose of electing the Chair and other Bureau members; the members of the Bureau shall hold office for a term of one year; and provisions of paragraph 5 of ECOSOC resolution 2000/35 (regarding travel expenses) apply only to the substantive part of the Forum's sessions.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

The informal consultations on the MYPOW began on Tuesday, 13 February, and continued through Friday, 16 February. The work of the informal consultations was organized according to the UNFF's six specified functions, with discussions focusing on the programme elements relating to each function. The review of the international arrangement on forests to be undertaken in five years was also discussed.

In opening the first session, Chair Mubarak commented that the informal consultations were not expected to finalize the MYPOW, but rather to bring a sense of direction to future work and facilitate discussions during UNFF-1.

INTRODUCTION OF INFORMATION NOTES ON THE MYPOW AND THE POA

Jag Maini introduced the information documents on the MYPOW and the PoA. On "Suggestion for a MYPOW" (Information Note #1), he remarked that it suggests programme elements and a schedule for the MYPOW, and attempts to balance a number of considerations, including guidance from the resolution, a focus on implementation,

enhanced regional involvement, and the timing of high-level segments and other forest-related events. He said the suggested MYPOW translates ECOSOC objectives, functions and specific actions into concrete tasks for the next five years. He underscored identifying the best timing for addressing different programme elements and not overloading the UNFF's agenda in any single year.

Regarding the high-level segment, Maini emphasized the importance of timing and topics, including topics for discussion with heads of CPF organizations. He stressed the importance of the high-level segment for providing political guidance to CPF members to indicate where enhanced coordination and cooperation are desirable, and flagged the need to clarify how multi-stakeholder dialogues should be conducted.

Regarding the "Proposed Framework Towards the Development of the PoA" (Information Note #2), Maini commented that development of the PoA will require careful thought, suggested that it be considered annually, and called for early development of the parameters for monitoring. Commenting that the PoA should be based on the IPF/IFF proposals for action, he raised the question of whether it should aim to implement all of the proposals or identify priority areas. He said the PoA should focus primarily on national-level action, with some focus on the regional and international levels. He suggested identifying priority areas for the PoA at UNFF-1 and approving a PoA at UNFF-2, which would include, *inter alia*, targets, timetables, financial provisions, major actors and the CPF's contributions.

GENERAL REMARKS

On Tuesday, 13 February, delegates delivered general remarks regarding the MYPOW. Several countries emphasized that the main focus of the UNFF should be on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. A number of countries emphasized the importance of national forest plans (NFPs) in this regard. The EU highlighted the importance of high-level segments, multi-stakeholder dialogues and the CPF. The G-77/China said finance must be addressed as a cross-cutting issue, since implementation requires finance and technology transfer, and noted the need to distinguish between the UNFF as a forum for discussion and the CPF as an implementation-oriented body. The US suggested that thematic areas be drawn from the IPF/IFF proposals for action and that clusters of issues be identified to better address cross-sectoral issues, such as financing, in the PoA. While some delegations supported establishing a working group on legal arrangements early on, a number of other delegations remarked that discussion of a forest convention should be avoided, so as not to distract delegates from more immediate matters.

FACILITATE AND PROMOTE IMPLEMENTATION

Delegates discussed programme elements relating to facilitation and promotion of implementation on Tuesday, 13 February, and Wednesday, 14 February. Discussion on this topic focused on the PoA as the primary tool for implementation. The G-77/China proposed that the PoA should: focus on ways and means of implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action; set the framework, objectives and time-bound targets; and give emphasis to unresolved issues regarding trade, finance and technology transfer. He noted financial support is key for implementation, monitoring and assessment of the PoA, and suggested that the sixteen programme elements from the IFF be organized into a chart for the PoA, with corresponding timetables, targets and financial provisions.

The Russian Federation said greater attention should be given to feasible goals, and supported prioritization and a comprehensive valuation of actions in the PoA. Brazil stressed that the IPF/IFF proposals for action should be the focus of the MYPOW and the PoA, and emphasized that the elements should be discussed in terms of means



for their implementation. Chile said the timeframe and available resources for implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action must be considered. The US, with Australia, suggested identifying thematic clusters or groupings of issues based on the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The Global Forest Policy Project supported the clustering of elements and proposed that two thematic issues be addressed at each UNFF session. He suggested countries report challenges identified in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

The US stated that the role of the UNFF is to facilitate and coordinate action, identified three main actors – national governments, the CPF and groups of countries – and noted that the real issue is to determine who should undertake what action. New Zealand identified NFPs, criteria and indicators and low forest cover as priority areas.

