



UNFF-1 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 14 JUNE 2001

On the fourth day of UNFF-1, delegates discussed a draft decision on the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW), first in Plenary and then in the Working Group on the MYPOW. Discussions focused largely on NGO participation in relation to the draft decision.

PLENARY

Chair Mubarak introduced the draft decision on the MYPOW prepared by the Bureau. He stressed that the Bureau based the text strictly on the delegations' input. He proposed that NGOs be allowed to provide comments before negotiations on the text begin. IRAN, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, objected to NGO comment on the draft text. BRAZIL said there was no harm in listening to NGO comments. The US, CANADA and SWEDEN, on behalf of the EU, supported allowing NGO statements on the draft text. Chair Mubarak said that inviting NGOs to provide comments prior to negotiation of the draft decision would be in line with the ECOSOC rules of procedure. After informal consultations, Chair Mubarak announced agreement that NGOs would be able to make comments on general issues but not on the actual draft text.

The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT (GFPP) expressed confusion about delegates' preferences regarding NGO participation and reserved his comments on the MYPOW.

The US stated that different countries have different views on what should be included in the MYPOW. She said some actions and strategies in the MYPOW might be more appropriate in the PoA, and suggested it would be more constructive to consider the PoA and CPF drafts together with the MYPOW draft. She noted that participation and transparency seemed to be missing from the MYPOW draft and wondered if these issues were adequately addressed in the PoA. She stressed the need to have broad discussions on how the MYPOW, PoA and CPF fit together to ensure that all topic areas and strategies are included and to clarify how they relate to one other. The EU echoed the US' concerns. The G-77/CHINA said it was prepared and eager to begin negotiations on all agenda items.

BRAZIL said she thought the Plenary had agreed to allow NGOs to make general remarks, and expressed confusion as to why they were not doing so. CANADA encouraged NGOs to deliver comments, stressing the need to incorporate their views in preparing negotiations on the MYPOW.

SOBREVIVENCIA/FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL explained that NGOs were hesitant to present their views as they were uncertain how detailed they should be. Regarding the MYPOW, she said it contained several interesting ideas, particularly the *ad hoc* expert group on monitoring, assessment and reporting.

WWF highlighted the importance of including all forest values – economic, environmental and social – when considering conservation at UNFF-2, and said the integration of these issues would be particularly relevant to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. He suggested UNFF-2 could work like a preparatory meeting in this regard, and demonstrate positive examples at the Summit. He also stated that the MYPOW draft's use of the term “harmonization” was unclear, and expressed hope that it meant integration across forest landscapes. CRESCENTE FERTIL underscored that the participation of indigenous peoples is critical. He highlighted that NGOs have laid out ten priorities for implementation.

SOUTH AFRICA called on NGOs to suggest modalities for including indigenous people in the UNFF and ways to take their concerns into account and facilitate their participation. NIGERIA noted that at the IFF, which was a more informal process, delegates agreed that major groups enrich the process. He said now that the process has been formalized into the UNFF, NGOs may deliver general comments, yet formal negotiations are to be purely intergovernmental.

The US, echoed by the EU, reiterated that negotiations had not begun and that it would be beneficial to have NGOs make specific comments. BRAZIL recalled that the ECOSOC decision states that ECOSOC rules of procedure as well as the supplementary arrangements established for the CSD would apply to the UNFF, and that the UNFF's work should build on the transparent and participatory practices established by the CSD, IPF and IFF. NIGERIA reiterated that many country proposals originally come from NGOs.

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SOBREVIVENCIA/FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL said NGOs had no intention of participating in negotiations and, in response to South Africa, called attention to the model used by the CBD in the discussion of Article 8(j) where indigenous peoples have been allowed to share perspectives. The INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES OF TROPICAL FORESTS highlighted participation of indigenous peoples in the CBD.

Regarding the MYPOW, the GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT stressed the importance of establishing the mechanism for monitoring, assessment and reporting as soon as possible. He supported identifying the purpose, the outcomes and the application of the multi-stakeholder dialogues' results. He was pleased to see attention given to cross-sectoral issues such as agriculture, energy and transportation. He supported a list of criteria by which the success of the MYPOW and entire UNFF could be measured. He also called for direct UNFF input to other forest bodies and for the UNFF to invite their input. Chair Mubarak then closed the Plenary and established the Working Group on the MYPOW, chaired by Knut Øistad (Norway).

MYPOW WORKING GROUP: The EU proposed, and delegates agreed, to hear general comments on the draft decision before proceeding with detailed negotiations. EGYPT asked whether NGOs would be allowed in the Working Group. Chair Øistad responded that NGOs are allowed to attend as observers but not to take the floor. The Conference Secretary clarified that, according to the rules of procedure, working group discussions are closed to NGOs unless all delegations accept their attendance. Chair Øistad suggested that NGOs remain in the Working Group as there had been no stated opposition.

