



UNFF-2 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 7 MARCH 2002

On the fourth day of UNFF-2, delegates met in two Working Groups. Working Group I discussed progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action on combating deforestation and forest degradation and on forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems. Working Group II addressed monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR), including concepts, terminology and definitions, and criteria for the 2005 review.

WORKING GROUP I

Combating Deforestation and Forest Degradation: Hossein Moeini (Iran), Chair of Working Group I, invited Bai-Mass Taal, UNEP, to present the report of the Secretary-General regarding combating of deforestation and forest degradation (E/CN.18/2002/6). The G-77/CHINA, supported by BRAZIL, said that problems of deforestation and forest degradation are mainly socioeconomic issues rooted at both the rural and national level. The EU, with CANADA, LATVIA and POLAND, supported integrating NFPs into rural development programmes. The EU recommended that the UNFF identify innovative approaches and finance-related knowledge exchanges relevant combating deforestation and forest degradation. SENEGAL called for a more concerted and coordinated approach to ensure efficient implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Many delegates underscored the need for a cross-sectoral approach, and agreed that forest fires, illegal logging and perverse subsidies are important emerging issues. On illegal logging, FRANCE noted significant loss of resources due to illegal logging, and COSTA RICA underscored the need for improved legislation and training to ensure enforcement of forest laws. CANADA advocated partnerships and South-South transfer of know-how. With INDIA, he preferred the term "environmentally damaging subsidies" over "perverse subsidies." BRAZIL and MALAYSIA called for improved market access. The US underscored land tenure issues, domestic policy and subsidies, and corruption as important emerging issues. NEW ZEALAND, with CHINA, stressed the important role of plantation forests.

The G-77/CHINA, with the GLOBAL FOREST COALITION and TURKEY, supported the development of a capacity-building programme. The G-77/CHINA, supported by CUBA, the GLOBAL FOREST COALITION and MALAYSIA, called for an action-oriented approach to addressing the underlying causes of forest loss and degradation, and underscored the lack of financial resources and appropriate technologies as primary obstacles to implementation of

the IPF/IFF proposals for action in developing countries. NIGERIA called for a funding mechanism to assist developing countries with implementation. MALAYSIA highlighted certification as a means to ensure SFM, and GHANA called for convergence of certification schemes. INDIA underscored joint forest management and community involvement. The GLOBAL FOREST COALITION advocated a country-driven approach to capacity building and broad participation. The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT said that UNFF sessions could facilitate implementation by sharing of successes and challenges. He noted that competition among certification schemes may increase their quality.

Regarding the outcome of the preceding discussion, the EU and CANADA supported a Chair's summary over a draft decision. The US said that in the event of a decision, new proposals should not be included. Chair Moeini said the Bureau would discuss the matter.

Forest Conservation and Protection of Unique Types of Forests and Fragile Ecosystems: Bai-Mass Taal, UNEP, presented the Secretary-General's Report on Forest Conservation and Protection of Unique Types of Forests and Fragile Ecosystems (E/CN.18/2002/9). The G-77/CHINA noted the report's failure to consider communities living within protected areas, the impacts of natural disasters on protected areas, and mangrove forests. The EU said the report focused too closely on protected areas, stressing conservation of biodiversity as a broader concept, and stated that adoption of an action-oriented revised Work Programme on Forest Biological Diversity at CBD COP-6 would facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. He suggested that innovative financial resources for protected area management were warranted.

Noting that advancements in SFM are often due to improved governance rather than increased financing, CANADA stressed the importance of planning, prioritization and sound implementation plans. COSTA RICA highlighted the negative impact of agricultural and colonization policies on forests, and stressed the need for more research on the benefits of forests, as well as the effects of plantations. MAURITIUS highlighted the particular vulnerability and fragility of forest ecosystems in small island States, and called for increased financial support for their conservation efforts.

The US emphasized that the extent of protected areas varies widely between regions and forest ecosystems, and noted that national protected area management laws are often inadequate and poorly enforced. She stressed the importance of applying SFM principles to areas not set aside for strict protection, and supported increased attention to land tenure and clarification of resource rights and responsibility.

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ties. TURKEY highlighted the importance of establishing and managing protected areas, but underscored the need also to establish conservation mechanisms outside protected forest areas to ensure the protection of the multiple benefits of forests.

MALAYSIA advocated balance between the protection and sustainable use of forests, and said market access for wood products could generate funds for forest protection. JAPAN underscored law enforcement as essential in protected area management and, stressing the importance of forest areas outside protected areas, advocated a landscape approach to protection. POLAND suggested establishing new protected areas on degraded lands and corridors between fragmented forests. PAKISTAN criticized the strict conditionalities of CPF members, and said successful management of forests requires strong linkages between departments working on forest-related issues. The MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE underscored protection of forests as an integral part of SFM and called for cooperation between the UNFF and the CBD. ASOCIACIÓN NAPGUANA stressed the importance of prior informed consent of indigenous peoples and mutual benefits when protecting forests. GREENPEACE called for sharing of both success stories and challenges.