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. The EU said the PoA should support implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action primarily at the national level, and noted that adopting the PoA at UNFF-2 would unnecessarily delay implementation. Several countries supported adopting the PoA at UNFF-1.

Drawing attention to timing and logistical matters, Jag Maini said adoption of the PoA at UNFF-1 might not be feasible. Regarding provision of financial resources, he noted that while some say this is the responsibility of countries, many countries do not have such resources. He flagged as challenges: determining how to mobilize financial support at the country level; and identifying areas where the international community will provide support.

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Delegates addressed programme elements relating to monitoring, assessment and reporting on Wednesday, 14 February. Most delegates agreed that monitoring and assessment should be based on voluntary national reports and other information from the CPF and other stakeholders. Delegates also called for harmonizing existing national and international reporting systems to enable efficient reporting to the UNFF and to alleviate the burden of submitting multiple reports. Several delegations, including the EU, the US, Australia and Norway, called for establishing an *ad hoc* working group on this issue. Brazil opposed the creation of such a working group. Canada suggested that an *ad hoc* working group should: establish baseline information; provide reporting format and requirements; and make recommendations on frequency and timing.

The EU recommended that developing a coordinated reporting system should be among the UNFF's first tasks. On assessment, she suggested that governments, CPF members, third parties and donor countries collaborate to identify achievements and obstacles to progress. She said monitoring, assessment and reporting should be based on criteria and indicators for SFM. The US suggested reporting on a cluster of issues to allow the UNFF to focus on implementation goals in a more manageable way. Indonesia stressed implementation of priority areas and cross-cutting issues, and called for financial assistance. Norway supported a reporting framework developed to reflect the priorities of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Australia stressed that reporting must assist national assessment of implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

ENHANCE COOPERATION AND POLICY AND PROGRAMME COORDINATION

Delegates discussed programme elements relating to cooperation and coordination on Wednesday, 14 February. Delegates agreed that the CPF should be modeled after the ITFF and play an integral role in coordinating actions. The EU noted that the CPF is a vital part of the new international arrangement on forests, and expressed hope that the

CPF will be operational by UNFF-1. She said the CPF should coordinate inputs to the UNFF and take full account of UNFF discussions in the work of the bodies represented in the CPF. Japan said the important task of the CPF is developing monitoring and reporting systems for the UNFF. Brazil said the CPF's main role is to assist the UNFF in implementation of the MYPOW and the PoA. The US suggested that strategies are needed to encourage CPF organizations to reorient their priorities toward the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and highlighted the work of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) in this regard. The G-77/China suggested that the CPF should be compact, but engage in consultations with regional commissions, private sector entities and other relevant stakeholders. Australia said clear terms of reference are needed for the CPF to ensure that it works efficiently and effectively. Norway commented that the CPF member organizations should be able to present a joint programme at UNFF-2 and that ways to integrate regional cooperation should be devised during UNFF-1. The FAO reiterated that the CPF was formed to support the UNFF's work, and assured delegates that the CPF will work in a transparent manner and build links with other interested parties.

FOSTER INTERNATIONAL AND CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION

Delegates discussed programme elements relating to international and cross-sectoral cooperation on Wednesday, 14 February. Regarding international cooperation, Brazil stressed that new and additional financing is critical and called for an international forest fund. The EU suggested that the UNFF facilitate information flows on available resources. Commenting on the suggestion that financial mobilization must happen at the national level, the G-77/China said this is not realistic in poor indebted countries, and said that SFM will only be discussed and not implemented until guidelines are developed on how to improve capacity, technology development and the flow of resources. Egypt said finance should be linked to thematic clusters, and stressed the need to assist low forest cover countries (LFFCs).

With regard to technology transfer, the EU acknowledged the need to build national capacity. Brazil stressed the importance of education, institutional capacity building, management training, and scientific research for SFM. Indonesia stressed strengthening international cooperation for technology transfer and capacity building, suggesting that NFPs provide a tool for facilitating international cooperation at the national level.

