



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## UNFF-1 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 11 JUNE 2001

On the first day of UNFF-1, delegates met in a morning Plenary session to hear opening remarks and address organizational matters. In the afternoon, delegates delivered general statements on the UNFF's multi-year programme of work (MYPOW), plan of action (PoA) and work with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

### PLENARY

**OPENING REMARKS:** Chair Mubarak Hussein Rahmtalla (Sudan) opened the session and encouraged delegates to work productively. Patricio Civili, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), presented a review of international forest-related work since UNCED, identifying key lessons learned and challenges ahead. He lauded the level of consensus achieved, the quality of leadership, the financial support provided by governments, and the work of the Inter-agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF). He identified challenges ahead, including the need to: formulate a realistic agenda; mobilize political and financial support; generate and sustain support for the CPF; and build capacity.

Chair Mubarak described the UNFF as the most concrete institutional legacy of Agenda 21, and said tasks for UNFF-1 include: adopting the MYPOW; initiating a framework for the PoA; and designing new approaches to cooperation and coordination among institutions. He noted the importance of multi-stakeholder dialogues, and invited proposals from NGOs. He reported that informal consultations had revealed interest in, *inter alia*, early negotiation on substantive decisions at UNFF-1, and holding a ministerial segment before the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Hosny El-Lakany, CPF Chair, reported on the establishment of the CPF and overviewed efforts to broaden the CPF's membership to include the FCCC, CCD and GEF, in addition to the ITFF members. He noted that the GEF has agreed to join the CPF and that the CPF will develop its work plan following the adoption of the MYPOW.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:** Delegates adopted the session's agenda (E/CN.18/2001/4) and agreed to its organization of work, which proposes that delegates begin drafting decisions on the MYPOW and the PoA in the first week of UNFF-1. Delegates also

agreed that Knut Øistad (Norway) will chair a working group on the MYPOW and that Slamet Hidayat (Indonesia) will chair a working group on the PoA.

Chair Mubarak requested delegates to provide guidance on the procedure for developing draft decisions and draft resolutions. The US supported modeling the procedure after the IPF and IFF, and also suggested that working group chairs could lead the drafting process. SWEDEN, on behalf of the EU, suggested that the Bureau develop draft decisions for the Plenary's consideration.

Delegates agreed to grant observer status to the Center for International Forestry Research, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (E/CN.18/2001/9).

**INTRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS:** Jag Maini, Head, UNFF Secretariat, introduced the session's documents: the Secretary-General's report on the MYPOW (E/CN.18/2001/5); the Secretary-General's report on the development of the PoA (E/CN.18/2001/6); and the Secretariat's note on the initiation of the CPF's work (E/CN.18/2001/7). Regarding the report on the MYPOW, he commented that it builds on the views expressed during the Eight Country Initiative and the UNFF informal consultations. He explained that the report suggests a MYPOW based on the UNFF's functions as set out in the ECOSOC resolution (E/2000/35), with each function divided into programme elements, with specific tasks for each UNFF session. He noted that the report also suggests a thematic focus for each UNFF session: UNFF-2, forest conservation, protected areas and environmental services; UNFF-3, international trade and investment in support of sustainable forest management (SFM); UNFF-4, forests and human needs, including sustainable livelihoods; and UNFF-5, consideration of progress made and future actions.

Regarding the PoA, Maini underscored that countries are the primary focus, although other actors, including the CPF, public-private partnerships, donors and major groups, would assist countries in achieving the PoA's objectives. He explained that step one in developing the PoA is for UNFF-1 to adopt decisions on its components, financial provisions, targets and timetables, and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress, and that step two is the adoption of the PoA at UNFF-2.

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Regarding the CPF, Maini noted that it is modeled after the ITFF and mandated to support the UNFF's deliberations, enhance cooperation and coordination, strengthen political commitment to SFM, and facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action through the PoA.

**GENERAL REMARKS:** In general, delegations emphasized the need for implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action rather than further dialogue, called for an action-oriented PoA with concrete targets and timetables, and expressed satisfaction with the establishment and initial progress of the CPF. Several delegations expressed concern with the apparent lack of implementation of the ECOSOC resolution's provision that funding for the Secretariat be provided from the regular UN budget.

IRAN, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, noted the special needs of low forest cover countries (LFCCs) and emphasized the provision of adequate financial resources. He said the PoA should include clearly defined timetables, targets and financial provisions, and recommended that donor coordination aimed at increasing ODA be predictable and reliable.