In their general remarks, delegations expressed support for the document as the basis for negotiation. However, the G-77/CHINA rejected the table containing the proposed schedule for the MYPOW, and called attention to their alternative proposed schedule.

The EU requested inclusion of a paragraph on intersessional meetings. He also said, *inter alia*: the thematic foci should be broader; multi-stakeholder dialogues should take place at all sessions, including UNFF-5; and emerging issues should be identified later. The EU accepted the proposed criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the UNFF and suggested including a reference to country-led initiatives.

The US said there are many omissions with respect to implementation of proposals for action and participation and transparency in the MYPOW. Regarding monitoring, assessment and reporting, she proposed listing the three agreed aspects of this category and highlighting it on a country level. On the success criteria, she expressed doubt that an agreement could be reached at UNFF-1. She noted that parts of the ECOSOC resolution are excerpted in the text, and suggested following the usual practice of citing entire paragraphs to provide context.

NEW ZEALAND urged that the MYPOW and PoA be approved at UNFF-1 in order to catalyze implementation of proposals that have existed for more than five years. He proposed that national reporting and intersessional meetings be incorporated into the MYPOW to facilitate implementation. He remarked that holding a ministerial segment at UNFF-2 would be premature and that developing parameters for a legally-binding instrument at UNFF-3 would also be premature. He stressed that the development of harmonized criteria for reporting cannot wait until UNFF-3.

MEXICO said social and institutional aspects of forests should be considered earlier than UNFF-4. NORWAY said monitoring, assessment and reporting should be moved forward in the schedule, and suggested that the thematic focus for 2002 be defined for the ministers. He commented that participation should be added to the MYPOW.

Regarding the draft's attachment on success criteria for the effectiveness of UNFF, he said the criteria seemed more like indicators and suggested including measures that would reflect action on the ground. JAPAN said that how the UNFF's outcomes would be implemented had been omitted. SWITZERLAND stressed that monitoring, assessment and reporting should be addressed as early as possible.

The G-77/CHINA introduced its proposed table, which emphasizes addressing technology, capacity building, finance and trade as cross-cutting issues at each UNFF session. He overviewed the schedule represented in the table, which suggests that, *inter alia*: at UNFF-1, working groups be established on criteria for monitoring, assessment and reporting, and finance and technology transfer; at UNFF-2, concepts, terminology and definitions be discussed along with LFCCs and traditional forest-related knowledge; at UNFF-3, fragile ecosystems, degraded land, combating deforestation and social, economic and cultural aspects be discussed; and at UNFF-4, forest-related scientific knowledge, maintaining forest cover, public participation and monitoring, assessment and reporting be considered. He explained that UNFF-5 would be devoted entirely to review of progress. CUBA supported replacing the Bureau table proposing a schedule for the MYPOW with the G-77/China's alternative table.

AUSTRALIA said cross-cutting issues should be addressed in relation to the themes, whereas the G-77/China's table appeared to mix them with the themes. The G-77/CHINA said they had fundamental problems with the Bureau's table, which gives the impression that each cross-cutting issue is being considered separately. The EU said it found merit in the Bureau's draft, and suggested incorporating in it many of the ideas in the G-77/China's table. The US expressed its preference to continue working from the Bureau's draft.

The G-77/CHINA stressed that UNFF-2 will be an important meeting with ministers present, and thus difficult issues should be addressed at that session to provide impetus for the remaining UNFF sessions. BRAZIL said many G-77/China members were not inclined to negotiate the Bureau's draft, as it incorporated very few of their proposals. She stressed that the three pillars of sustainable development should be considered together, and that the G-77/China opposed separating them as the Bureau had done in its draft. She underscored that the G-77/China hoped the MYPOW and the PoA would be geared toward implementation. AUSTRALIA clarified that the themes in the Bureau's draft did not intend to suggest that the three pillars of sustainable development should be viewed in isolation.

IN THE CORRIDORS

A number of NGOs expressed concern about the terms of their participation in the UNFF and being "ghettoized" into multi-stakeholder dialogues. Several NGOs have reiterated their support for the process of multi-stakeholder dialogue, but say they find it to be a narrow form of participation given the many other ways in which NGOs can contribute to the UNFF process. Some delegates note that this is a consequence of the famously informal IPF/IFF process becoming a formal UN body subject to ECOSOC rules of procedure. Others felt that the day's debate demonstrated delegates' commitment to ensuring NGO participation, and lamented that such organizational obstacles were hindering delegates from entering into negotiations.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

MYPOW WORKING GROUP: The MYPOW Working Group will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1 to begin negotiations on the draft decision on the MYPOW. The deadline for submission of written proposals on the CPF is 10:00 am. The draft decision on the PoA is expected to be available in the afternoon.