On cross-sectoral cooperation, the Global Forest Policy Project underscored the importance of non-forest sector matters in the UNFF's work. New Zealand agreed that development of a system of mutual recognition, such as market-based certification, would have potential in assisting the role of trade in SFM. Brazil urged enhancing the international competitiveness of sustainably harvested forest products. The EU said measures to promote sustainably harvested forest products and to address illegal logging should be the responsibility of governments, and encouraged the use of certification programmes. Mexico urged addressing international trade in support of SFM.

FOSTER A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF SFM AND ADDRESS FOREST POLICY ISSUES AND EMERGING AREAS

On Thursday, 15 February, delegates discussed programme elements relating to fostering a common understanding of SFM and addressing forest policy issues and emerging areas. Most delegates: emphasized implementation and action rather than discussion; underscored that clustering elements could help address cross-cutting issues; and called for linking SFM to the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action. Several delegates called for provision of financial means to achieve SFM and assess progress toward SFM at all levels.



On emerging issues, the US highlighted rural communities, forest fragmentation, agricultural conversion and urban sprawl, and law enforcement, and said the UNFF should work with forestry practitioners. 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. 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 the ministerial segment should be used to make progress on cross-sectoral issues and to foster increased public awareness of SFM. Australia opposed any work on new proposals for action, as it would divert the international community from implementing existing commitments. Pakistan emphasized the difficulties faced by LFCCs, including environmental degradation and threats to water supply due to desertification. Costa Rica highlighted its effort toward protection of forest-covered land and outlined predicaments faced by rural and indigenous populations due to deforestation.

Brazil commented that fostering a common understanding of SFM lies in building the capacity of countries and indigenous communities. She said emerging issues with relevance to SFM should be addressed, but warned against taking on complex issues, such as emissions trading, which are being tackled by other instruments. Indonesia called for the involvement of indigenous people and said traditional forest-related knowledge is important in elaborating a common understanding of SFM.

New Zealand said criteria and indicators for SFM should be adapted to the diversity of geographical areas and identified incentives for using first-growth planted forests for commercial purposes. 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 work on criteria and indicators since that issue is addressed in other fora.

STRENGTHEN POLITICAL COMMITMENT

On Thursday, 15 February, delegates addressed programme elements relating to strengthening political commitment. The EU stated that strengthening political commitment should result in increased awareness among other sectors regarding their impact on forests. Regarding the timing of the high-level segments, delegates generally supported holding one in 2005, but opinions varied on the timing of another 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 the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10). Costa Rica opposed holding the first high-level segment in 2002 due to the heavy meeting schedule that year, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and, with the US and New Zealand, supported holding a high-level segment in 2003. Australia cautioned that unwarranted high-level segments would discourage commitment. Norway supported timing the high-level segment to allow for inputs into the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The G-77/China questioned whether the ministers' presence is necessary for the adoption of the PoA, 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 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. Chile and Costa Rica supported holding regional high-level segments. 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.

Regarding the multi-stakeholder dialogues, a number of delegations suggested the dialogue format of the CSD could be used as a basis for the UNFF. The G-77/China said they should take place as side events or side discussions with their outcome feeding into meetings. Norway stressed the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities. The US supported holding dialogues at every meeting, underscored the importance of private sector and NGO participation, and suggested that the dialogues focus on thematic issues and cross-cutting areas, such as capacity building and governance.

Regarding the legal framework, Canada emphasized the importance of the mandate given to the UNFF by ECOSOC, and called for the establishment by UNFF-2 of an expert group with the mandate to develop a legal framework. The Russian Federation noted discussion of the issue within a working group would be useful. The G-77/China opposed the establishment of such a group until the UNFF's third or fourth meeting, since it would divert focus from implementation. Brazil also opposed the establishment of such a group, stating that this issue should not contaminate the UNFF's work. A number of delegations, including Australia, New Zealand, Uganda and the US, opposed discussion on the legal framework until considering progress achieved on implementation. Egypt emphasized the need to build trust prior to addressing complex issues, such as a legal framework. Switzerland warned against overloading the UNFF, but said the question of the legal framework should not be left until UNFF-5.