The EU said that the MYPOW should translate objectives, functions and tasks into concrete activities over the next five years. He emphasized the importance of a manageable agenda, suggested that each session deal with one cross-cutting issue and two priority issues, and called to adopt the PoA at UNFF-1.

COSTA RICA stressed the potential utility of regional forest strategies and the need for a standardized system for monitoring, assessment and reporting. BRAZIL said technology transfer, finance and trade should be cross-cutting issues in every UNFF session. She opposed discussing carbon sequestration and illegal logging, as proposed by the Secretariat, and said it was premature to create an *ad hoc* group on the parameters of a legally-binding mechanism on forests. She supported the establishment of a working group on monitoring and assessment at UNFF-1.

The US stressed strategic use of existing resources and said the recent ITTO meeting highlighted the importance of the UNFF's work. SWITZERLAND supported establishing *ad hoc* working groups on financing SFM and technical assistance, SFM criteria and harmonized reporting systems. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION supported establishing an expert group on a mandate for developing a framework for a legally-binding instrument. CANADA supported establishing expert groups on monitoring and assessment and financing and technology transfer during UNFF-1, and on the parameters for a mandate for a legally-binding instrument at UNFF-2.

CHINA said the MYPOW should focus on major issues outstanding from IPF/IFF and suggested that the PoA emphasize establishing mechanisms for financial and technology transfer. He said the CPF should strengthen inter-agency coordination and facilitate implementation at the country level.

NEW ZEALAND emphasized the need for action to combat forest degradation on the ground and said the MYPOW's policy dialogue should allow for the inclusion of other policy developments as necessary. JAPAN recommended that the MYPOW be formulated to take advantage of ministerial segments and multi-stakeholder dialogue.

NORWAY expressed support for the MYPOW's thematic sessions, recommended holding a ministerial segment at UNFF-2 to provide political leadership early on, and underscored the importance of major group involvement. CUBA reiterated that action on forests should be based on, *inter alia*: respect for state sovereignty; balance between

forest preservation and use to sustain national economies; guarantee of international financing, including provision of ODA; and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

AUSTRALIA stressed identification of priorities, and said national assessments could be useful to this end, as well as for regional comparison. He underscored the importance of concluding the PoA and indicators of progress at UNFF-1.

MEXICO identified the PoA as the main tool for consolidating and implementing the IPF /IFF accomplishments. FIJI, on behalf of the PACIFIC ISLAND FORUM, stressed the value of forests in providing timber, food, fuelwood, traditional medicine, clean water and soil protection, and their significance for both monetary and subsistence economies.

EGYPT called for financial provisions for implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action and urged consideration of LFCC concerns at UNFF-2. He stressed that the identification of priority action at the national level is each country's responsibility. NIGERIA emphasized capacity building and technology transfer, and suggested establishing a committee to address these issues. GHANA urged greater private sector involvement and capacity building for monitoring, assessment and reporting.

The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT (GFPP) lamented the oversight of cross-sectoral issues. He remarked that during the recent ITTO meeting, Malaysia and Brazil identified the UNFF as the appropriate forum to address illegal logging. BRAZIL responded that difficulties in enforcing forest legislation must be addressed before illegal logging can be discussed. MALAYSIA said effective reduction and control of illegal logging depends on factors outside national governments and the forestry sector, and that lack of regulation in international financial systems has led to illegal logging.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL presented the Chair with a banner stating "No more proposals for action; let's just do it!" He stressed the importance of addressing, *inter alia*, underlying causes of deforestation. He emphasized implementing the most crucial and relevant proposals for action, stated that some proposals are counterproductive, and called for a permanent, independent mechanism to review implementation.

Regarding financial support for the Secretariat, Chair Mubarak noted that a representative of the budget division would address questions and clarifications during Tuesday's afternoon Plenary. To clarify inconsistencies, BRAZIL asked that representatives from both the DESA budget department and the UN budget division be present.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates expressed varying views on what to expect at UNFF-1. While some perceive UNFF-1 to be primarily organizational and predict an uneventful session, others are suspicious that some contentious issues, such as finance, may surface and sidetrack progress. A number of delegates are concerned that a two-week meeting is too long for the session's agenda, and have suggested finishing early and banking the remaining time for a future session. Others, eager to make progress, would like to set more ambitious goals for UNFF-1, such as adopting the PoA by the end of the session.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** Plenary will convene in Conference Room 1 at 10:00 am for substantive discussion on the MYPOW. Substantive discussion on the PoA and the initiation of work with the CPF will take place during the afternoon.