WORKING GROUP II

Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, Including Concepts, Terminology and Definitions: Ositaadinma Anaedu (Nigeria), Chair of Working Group II, invited Hosni El-Lakany, Chair of the CPF, to introduce the Secretary-General's Report on MAR, including concepts, terminology and definitions (E/CN.18/2002/8). To guide UNFF-3 preparations, the EU proposed that a focused questionnaire be used for voluntary country reporting on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. INDIA, supported by SWITZERLAND, MALAYSIA and CHINA, highlighted the need to streamline reporting to reduce the reporting burden. INDIA said reporting requires capacity building for developing countries and should be voluntary, and called for focused questionnaires and information sharing between organizations. SOUTH AFRICA underscored the need for a common MAR framework and, with others, urged the establishment of a contact group. BRAZIL underscored the need to address common items that are part of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including national forest programmes (NFPs), criteria and indicators (C&I) and trade. CANADA emphasized that further proposals for action are not necessary, and stressed the need to advance action on the ground. She highlighted the value of reporting at the international level, and emphasized the need to prioritize and streamline requests for reporting. The US noted the complexity of issues, and suggested separating global and country-level MAR. TURKEY noted a lack of common understanding, and stressed the important roles of the CPF and the MAR expert group in this regard.

The G-77/CHINA emphasized the need for methodological C&I, and said their effectiveness will depend largely on factors such as transfer of technology, capacity building and financial assistance. FINLAND supported limiting the number of indicators. COLOMBIA highlighted potential difficulties if regional differences are not taken into account. JAPAN supported the extensive use of C&I, and said a step-by-step approach might be appropriate for countries with limited resources.

On concepts, terminology and definitions, the FAO highlighted its ongoing work on terminology related to forest resource assessments. The US called attention to the plethora of terms, expressed concern over use of the term "harmonization," highlighted differing views on terminology at the sub-national level, and emphasized new and evolving terminology. INDIA noted the lack of consensus on what constitutes a low forest cover country (LFCC), and IRAN suggested that LFCCs cooperate to address common needs and concerns.

GERMANY said NFPs are critical for the sustainable management of all types of forests. The US proposed a substantive, structured discussion on concepts, terminology and definitions at UNFF-3.

On criteria to review the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, CANADA recommended: adopting a strategic results-based framework to review effectiveness; selecting performance indices and agreeing on a data collection strategy; engaging a third-party expert to develop a comprehensive results-based management and accountability framework for UNFF-3; and measuring performance indices from an agreed base year. The EU agreed the review should be based on the UNFF's six principal functions, said specific criteria and benchmarks are needed for each function, and suggested amendments to the Secretariat's proposed criteria, noting that some were too broad and not measurable. The US said setting measurable criteria was unrealistic on issues where definitions have not been agreed and priority concerns not negotiated. She said individual countries must set their own goals for progress. BRAZIL said discussion on: reviewing effectiveness should not overshadow implementation; measurable criteria was difficult; and criteria should be an evolving process. MALAYSIA supported determining a base year against which to measure progress. SWITZERLAND called for a systematic and objective review with agreement on outcomes and successful benchmarks and measurable criteria. He supported establishing a contact group to address the mandate and composition of the MAR expert group.

The US and CANADA noted the need for clarity in nomenclature, and recommended working in an informal contact group. SWITZERLAND noted the MAR expert group's function would be to develop mechanisms or criteria for assessing implementation. The US proposed language on evaluating implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and said means of implementation in developed countries must also be addressed. BRAZIL suggested that a contact group discuss reviewing effectiveness at each subsequent UNFF session. She supported reviewing how common items are addressed, and said evaluating implementation cannot proceed if countries do not have the means to implement. Several delegates requested clarification on expected outcomes of the discussion.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Four days into UNFF-2, delegates remained unclear as to what outcomes UNFF-2 is supposed to produce. Most assume that, in addition to establishing three expert groups and forging a ministerial message for WSSD, UNFF-2 will generate some form of text that delegates can adopt. Certain delegates have suggested that some sort of document, beyond a Chair's Summary, would lend credibility to the UNFF. Others feel that the UNFF should not be judged by its paper output, but should instead be assessed according to its longer-term "on the ground" effects: the extent to which it triggers new thinking, offers a space for sharing both positive and negative experiences, and facilitates implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Some delegates perceive that UNFF-2's struggle to figure out the nature and format of its outcomes is impeding progress on its primary task: to review progress in implementation of the proposals for action.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: Working Group I will meet in Conference Room 5 at 10:00 am and in Conference Room 1 at 3:00 pm to address rehabilitation and conservation strategies for LFCCs; rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and promotion of natural and planted forests; and enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination.

WORKING GROUP II: Working Group II will meet in the General Assembly Hall at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm to resume discussion on preparations for the ministerial segment and on the three *ad hoc* expert groups.