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

Delegates discussed this topic on Thursday, 15 February. The EU noted the need to define means available, expected outcomes and the criteria against which the effectiveness of the arrangement will be assessed, and 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. A number of delegations, including Brazil, Canada and the EU, supported early development of criteria for review, and invited the CPF to develop such criteria in a transparent and participatory manner. The EU encouraged a link between the review of the arrangement and review of the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and monitoring and reporting, including through third party assessment. The US stressed the need to receive input from external stakeholders. The Global Forest Policy Project said further consultations were needed on elements for the review criteria.

PRESENTATION OF THE CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE MYPOW

On Friday, 16 February, Chair Mubarak presented his summary of the informal consultations on the MYPOW, noting that it was intended to facilitate the Secretariat's drafting of the Secretary-General's report.

Many delegations opposed text stating that consensus had been reached on some issues, noting it was erroneous in the context of a non-negotiating forum. The G-77/China noted several points did not adequately reflect the views expressed during the informal consultations, especially with regard to: the provision for *ad hoc* expert groups, as many had expressed reservations to their establishment; linking CPF activity and the outcome of the UNFF regarding monitoring and assessment; and linking international trade in support of SFM and certification systems. He also called for reference to addressing trade in international and cross-sectoral cooperation. Brazil also noted its opposition to the creation of *ad hoc* expert working groups and said the



Chair's summary fails to reflect a view expressed by the G-77/China that pending issues of IPF/IFF processes, such as finance, technology and trade, must be dealt with at each UNFF session. Indonesia said the summary should emphasize the need for the UNFF to discuss unresolved IPF/IFF proposals for action and the link between monitoring and implementation of cross-cutting issues.

Chair Mubarak clarified that the Chair's summary does not commit anyone to any course of action and invited delegations to forward comments for a revised version of the Chair's summary, to be posted on the UNFF web site on Tuesday, 20 February.

RESUMED ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

On Friday afternoon, 16 February, delegates convened for a resumed organizational session.

Regarding the Secretary-General's report for UNFF-1, Jag Maini announced that two documents will be produced: one that addresses the MYPOW, and which is based on Information Note #1; and another that addresses the PoA. Chair Mubarak requested the UNFF to organize an informal briefing on the documents prior to UNFF-1, which was agreed to by Maini.

In closing, the US highlighted the difference between the MYPOW and the fieldwork that remains to be achieved. She cautioned against creating too many *ad hoc* intersessional groups and invited consideration of specific issues to be addressed. Uganda suggested the UNFF set immediate priorities among the 16 elements and produce a minimum programme of work with which to proceed. The G-77/China highlighted valuation and criteria and indicators as two important themes and emphasized harmonization of criteria and indicators. The EU noted the strong consensus to focus on implementation, highlighting the role of national processes. She drew attention to an EU outline of the MYPOW that reflects their ideas on the issue, and asked the Secretariat to compile and circulate all statements submitted during the informal consultations. Brazil highlighted the importance of international cooperation in fostering a common understanding of SFM and commented that discussions on a legal framework should not take place before UNFF-5.

Chair Mubarak said participants had laid the right tracks for the UNFF and called for active participation at UNFF-1. He thanked participants and translation services for their collaborative efforts, wished delegates a safe and pleasant journey back home and ended the meeting at 5:30 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE UNFF

A NEW FORUM AND A FRESH START?

As the United Nation's Forum on Forests' organizational session and informal consultations on its multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) got underway, delegates seemed optimistic and eager to see the UNFF succeed, with declarations of their commitment to the process and calls for action on the ground to implement the proposals for action of its predecessors, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). Despite these pronouncements, many delegates have been clear in pointing out that calls for action will only be believed once implementation is given more than lip service.

The biggest challenge for the UNFF may be one of confidence building to assure stakeholders that it is not another "talk shop" as many perceive the IPF and IFF to have been. As a reminder of this, NGO delegates to the organizational session handed out pins printed with a red bar through "IPF/IFF Again." However, there was a marked difference in government interventions at this meeting from those of IFF-4, with many clamoring for implementation of previously agreed

commitments, statements that echoed those of NGOs at IFF-4. These interventions give hope that, at least for the first few years, the UNFF will focus on action on the ground and avoid protracted debates that stymied progress within the IPF/IFF on legal arrangements and finance.

A PREVIEW OF THE UNFF

The informal consultations on the MYPOW served their intended purpose of exchanging views to clarify the UNFF Secretariat's understanding of what delegates envision for the MYPOW, but did little more as delegates steered away from any negotiation or controversial exchange. A number of areas of general agreement emerged during the week, especially with regard to the need for action on the ground, the nature of the CPF, the need to streamline forest-related reporting requirements, the nature of multi-stakeholder dialogues, the importance of raising the political profile of forests and much more. However, a number of areas where consensus may be hard to reach were also flagged, especially regarding finance as a cross-cutting issue and when work on a legal arrangement should begin and how. A confidential meeting of the "Friends of the Convention" raised concern among those who hoped the topic would be dormant for at least a little while.

The most contentious topic during the organizational session was the Secretariat's location. Bilateral negotiations on the topic continued throughout the week to ensure the issue would not go to a vote and set an adversarial tone for the UNFF at its first meeting. In the end, delegates agreed to a face-saving compromise that linked the Secretariat's location with the venues for the UNFF meetings. Despite offers on the table from Costa Rica, Switzerland and the FAO, the G-77/China's preference for New York, based on the high number of permanent missions there, prevailed.

NGOs expressed frustration and some skepticism about the new Forum. However, NGOs were most conspicuous due to their small numbers, with only a handful of representatives at the meeting. While some suggest that the low attendance was because this was only an organizational session, others regret that there were not more NGOs present to provide input to guide the MYPOW development. Some worried that this showed a lack of confidence in the process.

While the organizational session and the informal consultations did not accomplish much on paper, the meeting provided delegates with information that will help them in doing their homework prior to UNFF-1, where there will be a full agenda, including finalization and adoption of the MYPOW. As delegates left the meeting, a number were hopeful that, thanks to the work achieved during the informal consultations, UNFF-1 will only need to meet for one week – as opposed to the two currently scheduled – to take care of its business. At UNFF-1 delegates will start to get a feel as to whether the UNFF can shake off the baggage from the IPF and IFF and establish itself as the new international authority on forests.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE UNFF-1

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE APPLICATION OF REDUCED IMPACT LOGGING TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: This meeting will convene from 26 February-1 March 2001, in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. For more information, contact: Thomas Enters or Patrick Durst, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand; tel: +66-2-2817844; fax: +66-2-2800445; e-mail: thomas.enters@fao.org or patrick.durst@fao.org.

CBD SBSTTA-6: The Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity will meet from 12-16 March 2001, in Montreal, Canada. For more



information, contact: CBD Secretariat, Montreal, Canada; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/>

FAO COFO: The FAO Committee on Forestry will convene from 12-16 March 2001, in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: Forestry Department, FAO, Rome, Italy; tel: +39-6-57054778; fax: +39-6-57052151; e-mail: Forestry-www@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry>

ITFF: The Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests will meet from 19-20 March 2001, in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: Forestry Department, FAO, Rome, Italy; tel: +39-6-57054778; fax: +39-6-57052151; e-mail: Forestry-www@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry>

GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND PUBLIC POLICIES: FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE FORESTRY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: This conference will convene in Atlanta, Georgia, US, from 25-27 March 2001. For more information, contact: Larry Teeter, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University; tel: +1-334-844-1045; fax: +1-334-844-1084; e-mail: fpc@auburn.edu; Internet: <http://www.forestry.auburn.edu/forestpoliyccenter/news.htm>

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CARBON ACCOUNTING, EMISSIONS TRADING AND COP-6 NEGOTIATIONS RELATED TO BIOENERGY, WOOD PRODUCTS AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION: This workshop will convene in Canberra, Australia, from 26-30 March 2001. For more information, contact: Kimberly Robertson; tel: +43-316-876-1330 (or +64-7-343-5899); fax: +43-316-876-91330; e-mail: kimberly.robertson@joanneum.ac.at; Internet: <http://www.joanneum.ac.at/iea-bioenergy-task25/announcement.doc>

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALL-SCALE FORESTRY: This symposium will convene from 20-26 March 2001, in Joensuu, Finland. For more information, contact: Dr. Anssi Niskanen or Ms. Johanna Väyrynen, European Forest Institute, Joensuu, Finland; tel: +358-13-252-020; fax: +358-13-124-393; e-mail: anssi.niskanen@efi.fi or johanna.vayrynen@efi.fi; Internet: <http://www.efi.fi/events/2001/ufro3.08.00/Info.htm>

MEETING ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PAN-EUROPEAN INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: This meeting will be held from 26-27 March, 2001, in Liechtenstein. It will be convened by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). For more information, contact: Peter Mayer, Liaison Unit Vienna, Vienna, Austria; tel: +43-1-710-7702; fax: +43-1-710-77-02-13; e-mail: liaison.unit@lu-vienna.at; Internet: <http://www.minconf-forests.net>

CSD-9: The ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development will be held in New York from 16-27 April 2001. This session will focus on: atmosphere; energy/transport; information for decision making and participation; and international cooperation for an enabling environment. The topic of the multi-stakeholder dialogue segment will be energy and transport. Prior to CSD-9, intersessional meetings will be held from 26 February – 2 March (Energy Expert Group), 6-9 March (Working Group on transport and atmosphere) and 12-16 March (Working Group on information for decision-making and participation and on international cooperation for an enabling environment). For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm#. For information for major groups, contact Zehra Aydin-Sipos, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8811; fax: +1-212-963-1267; e-mail: aydin@un.org

16TH COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY CONFERENCE – FORESTS IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE: This conference will meet from 18-25 April 2001, in Fremantle, Western Australia. For more information, contact: Libby Jones, Standing Committee on Commonwealth Forestry, Edinburgh, UK; tel: +44-131-314-6137; fax: +44-131-334-0442; e-mail: libby.jones@forestry.gov.uk

TECHNICAL EXPERTS GROUP ON FORESTS: The meeting will convene in Edinburgh, Scotland, from 23-27 April 2001 (tentative). For more information, contact: Ms. Frida Velarde, Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat; tel: +1-514-287-7001; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: frida.velarde@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/conv/events/events.asp?cbd>

CSD-10 (PREPCOM): The tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development is expected to convene for a meeting in New York from 30 April – 2 May 2001, to serve as the Preparatory Committee for the Ten-year Review of UNCED (World Summit for Sustainable Development). For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm#. For information for major groups, contact Zehra Aydin-Sipos, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8811; fax: +1-212-963-1267; e-mail: aydin@un.org

MCPFE ROUND TABLE MEETING: This meeting will convene from 14-15 May 2001, in Brussels, Belgium. This meeting is convened by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and is open to participants and observers of the MCPFE. For more information, contact: Peter Mayer, Liaison Unit Vienna, Austria; tel: +43-1-710-7702; fax: +43-1-710-77-02-13; e-mail: liaison.unit@lu-vienna.at; Internet: <http://www.minconf-forests.net>

FORESTRY IMPACTS OF CHINA'S REFORMS: LESSONS FOR CHINA AND THE WORLD: This symposium on the forestry impacts of China's rural, industrial, and financial reforms since 1978 will be held from 20-23 June 2001, in Dujiangya, Sichuan Province, China. The symposium is organized and co-hosted by the Center for International Forestry Research, China State Forestry Administration, and the Research Center for Ecological and Environmental Economics under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Chinese Academy of Forestry, and the Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science. For more information, contact: L. Dachang@cgiar.org and T. Suhartini@cgiar.org

UNFCCC SB-14/RESUMED COP-6: The 14th sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will take place from 21 May - 1 June 2001, in Bonn, Germany. This meeting may also serve as the resumed COP-6 (as outlined under COP-6 decision FCCC/CP/2000/L.3). For more information, contact: the UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

30TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL: The 30th session of the International Tropical Timber Council is scheduled from 28 May - 2 June 2001 in Yaounde, Cameroon. For more information, contact: the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); Yokohama, Japan; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: itto@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

FIRST SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS: This meeting is scheduled for 11-22 June 2001, at UN Headquarters in New York. For more information, contact: Secretariat, Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, tel: +1-212-963-6208; fax: +1-212-963-3463; e-mail: vahanen@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/unff_2001_fsm.htm